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## MODEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MICRO FOUNDATIONS OF CSR IN CZECH BREWERY

**Keywords:** employee social responsibility, corporate social responsibility, model, Czech company.

**J E L Classification:** M14, D91.

**Abstract:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a term that is being defined very diversely. The goal of this research is to show how corporate social responsibility (CSR) is actually implemented and managed in business practice by the Czech brewery. The special emphasis is placed on employees, because they are the key to the company. The method chosen for the research is the micro-level analysis of employee perceptions, reactions, and attitudes towards the company's CSR together with their determinants. The Model of psychological micro-foundations of CSR is used and, furthermore, the level of administrative employee CSR engagement in the CSR of a Czech brewing company is analyzed. The results show the determinants of this engagement or disengagement, the respondents' perceptions and evaluation of the company's CSR and finally, what are the outcomes of their reactions to the CSR of the company.

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## ■■■ INTRODUCTION

The Dictionary of CSR (Idowu, Capaldi, Fifka, Zu & Schmidtpeter, 2015) defines the term as a way of a company's self-regulation and monitoring of its activities so that they are legal, comply with ethical standards and international norms. The objective of CSR is to make a positive impact on all the stakeholders (Velinov, 2017; Murawski, 2018; Glonti, Trynychuk, Khovrak, Mokhonko, Shkrobot & Manvelidze, 2020). In summary, it is how companies balance environmental, social, and economic aspects while being accountable and transparent, creating wealth and improving society (Činčalová & Hedija, 2020). The definition also stresses the deep connection to the concept of sustainable development with its three components: economic, social, and environmental protection. Sustainable development is then understood as satisfying the needs of a firm's stakeholders without compromising its ability also to meet the needs of its future stakeholders (Idowu et al., 2015). Golinska-Dawson and Spychała (2019) link SD and CSR through the same focus on three problematic areas: ecology, economy and society, and point out the ISO 26000 standard as a helpful tool in the implementation of the idea of SD into the company's activities. This standard defines CSR as the inclusion of social and environmental aspects into the decision making and taking responsibility for these decisions while respecting the law (Golinska-Dawson & Spychała, 2019). In their later study, Idowu and Vertigans (2017) define CSR as voluntary company activities that demonstrate the inclusion of social and environmental issues in business operations and interactions with stakeholders.

In the quest for a universal CSR definition, Zu (2009) concludes that researchers should abandon the desire for the so-called "one definition fits all" as CSR definition should always fit the awareness, development and ambition levels of particular organizations. However, Zu (2009) argues that if CSR means different things to different people, there arises confusion in the debate on strategy formulation and stakeholder management. On the other hand, Zu (2009), after analyzing 37 definitions of CSR, identified five fundamental dimensions present in all of them that may provide a universally accepted definition. The five dimensions are the environmental, social, economic, stakeholder dimension, and voluntariness. Logossah, Hervieux and M'Zall (2015) agree with this view by saying that even though there is a high diversity of CSR definitions, all of them keep the same core idea and remain complementary.

The goal of this research is to show how corporate social responsibility (CSR) is actually implemented and managed in business practice by the Czech brewery. In this paper, the authors will concentrate mainly on the social dimension of CSR and only one group of stakeholders – the employees, following the objective of our study. However, the authors analyze the overall level of the company's CSR, employee perceptions of all the CSR activities of the chosen company and as the voluntariness plays a significant role in the employee CSR perceptions and affects subsequent employee CSR engagement (Hejjas, Miller & Scarles, 2019), all the five dimensions of the Dalshrud's definition will be covered.

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Idowu et al. (2015) state that nowadays, more and more employees consider the CSR activities of companies when choosing their employer. A study cited by Wilhelm (2015) conducted in 2012 by Net Impact showed that millennials already expected sustainability from the company, and for 88%, it was one of their criteria when choosing their future employer. Moreover, 58% of the student population would agree on a 15% pay cut to work for a company with which they would share the same values. Another poll in the USA showed that 78% of respondents significantly preferred to work for a company with a good image, notwithstanding lower wage (Pavlík & Bělčík, 2010). In the study conducted by Haski-Leventhal (2018) with business students in 2015, it was already 90% of respondents.

All the information mentioned above lead to the umbrella concept of employee engagement. Wilhelm (2015) defines employee engagement through three primary manifestations. Employees are engaged when they:

- have their values and goals in alignment with the company's mission,
- are emotionally committed to the company and their job,
- feel motivated to pursue organizational success.

