

# Corporate Social Responsibility in Driving Environmental Sustainability Performance

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## Abstract

*Demand for environmental sustainability reminds organization or business to restrategize to achieve competitive advantage in the dynamic global environment. Importantly, building Environmental Sustainability Performance (ESP) directs organizations to design Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as an effective environmental strategy in handling the negative effect on the environment because of the impact of organization or industry operation. This study has the objective to identify how CRS drives ESP in the current dynamic environment. This study was conducted by adopting the literature review method. Furthermore, the result of the study found that environmental sustainability policies are compulsory for organization to obtain the highest ESP. Organization or business can empower CRS by allocating the internal and external construct. The findings direct organizations or businesses to design and practice CSR as a strategy for the highest achievement of ESP.*

*Keywords:* Social corporate responsibility; Environmental sustainability performance; Environmental strategy

## 1. Introduction

The endorsement of organization or business responsible for environmental sustainability has become one of the important agendas and points of the academic converse and reference in the 21st century. It challenges to the status quo directed at joint green initiatives and environmentally friendly innovations to mitigate the effects of environmental damage (Atiku, 2019). For instance, the main problem of manufacturing companies is the hazard impact or risk to the environment and industry. This problem includes unstable climate change, emissions of air, industrial waste, depletion or diminishing natural resources, increased pollution of water and air, dilution of natural resources, and also because of the utilization of hazardous substances (Kraus et al., 2020; Haldorai et al., 2022). Absolutely, green aspect in the organization or business is an approach to turning down pollution by the industrial, till indemnifying the pollution of the environment (Atiku, 2019).

The environment has been proven to be the main obstacle in efforts to maintain economic growth in the future. Thus, environmental sustainability has become an issue at the center of public discussion and discussion in both developed and developing countries. Business organizations draw important inputs which are products or assets from the natural environment, the continuity of the business is very dependent on how the organization or company responds to and treats the natural environment (Ren et al., 2018). Therefore, as mentioned by Mishra and Suar (2010), there appears to be great pressure from regulatory agencies on organizations, so organizations inevitably have to comply with environmental standards and apply the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) to improve environmental sustainability.

The condition is that organizations are forced to adopt or implement environmental standards that have been designed such as ISO 14000, 14001, 14006, and OHSAS18000, and in the end, they are forced to take proactive actions to reduce hazards and pollution to the environment.

It should be noted that demands for environmentally sustainable construction are promoting organization or business to the adoption of environmental sustainability concept to reduce the negative impact on internal and external users. It calls for organization or business to restrategize resources toward environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability policies are considered necessary in assisting the construction of organization or business to solve constraints (Ajibike et al. 2021). Future green performance appraisal research is also required to concentrate on important issues, for example, cases or incidents of the environment, responsibility to the environment, communication policy for the environment, the system of green information, and involvement audits for the environment. The manager by the responsible function must focus on performance and fulfill immediate and necessary feedback. Implementation of these actions should be carried out throughout the year, and not just during the period of performance appraisal (Ahmad, 2015). Indeed, with the highest authority, top management can disseminate green environmental practices or activities by practicing an environmental technique concentrated at the whole stage. For instance, Business giants, Ford, Pepsico, etc. have handed in sustainability efforts and these companies have integrated design principles of environmentally friendly buildings for buildings of their organization. Meanwhile, companies such as Fortune 1000 have implemented sustainability policies for all their companies. They have improved the requirement for the concept of workspace in achieving green or sustainable buildings. While, for other cases, although support of leadership is a crucial aspect, stakeholders of organizations around the world tend to be concerned about top management's views on the matter. However, in the end, all these representatives must agree and support the organization through top management (Mishra, 2017).

Currently, organizations or businesses are increasingly realizing the benefit of some essential components such as social and ethical aspects, by including the ecological objective. In addition to these, there are also other benefits gained besides financial gains i.e. organizations push to the new objective, concentrate on individual, communal, and friendly for leading environmental performance and development. In this term, sustainable development goals can be developed by adapting the new ecological approach integrated with innovative sustainable strategies (Chams and García-Blandón, 2019). In the setting of contemporary industry, organization deal with direct and indirect pressure such as from intrinsic and extrinsic environment involving competitive entities and limitation of resources that hinder continuity and sustainability. CSR enables organization or business to produce the pressures charged by these environmental attributes (Li et al. 2022).

