Exploring the impact of social responsibility on staff engagement in Ghanaian Universities: unveiling the mediating effect of organizational identification

Emmanuel Barima Agyemang Prempeh (a)© Dennis Yao Dzansi (b)

(a) Faculty of Management Sciences, Central University of Technology, Free State, South Africa
(b) Professor, Faculty of Management Sciences, Central University of Technology, Free State, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

Ghanaian universities have embraced a corporate identity and are actively participating in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which is referred to as University Social Responsibility (USR). The purpose of this is to enhance the perception of identification (organisational identity) and promote employee involvement. This research examines the effect of University Social Responsibility (USR) on the level of involvement and commitment of staff members in Ghanaian institutions. It also proposes that the sense of identity plays a role in mediating the relationship between USR and staff engagement. This study utilized a cross-sectional survey methodology. The poll utilized a two-stage multi-stage sampling procedure to choose 412 participants. The survey utilized a validated questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) greater than 0.70. The data collected were configured and subjected to Structural Equation Modelling for analysis at a significance level of p<.05 using the SMART pls software. The findings indicate that identification perception does not significantly and directly predict the mediation effect of internal CSR on employee engagement (beta=0.008; t<1.96; p=0.439: p>0.05), and external CSR on employee engagement (beta=0.002; t<1.96; p=0.443; p>0.05) in the surveyed Ghanaian universities. The study concluded that the impression or identification did not operate as a mediator in the predicted association between the internal and external corporate social responsibility activities of the universities and employee engagement. According to the findings and conclusion, Ghanaian universities should take into account several elements and adopt a comprehensive approach when aiming to enhance employee job engagement. It is important not to exclusively concentrate on employee identification with the institution. It is advisable for the administration of Ghanaian institutions to develop efficient employee-focused engagement strategies and activities, both internally and externally, to boost the welfare of their workers, promote a sense of belonging, and improve overall performance.

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the concept that organisations have a responsibility to actively contribute to the advancement and improvement of society. Within the realm of higher education institutions (HEIs), such as universities, the concept and application of CRS has been defined and adapted as University Social Responsibility (USR). Consequently, colleges are obligated to take action in order to benefit society as a whole. Universities in Ghana have increasingly adopted a corporate approach and shown a commendable commitment to social responsibility towards the communities they are located in, as well as other stakeholders both within and beyond the university. Universities must prioritise meeting the wants and wishes of both external stakeholders in the surrounding society or community, as well as the internal stakeholders that make up the workforce (Ridho, 2017). Organisations can foster a culture of social responsibility that surpasses conventional corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts by taking into account the interests and demands of all stakeholders, including employees (Gautier & Pache, 2015). Prior research has highlighted the
increasing recognition of the crucial contribution that universities make to the advancement, enhancement, and well-being of societies and all parties involved, including employees (Huang, Shang, Wang, & Gong, 2022; Ramos-Monge, Audet, & Matinez, 2017).

In Ghana's current higher education scene, universities have embraced a more business brand. They prioritise their social duty by addressing both external stakeholders in society and internal stakeholders, such as personnel or employees, through engagement efforts. Employee engagement mostly pertains to the domain of human resources and management. Employee engagement refers to the emotional bond that workers have with their workplace, job role, position in the company, colleagues, and the overall organisational culture. This connection significantly influences their well-being and productivity. In other words, it refers to the encouragement of worker enthusiasm, active participation, and involvement in all production processes with the aim of enhancing labour productivity (Kruse, 2015).