Haski-Leventhal (2018) adds that no company can achieve its goals without engaged employees and that this issue is becoming crucial for firms as they face declining levels of employee engagement. She describes it as “a growth strategy for driving performance and building a competitive advantage” (Haski-Leventhal, 2018, p. 189). Her definition of employee engagement says that it is the emotional attachment of an employee to an organization and its people beyond their formalized role in the company (Haski-Leventhal, 2018). Gupta (2017) de-

scribed engagement not only as an emotional but also physical and cognitive attachment. The author provides a different definition by adding concepts such as involvement, satisfaction and enthusiasm for work. In this research, it would be worked with the definition provided by Wilhelm (2015); however, the authors will also study the phenomena named by other authors as they form part of the micro-level models that are to be used.

The research conducted by Gupta (2017) proves the positive link of employee engagement to organizational commitment and identification through CSR. The work of Turner (2020) on employee engagement suggests that there is even a two-way link between the level of engagement of employees and corporate social responsibility.

The research of Idowu and Vertigans (2017) proves that the companies which engage more in CSR activities attract skilled employees, which in return have a better perception of the company and are more loyal to the company. Kim, Song and Lee (2016) agree as their study showed a positive relationship between not only good employee perceptions of CSR and their organizational commitment but also a negative correlation with their turnover intention. Zu (2009) concluded their research by implication that the firms that involve CSR activities benefit from increased employee morale in general. All these studies support the argument of Haski-Leventhal (2018) that employee-pampering works only in the short term, but a purpose-driven, socially responsible company that the employees are proud to work for is the recipe for job satisfaction in the long run.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PROCESS**

The CSR research conducted until today has been predominantly the macro-level one, concentrating on institutional or organizational issues. The rising calls for micro-level research highlight the importance of understanding employee CSR engagement because, as stated by Hejjas et al. (2019), it is the employees who carry the burden of responsibility for implementing CSR and the positive results of doing so depend on their willingness to collaborate.

Hejjas et al. (2019) present another two reasons for the individual level of analysis of employee CSR engagement. Firstly, it recognizes existing differences amongst employees who used to be perceived as a homogenous stakeholder group. These differences can stem from divergent values and interests or ac-

ceptance levels, interpretation, and operationalization of the term CSR. Hejjas et al. (2019) propose that not only drivers for employee engagement can vary, but also the degree to which they support CSR of their organization can be different. Consequently, CSR programs should be tailored considering individual differences between employees (El Akremi, Gond, Swaen, De Roeck & Igalenset, 2018).

Secondly, they see an opportunity to examine also the “dark side of CSR” by studying the opposite of employee engagement. Some suggest that it is non-engagement or burnout (Hejjas et al., 2019). The term disengagement used by Hejjas et al. (2019) will be adopted as the simplest term. By adding this focus, the authors can contribute to the existing research by exploring the potential unintended negative effects of CSR. Nevertheless, stress out that it is necessary to search for causes as there is not enough information about the antecedents of disengagement because the analysis has been focusing mainly on its symptoms.

The limited number of individual-level studies already identified the key predictors and mediators of employee CSR engagement, as described in the previous chapter. However, there are still not enough studies on employee assessment and CSR responses (Hejjas et al., 2019). As a result, this work tries to contribute to the existing research by conducting a microanalysis of employee CSR perceptions. The authors try to identify factors that affect individual perceptions of CSR in the given company and drive suggestions for improvement of these perceptions amongst others.

Gond, El Akremi, Swaen and Babu (2017) systematically reviewed and evaluated micro-level CSR research to identify, synthesize and organize individual drivers of CSR engagement, individual processes of CSR evaluations, and individual reactions to CSR. The model (see figure 1) is based on the social identity and organizational identification theories explained before. This way, the authors created a coherent behavioral framework, which will serve us to analyze employee testimonies. The CSR drivers, according to Gond et al. (2017), stem from the recognition that CSR can help satisfy employees’ psychological and developmental needs.

The authors chose a Czech brewing company, one of the most transparent companies on the Czech market when it comes to CSR reporting (Kašparová & Kunz, 2013) and its CSR activities are very diverse, which makes it an interesting enterprise to study. The research question was put up:

RQ: What is the level of administrative employee CSR engagement in the CSR of a Czech brewing company?

