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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as an Environmental and Social Responsibility: Is It Beneficial for Business?

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ABSTRACT: Corporate Environmental and Social Responsibility, often referred to as CSR, is an initiative that requires companies to be accountable to the environment and society in relation to their business activities. The implementation of this responsibility varies across countries; some countries make it mandatory for all businesses, while others only require it in certain sectors, or treat it as a voluntary action reflecting business awareness and responsibility. This has become a subject of debate, especially when global urgency on sustainable development issues is being strongly emphasized, yet in practice, there is no uniform understanding or implementation, resulting in the lack of significant solutions to these global problems. This research aims to explore how CSR can have a positive impact on business development related to economic growth. Using the Systematic Legal Review research method, secondary data is used as the main reference, collectively collected on relevant topics and then processed into an information source. The results of this study show that CSR has a positive impact on business, both internally and externally in relation to business operations. It is hoped that this research can provide insights and ideas regarding the role of CSR, both directly and indirectly, in driving the growth and economic development of a country, as well as serving as an evaluation material to improve the effectiveness of CSR's role.

KEYWORDS: Business Development; Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); Economic Growth; Sustainable Development

I. INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept that delineates a company's commitment to operate ethically and contribute positively to society and the environment. CSR involves the voluntary integration of social, environmental, and ethical considerations into a company's business operations and interactions with stakeholders. As global stakeholders, including employees, customers, investors, and communities, increasingly demand ethical, transparent, and sustainable business practices, CSR has become essential for both internal organizational development and external market positioning. This report synthesizes empirical and meta-analytical evidence to evaluate the extent to which CSR influences business development, focusing on both internal dimensions (organizational culture, employee engagement, operational efficiency) and external dimensions (brand reputation, customer loyalty, stakeholder relations). Its evolution reflects a transition from compliance-driven philanthropy to strategic initiatives that align with core business objectives, stakeholder expectations, and long-term value creation. Modern CSR is recognized as a catalyst for innovation, risk management, and competitive advantage, rendering it a strategic necessity rather than a discretionary activity. CSR is frequently perceived as a mechanism to implement sustainable development programs aimed at protecting and sustaining both the environment and society.

CSR encompasses a variety of crucial practices, such as conducting sustainable business operations, investing in local communities, maintaining good relationships with stakeholders, and complying with applicable laws and norms. In its implementation, CSR aims to improve quality of life, reduce negative environmental impacts, and create economic sustainability that benefits both companies and society as a whole. Therefore, in accordance with the first principle of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, CSR is considered one of the ways that contribute to promoting economic development while taking into account the preservation of the local environment. CSR includes various practices, such as conducting sustainable business operations, investing in local communities, maintaining good relationships with stakeholders, and complying with applicable laws and norms. In its implementation, CSR aims to improve the quality of life, reduce negative environmental impacts, and create economic sustainability that benefits both companies and society as a whole. Therefore, in accordance with the first principle of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, CSR is considered one of the ways that contribute to promoting economic development with due regard for the preservation of the local environment (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Homburg, Bornemann, & Stierl, 2013; Jeffrey, Mccabe, & Rosenberg, 2019; Lee & Lee, 2018; Lu, Liu, & Falkenberg, 2020; J. Zhang & Liu, 2023; Q. Zhang & Ahmad, 2022). On the other hand, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) poses a challenge for companies, as it requires a significant allocation of time and financial resources for its implementation, even though it contributes to business activities and employee output. CSR also Moreover, the implementation of CSR serves as a valuable breakthrough for the government, as it can support economic, social, and environmental development and growth. Some parties argue that CSR is not profitable for businesses, as it carries high risks if not carried out carefully and thoughtfully. However, despite the various challenges and opportunities, in the long term, CSR has both direct and indirect positive impacts on business development. A critical question arises regarding the extent to which CSR can balance the fulfillment of social and environmental needs with the primary objective of companies, namely generating profit. This dilemma raises the issue of whether CSR can truly serve as an effective mechanism for achieving sustainable development without sacrificing short-term business profitability. In other words, there exists a research gap concerning how companies can optimally integrate CSR so that it functions not merely as a tool of social legitimacy but also as a driver of financial sustainability. Despite these challenges, in the long term CSR has been shown to exert both direct and indirect positive impacts on business development, corporate activities, and employee productivity, while simultaneously serving as a breakthrough that supports economic, social, and environmental growth at the governmental level.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) research method is an approach conducted by systematically and structurally collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing secondary data from various relevant sources to answer specific research questions. This method is used to process secondary data in the form of literature and legal documents related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its impact on business and economic development. The data used in SLR are secondary data obtained from relevant sources such as scientific journals, books, research reports, policy documents, and other academic publications that discuss CSR topics, its practices, and its influence on business and the economy. The data is collectively gathered by selecting relevant topics, which are then analyzed and processed into a comprehensive source of information. The results using the SLR method are obtained by conducting a systematic literature search using specific keywords and inclusion-exclusion criteria to find relevant sources, as well as collecting and organizing secondary data from the selected literature, then analyzing and synthesizing findings from various literature to obtain a comprehensive overview of the influence of CSR on business and the economy. The final step is drawing conclusions based on the synthesized data obtained, as well as identifying practical and theoretical implications from the research results.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. CSR Implementation Practices

