

CSR-HRM Nexus: Defining the Role Engagement of the Human Resources Professionals

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Abstract

The study explores the nexus between CSR and HRM and defines the role engagement of the HR professionals in CSR initiatives. Literature reviewed reveals that CSR is a triple bottom line (economic, social and environmental) performance and essentially a top-management driven activity, devoid of employees' participation. The latter characteristic of CSR is classical and tends to impede implementation process. However, a new dawn of CSR is now advocated to reposition HR professionals as strategic business partners to enhance the successful packaging and execution of CSR programs. The paper defines the role engagement of the HR professionals vis a vis CSR activities to include among others, leading and educating employees on the value of CSR, developing responsible and sustainable practices, communicating CSR activities to employees and other stakeholders, and providing direction, control and action plans for implementing the program in the organization. Finally, the study affirms the existence of the nexus between the two concepts and charges management to see the nexus as a strategic business decisions to unlock the human capital of an organization.

Keywords: CSR, HRM, sustainability, role engagement, HR professionals

1. Introduction

Perhaps a greater part of man's early business history revolves around the monolithic object of profit maximization and improving shareholders' values. Because the benefits accrued to shareholders/investors ultimately cascade to the society, some economic theorists assume businesses do not owe the society more than economic responsibility. Friedman (1970), argues that CSR distracts business leaders from economic goals, and the only social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. However, as the human society progresses and the nature of interrelationship and interdependence between business and society become obvious, different interest groups began to mount pressure on the business organization to assume more responsibilities for the society, beyond the economic function.

The emergent new movement - corporate social responsibility (CSR) - which "is largely a product of the 20th century, especially the past 50 years" (Carrol, 1999:268) or so, gathered momentum to define and assign broader corporate responsibilities to the business. Sahlin-Anderson, (2006:595), considers CSR "as a global trend incorporating business corporations, states, international organizations and civil society organizations". The business organization is now seen as a creation of society whose survival depends on the very society. The society in turn apparently seems to impose certain responsibilities or obligations on the business organization to discharge for the benefit of both shareholders and stakeholders. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development writes that businesses are integral parts of society and their roles are encouraged by the society; the two are interdependent and must ensure mutual understanding and responsible behavior (WBCSD, 2009). Similarly, Porter and Kramer (2006), add that successful corporations need a healthy society and at the same time a healthy society needs successful companies.

CSR rests its assumptions on the fact that the organization is a creation of society; therefore it has a responsibility to aid in the accomplishment of society's goals. A company's corporate responsibility must be inseparable from its economic function. According to Inyang (2004:146-147), the business "owes society an obligation or debt - for taking something from the former it must give something in return to the latter, which would continue to provide the fertile ground for its (latter's) continuous existence". Therefore, the substance of social responsibility arises from concern for the ethical consequences of one's acts as they might affect the interests of others. Traditionally, CSR is a top-management driven initiative or activity, nurture from policy conception to implementation mainly by the organization's executive. According to Sharma, Sharma and Devi (2009:207), "from the very beginning the key player in undertaking such activities in the organizations has been top management and it has been the driving force in the area of social responsibility". The authors further note that employees have been rarely covered under the ambit of CSR.

The apparent exclusion of other stakeholders and their non-involvement in CSR initiative tended to affect the successful implementation of corporate responsibility programs. This top-down approach to CSR creates gap between executives and the employees concerning appropriate sources and ownership of CSR initiatives (Bhattacharya, Sen & Korschun, 2008). The authors argue that a more strategic approach is to give greater ownership of the CSR initiatives to the employees, since they wish for greater roles and to be co-creators of the CSR value and this would energize and empower them. By definition, a stakeholder is any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the activities or achievement of an organization. Similarly, Cohen (2010: 20), considers the stakeholders as "All those who have an effect on a business, and all those who are affected by a business". The stakeholders in terms of CSR issues are: managers, employees, customers, investors, shareholders, suppliers, government, the local community and the society at large and even the natural environment. In fact, CSR commitment has been extended to include both ecological sustainability and social development with focus on a 'triple bottom line' (economic, social and environmental) performance.

