
Employee Satisfaction, Employer Branding, and CSR: A Five-Year Post-COVID-19 Analysis

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Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to verify the existence of a relationship between three variables: Employees' satisfaction with job, Employer Branding the company's undertaking corporate social activity (CSR) treated as a part of the sustainable development paradigm and in particular as a concern to preserve the diversified resources of the local community: organizations and employees. The intention of the authors of the article is to identify the persistence of the relationship between the above-mentioned variables in the period of 5 years from the previous study, and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research was longitudinal in nature. The aforementioned variables were elements of a previously constructed model (Krugielka 2019 p. 51) relating to the determinants of undertaking socially responsible activities by companies. A total of 117 people participated in the new research procedure: 55 representatives of the management staff and 62 other employees from small and medium-sized enterprises, participating in the previous stage of the research. Two questionnaires for corporate social responsibility research and the Minesocki Job Satisfaction Questionnaire and the Pandemic Questionnaire for the Employer Branding Survey were used as research tools.

Findings: The research results showed a persistent relationship between employees' job satisfaction, Employer Branding and corporate social responsibility, among the same communities after 5 years.

Practical Implications: The value of the presented research is the inspiration to take into account the coherence of considered factors as the level of employees' job satisfaction and their relations with Employers Branding, and the systemic approach to the issue of corporate social responsibility especially in employers' attitudes towards employees.

Originality/Value: This picture comes down to the need to take into account the dependence and connections of the examined variables, which result in success in business and higher competitiveness of the company.

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1. Introduction

An introduction to the research topic, establishing the context, a literature review, and defining the research problem and objective of the article. It is advisable to include the thesis statement or research questions at the end. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept that has been introduced to the canon of good management practices for over 20 years.

At the end of the last century, taking socially responsible actions was not the subject of obvious choices for companies or too much research devoted to the creation of diverse CSR models. Currently, the situation is radically different.

Corporate social responsibility has been introduced into the mainstream of management and is recognized not only as a binding activity in international institutions in relation to environmental protection, preserving natural resources for future generations, promoting renewable energy, but also as an activity related to creating value for an employee-internal client.

Evolutionary models of CSR focused on the implementation of values present the transformation of the company's culture from one based on economic calculation and the compulsion to adapt to legal and social requirements, to a positive culture based on values and the desire to help others (Witek-Crabb 2016; de Woot 2005).

The company improves its CSR, moving along a continuum, the beginning of which can be described as a small concern for the employee's health, job satisfaction in the organization, which is characterized by an unsupportive organizational culture of the company (Maon, Lindgreen, and Swaen, 2010), and focus on self-interest (self-interest, selfregarding).

The other end of this continuum is an attitude characteristic of a supportive culture, based on caring for others (other regarding), including not only customers, members of the local community, but also own employees. The situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, causing a threat among employees, was a special opportunity for entrepreneurs to show a caring attitude towards employees.

The authors of the article, however, would like to propose a broader understanding of the issues of sustainable energy as activities of an organization expressing concern for the preservation of specific resources. These resources include the well-being of employees (also manifested in the level of job satisfaction) which, together with the involvement of enterprises in corporate social responsibility and the creation of positive Employer Branding, constitute a system of care for the broadly understood local community. The factors prove that we care for the competitiveness of enterprises, high quality of life for employees and, indirectly, involvement in the development of smart cities.

It was a widely noticeable fact that the COVID-19 epidemic changed the conditions of the functioning of many professional groups and significantly influenced the labor market in Poland (Flaszyńska 2020, pp. 122-127). The introduction of the state of epidemic threat forced additional requirements regarding working conditions, implying a higher level of stress in the work environment, which, due to the emotional burden, negatively affects the health and wellbeing of employees (Fountoulakis and Kaprins, 2003; Ogińska-Bulik and Juczyński, 2010; Stasiła-Sieradzka and Turska, 2019).

The pandemic changed the functioning of both employers and employees. One of the greatest challenges faced by employees has become to ensure safety while maintaining a competitive advantage as a result of retaining specialists and talented employees (Bartkowiak, Krugielka, Kostrzewa-Demczuk, Dachowski, and Gałka-Bracha, 2022). There is evidence that if employees feel they “belong to their employer”, they do not consider leaving the organization and changing their employer.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also changed the way industries once operated. Enterprises have implemented working from home in their business. According to TCS COO: „The company expects that by 2025 only 25% of employees will be working in offices, the rest of the employees will be engaged in remote work, at home“ (Srivastova, Thripathi, and Rajlaxmi, 2021). Working from home is becoming the new norm, but still not all employees feel comfortable doing work from home.