In Indonesia, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices often include various initiatives aimed at providing positive benefits to society and the environment. Some common examples of CSR practices adopted by companies in Indonesia include: 1) empowering of local communities; 2) environmental efforts; 3) economic sustainability; 4) campaigns to raise political awareness.

3.1.1. Empowerment of Local Communities

Several companies run programs that empower local communities with the aim of enhancing the abilities of local residents so they can improve their quality of life. Some examples of these programs include skills training, education, healthcare, the provision of health services, support in the form of capital and skills for small businesses, or improvements to surrounding infrastructure. These programs are widely implemented in developing countries. (Chapple & Moon, 2005; Rosser & Edwin, 2010). For example, health and education service programs are widely implemented in several African countries.

3.1.2. Environmental Efforts

Companies often implement programs that focus on reducing the environmental impact of their operations. Examples of such initiatives include reforestation programs, improved waste management, energy-saving and carbon emission initiatives, the use of renewable energy, and the conservation of natural resources (Suyono & Farooque, 2018). In Europe, environmentally conscious practices are widely implemented not only due to regulations, but also because public awareness significantly influences their execution. Not only Europe, but North America has also implemented environmental programs as part of its initiative to achieve environmental balance.

3.1.3. Economic Sustainability

Several companies practice CSR through support for sustainable economic development. This can be achieved by investing in local infrastructure or organizing programs that can enhance local wisdom, such as sustainable agriculture (Kumala & Siregar, 2020). The main point in economic sustainability is an effort to create harmony between economic growth and the influence and development of the surrounding environment. This practice is implemented by business actors through good business ethics, transparent reporting, and compliance with all applicable legal regulations, both regarding human rights and the environment. These programs are usually carried out by multinational companies operating across countries, with the aim of maintaining their reputation and avoiding legal conflicts. In Europe, for example, CSR practices have been well integrated into business strategies, with countries such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany demonstrating strong frameworks(Idowu, 2009). These frameworks often emphasize social and environmental dimensions that are aligned with government policies and societal expectations. In France, culture, socio-economic traditions, and laws have a major influence on CSR practices. A combination of local factors and global influences shapes how companies in France approach CSR, including influences from multinational companies and international organizations (Antal & Sobczak, 2007).

3.1.4. Public Awareness Campaign

The company is also actively engaged in organizing campaigns to raise awareness about health and social issues, such as public health, poverty alleviation, and gender equality (Dănescu & Popa, 2020).

3.1.5. Social Inclusion and Equality

The implementation of CSR can take the form of practices aimed at reducing social exclusion among marginalized populations, such as providing employment opportunities and healthcare services for women's communities, with such CSR initiatives having been implemented in Bangladesh. The case study in Bangladesh shows that CSR programs like these can have a positive impact on socio-economic development (Werner, 2009).