Yasin et al. (2023) emphasized that corporate social sustainability is a branding that refers to important ecological, business, and strategic consequences that provide insight into how green innovation affects the sustainability of a company. At the same time, another important consequence is that organizations can fulfill social responsibilities and meet business goals (Zhang et al., 2020). More efficient management of energy and natural resources can lead to increased productivity and profitability. Therefore, CSR generates a culture of innovation that is obtained through encouragement from various components such as social aspect, environmental aspects, and sustainability since it will build models for new businesses, products and also services, or processes, thereby increasing productivity

and enterprise-level supply chains, so that the benefits obtained will spread broadly towards various communities (Padilla-Lozano and Collazzo, 2022).

However, organizations or businesses pay little concern to the beliefs and norms regarding the environment for addressing the issue or problem in the environment (Song et al., 2021). As stated by Kraus et al. (2020) that environmental degradation has become a serious problem in the world today. Several decades ago, practitioners of industry, policymakers, academics, and entrepreneurs lacked concern for environmental problems. There is a thought from the organization or business that their products do not have much negative impact on the environment. For instance, Al Kerdawy (2019) emphasized in his study that Egypt needs to work harder in an effort to develop a sustainable environment with the main goal of improving human and environmental welfare. Moreover, although many companies in Egyptian have now been able to broaden their understanding of the traditional concept of CSR that includes labor performance, human rights, and the environment among other aspects, it appears that the nature of their portfolio of society involvement in the concept has not changed. Thus, the Egyptian state has not been able to shift from an approach of charitable or philanthropic community involvement to the CSR approach adopted in the modern era. However, Ajibike et al. (2023) asserted that the adoption of social responsibility by corporate is crucial for the foundation of organization's environmental sustainability as it produces a resource for competitive edge in developing project delivery. As a consequence, sustainable environmental development through the preservation and protection of nature is an activity that embodies CSR activities, namely through the preservation and protection of nature (Mishra and Suar, 2010).

Meanwhile, CRS has been revealed by scholars as the effective environmental strategy influencing the sustainability performance of organization (e.g. Asiaei et al., 2021; Karácsony, 2019; Li et al., 2022; Herbohn et al., 2014; Zhao et al., 2021; Huang et al. 2024; Orlitzky et al., 2011). Despite these empirical findings, limited studies have explored the effect of CRS and sustainability performance in the context of environmental concept. Therefore, this study intends to fill this gap by investigating CSR in driving ESP as an environmental strategy for protecting and maintaining environmental sustainability in the current global environment by allocating resources related to internal and external pressures.

## 2. Literature Review

### *Concept of Environmental Sustainability Performance*

Environmental sustainability acts as a part of sustainable development that is a coalition of the economic, social and environmental predictor of development. The environment is a crucial stakeholder for organization, worker, investor, user/client, and society due to their dependence on the environment (Brundtland, 1985). The global environment is a trigger for environmental problems and pressures that make business organizations aware of and prioritize various activities or efforts to manage their environment, especially the environment in which the company operates. As a result, organizations with limitations try to anticipate being under constant encouragement and pressure to pay more attention to acting green by adopting these green concepts in green policies and practices (Ren et al., 2018).

To implement the long term strategy, environmental sustainability comes with a green concept to achieve the highest performance to protect and maintain environmental sustainability. In other words, when an organization adopts the concept of green practices, the organization can achieve sustainability in developing environment. It is often referred to as ESP, which helps organizations achieve competitive advantage. According to Ajibike et al. (2023), ESP was verified using pollution control, conservation of energy, protection of biodiversity, minimization of waste and etc. Therefore, the objective of the organization or business by empowering a sustainable program is to 'green' the product to minimize the negative effect for a conducive environment because of the company's productivity. Today, organization attempts to reduce and prevent the problem of environmental pollution, through the concept of green practice, for example, i.e. green innovation, green production, green marketing, and green management (Saeed et al., 2019).