Then, three partial questions were asked: What are the determinants of this engagement or disengagement? How do the respondents perceive and evaluate the company's CSR? and What are the outcomes of their reactions to the CSR of the company?

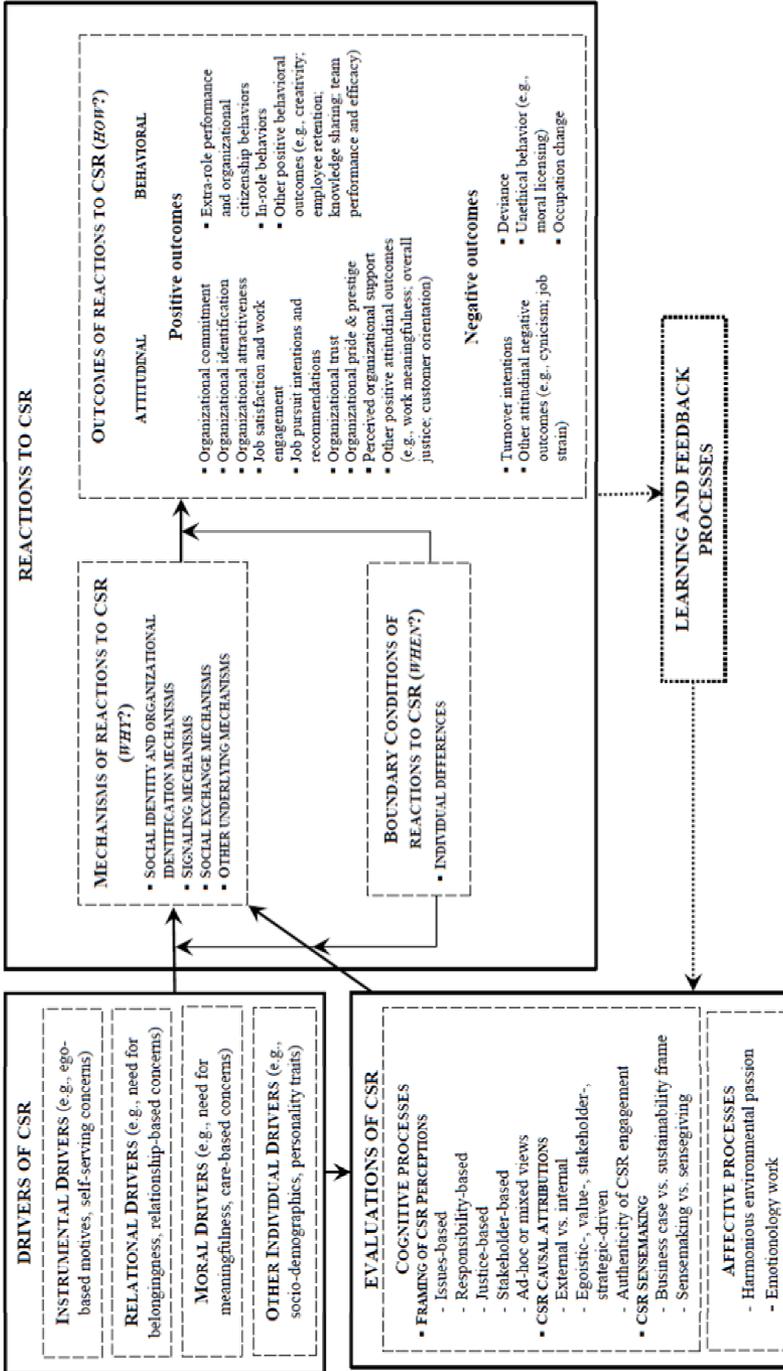
The research questions are tied to the model of micro-foundations of CSR and were answered through the content analysis of the interviewees' answers. The authors covered all three parts of the model by posing and answering three subquestions to this research question. Thirty-two employees responded positively to this e-mail and 13 were interviewed regarding the limited time frame but also their time constraints and function in the organization.