3.1.6. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) or Collaboration Between Government Sectors and Non-Profit Organizations

The partnership between the public and private sectors is essential to achieving sustainable development goals, such as poverty alleviation and advancing education. The involvement of both sectors is crucial as a joint effort to address social issues present in society. For the government, this initiative is one way to meet public needs with support from the participation of the private sector, which is a form of its responsibility to contribute to the surrounding community. Furthermore, implementing this program can also enhance the level of public trust in both sectors.

3.1.7. Health Promotion Program

Health promotion program, includes activities aimed at improving the health standards of both its workers and the local community. CSR programs aimed at health promotion involve strategic efforts by companies to improve health outcomes for employees and broader communities, addressing social determinants of health and fostering societal progress. These initiatives are influenced by corporate leadership styles, have financial and social benefits, and also enhance corporate reputation and consumer loyalty, reflecting an integral part of sustainable business practices (Fei et al., 2024; Hiswåls et al., 2020; Mahmud et al., 2020; Moussu & Ohana, 2014; Pirsch et al., 2006; Srivastava, 2024).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs in health promotion are increasingly recognized as vital initiatives through which businesses contribute to societal health and wellbeing beyond their immediate operations. These programs range from institutionalized efforts that deeply integrate CSR into corporate culture to promotional programs aimed at generating positive consumer responses and enhancing brand reputation (Pirsch, Grau, & Gupta, 2006). In the context of health promotion, CSR activities focus on improving the health and wellbeing not only of internal stakeholders, such as employees, but also external stakeholders, including communities and society at large. A health promotion is concerned not only with physical but also with psychological issues which influence an employee's productivity. For companies, employees are a valuable asset, so health promotion programs are essential and aimed at supporting their performance and safety. For the community, health programs are a form of responsibility toward the surrounding society.Additionally, CSR initiatives in health promotion are linked to enhanced corporate reputation and consumer loyalty. Companies that actively engage in health-focused CSR gain positive public perception which, in turn, drives consumer trust and loyalty, supporting sustainable marketing practices and long-term business success (Srivastava, 2024). Recent discourse emphasizes the importance for businesses to address social determinants of health through CSR strategies, helping to reduce health inequities and promote health equity (Hiswåls, Hamrin, Vidman, & Macassa, 2020). This expands the traditional workplace-centric approach to CSR in health toward broader societal impact, including community health improvements.

Various roles of CSR in the form of health promotion are carried out, such as health education campaigns, support for health facilities in the form of clinic construction or provision of medical equipment, and even tentative programs such as free health check-ups, vaccinations, and healthy living training programs. Another example of CSR programs in health promotion include the implementation of Health and Safety (H&S) initiatives within firms aimed at reducing health-related costs and improving employee welfare. Despite their proven effectiveness and profitability, investment in such programs may be underprioritized due to financial constraints like corporate leverage, though they deliver benefits for both firms and society (Moussu & Ohana, 2014). Meanwhile, an example of CSR implementation for mental health is carried out Pharmaceutical companies, among others, have demonstrated CSR programs that include mental health awareness campaigns, financial support for health projects, and development of sustainable healthcare initiatives benefiting both employees and society at large. These programs show the ability of CSR to impact public and employee health positively (Dănescu & Popa, 2020).

According to recent discourse in CSR research, workplace health and wellbeing have been recognized as fundamental parts of CSR strategies, especially for internal stakeholders like employees. Companies have increasingly integrated mental health support in their CSR programs to address social determinants of health and equity within the workforce. By doing so, businesses can foster a positive corporate image while contributing to employee health equity and sustainable organizational success (Hiswåls et al., 2020). CSR programs are often categorized along a continuum from institutionalized to promotional approaches. Institutionalized CSR programs, which include sustained mental health support frameworks, are more effective at increasing employee loyalty and reducing skepticism, reflecting the long-term commitment to holistic employee wellbeing (Pirsch et al., 2006). CSR programs focused on mental health are instrumental in fostering healthier workplace environments by directly supporting employees' mental wellbeing. Such initiatives not only serve ethical and social justice goals but also enhance corporate reputation, employee commitment, and overall organizational performance.