Unfortunately, often insufficient internet speed and bandwidth make work difficult. At the same time, employers have to pay additional operating fees as they need to provide employees and internet connections so they can work safely from home without putting themselves in danger. Increased charges for Internet bills, a good telecommunications network provider, etc. have become a necessity.

In this situation, Employer Branding plays an important role, both from the point of view of employees and the organization, as an activity aimed at creating a positive image of the company for both internal customers and external stakeholders. Equally significant is the fact that companies, regardless of the difficult situation resulting

from the pandemic, continue to take socially responsible activities (CSR), which translates into the level of employee satisfaction with work (Crane and Matten, 2021).

As a result of adopting a specific model of factors determining the undertaking of CSR by enterprises, constructed by one of the authors of the article (Krugielka, 2019, p. 51) and its empirical verification, Employer Branding turned out to be an intermediary variable in the existence of the relationship between CSR (independent variable) and job satisfaction (dependent variable). The obtained research results inspired the authors to undertake longitudinal studies to verify whether this relationship persists after five years and in a dynamically changing situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Job Satisfaction

In the literature on the subject, there are data indicating a relationship between job satisfaction and Employer Branding (Srivastova, Thirpathi, and Rajlaxmi, 2021; Mendis and Wanigasekera, 2013; Krugielka, Kostrzewa, and Demczuk, 2021), and CSR (Kumar, Jain, and Singh, 2021). Research conducted by the British Institute of Economics among English trading companies showed a raise in sales profits of 9% with a 20% increase in employee satisfaction with work.

Similarly, research carried out in local banks allowed to observe an equivalent increase in customer satisfaction in relation to the increment in employee satisfaction (Bezruchko 2008). Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasant, positive emotional state resulting from the evaluation of work experience (Locke, 1976). It is a coincidence of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances that makes the employee truly satisfied with their job (Krugielka, Kostrzewa, and Demczuk, 2021; Bezruchko, 2008).

They can be influenced by several factors and can be divided into internal, intangible in nature and resulting in a positive mental state (Stumpf and Hartman, 1984), and external, material prizes, such as salary, bonuses, promotions (Iqbal, 2010; Zin, 2017). In most cases, satisfied employees are more likely to stay with the company.

However, job satisfaction varies by environment and is the result of the personality alignment of employees. At the same time, job satisfaction reflects an employee's behavior in the workplace (Davis, Wanous, Poland, and Premack, 1992). The results of research on job satisfaction showed that the higher the job satisfaction, the better the employee's productivity (Hackman and Oldham, 1975; Shmailan, 2016).

Other studies of job satisfaction and motivation that have been carried out reveal a positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. The

results of the research also confirmed that employee satisfaction leads to increased productivity in comparison with dissatisfied employees (Indermun, 2013, Skiba 2002).

2.2 Employer Branding

Currently, Employer Branding is constantly perceived as one of the most important factors influencing the possibility of success by a given company. Enterprises with a very positive image of the employer can hire the most talented employees, often incurring lower costs associated with shaping it. One should pay attention to the fact that shaping the company's brand as an employer does not only consist in building its image outside the organization. It is important to install it from the inside.

Employer Branding does not exist when the created external image of the company is inconsistent and has little to do with how a given company really functions, what values it has, and its organizational culture (Espasandín-Bustelo, Ganaza-Vargas, and Diaz-Carrion, 2020). Employer Branding is a term that has recently (at most two decades) been present in social sciences, in particular in marketing, and management sciences. It means activities undertaken by employers in order to increase their attractiveness as a workplace for future and current employees as well as to attract and retain them.

This term comes from marketing, where branding of products and services means the ongoing process of building and communicating one's image and reputation to the environment (Levit, 1980). The appearance of a brand is therefore the result of a specific process (branding), which has become the basis for companies to compete by referring to the high quality of the product and as a result of the high craftsmanship of its production.

The first attempts to systematize knowledge about branding took place in the 1920s in the United States (Mokina, 2014). It was then that the concept of brand management emerged and began to develop, which led to the creation of numerous and varied marketing campaigns. In the literature on the subject, the concept of Employer Branding begins with its definition by the English researchers Ambler and Barrow's marketing practitioner, and publishing their considerations in the *Journal of Brand Management*.

The authors proved that the employer's brand is a specific set of benefits obtained by an employee taking up or already working for an employer, being employed in a company or other organization. Continuing and expanding this the authors of Ambler and Barrow (Ambler and Barrow, 1996), indicated that this process mainly concerns the employing entrepreneur and people with whom it is necessary to cooperate and, according to Uggla (2006), a specific workplace - the organization, and also refers to the organization as a whole (Davis and Blomstrom, 1975).