The interviews were conducted between 15/10/2020 and 13/11/2020 via teleconferences due to the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19 during the time of the collection of data. Before the actual interviews, the respondents were e-mailed the topics that were about to be discussed and the explanation of some terms that were to be used. This was supposed to assure mutual understanding, as suggested by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019). The open questions, together with probing questions to seek more in-depth explanations or further information, were used to avoid bias on the part of the interviewer (Saunders et al., 2019). Saunders et al. (2019) also recommend asking sensitive questions at the end of the interview when trust is already gained. Following this recommendation, the questions aimed at self-perceptions and personal values were asked at the end of the interviews. All the interviews were transcribed and qualitatively analyzed with the help of MAXQDA software.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the interviews with the company's employees' transcripts that followed the framework of Gond et al.'s (2017) model of psychological micro-foundations of CSR. The coding system was enriched by the determinants described by Haski-Leventhal, Roza and Meijs (2017) and re-grouped accordingly. In the end, the authors drive a conclusion about the most important CSR engagement determinants, factors influencing CSR perceptions of the respondents, and reactions or outcomes resulting from the described individual processes.

Figure 1. Model of psychological micro-foundations of CSR



Source: Gond et al., 2017.

### CSR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT DETERMINANTS

The most frequent type of determinants based on the responses of the interviewed employees are the relational determinants (figure 2). However, the comparison of the most frequent codes across the documents in figure 3 is made, the authors observe that the relational determinants are prevalent in 6 cases, the internal determinants in 3 cases and the two are comparably significant in 2 cases.

**Figure 2.** Simple frequency of the employee CSR engagement determinants codes

Code System	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	SUM
employee CSR engagement determinants														0
external		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	16
relational	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	36
internal	■	■					■					■	■	27
SUM	4	7	4	8	2	7	9	5	5	7	5	8	8	79

Source: own study.

**Figure 3.** Frequency of the employee CSR engagement determinants codes across documents

Code System	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	SUM
employee CSR engagement determinants														0
external		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	16
relational	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	36
internal	■	■					■			■		■	■	27
SUM	4	7	4	8	2	7	9	5	5	7	5	8	8	79

Source: own study.

When looking at the individual determinants in detail (figure 4), the most important determinant of employee CSR engagement seems to be organizational socialization. The code was chosen for any expression that indicated the need for belongingness or good relationships with colleagues. Respondents often mentioned that they took corporate volunteering as a possibility to spent time with their colleagues or that they wanted to participate to get to know new people within the company. All the respondents talked in some way about nice people in the company, feeling like a family, or a good atmosphere thanks to pleasant people around.

**Figure 4.** Employee CSR engagement determinants codes occurrence

Code System	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	SUM
employee CSR engagement determinants														0
external														0
media										1		1	1	3
social norms						1						1		2
work obligations		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1		11
relational														0
expected behavior				1										1
organizational values						1		1		1	1			7
organizational socialization	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	23
company encouragement			1			1		1					1	5
internal														0
job level of employee	1	1	1	1			1		1	1		1	1	10
socio-demographic and personality	1					1	1					1	1	7
moral		1					1	1		1			1	8
instrumental	1	1												2
<b>Σ SUM</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>79</b>

Source: own study.

The most frequent internal determinant was the job level of employee, which is connected to the high CSR job-related engagement discussed before. The external determinant work obligations mentioned in 10 cases refers to the already discussed workload and consequent time restraints that impede the employees from participating in the CSR activities according to their words. This factor is the most important one within the external determinants.

One more factor that the model of psychological micro-foundations of CSR omits, but was mentioned as crucial by Hejjas et al. (2019) and others, is the role of the supervisors. Therefore, the authors also analyzed how employees and their supervisors interact in connection with the company’s CSR. In figure 5, it could be seen that the most common action taken by the team leaders is the encouragement of the respondents to engage in CSR. The code encouragement usually occurred together with the code communication, which is understandable. In one case, it occurred together with the code ignorance, but in that interview, the respondent compared their previous manager with the actual one. If the respondents did not feel encouraged to take part in CSR activities of their employer by their team leader, they usually felt simple acceptance from their side in case they wanted to participate.

**Figure 5.** Ethical leadership codes occurrence

Code System	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	SUM
ethical leadership														0
acceptance			■	■	■	■								4
ignorance							■	■						3
communication	■								■	■			■	4
encouragement		■						■	■	■		■	■	6
Σ SUM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	17

Source: own study.

On the other hand, when comparing the co-occurrence of the ethical leadership codes and the employee social responsibility (ESR) behaviour codes (figure 6), it could be observed again a high co-occurrence of the codes standing for the encouragement and communication from the side of the managers with job-related CSR tasks. This finding is well represented by the quotation: “If it is important for my role, then we surely talk about it. But if it does not concern my role directly, my manager does not come to me to encourage me to do something more.” (R1, Sales specialist)

**Figure 6.** Co-occurrence of the ESR behaviour and ethical leadership codes

Code System	ethical leadership	acceptance	ignorance	communication	encouragement
ESR behavior					
employee-led CSR				■	■
job-related CSR tasks		■	■	■	■
corporate volunteering		■		■	■

Source: own study.