Corporate communication around mental health CSR programs is crucial for maximizing the benefits of these initiatives. Proper communication can improve stakeholder awareness and support, help build corporate image, and strengthen relationships with employees. Communicating company efforts in mental health positively influences employee advocacy behaviors and engagement (Du et al., 2010). Furthermore, CSR programs have been shown to positively influence community perceptions of societal progress, including health outcomes. Studies investigating the CSR efforts of financial institutions in Bangladesh illustrate that well-designed CSR initiatives enhance the community's trust and perception of societal development which likely includes health and wellbeing improvements (Mahmud et al., 2020). These health promotion programs are lead by an leadership in an organization. Transformational and ethical leadership styles notably contribute to effective CSR implementation, promoting organizational cultures that support employee engagement and align company values with health promotion goals (Fei et al., 2024). Effective communication and institutionalization of these programs are essential to maximize their impact and sustainability (Dănescu & Popa, 2020; Du et al., 2010; Hiswåls et al., 2020; Pirsch et al., 2006).

Global corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices have developed significantly and are influenced by the cultural, economic, and regulatory environments in which they are implemented. Specifically, CSR practices vary greatly between regions such as Europe, East Asia, the Americas, the Middle East & Africa, as well as Australasia (Idowu, 2009). Cultural, socio-economic factors, and legal frameworks lead to differences in the implementation or application of CSR in various countries around the world. In addition to these external reasons, internal factors also play a role. For example, issues related to company mechanisms and governance, or matters concerning family ties within a company, can be influential. In family-owned companies, for instance, there is often a correlation between CSR disclosure and earnings management (Kumala & Siregar, 2020).

Various examples of CSR implementation and its diverse applications can be seen in the following cases. In Brazil, CSR is carried out through the publication of sustainability reports by companies. Analysis of these reports shows that although companies have made progress in reporting, some practices such as stakeholder engagement still need to be optimized (Borges et al., 2017). Meanwhile, in Mexico, corporate social reports have evolved, with "first-generation" companies showing greater involvement in adopting international standards in CSR reporting compared to "second-generation" companies, which still tend to focus on local norms and philanthropy (Meyskens & Paul, 2010). East Asian countries, such as China, also engage in CSR activities but often face challenges and unique practices influenced by the local business environment and government policies (Idowu, 2009). In China, where CSR implementation is considered to be progressing well, it is still relatively slow in comparison to European countries, yet CSR reporting continues to develop. Although the number of published CSR reports increases every year, many of these reports still lack third-party certification and have low levels of information disclosure (Wu & Hąbek, 2021). In America, especially in the United States, companies have developed strong CSR programs that focus on sustainability and social issues, while countries such as Mexico and Brazil are still developing comprehensive approaches to CSR (Idowu, 2009). In addition, the Middle East and Africa regions are also showing increasing interest in CSR, with countries such as Nigeria viewing CSR activities as a means for economic development (Idowu, 2009). Likewise, South Africa has strongly integrated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into the mining and energy sectors, highlighting social equity and environmental sustainability. In Australasia, CSR practices place significant emphasis on environmental sustainability due to the region's geographical context and regulatory framework (Idowu, 2009). Australian companies, for example, have actively worked to reduce their carbon footprint and adopt renewable energy.