According to Ambler and Barrow (1996), Employer Branding generates functional, economic and psychological benefits and leads to greater identification of employees with the company. While public relations and corporate branding activities are addressed to stakeholders and the business environment (Balmer, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2009), Employer Branding refers to current and potential employees.

The employer's brand is a process of building an identity that allows to distinguish an employer, organization, enterprise from others by communicating with employees and the environment, thus building its competitiveness (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). Communication also takes place at the employee - potential employee level (Knox and Freeman, 2006).

Disseminating information about the employer in this way is a commonly known and applied practice. However, it is difficult to talk about a precise difference between the concepts of public relations, in particular recognized as an element of management, and Employer Branding, because the latter concept, apart from employment-related issues, includes the company's striving for success, concern for the external image and high level of a product or service (Maxwell and Knox, 2009).

Employer Branding requires promoting the communicative vision of the company's functioning (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Cable and Turban, 2003) and the integration of activities that combine Human Resources activities with marketing.

These include, support from the management board and employee groups, management style, transfer of power, development vision, appropriate environment; processes taking place in employee groups: introducing changes, motivating system; communication between employee groups inside and outside the organization, combined with undertaking marketing activities (Ahmed, Rafiq, and Norizan, 2003) cooperation leading to the synergy effect in the promotion of products and services and the recruitment process of candidates for work with a friendly employer (Moroko and Uncles, 2009).

The element of Employer Branding is therefore investing in human capital as a manifestation of employers' competition among themselves, care for the sustainable development of human resources, regardless of their age and seniority, intellectual abilities and other factors in which employees differ from each other. These activities lead to an increase in the level of employee satisfaction with work, and a greater level of employer's attractiveness for talented employees (Leonard, 2000; Schlager, Bodderas, Maas, and Cachein, 2011).

The employer's brand is characterized by the following features: it relates to the current situation in the company and is adequate to it, it should be communicative, understandable, legible, graphically illustrated and easy to remember (these are features common to the product brand and corporate brand) is irrational and

unambiguous, it is dynamic, changing as a result of new conditions and new information, its goal is to create a relatively stable vision of the company and can be perceived as a combination of identity and image (Biswas and Suar, 2016).

Branding (EB) as a process is the creation of a well-built employment brand that positively influences the results at the organizational and personal level, thus creating a competitive advantage. The brand value or the commercial value derived in this way can then be associated with a strong employer brand, which can also positively impact employee loyalty and reduce staff rotation intentions (Okolocha, 2020).

Employer brand value consists of the resources, assets, and liabilities offered through a product or service to internal and external customers (Aaker, 1991). It is a hidden resource relating to brand and employer associations as well as the awareness of future job candidates (Espasandín-Bustelo, Ganaza-Vargas, and Diaz-Carrion, 2020; Biswas and Suar, 2016). Brand associations build the employer's image. The value of the employer's brand is also a source of the company's competitiveness through attractiveness to potential employees, a positive impact on the motivation to work of employees, greater chances of acquiring talented candidates for work (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004).

According to the model proposed by Backhaus and Tikoo, the effect of Employer Branding is to develop brand attachment and a sense of loyalty with the company. The employer's brand becomes relevant when an organization differentiates its ways of working in relation to the competition or reduces the aforementioned employee rotation intentions. The literature also indicates that EB has a positive effect on the financial situation of companies (Moroko and Uncles, 2008; Tanwar and Prasad, 2017).

From the organizational point of view, EB includes the organization's efforts to create a positive image of the organization from the perspective of employees, including job candidates. Means an action strategy planned for a longer period, affecting the awareness and perception of current and future employees and stakeholders of the company (Mendis and Wanigasekera, 2013; Ernst and Young 2000).

Current employment is a category that strongly influences the perception of the company as attractive, especially for its current employees, who consider the work environment, relations in the company, management style, bonuses and benefits, and the type of work (Maxwell and Knox, 2009). In turn, brand loyalty is a form of employees' attachment to the employer (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004).

This attachment leads to obtaining various forms of benefits by the employer, increases the level of employees' commitment to the work performed, contributes to the increase of employee satisfaction with work and reduces the employee

fluctuation rate. The third of the above-mentioned elements integrates the others and influences the creation of dependencies between employees and external customers, so that they interpenetrate. The company's attractiveness for future employees also builds the sense of satisfaction of those who are already working, contributes to the creation of a positive brand image, which increases sales and increases customer satisfaction.