However, there has also been a slightly higher co-occurrence of the codes found between those standing for the encouragement from the supervisor’s side and the participation in corporate volunteering. The team leader’s encouragement occurred in the transcripts of respondents that participate in corporate volunteering the most when compared to other manager’s actions mentioned during the interviews.

### CSR EVALUATIONS

During the coding process, the authors tried to identify the cognitive and, to some extent also the affective processes when the respondents evaluated CSR of the company. However, respondents did not tend to express their emotions and so the results talking about the affective processes are limited only to few explicit testimonies. On the other hand, the author of the model does not provide a clear methodology to study these processes and admits a lack of research in this field. Consequently, the coding in this part was done fully deductively.

**Figure 7.** Occurrence of the CSR evaluations codes

Code System	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	SUM
evaluation of CSR														0
affective														0
emotionology work	■						■						■	4
harmonious environmental passion			■								■			2
cognitive														0
CSR sensemaking														0
sustainability frame	■		■				■	■	■	■		■		12
business case	■				■					■			■	8
CSR causal attributions														0
authenticity			■			■		■	■	■			■	10
egoistic-driven													■	1
stakeholder-driven	■	■	■		■		■			■			■	10
value-driven				■		■		■				■	■	9
strategic-driven	■				■				■	■				6
framing of CSR perceptions														0
stakeholder-based	■	■	■		■		■						■	10
issues-based	■													1
responsibility-based				■		■		■			■	■		7
Σ SUM	12	2	9	2	5	3	7	7	5	7	2	6	13	80

Source: own study.

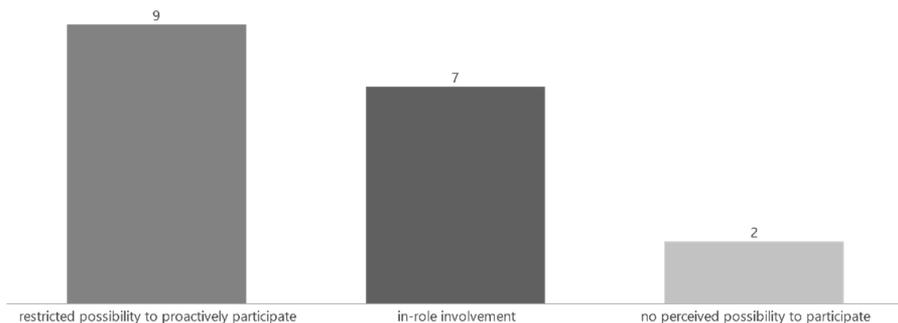
It could be seen in figure 7 that the respondents see the sense of CSR activities in the need for sustainability. However, when some respondents talked about CSR as a business case, they tended to stress this perception repeatedly during the interview. They predominantly framed their CSR perceptions concerning the company stakeholders and explained the whole problematic through the optics of different company stakeholders. Similarly, the majority of the respondents perceived CSR of the company as stakeholder-driven, in other words, responding to the needs and requirements of different stakeholders and seeing stakeholders as the driver behind CSR.

**Figure 8.** Co-occurrence of the CSR causal attributions codes

Code System	CSR causal attributions	authenticity	egoistic-driven	stakeholder-driven	value-driven	strategic-driven
▼ evaluation of CSR						
▼ cognitive						
▼ CSR causal attributions						
authenticity			■	■	■	■
egoistic-driven		■		■	■	
stakeholder-driven		■	■		■	■
value-driven		■	■	■		
strategic-driven		■		■		
Σ SUM	0	9	3	8	5	5

Source: own study.

The code authenticity consequently occurred the most in combination with the codes value-driven and stakeholder-driven (figure 8). These perceptions are well represented by the words of one of the respondents: “There is a little difference between what the company says the values are and reality”. Another quotation shows the authenticity perception along with the stakeholder-based framing of the CSR perceptions: “Even from the consumer’s point of view, I would prefer a company that does less but well instead of greenwashing. I think that our activities are relevant”.

**Figure 9.** Occurrence of the perceived CSR involvement codes

Source: own study.