Although the implementation of CSR has been adopted in various countries, CSR practices still face several challenges and, in some cases, may even lead to new problems. The challenges encountered in implementing CSR globally include the influence of mass media, greenwashing practices, the local business environment, and local government policies. Mass media can affect engagement and dialogue among stakeholders. Freedom of speech for all parties is necessary to ensure CSR implementation is targeted and effective in promoting sustainable development. If dialogue or communication among these elements is hindered, it can reduce public participation, resulting in the failure to fulfill or carry out CSR (Stohl, Woo, Etter, & Banghart, 2015). On the other hand, the presence of mass media can have a positive impact on the opportunities for implementing CSR or achieving its targets for a company, as well as attract public interest and aspirations, providing a platform for people to express their concerns. In addition, another challenge faced is greenwashing practices carried out by business actors in CSR programs, often in the form of green marketing strategies. To address these challenges, a legal framework, partnerships between the public and private sectors, and consumer demands are significant driving factors influencing these practices (Deshmukh & Tare, 2023). The existence of a developed local business environment also poses a challenge for CSR implementation. Sometimes, existing societal norms do not always have to be followed as traditions, but rather should be changed to adapt to the times. Traditional or conservative business practices often disregard the impact of business activities on business sustainability, the economy, society, and the environment. In this era of progress, environmental issues are sensitive and highly considered. Therefore, an understanding of these responsibilities requires adjustment, socialization, and adaptation so that shifts in corporate responsibility or CSR can be accepted. Without such changes, resistance to them will make it difficult for companies to implement and balance economic and social interests to meet the needs of local communities. Another challenge lies in local government policy. Naturally, the implementation of CSR must comply with the policies established by the country in which the company operates. Companies must ensure compliance with the applicable rules and proper procedures regarding the implementation process and the reporting mechanisms of CSR activities. Whether set by the central or local government, companies must understand the synchronization between policy interpretation and implementation. Furthermore, the mechanisms for executing CSR must also align with the direction of both central and local government policies to ensure that its implementation has a positive and effective impact and aligns with the objectives of local government policy. If a company neglects CSR, which is a corporate obligation, the company may be considered non-compliant with the applicable laws.

3.2. The Impact of CSR on Business Development

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a significant positive impact on business development both internally and externally. CSR impacts the internal operations of businesses by optimizing human resource practices, enhancing risk management, supporting cost efficiency, and boosting employee engagement and performance. These benefits underscore the importance of integrating CSR into a company's core operational strategy to improve both business outcomes and stakeholder relationships (Du et al., 2010; He et al., 2019; Lu et al., 2018).

CSR also improves employee engagement, job satisfaction, and operational efficiency by enhancing organizational culture and fostering a sense of pride and trust among employees. One primary way CSR impacts operations is through risk management and cost savings. The implementation of CSR can assist companies in risk management by applying controls for social and environmental risks, thereby reducing the potential for conflicts and legal issues. CSR practices such as energy efficiency and waste management can also lead to operational cost savings and increase the company's capital availability, helping to protect the company from environmental risks(J. Lu et al., 2018). Beyond controlling potential risk, CSR implementation can also reduce costs associated with resource usage and waste management(Lu, Streimikis, He, Ren, & Lin, 2018). Several empirical studies indicate a positive relationship between CSR implementation and corporate financial performance. CSR initiatives that focus on employees, environmental protection, and business ethics can drive increased company profitability and competitiveness in the market(Simionescu & Dumitrescu, 2018).

Moreover, CSR practices contribute positively to human resource management and talent management. Companies that incorporate CSR into their strategies tend to emphasize values such as diversity, equity, and inclusion, which not only improve the workplace environment but also enhance employee satisfaction and engagement (Cajander & Reiman, 2024). This can be achieved through employee engagement with an ethical and participative leadership style. Leadership that encourages employee involvement in CSR programs can strengthen organizational culture and enhance positive outcomes for CSR(Fei et al., 2024).This approach facilitates the attraction and retention of skilled employees, which is crucial in today's competitive market.

