Internal Corporate Social Responsibility and Organizational Identification: Evidence from a Malaysian Public University

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between internal corporate social responsibility (ICSR) and organizational identity (OI) among academic staff at a Malaysian public university. Internal corporate social responsibility (ICSR) is referred to as an organization's self-regulation efforts that reflect its responsibilities to internal stakeholders. ICSR is conceptualized as having two major components: (1) responsible job design (RJD) and, (2) communication and team building (CTB). OI is a self-defined mental and emotional engagement with the organization as a social being. As organizations prioritize ICSR, employees will be more likely to go above and beyond their obligations for the organization due to a continuous sense of satisfaction and assurance in their jobs. This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey approach, using online self-administered survey items, and disseminated to respondents using systematic random sampling. The study has been participated by a total of 245 academic personnel. The findings indicate a significant positive relationship between RJD and OI, but the relationship between CTB and OI was weak and insignificant. This study adds to the empirical data supporting the relationship between ICSR and OI. University ICSR initiatives may employed these findings to improve staff retention, cohesion, and a sense of belonging. The study's generalizability is limited by the bias in self-reported data in a single university case study. It is suggested that future research could include the impacts of communication channels, with diverse factors to suggest a multidimensional approach, as well as expanding the study to other public universities and professional positions to examine the relationship between ICSR and OI.

Keywords: organizational identification, internal corporate social responsibility, responsible job design, communication, and team building

INTRODUCTION

Organizational identification (OI) gives employees a more thorough grasp of their roles and responsibilities as well as the direction of their organizations. Employees are more likely to accelerate task matters when OI is high; on the other hand, when OI is low, employees lose direction and disregard their duties. Given that OI is linked to favorable outcomes including engagement, retention, and performance, it is critical for organizations to comprehend the elements that most strongly influence OI. In the case of public universities, OI is crucial for their academic staff, which must work to preserve the quality of education in line with the institutional corporate purpose, educational philosophy, and international standards. According to the current situation of educational institutions, academic staff members experience excessive stress, burnout, and long work hours as a result of the ever-changing demands of the industry and educational needs. A weak OI can lead to problems including a lack of team cohesion, poor quality education, a decline in stakeholder trust, and wasted resources [16],[26].

Numerous OI predictors have been studied in the literature; however, when employers develop, design, and implement responsible job design, communication, and team building, employees can benefit economically,

functionally, psychologically, and ethically from internal corporate social responsibility (ICSR)[24]. Organisation can enhance OI by offering information on ICSR, which will motivate academic personnel to remain devoted and do exceptional work. Understanding the potentially significant role of internal corporate social responsibility (ICSR) can aid in human resources and social responsibility investment plans [16]. Organizations risk missing out on chances to use ICSR and enhance employee alignment if they fail to address these gaps. There could be useful organizational benefits from a more accurate depiction of the ICSR-OI link. Therefore, the goal of the study is to identify the level of OI and the relationship between communication and team building (CTB), responsible job design (RJD), and organizational identification (OI) among the academic staff in a Malaysian public university.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Organizational Identification (OI)

According to Karanika-Murray et al., [15], OI illustrates a psychological interaction between an individual and the organization, whereby the individual has a profoundly self-defined mental and affective relationship with the organization as a social entity. High levels of adaptability to the organizational culture and work environment, the ability of members of the organization to form a positive and meaningful association with the organization, the ability of employees to align their goals with organizational objectives, and the ability to influence employee retention, productivity, and performance at higher levels are all examples of strong identification values [11]. Moreover, OI creates a true sense of connection among employees. The organization becomes more successful as a result of the attitudes and actions this process produces. Workers will take greater pleasure in their jobs, identify themselves beneath their businesses based on a strong feeling of self-definition and belonging [16],[26].

Conversely, a deficit in OI leads to various attitudinal, behavioral, and performance problems, as individuals do not have a personal connection to the organization. An employee may perform poorly and cause problems. The individual and the organization are distinct entities, lacking interconnection and mutual support. This will affect organizational planning because there are groups that hold different values and directions. Additionally, the organization's ability to hire new staff and keep present employees from leaving may be impacted if departing employees do not value the organization [16]-[17].