On the other hand, a company with a strong brand and a positive image attracts talented people who usually raise the level on its innovation (Ernst and Young, 2000). However, after an extensive analysis of the literature on the subject, presented a critical view on the issue of EB, reducing the concept mainly to the fight for talented employees. The authors concluded that this concept is nothing new in relation to the previously known concepts of "Internal Marketing" or "HR Marketing".

2.3 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

In turn, studies have confirmed that the previously discussed employer brand gains in importance when the organization maintains its uniqueness, adhering to corporate social responsibility practices (Okolocha, 2020; Cable and Turban, 2003). At the same time, while continuing the considerations, it is difficult to ignore the relationship between job satisfaction and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The relations between these factors have been discussed by numerous authors who perceive them as the result of theoretical analyzes and conducted research. Their external and observable effect is perceived as the occurrence of a higher level of involvement of enterprises in corporate social responsibility.

CSR can be broadly understood as the involvement of companies in bringing benefits to society and carrying out activities (i.e., doing good) to meet perceived social obligations (Davis and Blomstrom, 1975; Brown and Dacin, 1997; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). However, there are different goals and definitions of CSR. According to Dhanesh (2014), the myriad definitions fall into two main categories.

The former treats CSR as a resource dedicated to increasing the profits and financial profits of companies (Drucker, 1984), while the latter treats CSR as a corporate commitment to the values and goals of society as a whole (Dhanesh, 2012; 2014). To consolidate different economic and social perspectives and orientations, Carroll (1991), proposed a comprehensive definition of CSR that includes a four-part conceptualization.

A CSR pyramid was therefore introduced to represent the four elements of CSR. Economic responsibility is a fundamental building block and relates to the company's ability to generate profits. The next level is the legal responsibility of the business, which refers to the expectation of the company to obey the law and "play

by the rules of the game". The third level is ethical business responsibility, which refers to how important it is for the company to adhere to and conform to the ethical standards and expectations of society.

Finally, discretionary philanthropic responsibility relates to a company's response to the social expectations of being a good citizen (Dhanesh, 2014; Carroll, 1991). This study follows Carroll's definition of CSR, which covers four different dimensions for two main reasons. First, the definition of Carroll's CSR was adopted in previous studies from an internal perspective (Dhanesh, 2012; 2014).

Secondly, this definition is based on the stakeholder theory, a foundation that enforces CSR research from an internal perspective. Stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of dealing with the interests of a wide range of stakeholders, not just shareholders (Freeman, 1984), but also customers. This emphasis requires adopting a holistic view of CSR, which includes various dimensions of responsibility into the company's basic operations (Werther and Chandler, 2011), i.e., attitude to external and internal customers - employees, attitude to ethics, attitude to innovation (Tolvier, 2013, p. 167-168).

Commenting on the discussed factors, the authors (...) drew attention to a different perspective of perceiving the functioning of specific practices in enterprises, which resulted from the adoption of different perspectives and resulted in discrepancies in assessments.

Figure 1. Model relationship between JS, EB, and CSR



Source: Own study.

For this reason, it seems interesting to examine the existence of discrepancies between the level of job satisfaction, employer branding assessment and company commitment and socially responsible activity, between the manager and other employees, after 5 years (when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred).

3. Research Methodology

The considerations carried out indicate that at present it is highly probable that companies caring for beneficial Employer Branding engage in CSR, and at the same time their concern for Employer Branding is a factor that causes job satisfaction, therefore, empirical research aimed at obtaining answers was planned to the following research questions:

- *What is the relationship between social corporate responsibility and Employer Branding and job satisfaction?*
- *Are these relationships studied in the same groups as five years ago, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, still persist?*
- *Is there a difference between the assessment of JB, EB and CSR among managers and employees?*

These questions allowed for the formulation of the following hypotheses:

- *H1: Job satisfaction is a predictor of EB and corporate social responsibility.*
- *H2: Relationships between JS, EB and CSR continues despite the passage of five years the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- *H3: There are differences in the assessment of JS, EB, CSR by management and other employees.*

To achieve the purpose of the article, the iput regression model was used, in the form: $Y = a_0 + a_1X_1 + a_2X_2 + \dots + a_kX_k$,

where: Y means the dependent (dependent) variable, $X_1, X_2 \dots X_k$ – independent (independent) variables and $a_0, a_1, \dots a_k$ - estimated by the least squares method of structural parameters of the model. To verify the existence of discrepancies between the level of job satisfaction, employer branding and corporate social responsibility, the Student's "t" coefficient was used.