USR, which stands for University Staff Relations, and staff engagement are essential for institutions in Ghana due to the challenges posed by restructuring. The reason for this is because User Social Responsibility (USR) has an impact on employment outcomes such as affective commitment, organisational identity, and work engagement (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019). The increasing focus on social responsibility towards the workforce at Ghanaian institutions has led to a notable transformation in institutional cultures and methods, policies, and practices, which has had a profound impact on staff dynamics and levels of involvement. The reason for this is that heightened work requirements, elevated stress levels, and extended work hours can potentially affect the amount of employee involvement and commitment (Shukla & Srivastava, 2016). Hence, it is imperative to apply USR effectively while formulating policies and processes for employee engagement in Ghanaian universities. Therefore, a university must successfully carry out its responsibilities of providing education, conducting research, and engaging in community service in a manner that is productive, streamlined, and meets the expectations of its students, employers, and society as a whole. Participating in User-System Research (USR) efforts can enhance employee involvement, while disregarding it might result in a range of organisational difficulties. When a university does not comply with its USR (University norms and Regulations), or even minimally diverges from the norms, guidelines, and regulations set by its national accrediting organisation for higher education, it is behaving irresponsibly. In the context of this situation, it is important to comprehend the impact of social responsibility efforts on the level of involvement and commitment of employees in Ghanaian institutions. This understanding is essential for enhancing the morale, satisfaction, and productivity of the educational workforce. Previous research has suggested that social responsibility may have a positive impact on employee or work engagement. Several studies (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Esmaeelinezhad, Singaravelloo & Boerhamnoeddin, 2015; Farid et al., 2019; Glavas, 2016) have explored this relationship. However, there is still a gap in our understanding of the specific ways in which social responsibility affects employee engagement, especially in the context of higher educational institutions in Ghana. Organisational identification is an often ignored factor that might potentially mediate employees' sense of belonging to their organisation and work engagement. This phenomenon gives rise to a knowledge deficit, necessitating research on the impact of social responsibility on work or staff engagement, affective commitment, and organisational identity in higher education institutions. Additional scholars have advocated for investigations into the relationship between social responsibility and work engagement, as suggested by Aguinis and Glavas (2019), Boğan and Sarıışık (2020), Farid et al. (2019), and Gond, El Akremi, Swaen, and Babu (2017). This discourse examines the ways in which social responsibility might impact employment engagement in the chosen universities by investigating the mediating mechanisms involved. Therefore, this paper investigates the impact of both internal and external user-generated content on employee work engagement, and explores the function of identification views in this relationship. Examining these dynamics is crucial for improving employee well-being and productivity. Moreover, gaining a comprehensive grasp of the mediating and moderating mechanisms that play a role in this correlation can offer useful insights for universities in Ghana and other locations. This knowledge can assist them in formulating more efficient policies and procedures to enhance employee engagement.

This research seeks to examine the effect of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on employee engagement in Ghanaian universities, and analyse the function of organisational identification in mediating the relationship between social responsibility and employee engagement. Understanding these links would not only illuminate the complex interactions between social responsibility, employee engagement, and organisational identification but also offer practical insights for colleges in Ghana.

Improved comprehension will allow these institutions to optimise their strategies for social responsibility, promoting better levels of employee involvement and strengthening organisational identification, so contributing to higher educational standards and institutional excellence.

The structure of this paper is as follows: After the introduction, the second portion consists of a literature review that includes the conceptual and theoretical foundation, as well as empirical investigations that provide insight into the connection between theory and practice. The third section provides an introduction to the background information regarding the research and methods. Following the examination and results of the study, the authors present discussions and implications. The paper finishes by providing a concise overview of the main themes that were discussed, as well as offering suggestions for future research and acknowledging the limits of this study.
Literature Review

This discourse looks at the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guide empirical reviews and hypotheses formulation.

Conceptual and Theoretical Background

This philosophy or notion of social responsibility also aligns with the Social Exchange Theory (SET). The theory (SET) maintains that such a relationship may end when significant effort or resources are re-directed at other alternatives, but the returns are not worth it without receiving anything in return. The theory suggests that there is an exchange relationship between an organisation and its stakeholders, including employees (Larrán & Andrades, 2015). This exchange relationship is based on mutual expectations and obligations, with each party expecting certain benefits and outcomes from the other. In the context of this study, the social exchange theory can help to explain the relationship between social responsibility initiatives and staff engagement. This paper also aligns with the Social Identity Theory. In this discourse, individuals evaluate their self-worth based on their own perceptions and how they compare to societal norms (Tajfel, 1978; Turner, Brown & Tajfel, 1979). According to Boroş (2008), a person's social identity is the part of self-concept derived from knowledge of their membership in a social group(s) together with the value and emotional significance attached to group or organizational membership. This suggests that stakeholders including employees of the university feel more secure when their membership identity is recognized in the group or institution in which they belong. As a result, they tend to keep up their good identities and involvement in groups, which promotes engagement since it raises their self-esteem (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This assertion echoes the views of some researchers who averred that people see their membership in particular groups based on social roles and role relationships, and they classify themselves and others into different social categories such as organizational membership, gender, ethnicity, age cohort, or religious affiliation (Jones & Volpe, 2011). The theory also suggests that for employees to feel a sense of belonging in their workplaces, they should be able to identify with a social category, such as a set of personal attributes (Todd & Kent, 2009). The Social Identity Theory is relevant to USR since it demonstrates how employees who perceive USR have stronger commitment, job satisfaction, and engagement and feel more linked with their firm (Farooq, Farooq & Jasimuddin, 2014; Shin, Hur & Kang, 2016; Glavas, 2016). In other words, when employees identify with the institution they work for, which occurs when its USR efforts are distinctive, prestigious, and enjoy a strong reputation, they are more likely to profit from USR.