Consequently, OI is highly advocated in the university atmosphere. The degree to which the academic staff members mentally incorporate the university's identity and affiliation into their self-concept and have a strong feeling of devotion to the institution is measured by OI in public university contexts [5]. Strong organizational identification (OI) increases the likelihood that staff members develop loyalty and perseverance in a changing and demanding environment and are more inclined to go above and beyond the call of duty to assist the university in achieving success; quality of education and learning, graduates who have broad skills, and understanding and carrying out essential tasks successfully [28]. Employees develop sense of belonging to the university community and embrace its common aims and ideals as their own. Active promotion and advocacy for the university's interests and reputation are facilitated by a strong feeling of OI and belonging to the institution [13], because high OI identifiers work together across internal and external barriers to accomplish common goals; this perspective influences their attitudes and behaviors [31].

B. Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR)

The idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR) suggests that businesses create and execute projects by making calculated socially beneficial decisions. According to the principle, organizations should run their operations or initiatives in a way that benefits the community as a whole; economically, socially, and environmentally. Large organizations have an obligation to participate in charitable endeavors that are not motivated by profit or financial gain but rather by a desire to restore humanity and compassion to society at large. External and internal CSR are the two main categories into which scholarly studies on CSR usually fall. Bolton [6], asserts that the implementation of sustainable change within the firm and the cooperation between employers and workers are characteristics of internal corporate social responsibility. External corporate social

responsibility, on the other hand, seeks to benefit the society or community by enlisting the help of suppliers, customers, governments, and stakeholders [3].

Enhancing an organization's social status and reputation is the goal of both internal and external corporate social responsibility (CSR), with a focus on highlighting the good acts and positive activities that are connected to the organization. Due to consumer expectations, businesses have adopted corporate social responsibility (CSR). They must exhibit CSR activities to keep customers interested in buying their goods and services [20]. However, according to Sánchez-Hernández et al. [24], ICSR is still a crucial subject to tackle when talking about how to generate value in any organization, despite the fact that not much study has been done on it. ICSR advances innovative ideas in sustainable development and organizational management. These concepts consider the functions of internal stakeholders, such as the employer-employee relationship, in managing resources and upholding social responsibility.

ICSR improves employees' perceptions of their employer's commitment to their well-being. ICSR can therefore increase job satisfaction and raise employees' awareness of the importance of returning favors. As organizations prioritize ICSR, employees will be more inclined to exceed their responsibilities due to a consistent sense of assurance and enjoyment of their employment [20]. When an organization meets the needs and expectations of its members, its employees perceive it as a compassionate corporate entity, thereby enhancing the rate of employee loyalty and retention. ICSR is capable of fulfilling employees' fundamental requirements, including security, safety, and belonging [20], and employees experience exceptionally high levels of security. The two elements of ICSR, which are responsible job design (RJD) and communication and team building (CTB), were the primary focus of the study. This is because these two elements make an organization a desirable place to work, which helps employees reach their goals and stay competitive.

1) Responsible Job Design (RJD)

RJD is the process of organizing tasks to establish the duties and responsibilities of employees to foster productive working relationships. RJD is the component that contributes to the creation of a job position and a job specification for an employee who elects to become a member of an organization. The extent to which upper management provides autonomy and accuracy in an employee's job description is the basis for measuring RJD in this study. The degree of employee contentment in their professional lives is contingent upon the level of empowerment and accuracy that a job scope provides. Job design has the potential to enhance psychological health among employed individuals by increasing job satisfaction, according to Liu et al. [21]. According to Van den Broeck & Parker [30], the Herzberg Theory of Job Design demonstrates that employees form a highly positive affiliation and connection with the organization when management understands their needs. When management establishes effective job design policies that facilitate the development of skills, establish clear job roles and responsibilities, and promote work-life balance initiatives, employees perceive that their workload and job design are reasonable and supportive. Consequently, they are more likely to cultivate a robust sense of OI [25].

2) Communication and Team Building (CTB)

McEwan et al. [22], elucidated that seamless communication within team-building activities and team operations enhances the competitiveness and competency of the group to perform their tasks and reach goals. Group maintenance and locomotion say that communication is an essential part of both team building and maintaining team bonding motions. This means that communication and team building are inextricably linked. Upper management's continuous support, understanding, and motivation can explain CTB and enhance engagement. Brown [7], posits that the level of engagement among organizational members in the strategy-making process and the operational strategies influences the outcomes of OI. This assumption is due to the fact that OI heavily depends on the interconnected efforts of employees and the interactions within the organization to guarantee the successful execution of operations and the attainment of organizational objectives. A positive correlation between communication and team building further enhances an organization's capacity to generate productive employees who are eager to enhance the organization's status and condition [27],[29].
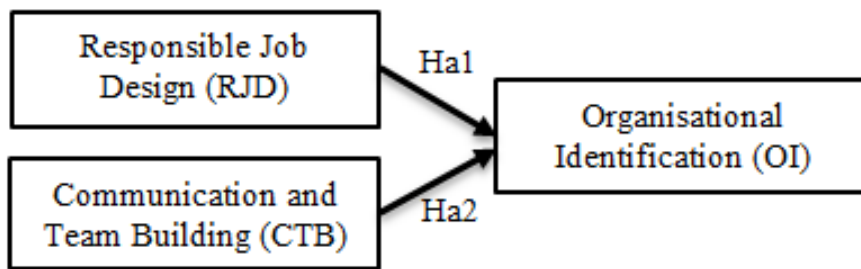
Figure1. Conceptual Framework