Externally, CSR enhances brand reputation, builds customer loyalty, and strengthens stakeholder relations by promoting transparency and ethical practices, and also supports sustainable development. With social responsibility, the company's image can improve and a positive reputation can be built in the eyes of the public and stakeholders. This can be achieved by implementing CSR in a transparent and consistent manner, thereby enhancing the company's reputation. As a result, it attracts consumer trust and increases customer loyalty. This also impacts advocacy behavior from stakeholders, such as product purchases, investments, and job seeking at the company (Du et al., 2010; Srivastava, 2024). In addition, having a good relationship with customers will also positively influence the company's relationships with other stakeholders. These good relationships must exist among employees, the community, customers, and suppliers. For example, involvement in CSR programs can increase employees' identification with the company and strengthen their commitment, which ultimately improves employee productivity and loyalty(Kim, Lee, Kim, & Lee, 2010; Uvaneswaran, Ahmed, & Zemen, 2019). If CSR is consistently implemented, with transparent reporting and the involvement of society, employees, and the government, it can have an even greater impact on sustainable development. If carried out in this way, the goals of sustainable development are expected to be achieved, as they are an integral part of the principles of sustainable development. Companies that implement CSR contribute to sustainable economic development by taking into account the well-being of the community and surrounding environment, which plays a key role in supporting the long-term sustainability of the business(Deshmukh & Tare, 2023; J. Lu et al., 2018).

However, the effectiveness of CSR is moderated by cultural contexts, strategic alignment between internal and external initiatives, and the mode of communication, with digital transparency and social media emerging as key facilitators in contemporary settings. Effective communication of CSR efforts can lead to better support behaviors from stakeholders, such as employees and investors, ultimately leading to a strengthened corporate image and improved internal cohesion (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010).

3.2.1. The Influence of CSR on Economic Growth

CSR proves positively impacts economic development through various mechanisms. CSR initiatives promote sustainable development by integrating social, environmental, and economic dimensions into business practices. By enhancing corporate performance, fostering stakeholder collaboration, promoting ethical business practices, and supporting sustainable resource use. These factors together enable more sustainable and inclusive economic progress and development (Ait Sidhoum & Serra, 2017; Li et al., 2019; Lu et al., 2018, 2019; Manasakis, 2018; Nurunnabi et al., 2019; Tian et al., 2024; Tien et al., 2019; Weyzig, 2008). These initiatives can improve corporate financial performance by enhancing risk management, reducing costs, and fostering better stakeholder relationships, all of which contribute to long-term business stability and growth. Companies that actively engage in CSR often see improvements in competitiveness and innovation, which stimulate economic activities and development in their operating regions. Thus, it helps companies build better relationships with customers, employees, suppliers, governments, and communities, which can lead to increased trust and support. Such engagement often translates into more robust economic environments and contributes to improved human resource management. CSR also plays a role in mitigating corruption and strengthening governance, particularly in sectors like energy, which are crucial for economic sustainability. By addressing social and environmental concerns, companies not only enhance public welfare but also contribute to the achievement of broader sustainable development goals, fostering inclusive economic growth. This interplay between CSR and corporate governance, social welfare, and environmental conservation creates a balanced approach that supports economic development while respecting societal and ecological constraints.

Overall, CSR makes a broad contribution to business development by strengthening reputation, stakeholder relationships, operational efficiency, and long-term business sustainability. Well-implemented CSR helps a company not only fulfill its social responsibilities but also enhance its overall business value.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This article concludes that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) makes a significant contribution to business development and sustainable economic growth. Effective implementation of CSR strengthens a company's reputation, fosters closer relationships with stakeholders, increases operational efficiency, and supports the long-term sustainability of the business. In addition to helping companies fulfill their social responsibilities, CSR also enhances overall business value by creating a balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects. Thus, CSR becomes an important strategy that not only fulfills ethical and legal obligations but also drives sustainable business growth and inclusive economic development. Some recommendations for more effective CSR implementation, both for sustainable development and for economic and social growth, include: Companies should strategically integrate CSR into their business operations to maximize positive impact both internally and externally; CSR initiatives must be adapted to local cultural, social, and policy contexts to ensure that programs are more effective and have a broader impact; transparency and consistent communication regarding CSR programs are crucial for building trust and supporting active participation from all stakeholders. In addition, strong collaboration between the public sector, private sector, and community should be strengthened to comprehensively achieve sustainable development goals. Companies are also encouraged to continue developing innovative and responsive CSR practices to address dynamic environmental and social challenges, thereby ensuring long-term business sustainability.

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