For instance, Padilla-Lozano and Collazo (2022) mentioned that there has been a large and drastic increase by various organizations in the world in recent years, i.e. in adopting the green building concept. It can be found several attributes of green buildings include green practices, for instance, the efficiency of energy, renewable energy, and management of rainwater. However, these activities require a corporation, that is a pioneer in innovation that demands higher prices or costs for these environmentally friendly products, improves the company's reputation, and markets its technology or environmental services better, and in the end, it will develop new potential markets to gain a competitive advantage. Another example, Idea Rebel, for activity related to payment stubs is sent by email to the employees, and all the notes are done on tablets, and using whiteboard devices. Thus, a piece of paper is permitted for designers, but they need to bring the paper to their home when it is at the end of each day of office hour. Lastly, an effort to reduce the use of paper will lead to automatically saving limited natural resources, and then, it prevents danger by the pollution, and then, minimize for using water and energy wastage (Ahmad, 2015).

Furthermore, standardized environmental performance data can be assessed and then used for conducting audits and assessing the successful practices of environment of the organization (Yusliza et al., 2019). Therefore, organizations around the world need to make drastic changes in business processes which ultimately lead organizations to invest more in green initiatives, especially in innovative environmentally friendly products and services for environmental sustainability and customer welfare (Atiku, 2019).

### ***Concept of Social Corporate Responsibility***

CSR strategies lead to action and decision-making encouraging to maintain and adopt CSR performance in their organizations. In the context of CSR (Úbeda-García et al., 2022). Therefore, Ajibike et al. (2023) claimed that organization have to provide information related to social responsibility by reporting their events of CSR to community and acting following the theory of legitimacy to stay contentious and continue for operating in the marketplace. Organization need to make themselves responsible to the public in their operational zone. A study by Haldorai et al. (2022) in Spain found 3 aspects or dimensions of CSR i.e. the dimension of the social, dimension of economic, and the dimension of environmental significantly improve the performance of the economy by micro, small, and medium enterprises as the construct of ESP.

However, the facts showed most managers misuse resources of the organization for conducting activities that are not based on business ethics under the pretext or guise of being a CSR practice as opposed to focusing on projects for welfare that provide benefit to

the society (Mbanyele et al., 2022). In another case, the data revealed that during 2007-2010, the concept of CSR in several organization showed instability. Indeed, this is the effect of confusion or misunderstanding among managers on the major meaning of the implementation of CSR. For example, in cases of Muslim countries, managers look that the concepts of deed and CSR are the same thing or there is no difference between the two concepts. This is bearing in mind that in the culture of Muslims, charity is voluntary work. They assumed that 'God will bless their work'. A specific example is Egypt, the first reason, CSR is established in a very complicated environment because religion is attached as the center of the society's cultural aspects. The second reason is possible due to the economic and social challenges. Egypt is suffering from such as; poverty alleviation, provision of health services, infrastructure development, and education. Thus, Egypt needs to work harder in an effort to develop a sustainable environment with the main goal of improving human and environmental welfare. Currently, many organizations in Egypt have been able to broaden their understanding of the traditional concept of CSR i.e. labor performance, human rights, and the environment among other aspects, it appears that the nature of their portfolio of society involvement in the concept of CSR has not changed. Thus, the Egyptian state has not been able to shift from an approach of charitable or philanthropic community involvement to the CSR approach adopted in modern times (Al Kerdawy, 2019).

Therefore, as revealed in a study by Hang et al. (2022), the concept of CSR in developing countries is adopted as a fundamental means or method for developing proper progress by making innovation for the organization (i.e. innovation in terms of green product) as a part of the ecosystem of business or enterprise (Farooq et al., 2022). However, a company's green organizational capital not only can be utilized to enhance relational capital but also enhance its effectiveness. Therefore, it leads companies to achieve the highest advantage by utilizing their external relations more effectively (Jirakraisiri et al., 2021). Many CSR projects can be performed by the organization in practicing CSR to promote and build trust and also develop responsibility to society. For instance, a deeply rooted eco-friendly approach is very important when organization conducts recruitment and selection for job applicant candidates. Some of the results of research applying the interview in the UK found evidence that organizations or companies with good reputations in Environmental Management (EM) will employ the best staff who are committed to the concept of green behavior. Apart from pro-environmental activities, employees who have been involved in the company must also be involved and show willingness or commitment to EM programs and activities (Cheema, and Javed, 2017).