3.2 Reaserch Tools

Moving on to the operationalization of individual variables, it is worth noting that the analysis of the literature on the subject indicates various elements and dimensions included in the tools used to measure Employer Branding, i.e., safety and security (Maheshwari, Gunesh, Lodorfos, and Konstantopoulou, 2017), motivation, compensation and benefits (Tanwar and Prasard, 2017), work-life balance (Jain and Bhatt, 2015; Gunesth and Maheshwari, 2018), and the employer's attractiveness (Maheshwari, Gunesh, Lodorfos, and Konstantopoulou, 2017).

For the purpose of the Employer Branding research, a structured questionnaire consisting of 15 questions was prepared. During its construction, a research tool (Questionnaire on Employer Branding) developed by Sirvastova and colleagues

(Srivastova, Thripathi, and Rajlaxmi, 2021), was used. The questionnaire was divided into two parts; Part A contains 5 questions relating to demographic data, and part B contains 15 diagnostic statements, within which the following 5 scales have been distinguished: work sense of support received from the organization by employees and work-life balance, organization management, in particular in a crisis caused by COVID-19, employee motivation to work, a sense of security and loyalty to the employer, and the level of trust in the organization.

The modification of the original questionnaire was preceded by a literature review relating to the search for factors measuring the impact of COVID-19 on Employer Branding o (Crane and Matten, 2021). A five-point Likert scale was used; where 1-point means "I strongly disagree" and 5 points. means "I strongly agree". Cronbach's alpha value for the original version (there were 30 items in it) was 0.874, confirming the reliability of the questionnaire.

In the shortened version, used in the further analyzed studies, the mean Cronbach's alpha was 0.823, and within individual scales from 0.799 to 0.845. The pilot study verifying the research tool-Employer Branding was conducted on a sample of 127 people: managers and employees of small and medium-sized enterprises. Weiss, Davis, Englands and Lofquist (Weiss, Davis, England, and Lofquist, 1967) - the authors of the Minesocki Questionnaire of Job Satisfaction - defined job satisfaction as "the result of an employee's assessment of the degree to which the work environment is able to meet its requirements" (Davis, 1960).

The study used the MSQ-Short Form version, which was shortened compared to the original (100 questions) and translated into Polish. The questions used in this version have the greatest discriminatory power, in line with the 20 components of the work distinguished by Weiss *et al.* (1967). The questionnaire was constructed on the basis of 20 dimensions of work, recognized as potential opportunities provided by the work environment.

These are opportunities for active action, independence, variety of tasks, social position, professional skills of superiors, financial compensation, the possibility of using all of your abilities at work, opportunities for pro-social activities at work, gaining power, the manner of implementing the agreed company policy, opportunities for formal promotion, business relationships interpersonal relations with co-workers, evaluation and recognition for work, opportunities for creative work, opportunities for achievements, the degree of responsibility of the professional tasks carried out, interpersonal relations with superiors, financial conditions of work, opportunities for personal development at work, the degree of importance of the work performed.

People filling in the questionnaire replied assigning each dimension from 1 to 5 points. In the original version of the MSQ-Short Form, two subscales were distinguished, satisfaction with internal factors of work and satisfaction with

external factors of work. Due to the lack of data verifying the accuracy of the questionnaire, only the general indicator of job satisfaction was considered.

Based on the information provided by the authors of the questionnaire, the internal consistency of the subscales was set at 0.87 to 0.92, and the stability (reliability) coefficients measured for the period of one week were " r " = 0.89, and for the period of one year " r " = 0.70 (Srivastova *et al.*, 2021). For the version used in the research, the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated, the value of which was 0.78. The research was carried out on a sample of 120 employees and 0.78 on a sample of 107 lower-level managers. The obtained results are within the acceptable limits.

The Corporate Social Responsibility Questionnaire for Companies is a modification of the scale proposed by Tolvier (2013). This scale consists of 4 subscales specifying, attitude to employees, attitude to innovation, attitude to ethical principles, attitude to external clients and the business environment, consisting of 15, 10, 9 and 12 statements, respectively. The reliability of the whole scale was measured with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and it was 0.78.

The translations were made using the back-translation method. The internal consistency in the Polish version was calculated by supplementing the questionnaire with additional questions for the reliability test, comparing the results of 202 employees and 94 managers employed in small and medium-sized enterprises, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for individual scales and for the entire questionnaire was within 0.71 - 0.77.

4. Research Results

4.1 Description of the Research Sample

The research in the first, previous stage carried out in 2017 was attended by 94 representatives of the management staff and 202 employees from 23 companies differentiated by industry and size (Krugielka, 2019, p. 172).

The selection of enterprises was related to their participation in previous competition procedures related to their activity in CSR. The condition for conducting the research was the consent of the management and employees participated in the research.