The employees are the most strategic of these stakeholders, and their involvement in CSR initiative impacts significantly on the organization's bottom line. "It is through employee actions and decision-making that many CSR strategies come to life. Human resource professionals are in a unique position to nurture and foster CSR performance within their organizations" (Strandberg, 2009a:2). Human resource professionals are very well positioned to implement any CSR initiatives or programs that will engage and benefit both the company and its stakeholders (Glade, 2008; Fenwick & Bierema, 2008). As a key stakeholder of the firm, the employees should not be seen as cost to be managed, but as an asset to be developed and valued (Zappala, 2004; Deniz-Deniz & De Saa-Perez, 2003). The involvement of employees - the human resource professionals - clearly shows the strategic importance of the human resource management (HRM) in the CSR initiative of an organization. There is, in fact, growing evidence that human resources provide firms with competitive edge (Pfeffer, 1998). According to Svensson & Wood (2005), the workforce is the most valuable asset of a company.

Galbreath (2006), notes that investing in internal stakeholders such as employees, has positive and significant effect on company performance. The purpose of this paper is to vigorously explore the emerging and scanty literature on embedding CSR in HRM and to contribute by repositioning internal stakeholders to assume a leading role in corporate responsibility programs in an organization. Exploratory approach was employed to unveil the nexus between CSR and HRM and to define the role engagement of HR professionals in CSR initiatives. The paper is divided into six sections. The first section presents the introduction. The second section deals with the literature review of the two concepts of CSR and HRM. The third section explores the nexus between CSR and HRM, and identifies the dimensions of HR practices in CSR. The role engagement of the HR professional in CSR is discussed in section four. Section five discusses the implications of the study for both the industry practitioners and academics, and this is followed by the concluding section.

2. Literature review: CSR and HRM

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The declaration by Industry Canada (2009:1), that "CSR is an evolving concept that currently does not have a universally accepted definition" is apt and well supported by many reviews and scholarly writings which attempt to define it (Carroll, 1979; 1999; Wood, 1991; Van Marrewijk, 2003; Catalyst Consortium, 2002; McWilliams, Siegal and Wright, 2006; Obalola, 2008 and Dahlsrud, 2008). Contributing to this definitional discourse, Carroll (1999:291) declares that the "concept of CSR has had a long and diverse history in the literature". Lantos (2001) states that the concept of CSR is fuzzy and is riddled with indistinct boundaries and debatable legitimacy. Okoye (2009), argues that identifying and defining what CSR means is open to contest and this presents some difficulty for theoretical and empirical analysis.

Werther, Jr. and Chandler (2011: xi), put it that “consistent definitions, labels, and vocabulary are still emerging and remain hotly debated in the field of CSR [and therefore] the range of competing terminology that is used can be a source of confusion and disagreement”. Fenwick and Bierema (2008:24), equally note that “understandings of CSR vary and are widely contested”. Merwe and Wocke (2007) add that there is a wealth of terminology in the field such as, corporate social responsibility, corporate sustainability and responsible business. The different definitional offerings apparently tended to influence scholars in their presentation of CSR analysis as varied in context, content and process, and sometimes went to equate or interchange it with ‘discretionary or philanthropic responsibility’ (Carroll, 2000), ‘Corporate social initiatives’ (Hess, Rogovsky and Dunfee, 2002), ‘corporate sustainability’ (Van Marrewijk, 2003; WBSCD, 2009; Strandberg, 2009b), ‘corporate citizenship and community involvement’ (Zappala, 2004), ‘corporate citizenship’ (Matten and Crane, 2005), ‘corporate social performance’ (Carroll, 2007), and ‘corporate sustainability and responsibility’ (Visser, 2010). Thus we find that one is dealing with a nebulous concept whose metamorphosis is essentially being influenced by public/society pressure, outcry and agitation demanding that business organizations should undertake more responsibilities beyond their legal requirements.

Willard (2005), argues that even though business organizations have always responded to “shareholder” demands, they have since the mid 1990s been responding to powerful interest groups, green consumers, activist shareholders, non-governmental organizations and government, making urgent demands for social responsibility. Business organizations are more and more coming under pressure by increased public awareness, different interest groups, legal and governmental concerns and media coverage to behave in a socially responsible and ethical manner (Carroll and Cannon, 1997; Jamali and Sidani, 2008). In fact, the business world of today is increasingly been characterized by global interdependence, privatization and environmental concerns and these top-notched issues have jointly imposed higher demands on managers of corporate organizations to assume a more positive stance on issues regarding social responsibility and ethical behaviour. The concept of CSR is still lacking an encompassing definition. McGuire (1963:144), defines CSR thus: “The idea of social responsibilities supposes that the corporation has not only economic and legal obligations but also certain responsibilities to society which extend beyond these obligations”. This definition acknowledges the primacy of economic and legal obligations but also certain responsibilities to society, which extend beyond those obligations.