Furthermore, the main effect of implementation in the differentiation of the CSR concept can strengthen reliability in the field of technology companies where so far it has required to seek various innovative components and knowledge, and in the end, to identify the influence on exploratory green innovation has been limited or constrained (Wan et al., 2023). However, there is still a lack of empirical study as further examination of the link between the performance of CSR on significant externalities for creating innovation in terms of environment (Mbanyele et al., 2022). Indeed, as revealed in the study by Hang, et al. (2020), in developing countries, the concept of CSR is adopted as a fundamental means or method for developing proper progress by making innovation for the organization (i.e. innovation in terms of green product) as a part of the ecosystem of business or enterprise (Farooq et al., 2022). Therefore, organization's green organizational capital not only can be utilized to enhance relational capital but also enhance its effectiveness. It leads organization to achieve the highest advantage by utilizing their external relations more effectively (Jirakraisiri et al.,

2021).

### ***Corporate Social Responsibility In Driving Environmental Sustainability Performance***

Incremental changes in business processes lead to investment in green initiative businesses, and innovative environmentally friendly products or services that are urgently needed with the main motive being environmental sustainability and customer welfare (Atiku, 2019). Green initiatives are needed to help suppliers understand the standards and requirements of organizations on the environment and they can ultimately present products of environmentally friendly. For example, the business of a hotel can perform an audit of the environment to assess the extent to which a supplier's green practices can meet environmental objectives for a company specifically in the hospitality sector. Likewise, organizations or companies should be able to maintain close relationships with their customers on an intentional and regular basis to communicate the environmentally friendly products/services that they have produced and also seek feedback on the organization's environmental strategies and objectives (Haldorai et al., 2022).

Further, in the context of the environment, the sustainable performance of a company or business organization can only be obtained if the organization carries out organizational processes, functions, or operations so that in the end the business or organization's activities can participate in the environment, i.e. by not damaging environmental quality or the health of its customers. Then, it is necessary to continue to carry out better social interactions by the whole parties i.e. stakeholders such as suppliers, consumers, the public or society, and authorities (Zhao et al., 2022). Research findings have shown that top management's concern is what determines the successful adoption of the CSR concept. When the commitment of top management to the environment is less or minimal, it will cause the failure of the environmental efforts that have been guarded so far. Such efforts lead to unhealthy or very poor environmental performance. Besides, when referring to the GHRM concept, several activities can be carried out i.e. individual improvement activities, and organization pro for the environment. Specifically, given the important role of employees as individuals in organizations, it is necessary to adopt a special program for the environment of the employee (Sabokro et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the research findings by Shahzad et al. (2020) showed that activities or programs directed at activities CSR on green innovation need to be embedded in environmental strategy, where all the dimensions of CSR have a significant impact on the development of environmental sustainability. While previous study by Zhao et al. (2021) found a high impact on the relationship between CSR and sustainability on the environment. Thereby, the need of stakeholders and environmental commitments are met when there is a concern on conserving and protecting natural resources. Importantly, organizations need to meet green aspects and social responsibility to fulfill the sustainability for operations and performance of an organization. Empirical evidence by Li et al. (2022) investigated corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability in achieving sustainable performance of organization. The result indicates the significant relationship between CSR and sustainable environmental performance.

Currently, Ajibike et al. (2023) examined the impacts of social responsibility on the environmental sustainability performance of the Malaysian construction industry. The finding revealed the importance of organizations' engagement in the CSR concept in minimizing the effect of organization activities on the environment. The finding also revealed that organization construction is still obliged to be socially responsible by investing

in environmental and activities of social responsibility. Lastly, the study revealed that coercive pressure transfers a positive effect as a mediator in the relationship between social responsibility and environmental sustainability performance. By introducing coercive pressure as a mediating, it will direct to understand how the attitude of manager influences environmental sustainability performance.