The companies participating in the research were operated on the market for at least 8 years. They presented the following industries: metal, food, IT, media, chemical and various services. They employed from 20 employees to over 200 employees, so they represented small and medium-sized enterprises.

In the second stage (described in this elaboration a total of 117 people participated in

the currently conducted research was a group of 64 representatives of the management staff (including 38 men) and 53 employees (including 55 women) (Table 1).

The condition for participation was staying in the same workplace for the last 5 years. A presentation of the results obtained, preferably in the form of tables, graphs, or diagrams. Interpretation of the results should be avoided in this section.

Table 1. *Characteristics of the respondents by gender.*

Gender	Managers	Employees	Summary
Man	38	24	62
Woman	26	29	55
Summary	64	53	117

Source: *Own research.*

Both in the first stage of the research (2017) and the second stage (2022), all respondents had higher education.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Here are the descriptive statistics relating to the data obtained (Table 2).

Table 2. *Values of descriptive statistics of research tools.*

	Min.	Maks.	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	25.00	65.00	44.1795	9.73318
Attitude to the employee	4.00	14.00	8.1966	2.51286
Attitude to innovation	1.00	10.00	5.6410	1.87755
Attitude to ethics	3.00	9.00	6.2137	1.44931
Attitude to the client	4.00	14.00	8.2308	1.87720
Overall results	17.00	43.00	28.4786	6.15265
Employer Branding	24.00	73.00	51.5812	12.23705
Job satisfaction	33.00	100.00	64.7436	15.84415

Source: *Own research.*

All variables used in the study showed variation in the maximum and minimum score values.

4.3 Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employer Branding and Corporate Social Responsibility

When considering the relationship between job satisfaction Employer Branding and corporate social responsibility, the existence of a moderate and strong relationship between individual variables was observed. In order to verify the previously identified relationships, an input regression model was adopted in the analysis,

which required recognition of job satisfaction as a dependent variable.

Table 3. Correlations between Job Satisfaction Employer Branding and Corporate Social Responsibility.

Variables		JS	EB	AEm	AIn	AE	Ac	Os
JS	r	1	,727**	,631**	,426**	,600**	,530**	,706**
	p		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
EB	r	,727**	1	,501**	,441**	,586**	,365**	,586**
	p	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
AEm	r	,631**	,501**	1	,408**	,448**	,539**	,815**
	p	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
AIn	r	,426**	,441**	,408**	1	,456**	,376**	,637**
	p	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001
AE	r	,600**	,586**	,448**	,456**	1	,397**	,672**
	p	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001
Ac	r	,530**	,365**	,539**	,376**	,397**	1	,745**
	p	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
Os	r	,706**	,586**	,815**	,637**	,672**	,745**	1
	p	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	

Note: ** significant correlation at the level of 0.01 (two-tailed) Pearson's "r" coefficient was used in the analysis.

Source: Own research. (JS – Job Satisfaction, EB – Employer Branding, AEm – Attitude to the Employer, AIn – Attitude to the Innovation, AE – Attitude to Ethics, AC- Attitude to the Client, OS – Overall Score)

Table 4. The input regression analysis model (Job satisfaction as dependent variable) – Summary.

Model	R	R-square	Corrected-R-square	Standard error of estimate
	,817	,668	,650	9,37287
Predyktors: (Constant), EB, CSR (Attitude to the Employee, Attitude to innovation, Attitude to ethics, Attitude to the client, Overall score)				

Source: Own research.

The presented model in Table 3 allows to estimate (which determines the fit of the model) over 60% of the variability of the distribution of dependent and independent variables.

Assuming that the dependent variable is job satisfaction with the work he presented data indicate that the increase of job satisfaction results in an increase of employer branding and in an increase in the company's involvement in socially responsible activities in terms of attitudes towards employees and all elements of its commitment taken together.

As indicated in the table above, the predictors of job satisfaction turned out to be both concern for the image of the enterprise. In other words, the level Employer

Branding and CSR especially in the score of attitude to the employee seems to be one of the significant predictors of the level of employees job satisfaction.

Table 5. Standardized and non-standardized coefficients of the input regression analysis model. Dependent variable: Job satisfaction.

Non-standardized coefficients			Standardized coefficients	t	Significance
Model	B	Standard error	Beta		
(Constant)	-,628	4,813		-,131	,896
Attitude to the employee	1,535	,452	,243	3,396	, <,001
Attitude to innovation	-,331	,647	-,039	-,511	,611
Attitude to ethics	1,442	,919	,132	1,569	,120
Attitude to the client	1,124	,757	,133	1,484	,141
CSR-overal score	,1094	,464	,217	,3051	<,001
EB	,583	,094	,450	6,173	<,001

Source: Own research.