The notion or view that organisations should be accountable for their social and environmental impacts is termed corporate social responsibility. Thus, social responsibility highlights the importance of organizations being accountable for their social and environmental impacts, especially given their increasing impact on society (Camilleri, 2022). This assertion echoes the views of several scholars who cited that the main objective of a social responsibility initiatives is to make many contributions to the development and progress of society (Aguye, Sun, Penney, Abrokwa & Ofori-Boafo, 2021; Bello, Jusoh & Md Nor, 2021; Fatma & Khan, 2023; Hameed, Khan, Islam, Sheikh & Khan, 2019; Haupt, Wannow, Marquardt, Graubner & Haas, 2023; Kim & Manoli, 2022; Kowalczyk & Kucharska, 2020; Kuokkanen & Sun, 2020; Lee, Han, Radic & Tariq, 2020; Maury, 2022; Ridho, 2017; Sahut, Peris-Ortiz & Teulon, 2019; Stoyanov, 2017; Zhang, Kong & Lu, 2021). An aspect of corporate social responsibility is University Social Responsibility (USR) or University Corporate Social Responsibility (UCSR).

According to Reiser (2007), USR is a policy that aims to promote ethical quality within the university community through responsible management of the educational, cognitive, labour, and environmental impacts of its students, faculty, and administrative employees. Scholars have yet to agree on a standard definition of USR. USR was defined by the European Commission University Social Responsibility [EU- USR] (2015) as the duty of universities to mitigate the adverse effects of their actions on society and the environment through open and honest practices. That is the school’s ability to teach a consistent set of morals and values that permeate all levels of administration and help realise the university's stated social goal (Rodriguez-Dominguez, Sánchez-Hernández & Delgado-Ramos, 2009). Reiser (2007) views USR as a policy that aims to promote ethical quality within the university community through responsible management of the educational, cognitive, labor, and environmental impacts on its students, faculty, and administrative employees. This paper adopts Reiser’s (2007) definition of USR and operationalizes it as the development of a policy that outlines the university's commitment to ethical and responsible management of its educational, cognitive, labour, and environmental impacts which ensures that both internal and external holders uphold ethical behaviour and standards. This requires that the internal stakeholders identify and assess the social, environmental, and economic impacts of the university's activities and develop strategies to manage these impacts in a responsibly and sustainably way. Again, based on Reiser’s (2007) definition, this paper also operationalizes USR as fostering a culture of engagement with external stakeholders, including the local community, industry partners, and government agencies. USR focuses on a university’s capacity to disseminate and utilize procedures in four areas: social issue awareness, information sources, required education, and help from the neighbourhood (Gomez, 2014).
Figure 1 shows the hypothesized relationship between USR and work or staff engagement mediated by organizational identity. Firstly, the CSR activities of universities are directed at its stakeholders (Harrison, Freeman & de 2015). These activities can be grouped into external and internal depending on which stakeholders are targeted (Ferreira & de Oliveira, 2014; Obeidat, 2016). The external stakeholder activities focus on the external university community and environment. The internal CSR activities centre on employees, students, and the internal university environment (Ferreira & de Oliveira, 2014; Obeidat, 2016). Secondly, the literature review has also clarified direct and indirect relationships between USR and employee engagement and other organizational outcomes in the following ways. USR directly impacts employee work engagement based on Social Exchange Theory (Chaudhary, Rangnekar & Barua, 2014; Esmaeelinezhad et al., 2015). The Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits that there is a direct link between USR and employee identification (Waldkirch, 2015). Finally, employee identification directly influences work engagement based on SET and SIT (Waldkirch, 2015). This depicts the conceptual research framework of the study.

Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development

This empirical review is on the hypothesized relationship between USR and staff engagement mediated by organizational identity. The paper hypothesizes that USR activities directed at the university’s staff, and its internal environment will have a direct significant effect on employee work engagement.