Finally, this study found that there are some internal and external constructs for the success of practicing CSR in achieving the highest ESP (see Table 1). These constructs need to be managed effectively when organization endeavors to flourish CSR in anticipating constraints to develop trust from public that influence the performance of organization through environmental strategy.

Indeed CSR and the concept of sustainability are trending issues in the business world that drive organizational change worldwide toward social awareness, thereby contributing to social aspects and environmental welfare. CSR directs organizations to gain the benefit of economic activities in the social form and environmental support, and it is sensitive to CSR implementation (Hang et al., 2022).

### **3. Results**

The results of the study indicate that environmental sustainability policies are considered necessary to be bolstered to assist comprehensive construction through CSR in conquering the inherent constraints. Thereby, CSR can be empowered by allocating resources related to the internal and external pressures (Ajibike et al., 2021). This study found some external and internal constructs reinforce in adopting CSR. Firstly, related to the internal construct i.e. organization culture, managerial attitudes, green innovation, market and cost performance, information technology, sustainable innovation, corporate social capital, interplant coordination product and export performance, green human resource management and commitment. Second, related to the external construct i.e. coercive pressure, political ties and stakeholder.

**Table 1:** Internal and external construct for reinforcing CSR to drive ESP

Authors/ Year	Coercive Pressure	Organizatio n Culture, Managerial Attitudes	Green Innovation	Market Performance and Cost Performance	Political Ties and Information Technolog y	Sustainable Innovation	Corporate Social Capital	Interplant Coordinatio n	Product and Export Performance	Green Human Resource Managmen t	Commitme nt and Stakeholder
Ajibike et al. (2023)											
Ajibike et al. (2021)											
Shahzad et al. (2020)											
Suganthi (2020)											
Xu et al. (2023)											
Bacinello et al. (2020)											
Liu et al. (2021)											
Li et al. (2022)											
Ullah et al. (2021)											
Sabokro et al. (2021)											
Wen et al. (2022)											
Yasin et al. (2022)											
Zhou et al. (2023)											
Sabokro et al. (2021)											
Zhao et al. (2021)											

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2024

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Managing effectively constructs of CSR will establish the organization to the strategy on environmental performance that helps the organization's sustainability through friendly circles or ecological efforts and environmental performance improvement. This study also suggested that in achieving the ESP by practicing CSR, there is a need for mediators and moderators that can reinforce the impact of environmental strategy. The investment and persistent efforts made by the organization will present business benefits for the company and at the same time fulfill social responsibility through the concept of CSR (Zhang et al., 2020). When an organization or company invests in improving environmental management, it is especially important for gaining a good image or reputation among the stakeholders because this will demand and pressure the company to adopt a green concept in all processes, products, and/or services. By integrating the construct of CSR, it will lead organization to the highest ESP. Therefore, the concept of CSR is to encourage organization to contribute to increasing green capabilities with a sense of comfort by adopting a supportive environment and providing opportunities to realize the green potential that helps organization to be sustainably relevant. and competitive in the market (Singh et al (2020).

This study has implications that will encourage organizations to develop the concepts of CSR to establish ESP as the strategy for achieving competitive advantage. In addition, this study provides a new contribution to the field of environmental strategy that can be used in creating new practices of CSR to anticipate environmental constraints to ensure the sustainability of organizations. Most importantly, the study develops constructs that assist the next researchers and practitioners in performing their responsibility through environmental strategy. Furthermore, the findings direct organizations or businesses to design and practice CSR as the strategy in current organization or business activities to the highest achievement of ESP by empowering a sustainable project of CSR. Therefore, this study proposes for the practitioners of industry and environmental policymakers, academics, and entrepreneurs the importance of the role of CSR on ESP under the internal and external constructs. However, this study also has a limitation since it only examines the issue in the context of the literature review, then there is a need for future investigation to extend to empirical studies on the issue discussed.

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