This also means a significant role of the attitude towards employees as an element contributing to taking socially responsible actions, and at the same time it may indicate an increase in the awareness of the management staff in the area of appreciating the role of employee care in the broadly defined social responsibility in business.

4.5 Differences between Job Satisfaction, Employer Branding and Corporate Social Responsibility in Managers' and Employees' Opinion

Moving on to discussing the existence of differences between the CSR assessments recognized as the total result of the questionnaire and its individual dimensions, Employer Branding and job satisfaction, statistically significant differences were found in the statements of management and employees. These differences relate to attitudes towards employees, attitudes towards innovation, attitudes towards external clients as dimensions of CSR and the level of job satisfaction.

Table 6. Differences in the assessment of CSR, EB and job satisfaction by the management and other employees. (** means $p < 0,05$; * means $p < 0,01$)

	Managers N=64		Employees N=53		t	Df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Attitude to the	8.88	2.45	7.38	2.36	3.347	115	0.001*

employee							
Attitude to innovation	5.19	2.08	6.19	1.44	-3.066	111.795	0.003
Attitude to ethics	6.11	1.49	6.34	1.40	-0.854	115	0.395
Attitude to the client	8.55	1.63	7.85	2.09	2.028	115	0.045**
CSR- overall results	29.20	6.41	27.60	5.77	1.406	115	0.163
Employer Branding	51.94	12.64	51.15	11.84	0.345	115	0.731
Job satisfaction	67.91	16.63	60.92	14.07	2.422	115	0.017**

Source: Own research.

Managers evaluate their enterprise more positively and formulate more positive assessments of their job satisfaction. Certainly, a higher level of job satisfaction may result from the specificity of the managerial position held, which provides more autonomy and opportunities for self-fulfillment.

5. Summary

The obtained data confirm the model adopted in the theoretical part, in which Job satisfaction turned out to in the relationship with Employer Branding and corporate social responsibility, as well as the formulated hypotheses.

Figure 2. The empirically verified model relationship between JS, EB, and CSR (Attitudes towards Employee (AE) and Overall Score (OS)).



Source: Own study.

As a result of the research, the hypothesis (H1) about the relationship between the employee job satisfaction, employer branding and corporate social responsibility, especially in score of attitudes towards the employee, was confirmed. Moreover, it turned out that the dependencies diagnosed in the same research group as in the previous studies, despite the specific situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, still persist (H2).

Similarly, the assessments of management regarding the three examined variables generally turned out to be slightly more positive than in the case of other employees (H3), however, this hypothesis should be considered only partially confirmed, due to the fact that there is no statistically significant discrepancy between attitudes to ethics as a dimension of CSR- the total score in the questionnaire and the Employer Branding assessment.

6. Discussion

Due to the fact that in the last decade, interest in corporate social responsibility has spread widely in diverse industries and among academics, the interest in the relationship between employees' job satisfaction, the employer's care for Employer Branding and undertaking socially responsible activities has also increased. The authors who showed interest in the relationship between JS, CSR, EB obtained as a result of the conducted re- search confirmed the legitimacy of further penetration of this issue, an example of which is this article.

Thus, the relationship between JS, EB and CSR especially attitudes toward employees is indicated by numerous authors, mainly in the English-language literature on the subject (Tanwar and Prasard, 2017; Maheshwari, Gunesh, Lodorfos, and Konstantopoulou, 2017; Aggerholm and Andersen, 2011), and suggest that high employer's brand often coexists with the involvement of companies in socially responsible activities and that these dependencies should be constantly verified.

This research confirmed the relationships identified by the above-mentioned authors, which relate to the relationship between CSR, in particular in terms of attitudes towards employees. It is worth noting that the existing dependencies persist regardless of the passage of years and the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, burdening both employees and employers.

This means that these dependencies will be permanent and as such should be considered in management practice. Similarly, as indicated by the conducted research, the discrepancy of each variable of the level of job satisfaction persists, assessment of employer branding and the company's commitment to socially responsible activities from the perspective of the management and other employees. Management usually evaluates each of these variables more favorably (Krugielka, 2019, p.180).

Particularly noteworthy is the care for employees, shown during the COVID-19 pandemic as a factor influencing the job satisfaction and, as one might suppose, the shaping of the company's image as a friendly employer.