As such, the following hypotheses statements were developed,

Ha1 – There is a significant relationship between RJD and OI

Ha2 – There is a significant relationship between CTB and OI

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design that involved academic personnel from one of Malaysia's public universities. The participants were selected from three primary disciplines: science and technology, social science and the humanities, and business and management. The sampling frame consists of 4,573 academicians, according to Krejcie and Morgan's [19] table, which determined the sample size for the study to be 354 respondents [9]. The self-administered online survey questionnaires were distributed using a systematic random sampling technique. The survey questions were adapted from a past study, specifically Sánchez-Hernández et al. [24], which focused on organizational identification (four items), responsible job design (eight items), and communication and team building (11 items). The levels of agreement were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, which ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), and data were analysed using multiple regression analysis.

RESULT

The research has obtained 245 participants, with a response rate of 69% recorded. 22.4% of male respondents and 77.6% of female respondents participated in the study. The majority of the respondents were PhD holders (69.4%) from science and technology fields (45.3%), senior lecturers (53.9%), and had 11 to 15 years of working experience (27.3%). As for the compensation range, the majority of respondents receive a salary within the range of RM7,000.00 to RM9,999.00 (41.6%). The mean scores for the research variables ranged from 3.55 to 4.29: organizational identification (4.29), communication and team building (3.55), and responsible job design (3.86). The study recorded the standard deviation values within the range of 0.658 to 0.707, indicating that the variable point values are generally close to the mean. For all three research variables, the Cronbach alpha value is between 0.918 and 0.937. This means that the instrument was reliable (OI = 0.918, RJD = 0.927, and CTB = 0.937). The correlation values for all variables were less than 0.85, which implies that unidimensionality is present [1]. Subsequently, all items utilized in this study are valid and reliable.

The skewness value, within the range of ±2, and kurtosis values fall within the range of ±7.0 indicates a normal distribution [8]; OI (skewness = -0.836 and kurtosis = 0.521), RJD (skewness = -0.367, and kurtosis = -0.248) and CTB (skewness = -0.018 and kurtosis = -0.122), respectively. The data is normal, as indicated by the normality tests, and hypothesis testing is permissible. The multicollinearity issue was identified by evaluating two critical statistics: tolerance and VIF (variance inflation factor)[12]. The VIF values are less than 10, and the tolerance values for all variables are greater than 0.20, as indicated by the results. This finding refutes the assumptions of multicollinearity. The regression results indicate a significant relationship between OI and RJD-Responsible Job Design (β = 0.636, t = 8.927, p = 0.000), thus, Ha1 accepted. The study also indicated that the relationship between OI and CTB (communication and team building) is insignificant (β = 0.088, t = 1.23, p = 0.219); Ha2 rejected. Independent variables account for 49.9% of the variance (r^2 = 0.499) in OI, while factors not included in this study account for the remaining 50.1%.

Table 1: Multiple Regression Results

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Responsible Job Design	0.636	8.927	0.000	0.408	2.453
Communication and Team Building	0.088	1.233	0.219	0.408	2.453
R_2	: 0.499				
Adjusted R_2	: 0.495				
F Change	: 120.393				
Sig	: 0.000				

Dependent variable: Organisational Identification

DISCUSSION, LIMITATION AND SUGGESTION

OI is the degree to which a member identifies themselves according to the same characteristics that they perceive as designating an organization. To accomplish this objective, the mean value was observed. The results indicate a high perceived level of OI achieved among academic personnel (mean = 4.29). The previous study [4], corroborated this finding. The research reveals that the most frequently observed behaviors include "feeling of pride for belonging to the organization" (mean = 4.42), "feeling of strong sense of integration into the organization" (mean = 4.29), a sense of "in accordance with the service that the organization provides to the clients" (mean = 4.24), and "fully identify with the mission, vision, and values of the organization" (mean = 4.23).