Davis and Blomstrom (1975:39), see CSR as “obligation of decision makers to take actions which protect and improve the welfare of society as a whole along with their own interest”. This definition implies that social responsibility seeks to protect and improve society, thus bringing positive benefits to society. Another point is that CSR is an obligation. Carroll (1979:500), defines CSR thus: “The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time”. Carroll’s four dimensional definition of CSR involves the conduct of a business so that it is economically profitable, law abiding, ethically oriented and socially supportive. The discretionary dimension involves voluntarism and/or philanthropy. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 2009:2), defines CSR as “the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life”. For Industry Canada (2009:1), CSR is “the way firms integrate social, environmental and economic concerns with their values, culture, decision making, strategy and operations in a transparent and accountable manner and thereby establish better practices within the firm, create wealth and improve society”.

According to EU Commission (2002, 347 final: 5), “...CSR is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis”. In his contribution, Inyang (2004:148-149), defines CR as “the obligation of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions or to follow those lines of action, which are desirable in terms of objectives and values to the society of their location”. This definition is considered useful and elastic enough to handle the varied concerns of CSR as espoused in the burgeoning literature. Issues of economic profitability, legal concern, ethical and philanthropic actions, sustainability in all its ramifications - ecological, social, etc and economic accountability - where businessmen invest in projects that have positive effects on the community and are profitable to the firm and its stakeholders can be accommodated in the definition. Equally important is the fact that content, context, cross-cultural and/or country specific analysis concerned with CSR can be undertaken successfully and more objectively.

2.2 Human Resource Management (HRM)

To explore the nexus between CSR and HRM it is pertinent to present a brief review of the concept of HRM practice, as an important strategic responsibility in the organization that contributes to the bottom line. Managing people in organization is an important activity under HRM.

According to Sims (2002:2), HRM is “the philosophy, policies, procedures, and practices related to the management of an organization’s employees”. Inyang (2001:8), defines HRM as “a set of organization wide and people-oriented functions or activities deliberately designed to influence the effectiveness of employees in the organization”. The HRM function is essentially concerned with all the activities that contribute to successfully attracting, developing, motivating, and maintaining a high-performing workforce that result in organizational success. This earlier conception of HRM, concerned with providing transactional and administrative support services in the organization has since given way to the emergence of strategic human resource management (SHRM), according to Inyang (2010). Gupta (2010:397), equally notes that “the HR function has gradually shifted its focus, from a narrow maintenance reactive role, to a much wider canvas, integrating HR strategy with corporate strategy, empowering employees, restructuring the organization and so on”.

In this paradigm shift, SHRM, integrates the human factors to strategic business goals of the organization to create more value and enhance the competitive advantage of the organization.

1. The human resource (HR) professional has now become a strategic business partner, with a new mandate to deliver value in the organization in four ways, according to (Ulrich, 1997; 1998).
2. HR should become a partner with senior and line managers in executing business strategy and helping to improve planning from boardroom to the market place.
3. HR should become an expert in the way work is organized and executed, and to deliver administrative efficiency to ensure cost reduction and quality products and services.
4. HR should become a champion for employees, by representing their interest to senior management, and working to increase employee contribution, that is, their commitment to the organization and their ability to deliver results.
5. HR should become a change agent, by shaping processes and culture that together improve an organization’s capacity for a change.

The new mandate places the HR professional in a more strategic position to contribute significantly, to the success of CSR initiatives of the organization. Susan (2007:1), argues that “the recent shift by organizational leaders from viewing socially responsible or sustainable business practices as a peripheral issue, related mainly to brand perception and public relations, to a strategic issue, presents a significant leadership opportunity for HR professionals”. CSR has for long remained a top-management driven activity, devoid of effective participation from the employees. As a strategic business partner, and now to be more involved in corporate decision making and policy formulation, the HR professional can own CSR initiatives and drive the programs through policy crafting to successful policy implementation.

According to Cohen (2010), HR can leverage CSR strategies to deliver greater benefits for the business, for employees, for society, for the environment and ultimately, for HR professionals themselves. Lokhandwala (2009), add that the “HR can manage the CSR plan implementation and monitor its adoption proactively, while documenting (and celebrating) its success throughout the company”. In fact, employee involvement is a critical success factor for CSR performance. Strandberg (2009b: 2) states that “Human Resource managers have the tools and opportunity to leverage employee commitment to, and engagement in, the firm’s CSR strategy”. Successful CSR programs rely on enlightened people management practices. For example, getting the employment relationship right is a precondition for establishing effective relationship with external stakeholders (CIPD, 2002).