Studies conducted by numerous authors have shown that employees expect support from the employer and positively assess the initiatives taken by employers in a situation of emotional stress, remote and hybrid work (Arntz, Ben, Yahmed, and

Berlingieri 2020; Bartkowiak, Krugielka, Dama, Kostrzewa-Demczuk, and Gawęł-Luty, 2022; Carreri and Dordoni, 2020; Krugielka, Bartkowiak, and Dama, 2021; Jakubowski and Sitko-Dominik, 2021).

In the analyzed studies, all participants expressed a positive opinion about the care of their employers for their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it can be expected that this factor has a positive effect on Employer Branding and contributes to increasing employee satisfaction with work.

Regardless of this, the uniqueness of the conducted research comes down to finding evidence that the observed dependence is permanent, i.e. it persists despite the passage of years and disruptive factors, such as a pandemic occurring for a period of less than two years. Another diagnosed dependence concerned the differences in the assessment between the management and employees.

The obtained data showed the existence of statistically significant discrepancies between the assessment of the attitude of one's enterprise to employees, the attitude to innovation and the assessment of the image of one's own company as a friendly employer.

The situation may be caused by a greater possibility of making decisions, greater autonomy of the managerial staff increasing the possibilities of shaping their own professional situation (Bartkowiak, 2021; Bartkowiak and Krugielka, 2019) and the possibility of using a strategy of coping with the occupational burden (Davis and Blomstrom, 1975).

7. Limitations of The Study

The conducted research has limitations. These include the deliberate selection of the research sample and a small research sample limiting the generalization of the obtained data. However, the inclusion criterion, which enabled the use of the same research sample that participated in the 2017 research, turned out to be a significant barrier.

When considering the direction of further research, it would be good to conduct similar research on a larger research sample, and to deepen the factors triggering job satisfaction, which make up a positive assessment of the employer's image, as well as to learn about the ongoing forms of corporate social responsibility, plan qualitative research.

For this reason, in future research, it would be good to plan in-depth interviews with both representatives of the management staff and their subordinates in order to deepen the information on how CSR is actually implemented, how they evaluate the EB activities undertaken by the company and what factors increase the level of job satisfaction. A good solution would be to conduct longitudinal research using the

same research tools, e.g., after another 5 years.

8. Conclusions

The assumed research paradigm confirms the implemented trends in the area of the currently functioning CSR 3.0 models, in which the dependence of concern for the well-being of employees and their job satisfaction as a result of a good image of the company, maintaining a positive assessment of Employer Branding and creating value for the internal client is emphasized to a greater extent which results in success in business (Porter and Kramer, 2011; Visser, 2012; Porter and Kramer, 2019).

A special opportunity to express such concern was the situation of employees at risk, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in which entrepreneurs could meet the expectations by adjusting working hours, introducing modified forms in the form of hybrid work and other practices beneficial to employees.

The value of the presented research in the cognitive aspect is the inspiration to take into account the convergence and coherence of approaches from the individual point of view, considered at the level of employees and their relations with employers, and the systemic approach to the issue of corporate social responsibility. This picture comes down to the need to consider the interdependence and connections of the examined variables, which result in success in business and higher competitiveness of the company.

In practice, this means that corporate social responsibility also means striving to increase the awareness of the management staff (also other employees), e.g. by organizing training courses and conferences presenting current research results and taking actions that are an expression of concern not only for external customers as building a positive image of the company among future job candidates, but to increase the level of involvement of enterprises in the study of factors creating a sense of job satisfaction of internal clients.

Assuming that the employees' satisfaction with work leads to an increase in their productivity, the conducted research has shown the importance of social responsibility (especially in terms of the attitude towards the employee as a factor stimulating employee involvement. This means a significant role for the activities undertaken by the company for the benefit of internal customers and employees.

As a result of the research, the involvement of companies in socially responsible activities as an element that coexists with the care for the image of a friendly employer, also remaining in positive relations and with job satisfaction, turned out to be equally important. For this reason, it seems advisable to monitor the level of employee satisfaction with work by conducting continuous research as well as research relating to the assessment of the company's image as a friendly employer. It can be expected that the data obtained in this way will enable early organizational

intervention, important both for the company, the enterprise as an employer and employees as internal clients.

The presented article is an attempt at an innovative approach to understanding sustainable energy, which includes resources on the side of the organization related to its functioning (CSR, Employer Branding) and employees (their satisfaction with work).

The relations of these resources, the indisputable role of EB and CSR in building employee satisfaction with work as an effect of basic research relating to the same group of employees, five years after, and when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, apart from the cognitive value, have an application value. We can expect greater involvement of enterprises in socially responsible activities results in taking care of the positive image of the company as an employer and, as a result, contributes to the increase in the quality of life of the local community.

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