University Social Responsibility (USR) and Staff Engagement

Universities, like other organisations, rely heavily on their employees including faculty, staff, and researchers to achieve their missions of providing high-quality education and conducting cutting-edge research (Kim, Kim & Kim, 2021). Employee or staff engagement, also known as worker, workforce, or workplace engagement, is an aspect of corporate social responsibility. In the landscape of higher education, USR is conceptualized as the extent to which employees are committed to their work and the organization (whether emotional and psychological, cognitive, or physical), characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and a willingness to actively contribute to organizational success (Harter, Schmidt, Agrawal & Plowman, 2020; Osoian & Petre, 2022). These components of employee engagement are represented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Components of Employee Engagement; Source: GirlsGuideToPM.com- adapted from Robert Talbert (2018)
satisfaction and career development opportunities (Kim et al., 2021). Staff engagement is particularly relevant in the university context, as faculty staff's motivation, commitment, and performance, which, in turn, can affect the quality of education and research outcomes. On this premise, this review aims to provide an overview of employee engagement, focusing on the key drivers of engagement and their relevance in the university context. By examining the trends in employee engagement, the review will highlight the importance of fostering employee engagement in universities. The hypotheses below guide this debate.

**H1:** USR performance has a positive effect on staff engagement.

**H1a:** USR activities directed at the university's internal stakeholders will have a significant effect on employee work engagement.

**H1b:** USR activities directed at the university's external stakeholders will have a direct and significant effect on employee work engagement.

Some previous studies examined the impact of CRS on staff engagement (Albrech, Bakker, Guman, Macey & Saks, 2015; Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Boğan & Saruşık, 2020; Esmaeelinezhad et al., 2015; Farid et al., 2019; Harter et al., 2020; Glavas, 2016; Gond et al., 2017; Harvard Business Review, 2019; Mbughuni, Mtega & Malekani, 2022; Osborne & Hammoud, 2017; Saks, 2019). Some of these existing studies hypothesized that social responsibility can improve employee (staff) work engagement (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Esmaeelinezhad et al., 2015; Farid et al., 2019; Glavas, 2016). These studies reported that staff engagement significantly impacts organizational performance, including employee commitment (Saks, 2019), reduced turnover (Mbughuni et al., 2022), positive work environment (Mbughuni et al., 2022), increased productivity (Harvard Business Review, 2019), improved customer satisfaction, and higher levels of innovation and creativity (Harter et al., 2020; Mbughuni et al., 2022). It becomes clear that employee engagement has become an influential factor for organizational success in a competitive business world. For this reason, employee engagement has increased as a management and research concern. Albeit, there is a paucity of research on the relationship between social responsibility and work engagement in higher education (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Boğan & Saruşık, 2020; Gond et al., 2017).

Furthermore, there is little to no understanding regarding how social responsibility impacts work engagement in higher education in Ghana due to a lack of research on the subject (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Boğan & Saruşık, 2020; Gond et al., 2017). This situation creates a knowledge gap that might affect the policies and practices of educational institutions like universities. Such a knowledge gap will unavoidably hinder the successful application of social responsibility in the development of policies and procedures for employee involvement in the university sector in Ghana. The relationship between USR and staff engagement has been empirically proven to increase organizational identity. Therefore, this paper theorizes that university corporate social responsibility enhances organizational identity. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that social responsibility activities directed at the university’s internal staff, namely employees, and its internal environment, will have a significant impact on employee identification perceptions. The following hypothesis and sub-hypotheses guide the discourse.

**H2:** USR performance has a positive effect on organizational identity

**H2a:** USR activities directed at the university's internal stakeholders, namely employees, students, and its internal environment will have a significant impact on employee identification perceptions.

**H2b:** USR activities directed at the university's external stakeholders, namely its external community and immediate external environment will significantly impact employee identification perceptions.

**University Social Responsibility (USR) on Organization (Institutional) Identification**

The level of employees’ identification with their institutions is linked to their sense of belonging or self-believe concept of belongingness, which is known as organizational identity. This is self-entitlement of identity helping to develop employees alongside with organization. This paper adopts the explanation given by Albert and Whetten (1985) on the concept of organizational identity. In their view, the organizational identity is (a) what employees perceive as organization’s most essential characteristics; (b) how employees perceive the company; (c) what employees perceive to be enduring or continuous, despite objective changes in the organizational surroundings; and (d) what employees believe to be different and hence unique from other organizations in their eyes. These scholars interpreted organizational identity to represent the organization’s internal, that is, employees’ vision (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Organizations with a strong identity, according to the characteristics listed above, have central traits, are distinct from other organizations, and stay the same for extended periods. Organization identification has three components: (a) feeling like one’s voice is heard within the organization, (b) supporting the organization’s goals with one’s actions, and (c) perceiving commonalities with other employees. So, the identification statement of a university or an organization must distinguish it from others to meet the uniqueness criterion. An organization or institution’s ideology, management philosophy, and culture often find a home in this direction and influence substantially the identity of the organization. In the context of universities, understanding the concept of organizational identity and its potential limitations is crucial for promoting social responsibility and staff engagement. Just like any other organisation, universities have a unique identity that shapes their decision-making processes and influences how employees perceive and react to various issues. Therefore, exploring ways to foster pliability and critical self-reflection in universities' organizational identity can contribute to the creation of a more socially responsible and engaged academic community.