Lastly, inspired by the recommendation of Pavlík and Bělčík (2010) to involve the employees in the processes connected to CSR as much as possible because it creates positive results such as a sense of belonging, the authors decided to verify whether the employees feel involved in the creation process of the SD strategy or CSR activities. Our respondents' answers were very similar and can be represented as follows: "I think that it depends more on proactivity. The company is an open company, and if somebody wants to participate in something, they can. You just need to know whom to talk to." They felt involved, but only due to tasks directly connected to their job, and when it came to having their word in the process of the SD strategy creation or the creation of new ideas or activities, they felt that they would have to be proactive themselves to get involved (see figure 9). Nevertheless, no perceived encouragement or support to take part in the creation process from the side of the company was mentioned.

### EMPLOYEE REACTIONS TO CSR

The outcomes of the employee CSR perceptions manifested through their reactions were divided into three groups in the code system. The attitudinal and behavioral outcomes embrace all the positive outcomes identified in the responses. The negative outcomes were rare and therefore are not divided into subgroups, but the individual codes were created in vivo.

Only two respondents expressed their disagreement with the company's CSR, namely with the usage of plastic shrinks even though they are made of fully recycled plastic and with the company pursuing the diversity goal, which seemed illogical to one respondent as the company is a beer company, and therefore naturally employs more men than women according to them.

**Figure 10.** Co-occurrence of the behavioural reactions to CSR and ESR behaviour codes

Code System	ESR behavior	employee-led CSR	job-related CSR tasks	corporate volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ behavioral                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ employee retention</li> <li>☞ in-role behavior</li> <li>☞ organizational citizenship behavior</li> <li>☞ extra-role performance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				
			■	
		•	■	■
		•	■	■
			■	■

Source: own study.

The most common behavioral reaction to the company’s CSR identified was in-role behavior, which occurred the most with the most common code identified when exploring the level of ESR identity of the employees – job-related CSR tasks (figure 10). Employee retention, being also a significant outcome, can be proven by the highest level of co-occurrence with the code job pursuit intentions, as seen in figure 11. The intention of the employees to stay in the company hidden behind the code employee retention also shows high co-occurrence with the organizational pride and prestige and job satisfaction, which supports the findings presented in the theoretical part. Organizational citizenship behavior also seems to enhance job satisfaction. Even if the participation in the CSR activities of the employer is connected to their role in the company, it seems to stimulate the feeling of work meaningfulness, organizational trust, pride, and job satisfaction amongst the respondents (see figure 11).

**Figure 11.** Co-occurrence of the attitudinal and behavioral reactions to CSR codes



Source: own study.

**Figure 12.** Frequency of the attitudinal reactions to CSR codes across documents



Source: own study.

When looking at the sum of the code frequencies across the transcripts (figure 12), it could be observed the most frequent attitudinal reactions to the company’s CSR identified in our interviews. The job satisfaction and organizational pride and prestige codes have the highest number of frequencies, followed by the work meaningfulness code. Perceived organizational support, job pursuit intentions, organizational identification, and organizational trust were each identified 7 times. A poor result of only 4 respondents for the attraction code is interesting as it was attributed to those respondents that confirmed that the company’s CSR was one of the criteria when deciding whether to join the company. Other participants admitted that they had no information about the company’s CSR before joining the company or that it did not play a role when finding this job.

### CONCLUSIONS

The authors found amongst the respondents, who represent the group of administrative employees of the Czech brewing company, that the most important determinant of their CSR engagement was corporate socialization. Said in other words, the relational determinants as time spent with colleagues, meeting new colleagues, and socialization with others seemed to influence the most whether

the employee engages in the CSR activities of the company or not. Many of the respondents engaged in CSR activities that were related to their job.

Therefore, the authors found room for improvement in their extra-role CSR participation, but also in the encouragement from the part of their supervisors. This is the contrast between the expected results and the actual results. The respondents framed their CSR perceptions by trying to look at the issue from the point of view of different stakeholders. They saw the sense of doing CSR in the need for sustainability, and a positive for the company is that these employees regarded its CSR as authentic. It was found mainly positive CSR reactions on the side of respondents, such as job satisfaction, organizational pride, or job pursuit intention. However, the respondents engaged again only in the job-related CSR activities, and the authors were surprised by the poor effect of the company's CSR on their decision to join the company.

The limits of this research in its limited time and frame. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was impossible to interview more employees or to include more groups of employees to drive more complex results. Therefore, it is also suggested studying the perceptions of the manufacturing employees to see the differences in perceiving CSR.

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