3. The nexus between CSR and HRM

There is no doubt that CSR is a strategic issue that permeates departmental boundaries and influences the way the organization does its business and relate with its stakeholders, both internally and externally. The HRM function is equally a pervasive responsibility which affects all units and departments in the organization. The HRM system should take the primary responsibility for managing CSR activities. CSR therefore expands or broadens the HR agenda and focuses on effective implementation. According to Sammer (2009), CSR is a significant way for HR to positively affect company performance. Kramar (2004), argues that the HR department has the potential to play a significant role in developing CSR activities in the organization. While CSR is expanding the role of HRM, it also supports the benefits of workplace practices, which contribute significantly to organizational efficiency and effectiveness. PR Leap (2007) argues that there is a growing overlap between HRM and CSR and that it is becoming increasingly important for HR professionals to take a leading role in both planning and implementing CSR strategies and in turn using CSR to deliver their own HRM objectives. Sharma et al (2009:205), add that “the combined impact of CSR and human resource activities, which reinforce desirable behavior, can make a major contribution in creating long term success in organization. Simmons (2008: 9), views “HRM as both a component and a potential facilitator of CSR”.

In a survey of the top 50 Turkish companies on the HRM dimensions of their CSR policies and practices, Tekin (2005), finds that 45% of the respondents consider the HRM department, as the key co-ordinator unit with respect to CSR initiatives. This means that besides developing and implementing the HRM functions, the department is also responsible for co-ordinating of social activities in the companies. The companies tended to perceive CSR programs as a sort of social activity. The nexus between CSR and HRM is quite obvious. Tekin (2005), in his survey asked respondents to evaluate the HRM functions of recruitment and training, from the CSR perspective. The finding shows that CSR leads to an improved recruitment and the company that shows greater commitment to CSR initiative is more attractive to potential employees. A strong relationship was also found between CSR and training functions as a strategic issue. Employees are more likely to respond if training programs incorporate policies, procedures, and system use in the workplace that meet the CSR objectives. New recruits or employees who are trained on CSR policy and projects during the orientation period are likely to perceive the importance of CSR policy and will buy into it.

Sammer (2009), similarly stresses the need for HR team in organization to make sure the importance of CSR is emphasized during employee orientation. In a study of two Swedish multinational corporations, Strandberg (2009c) finds a strong connection between CSR and human resources in the two organizations. The companies were found to use CSR to attract, motivate and retain human resource talents and this in turn improved their competitive positions. In fact, being perceived as an attractive workplace, especially if the company reputation and image is valuable, rare and not easily imitated companies can attract and maintain a high quality workforce to achieve a competitive advantage. Similarly, PR Leap (2007), notes that when CSR is embedded in mainstream business strategy, it therefore becomes a mechanism for unlocking human capital. By helping to enhance corporate reputation and build pride and shared values, CSR contributes to an organization's ability to attract and retain the best people. Greening and Turban (2000) find that job applicant and employee perceptions of a company's CSR determines their attractiveness towards the organizations.

4. The role engagement of HR professional in CSR

The role engagement of the HR professional in CSR initiatives in organization is a relatively unexplored area, in the ongoing academic discourse, theorizing and public debate, concerned with the nature, direction, role and process of CSR. CSR as a corporate imperative is essentially a strategic approach for organizations to anticipate and address issues with their interactions with stakeholders and through those interactions, to achieve success in their business endeavors. The top-bottom approach, where CSR initiative is driven by top-management remains dominant, with little involvement of the organizational employees, the human resources that is strategically placed to derive such organizational activities, with the complex array of stakeholders involved in CSR. Mees and Bonham (2004) argue that "if employees are not engaged corporate social responsibility becomes an exercise in public relations. The credibility of an organization will become damaged when it becomes evident that the company is not "working the talk". This is expressed as CSR=HR=PR. Embedding CSR in the corporate strategy of the organizations can enhance the unlocking of the creative potentials of employees, who can now buy into the program, and drive its implementation to success. The HR has a strategic role to play in the organization's CSR initiatives.