**H3:** Employee identification perceptions of the university will significantly impact employee engagement.
Identification Perceptions and Employee Engagement

Employee identification can be construed as employees’ perceived sense of belongingness and alignment with their organization's values and goals. Employees who have a strong identification with their organization are more likely to feel engaged in their work for several reasons as revealed in the literature review. In other words, employees tend to be more engaged in their work when they have a strong sense of organizational identity. This happens when employees feel a personal connection with the organization, its values, and its goals. Some researchers found a positive link between organizational identity and employee engagement, indicating that employees who strongly identify with their organization are more engaged in their work (Duus & Harnish, 2018; Hamid, Ishak & Shamsudin, 2014; Ohly & Schmittand Almer-Jarz, 2017; Wu, Hsu & Chen, 2023). It can be inferred from the existing studies that organizational identification has a positive effect on employee job performance (engagement). In other words, studies show that employees who perceive a strong sense of organizational identity tend to exhibit higher levels of engagement compared to those with weaker identification. Thus, organizational identification is a potential indicator of employee engagement (Ohly & Schmittand Almer-Jarz, 2017). In other words, when employees strongly identify with their organization, they are more likely to engage in their jobs. Duus and Harnish (2018) indicated that when employees identify strongly with their organization, they are more likely to be engaged in their work. Lastly, Wu et al. (2019) also examined the mediating role of perceived organizational support. They found that organizational identification positively enhances employee engagement. In other words, the findings suggest that employees who identify strongly with their organization exhibit higher levels of engagement. This paper hypothesizes that organization perception (employee identification perceptions) will influence social responsibilities and staff engagement in university workplace output.

The Mediating Roles of Identification Perceptions on Employee Engagement

Employee identification can serve as a significant mediator between USR and employee engagement. The link between USR and employee engagement may not be direct but is influenced by the degree of employee identification. Firstly, USR activities alone may not boost employee engagement unless employees identify with the organization or institution and its values. When employees see their organization engaging in USR activities, it strengthens their identification with the organization, which in turn boosts their engagement.

Empirical studies confirm this stance (De Roeck & Farooq, 2018; Farooq et al., 2014; Gond et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2020). In this instance, organizational identification served as a mediator between USR and employee engagement, emphasizing the significant role of employee identification. Gond et al. (2017) reported that USR practices positively influence employees' organizational identification, which subsequently enhances their engagement level. De Roeck and Farooq (2018) indicated that USR activities increase employees' organizational identification, thereby leading to improved employee engagement. A study conducted by Lee et al. (2019) showed that employees' identification perceptions positively influenced their level of identification with the organization, which then led to higher levels of engagement. Farooq et al. (2014) also found that USR directly impacts employee identification. If employees identify with their organization, especially when they perceive their company as socially responsible, it likely results in higher levels of employee engagement. However, if employees do not identify with their organization or its values, the USR activities might not have as strong an impact on employee engagement.

Research and Methodology

This cross-sectional survey employed the quantitative research approach based on the positivism paradigm. The population for the survey was 1896 permanent workforce including senior members, senior staff, and junior staff of both academic and non-academic departments in four universities both public (2) and private (2) in Ghana, namely; the University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS =832), University of Environment and Sustainable Development (UESD =403), Evangelical Presbyterian University College (EPUC =253), and All Nations University (ANU=408). Multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 412 respondents for the survey.

The multi-stage sampling was done in two stages. In the first stage, the four universities were purposively selected because they are noted for their immense involvement in both internal and external CSR activities. The second stage was the selection of sub-groups of the employees from the universities for the survey. The use of simple random sampling allowed the researcher to give an equal chance for inclusion in the study, thereby reducing the possibility of sampling errors (Balitphip, Pasri, Suwanphahu, McSherry & Kritpracha, 2022). Data was obtained through a 5-point Likert scale structured questionnaire adapted from a previous empirically validated questionnaire with Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α > 0.7).

The quantitative data collected were configured and subjected to Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) involving the two-stage embedded approach using the SMART pls software to test the formulated hypotheses. This offered the platform for testing the hypotheses in a way that minimised the personal influence of the researcher on the phenomenon of the study (Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019). This research analysed three (3) variables, namely; social responsibility, staff engagement, and organizational identification (identification perceptions).
Findings and Discussions

The results of the study cover respondents’ characteristics, test of hypotheses, and discussion of findings.