As a result of the research, more useful conclusions can be drawn that will help organizations choose the best human resource and ICSR investments to boost employee alignment, engagement, and unity. This study addresses the need for further examination into the relationship between ICSR and OI. There was a statistically significant, positive, and moderately strong association between RJD and OI. According to Daniels et al. [10], job design has the potential to improve individuals' psychological well-being. Therefore, the current study suggests that the design of a job significantly influences the satisfaction and overall mental health of employees within the organization. Additionally, autonomy in the workplace refers to the extent of discretion, independence, and freedom that a position provides in terms of task execution methods, decision-making, and scheduling. Consequently, the degree of OI will increase in proportion to the quality of the task design [24]. Van den Broeck and Parker [30], assert that well-defined duties, equitable compensation, and favorable working conditions lead to superior performance. Employees firmly support and defend the organization because of the intense sense of affiliation and connection this positive work environment fosters.

Consequently, it is crucial to carefully design jobs to enhance employee attitudes, well-being, and performance. This is because a well-crafted job design can resolve various issues that can impede work effectiveness. In particular, effective job design can mitigate job stress and exhaustion by guaranteeing reasonable workloads, sufficient resources, and demand management, thereby preventing employees from being over-pressured. Additionally, RJD can improve intrinsic motivation by integrating autonomy, task significance, skill variety, and identity into roles, providing employees with a sense of meaning and impact in their work. Additionally, RJD enhances job satisfaction by reducing the number of repetitive, mundane tasks and fostering opportunities to apply creativity. Employees derive greater satisfaction from tasks that are diverse and demanding, as they are able to completely apply their abilities and talents. This reinforces OI by satisfying growth requirements and aligning with one's self-image. Thus, carefully planning job duties and characteristics using positive design principles can lower the chances of being dissatisfied and raise the motivating, learning, and satisfying parts of work. Such an approach will unlock greater employee potential and performance without necessarily increasing costs [25].

The study also suggests the importance of communication and team building (CTB), despite the fact that it is not significantly associated with organizational identification. CTB is essential in public institutions [14], as it affects the capacity of public managers to engage employees and achieve objectives [2]. CTB is particularly important in public sector organizations such as government agencies and universities, which must coordinate large numbers of employees, have complex bureaucratic structures, with diverse stakeholders. Investing in

CTB can enhance alignment and performance, as internal communication is a critical factor in organizational success. The correlation between organizational success and robust internal communication practices is well-established. This phenomenon occurs because communication allows managers monitor and establish alignment to engage employees around objectives. Adequate information about decisions, changes, and priorities enables employees to coordinate more efficiently. The advantages of team building and internal communication are evident, regardless of whether the connection to identification was specifically noted. Organizations should continue to invest in CTB as a sensible management practice [27],[29].

This research used instruments from Sánchez-Hernández [24], which are valid and reliable, and the Likert scale to gauge respondents' degrees of agreement. Quantitative research is an ideal method for evaluating the opinions, attitudes, and practices of a large population, testing hypotheses, and establishing cause-and-effect relationships [23]. According to the reliability and validity results, the instruments used are valid and reliable, with Cronbach values between 0.8 and 0.9. The study exclusively examines OI, RJD, and CTB as variables. The results would be less persuasive due to the researchers' restriction to limited variables. The results draw this conclusion clear: they show that parts of ICSR, especially RJD and CTB, explain 49.9% of the differences in OI. The finding suggests that there is a potential for other factors, in addition to RJD and CTB, to impact OI. Future research should investigate a broader range of indicators when evaluating OI, including values, culture, and organizational policies. Furthermore, the absence of sufficient variables in research can restrict the analysis's scope and result in findings.

This study focuses on the public university as the educational hub that is responsible and accountable for providing world-class education services to customers and expedites access to higher education. Furthermore, the study emphasizes academic staff from a single public university's perceptions of the research variables that limit its generalizability [24]. To increase the generalizability of the study, future research can be expanded to diverse cultural and industry contexts. The potential for bias in data collection and the limited capacity to convey complex human experience are among the weaknesses of quantitative research [23]. Face-to-face interviews are considered an effective method for gathering precise data. A face-to-face interview allows for a more thorough understanding of the RJD, CTB, and OI from their perspective. This approach is feasible because online meetings such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet are available.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the main goal of this study is to examine on how ICSR affects the OI of academic staff. The ICSR elements consist of RJD and CTB. The instruments were valid and reliable, and data were normally distributed. This study indicates that there is a significant relationship between OI and RJD; however, the relationship between OI and CTB is insignificant. The study suggests that equal opportunity for career growth, equitable pay with adequate recognition, and autonomy have a substantial impact on employees' sense of pride and belonging to an organization.

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