For HR to take this leading role it must be made a strategic business partner, participating in CSR policy formulation in the corporate boardroom. In this role, the HR professional can facilitate the implementation process through the involvement of the employers who are the 'DNA' of an organization and a key source of competitive advantage in today's knowledge-based business environment. Developing the proper nexus or link between CSR and HR can enhance society's development and provide benefits for the organization. Wilcox (2006:194), notes that "in drawing link between socially responsible practices and organizational performance, HRD professionals can facilitate the legitimation of CSR strategies within an organization". The role engagement of the employees will therefore bring up, the strategic contribution of HRM in CSR. The HR professional will then be contributing to sustainable practices in the organization and this will enhance organizational success. Agrawal (2007), also notes the immense benefit organization derives when the HR professional embeds the CSR values in the corporate culture. The HR policies and strategies which form the framework for culture in the organization help to create awareness among employees, of the need to achieve the corporate goals in the best possible and ethical manner. The HR professional can be engaged to perform many roles in the organization that initiates CSR programmes. Performing these roles brings immense benefits to the organization.

1. The HR can lead and educate organizational members on the value of CSR and provide the action plans on how to strategically and successfully implement the program. He provides requisite training opportunities for employees to identify with the CSR activity and provide the necessary support during implementation. By helping to develop action plans to analyze CSR activities, the HR professional is equally promoting corporate citizenship, which is vital for developing a culture for social responsibility.

This will further enhance the corporate reputation of the organization. Friedman (2009), argues that if a company wants to add organizational value, the HR function must focus on actions that build employee competencies and motivation that in turn positively influence corporate reputation. Lockwood (2004:5), argues that “it makes good business sense for HR to head the (CSR) process and partner with strategic leaders in the firm because human capital is arguably the number one intangible value driver”. In highlighting the important interfaces between HR and CSR, Dirani, Jamali and Harwood (2010) argue that the HR function can play a critical role in embedding CSR within corporations through facilitating CSR strategy development, implementation and related change issues.

2. The HR manager can help organization develop responsible and sustainable practices, and the focus on such practices may give HR more support in its existing work. Meisinger (2007), notes that equitable employment practices appear to affect employees through improved morale, increased engagement, higher productivity and better retention. These also reflect on an organization’s position as an employer of choice.

3. The HR professional can serve as a veritable channel or source for effectively communicating CSR activities to employees and the public or community. This communication allows a company to gain additional benefits from their investment including improving their public image, increasing employee morale, and support from the community (Zappala and Cronin, 2002). Tekin (2005), finds communicating with employees to greatly improve the performance of CSR mission. The HR’s role therefore involves developing the strategies to enhance business sustainability and communicating the values that enable the company to look beyond their short-term interests and see that acting responsibly can enhance their very ability to survive. According to Strandberg (2009b: 21), “the ultimate goal of CSR communications should be to engage employees in the CSR mission of the firm, to help build out the firm’s CSR DNA”.

4. The HR professional can also play an important role in helping the organization achieve CSR standards. HR leader can accordingly, influence three primary standards of CSR - ethics, employment practices and community involvement - that relate directly or indirectly to employees, customers and the local community (Marti, 2008). In fact, human resources management practices promote personal and professional employment, diversity at all levels and empowerment. According to Rimanoczy and Pearson (2010:14) the HR “has a key role to play by ensuring that their organization abides by accepted legal and ethical standards. It is part of their role to ensure employee effectiveness with an environment that maximizes the return on the investment in human capital by observing legal, ethical and fair treatment”. Other HR practices consider employees as valued partners, with the right to fair labour practices, competitive wages and benefits and a safe, harassment-free, family-friendly work environment. The HR professional will encourage community relations through his HR teams by implementing reward programs, charitable contributions, fund raising activities, and encouraging community involvement and practices. The community relations aspect of charity makes a company stronger and better able to engage or recruit and retain competent employees who easily identify with CSR initiatives. The HR team has a responsibility to make sure that the importance of CSR is emphasized during employee orientation and other training sessions. In community involvement, the HR leader will help the company foster an open relationship that is sensitive to community culture and needs and play a proactive, co-operative and collaborative role to make the community a better place to live and conduct business.