Respondent Characteristics

The respondents in this research were 412 permanent employees comprising senior members, senior staff, and junior staff of both academic and non-academic departments in four universities in Ghana, namely; the University of Health and Allied Sciences, University of Environment and Sustainable Development, Evangelical Presbyterian University College, and All Nations University. Of all the respondents, this research identified several characteristics including the respondent's gender, age, education, and work experience in terms of length of service in years. Detailed results of respondents’ characteristics are shown in Table 1.

The survey found that the majority of respondents were males (59%), while 41% were females. This shows that male employees dominated the workforce in the universities. Furthermore, from the age aspect, it was found that the majority (81%) of the employees in the universities were aged 31 - 50 years with 61% within the 31-40 and 20% within the 41 - 50 age groups. A few number (19%) of the employees were below 30, or above 50 years of age.

Table 1: Respondents’ Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Sample (n = 412)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>30 and below</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31 – 40</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41 – 50</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Education</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma/HND</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below Diploma</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of service (years)</td>
<td>5 and below</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 and above</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparatively, the workforce of the universities could be described as youthful. Hence more responsibilities are on the human resource (HR) units of these universities to institute appropriate human resource development initiatives and policies to tap into the experiences of these workers over time to maximize their lifetime value for the betterment of the universities. In terms of length of service or number of years in service, the majority (83%) of the employees had 10 years of working experience or below with 57% constituting 6-10 years of work experience, while 26% had up to 5 years of work experience. Conversely, a few numbers (17%) of the employees had been working for 11 years or more, with 9% working for 11-15 years and 8% working for 16 years and above, respectively. It can be concluded that the majority (83%) of the workforce in the universities surveyed are less experienced. Hence, proper succession planning and retention strategies could help the universities get the best out of their workforce. Based on the highest education level, the majority (66%) of the workforce in the universities had higher degrees (doctorate and master degrees), while 34% had bachelor’s degree and diploma certificates. Of the 66%, 49% had a master’s degree as their current highest level of formal education. More room should be given for staff development in their universities to produce more Ph.D. staff and professors.

Analysis of Result

Test of Hypotheses and Mediation Analysis

The paper hypothesizes that organization perception (employee identification perceptions) will mediate the relationship between social responsibilities and staff engagement in university workplace output. Based on this mediation hypothesis relationship, it is hypothesized that: a) $H_1$: CSR activities directed at the university's internal stakeholders, namely employees, students, and its internal environment will have a direct and significant effect on employee work engagement; b) $H_2$: CSR activities directed at the university's internal stakeholders, namely employees, students, and its internal environment will have a significant impact on employee identification perception; c) $H_3$: CSR activities directed at the university's external stakeholders, namely its external community and immediate external environment, will significantly impact employee identification perceptions. These hypothetical assumptions were statistically subjected to structural equation modelling (SEM) at a significance level of $p<.05$, and the results are presented in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.
Table 2: Identification Perceptions as a Mediator between CRS and Employee Work: Specific Indirect Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t statistics</th>
<th>p values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal CSR -&gt; Identification perceptions -&gt; Employee work engagement</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>0.439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External CSR -&gt; Identification perceptions -&gt; Employee work engagement</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>0.443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the hypothesis test results of organizational identification (identification perceptions) as a mediator between CSR and employee engagement. Although it is empirically proven that organizational identity (employee identification perceptions) is a positive and significant mediator between CSR and employee engagement, the results in Table 2 show that identification perceptions failed to mediate the predictive relationship between internal CSR and employee work engagement (beta=0.008; t<1.96; p=0.439; p>0.05). In a similar vein, the mediating effect of identification perceptions was found to be insignificant in the predictive relationship between external CSR and employee work engagement (beta=0.002; t<1.96; p=0.443; p>0.05).

Table 3: Coefficient of Determination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R-square</th>
<th>R-square adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification perceptions</td>
<td>0.333</td>
<td>0.330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 3 show that changes in both external CSR and internal CSR account for a 33.3% positive change in identification perceptions ($r^2=0.333$). Technically, both external CSR activities and internal CSR activities jointly account for weak positive change in identification perceptions among workers in the four Ghanaian public and private universities enrolled in the survey.

Discussion

Previous studies collectively support the mediation hypothesis (assumption) that employee identification perception plays a positive and significant mediating role in the relationship between an organization's CSR activities and employee engagement. However, this study found that identification perceptions fail to transmit the effect of internal CSR on work engagement. This implies that identification perceptions failed to mediate this predictive relationship between internal CRS activities of the universities and employee work engagement. In other words, identification perceptions did not serve as a mediator in transmitting the effect of internal CSR on work engagement, indicating that it does not explain the impact of internal CSR on employee engagement in the surveyed universities. Hence, the mediation hypothesis is not supported. This is an indication that identification perception is not a suitable factor that better helps to explain the effect of internal CSR on employee engagement in the universities surveyed in this study.

Therefore, this finding contradicts the position held by some previous researchers who averred that identification perceptions perform a transmissive role in the internal CSR-employee work engagement predictive relationship (Adhikari, 2016; Brammer, He & Mellahi, 2015; De Roeck & Farooq, 2018; Farooq et al., 2014; Gond et al., 2017; Hamid et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2019). The finding is contrary to the conventional wisdom of previous researchers who stated that identification perceptions play a crucial role in mediating the internal CSR-employee work engagement predictive relationship. Instead, the finding supports the notion that internal CSR can significantly influence employee work engagement without relying on the mediating effect of identification perceptions. So, while identification perceptions may play a role in some contexts, this study shows that it is not a universal mediator for the relationship between internal CSR and work engagement. Rather, internal CSR has a direct and significant impact on work engagement, which can help organisations develop a more effective engagement strategy. On the other hand, the finding supports the position that internal CSR significantly influences employee work engagement without recourse on the intervening mediating effect of identification perceptions.

It also unfolds from the survey that the mediating effect of identification perceptions was found to be insignificant in the predictive relationship between external CSR and employee work engagement. Put differently, identification perception was not found to be significant in explaining the relationship between external CSR and employee engagement in the surveyed universities. This highlights that the impact of external CSR on employee work engagement cannot be solely explained by the degree to which employees identify with the CSR activities of the universities concerned. Rather, the results support the notion that external CSR has a direct and significant impact on employee work engagement, without the need for identification perceptions to mediate this relationship. Despite previous claims by Adhikari (2016) and Tolbert and Hall (2015) that identification perceptions transmit the effect of external CSR on work engagement, the results of this study suggest otherwise. The situation can be explained by the complex and dynamic relationships among stakeholders in the university context and the potential conflicts that can arise between stakeholders with different interests and powers. The complexity of these relationships and the fact that each stakeholder group may have distinct interests and expectations regarding the university’s social responsibility efforts could contribute to this development. Again, other variables like job satisfaction, work-life balance, and leadership styles could have a greater impact on employee engagement. Additionally, this could be due to a failure on the part of a university to adhere to its internal and external obligations, engage in actions that damage its reputation, or deviate from the standards, guidelines, and regulations established by its national accrediting...
body for higher education, like the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). This could make the university face a risk of losing support from stakeholders, thereby negatively affecting employees' identification perceptions of their affiliated universities and work engagement. Therefore, universities must recognize the importance of organizational identity and adopt practices that align with their mission and values to build a sustainable reputation for themselves and their stakeholders. In this regard, it is prudent for the management of Ghanaian universities to design and implement effective internal and external CSR strategies and activities that foster a sense of identification and enhance staff engagement levels.

Conclusions

This study aims to examine the hypothesis that perceptions of identification have a positive and significant role in mediating the relationship between USR (Unit Social Responsibility) and employee engagement. This study discovered that the impression of identification does not directly clarify or forecast the mediation effect of internal and external user self-representation (USR) on employee engagement in Ghanaian public and private universities that participated in the survey. This finding indicates that while identification views may have an impact in certain situations, it is not a universally applicable factor in the connection between internal or external USR and work engagement at universities. The results and statistical analysis did not provide evidence to support the idea that identification perceptions have a positive and significant role in mediating the link between USR and employee engagement. Both internal and external user satisfaction ratings (USR) have a direct and substantial influence on work engagement at universities. Hence, the study's results and conclusions have significant ramifications for policy, practice, and philosophy.

This research offers suggestions for the management and human resource departments of universities and other organisations to enhance their engagement strategy by integrating changes into both internal and external corporate social responsibility (CSR) plans. The research findings also offer suggestions for universities to enhance the work engagement of their employees by involvement in USR activities that focus on their external community and environment. Hence, it is advisable for Ghanaian institutions to develop USR activities that prioritise the needs and interests of employees in order to encourage their active involvement. These activities may encompass community outreach programmes, environmental sustainability initiatives, and social responsibility projects with the goal of enhancing the welfare of the local community. University public relations departments can also generate awareness of USR programmes among university staff and communities in order to garner support for the effective execution of USR initiatives.