5. CSR has recently expressed its concern to include both ecological sustainability and social development with a focus on a ‘triple bottom line’ performance. Business firms now place emphasis on sustainability which implies a simultaneous focus on economic, social and environment performance (Colbert and Kurucz, 2007). Rimanoczy and Pearson (2010:13), defines “a sustainable corporation as one that achieves economic profit, maintains environmental quality and contributes to increased social equity”. The HR professional has an important role to play here in terms of developing, monitoring and implementing the triple bottom line activities. Glade (2008) argues that an organization’s CR and sustainability can be most effective with the HR team in the lead. The HR professional has an opportunity to get comprehensive CSR programs rolling that will engage and benefit the entire organization and its stakeholders. Glade (2008), argues further, that it makes sense for HR to lead sustainability initiatives, since recruitment, retention, morale, productivity, recognition and rewards - as well as innovation - are major components of a CSR/business sustainability strategy

5. Managerial and academic implications

There are obvious managerial and academic implications arising from this exploratory analysis of the nexus between CSR and HRM. It is clear from the analysis that business leaders are increasingly recognizing the strategic role of the human resources or organizational employees in driving and delivering sustainable business strategy.

WBCSD (2010), reports about a survey by the World Economic Forum which found that 75% of CEOs rated employees as a key driving force for corporate citizenship, 60% rated employee motivation as one of the top three benefits in taken action, and 90% saw communicating values and policies internally as a key step for achieving success in this area. WBCSD (2010:4-5) further identifies five key elements to the business case for engaging employees in sustainability:

1. Behavior change: The gains from sustainability - cost savings, risk reduction, reputation enhancement and innovation - arise through employees changing the way they work, learning new skills and pursuing new goals.

2. Innovation: Innovative ideas and cost savings may come from anywhere along the value chain, from front-line employees or the factory floor. If employees can make links between the issues that matter to them, their community, the planet and the business with a clear understanding of what this means for their own work, then they will be motivated to address sustainability concerns.

3. Attraction and retention: A commitment to sustainability helps in attracting and retaining talent.

4. Motivation and productivity: Employees are motivated when a business has a purpose. Employees who feel they are valued are more willing to “go the extra mile” in solving problems, taking initiative, helping colleagues and customers and working collaboratively.

5. Reputation: Employees can strengthen or damage brand reputation. The protection of brand reputation and the license to operate remains the strongest driver for addressing sustainable development. Employee involvement as front-line ambassador is a *sine qua non* for brand reputation. If employees are not involved, the efforts may be seen as a mere public relations exercise, that is, CSR-HR =PR.

The managerial implications are for the corporate leaders to recognize the critical role of employees in CSR initiatives and accordingly involve them from policy conception to implementation. The managers should also integrate the HR professionals as strategic business partners to lead and drive CSR programs in the organization to successful implementation. According to Strautmanis (2008: 348), successful implementation of CSR “helps the stakeholders (employees, society as such suppliers, etc) to develop a good impression of the enterprise. This creates a positive long-term image of the enterprise, increases its value and forecasts bigger profits in the future”. The HR professional in his strategic partnership position can then link up with other strategically positioned members of the organization to provide direction and control for full implementation of CSR programs. For the academics, this analysis is a wake-up call to extend research cannons to investigate the relatively unexplored nexus between CSR and HRM, and to clearly define and delineate the role engagement of the HR professional in CSR activities. There is urgent need for academics to undertake more rigorous empirical and theoretical studies in the area, to improve our understanding or advance our knowledge, especially now that CSR is a corporate phenomenon that is attracting more global attention or focus. The findings from such studies should help us to properly embed CSR in the corporate or business strategy of the organization to unlock the human capital that can successfully drive the CSR activities.

6. Conclusion

Corporate social responsibility concerns organization’s ability and willingness to meet the economic, legal, social and environmental interests of stakeholders. Its development and successful implementation attract long-term positive image for the enterprise amongst stakeholders and foster opportunity for increased values and bigger profit potentials. However, meeting the interests of stakeholders is a pervasive task though the classical theorists reserve the formulation of CSR programs to the domain of top-management. This outright neglect of HR professionals in CSR initiatives impedes implementation and espouses a new dawn that places HR professionals on a new pedestal as strategic partners, who drive CSR programs from conception to full implementation. Organizations that embed CSR programs in business strategy facilitate the unlocking of the human capital capable of making significant contribution to the success of CSR initiatives. The HR professionals successfully perform the roles of leading and educating employees on the value of CSR, developing responsible and sustainable practices, communicating CSR activities to the stakeholders and providing direction, control and action plans for implementing CSR initiatives in the organization. The managerial implications of fully involving the HR manager is to enable him take strategic action plans and control of the CSR programs and to enhance employees’ participation. The implications extend to the academics, who are now called upon to undertake more rigorous investigations into this relatively unexplored area, CSR-HRM nexus, to improve our understanding of the this corporate phenomenon.

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