Both public and commercial universities in Ghana should prioritise the inclusion of external University Social Responsibility (USR) initiatives in their strategic plans. This would contribute to the betterment of their employees' welfare and overall performance. This is because when colleges participate in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that positively impact the external community and environment, employees are more inclined to associate themselves with the institution and experience a sense of affiliation. It is necessary to allocate sufficient funds for USR initiatives. If universities do not have the necessary internal ability to practically implement USR programmes, it may be necessary to outsource to professionals in order to ensure proper execution.

This study highlights the significance of taking into account internal stakeholders when designing USR activities, since they have a substantial impact on employee attitudes and behaviours towards the university. Based on the study's findings and conclusions, it is advised that the management of both public and private universities in Ghana engage their employees in the development and implementation of internal and external USR (University Social Responsibility) initiatives that specifically target employees and students. This will help to cultivate a stronger sense of identification among them. To enhance the overall organisational culture and staff dedication, Ghanaian universities should give priority to USR projects that directly benefit their internal stakeholders. These activities encompass employee appreciation programmes, employee training and development opportunities, and student-focused initiatives aimed at promoting student happiness and participation.

The second-to-last hypothesis of the study suggested that views of employee identity would exert a substantial influence on employee work engagement. Nevertheless, the study's findings indicated that perceptions of identification did not have a statistically significant positive impact on predicting the variation in employee job engagement. This discovery implies that although an employee's sense of belonging to the university is a significant factor in organisational behaviour, it may not have a direct impact on their level of work engagement. Additional variables, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and leadership styles, could potentially exert a more significant influence on employee engagement. According to this research and the conclusions made from the study, Ghanaian universities should take into account several aspects while attempting to enhance employee work engagement, rather than exclusively concentrating on employee identification with the school. An integrated approach that considers multiple facets of the work environment and employee requirements may be more efficient in fostering job engagement among personnel.

The study's findings suggest a disparity between how university staff perceive their affiliation with the organisation and their level of engagement in their profession. The discoveries presented in this document have significant ramifications for policy and practical application. The results emphasise the necessity for administrators in Ghanaian institutions to create and execute internal corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies, which should include programmes for acknowledging employees, training and development opportunities for employees, and activities centred on students. University administrators in Ghanaian universities should engage in partnerships with external stakeholders to implement community development projects, environmental sustainability programmes, philanthropic activities, and other tactics that contribute to the well-being of the university's local surroundings. Implementing both internal and external CSR engagement methods and activities has the potential to boost the well-being of employees, cultivate a
feeling of identity, and improve staff engagement and overall performance. This research outcome adds to the existing literature by showing that employee identity has a minimal effect on work engagement. Although employee identification is seen as a crucial element of organisational behaviour, the research discovered that it does not have a direct impact on work engagement among university employees. This theoretical insight encourages additional investigation into the intricate interaction of several elements that contribute to employee engagement, such as job satisfaction, leadership styles, and work-life balance.

This paper examined the effect of university social responsibility on staff involvement in Ghanaian universities. It also proposed that identification views have a mediating role in this relationship. However, it is important to note that the study only included a sample of 412 participants from four specific universities. Although the current sample size is sufficient, it is recommended that future research increase the sample size to encompass a wider and more diversified range of employees from both public and private colleges across various regions of Ghana. This would improve the potential to apply the findings to a larger population. This study utilised a completely quantitative methodology by employing the survey method. Although the quantitative technique allowed for the analysis of a larger sample size, it did not facilitate a thorough comprehension of the phenomenon being studied. Hence, it is imperative for a forthcoming investigation to adopt a mixed methodologies approach and research design that integrates surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. This could offer more profound understanding into the factors contributing to the absence of substantial intervention through identification views. Therefore, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data could enhance the applicability and certainty of the findings. This discussion, based on the cross-sectional survey design, provides a brief overview of university social responsibility (USR), views of identification, and employee involvement in Ghana at a specific moment in time. Therefore, it failed to take into account potential or upcoming patterns that analyse variations over a period of time. To fully understand how the effects of USR on employee engagement alter in response to university policy or economic conditions, it is necessary to conduct a longitudinal study that tracks these changes over time. Considering the cross-sectional nature of the study, it would be appropriate to use a longitudinal research methodology for future investigations on the impact of USR activities on employees’ identity perceptions and work engagement in Ghanaian institutions. This study specifically proposed that identity perceptions have a moderating role in the relationship between staff engagement and university social responsibility. Further research should investigate supplementary factors, such as organisational culture and leadership styles, in order to gain a more intricate comprehension of the relationship between USR and employee engagement.

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