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# Internal Corporate Social Responsibility Preferences of Young Job Seekers with Regard to Sustainable HRM: Are These CSR Preferences Related to Their Personal Value Orientations?

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## ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** In order to increase corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities with organizations, the support of employees in times of climate change is crucial: employees with CSR awareness of sustainability and their subsequent extra-role work behavior are an asset to an organization. Sustainable HRM promotes sustainable employee behavior. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between personal values orientations and internal CSR preferences which increase subsequent sustainable employee behavior fostered by sustainable HRM practices. Specifically, our central research question here examines the extent to which personal value orientations predicts internal CSR preferences towards sustainable employee behavior. In this paper, we look at this issue from the perspective of young, highly qualified job seekers who have to face issues of sustainability.

**Methodology:** We conducted an integrative literature review of empirical studies on internal CSR and sustainable HRM. In addition, we reviewed the application and relationship of Schwartz's personal values framework and employees' internal CSR preferences.

**Findings:** The findings conclude that the relationship between personal value orientations of employees and their preferences in the focus of the company's internal CSR is heterogeneous, as positive vs. negative paths between personal values and internal CSR preferences were identified. Further, different scales for internal CSR dimensions were applied.

**Value Added:** Based on previous studies we develop an integrative internal CSR framework (with employee vs. organizational dimensions) that could be applied in organizations to measure their internal CSR maturity level and be supported by the specific, sustainable HRM practices discussed.

In addition, we dealt with the question of how the connection between the personal value orientations of potential candidates or employees and their internal CSR preferences can be proven in field research.



**Recommendations:** Based on recent heterogeneous study results, we identify five research gaps and propose research design ideas for future research. Practical implications are also discussed.

**Key words:** internal CSR, personal value orientations, sustainable HRM

**JEL codes:** M12, M14, M50, J17

## Introduction

In the 21st century, the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDG, United Nations, 2021) form the foundation for corporate social responsibility (CSR). As a result of these goals, CSR is likely to play a central role in the strategy and business model of organizations as they rely on ever-changing, even shrinking resources and help to alleviate the increasing pressures of growing economic, social and environmental issues affecting the world. CSR as a strategy and framework has been discussed for many years and continues to persist in the extant literature (Allen & Craig, 2016; Pisani et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2019). In particular, a growing body of literature recognizes the importance of CSR and its contribution towards the triple bottom line (i.e., people, planet and profit) "for a more sustainable biosphere" (Renwick, 2018, p. 8), to achieve the SDGs (UN, 2021), and to address the "grand challenges" of our planet. CSR strategy could impact economic success, but goes beyond that as a common good approach with a higher purpose for our society and our planet rather than being a green-washing campaign (Aust, Matthews, & Müller-Camen, 2020).

CSR as a multi-dimensional concept is based on the stakeholder approach to sustainable business, fulfils an obligation of welfare to internal vs. external stakeholders, and impacts our society, our environment and economy (Carroll, 1979; Kolk, 2016). Glavas (2016, p. 2) defines CSR in general as "context specific organizational actions and policies that take into account the stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental performance."

This CSR definition forms the basis for our review whereby CSR is differentiated into internal vs. external CSR. The internal stakeholder approach (i.e. internal CSR) includes an emphasis on employees, while the external stakeholder view (i.e. external CSR) focuses mainly on the marketplace, customers and community (Brammer, Millington, & Rayton, 2007; Brammer, Pavelin, & Porter, 2009).

External CSR benefits both society as well as the environment and can consequently promote awareness and perception of CSR among employees, leading to increased organizational commitment, work engagement and ultimately higher employee performance (Wang, Xu, & Wang, 2020 and Turner et al., 2019). Further, this external perspective could be supplemented by the community, supplier, customer, natural environment and shareholder orientation to a multi-dimensional CSR perspective, leading to increased work engagement and commitment (El Akremi et al., 2015). El Akremi et al. (2015) validated those specific dimensions to a CSR scale, whereas internal CSR was only defined by employee-oriented CSR.

Internal CSR, however, includes ethical and transparent action that contributes to the health and welfare of employees by regarding them as citizens of society (ISO 26000, 2010). Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel (2015, 2016, 2017) and Bustamante et al. (2020) identified a number of social preferences covered by internal CSR in relation to the employee vs. organizational dimension: these include work-life balance, social benefits, health & safety, training & development opportunities, diversity/equal opportunities, job security, and labor relations. Internal CSR benefits organizations by attracting future highly qualified candidates, and by developing and retaining employees (Rank & Contreras, 2021). For example, Kim et al. (2010) identified that active CSR participation directly influenced employee identification, which in turn impacted employee commitment in contrast to mere CSR perceptions. Ferreira & de Oliveira (2014) found that employees who were only exposed to internal CSR scenarios were more engaged than those who were only exposed to external CSR scenarios.

Here we focus on internal CSR to examine what CSR preferences employees have in a modern workplace. In order to strengthen and increase the internal CSR activities of organizations, the support and engagement of employees is crucial, especially of young, highly qualified job seekers who have to face the sustainability issues of the 21st century. This allows us to look from the perspective



of young, highly qualified job seekers. Due to demographic changes in Europe, young professionals with university degrees are rare and the war for talent (Chambers et al., 1998) is forcing employers to find, recruit, integrate and retain this talent. According to Aust, Matthews, & Müller-Camen (2020), Ehnert (2009) and Ehnert et al. (2016), sustainable human resource management with its strategies, policies and practices may increase the extra-role behavior of employees, i.e., recruiting candidates with a preference and attitude towards CSR, CSR training and sustainability awareness, and then further rewarding behavior which may ultimately contribute to the sustainable performance of the organization (“common good approach”). Since Green HRM is part of sustainable HRM (Wagner, 2013; Renwick, 2018; Paulet, Holland, & Morgan, 2021), which aims to improve the green behavior of employees, we believe that the overarching pillars of internal CSR, i.e., the environmental and social pillars, are worth considering as a way of contributing towards overall sustainability. Thus, the employee could contribute to both pillars of internal CSR with their pro-active behavior.

In particular, by defining internal CSR actions embedded in a sustainable HRM framework the organization could recruit CSR-motivated job seekers to encourage employee behavior to contribute to sustainable business strategies. Consistent with the person-organization (PO) fit approach (Kristof, 1996; Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995), we recognize that personal values are fundamental to every hiring candidate. Personal values predict attitudes, preferences and behavior of individuals as underlying foundations and guide “what is good and worthy” (Sagiv et al., 2017, p. 1). Drawing together the three research strands mentioned above (i.e., internal CSR, personal values, sustainable HRM), our central research question examines the extent to which personal value orientations predicts internal CSR preferences towards sustainable employee behavior.

The remaining part of the paper proceeds as follows: firstly, we define internal CSR with regards to sustainable HRM as a key contributor to internal CSR; we argue that sustainable HRM practices could help to develop these altruistically motivated young professionals into CSR ambassadors within the organization in order to increase the overall sustainability of the organization to a higher level of maturity (Aust, Matthews, & Müller-Camen, 2020). Secondly, we review

the operationalization of the internal CSR construct and its preferences, and note how the construct with subscales has been applied differentially in studies and identify the need for further validation of the internal CSR preferences (Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2015, 2016, 2017; Bustamante et al., 2020; El Akremi et al., 2015). Third, we examine whether the personal values orientations (Schwartz, 1992, 2014) of young job seekers predicts internal CSR preferences by reviewing existing literature. Finally, we conclude with an examination of the main directions for future research along with practical implications, responding to the call of Aust, Matthews, & Müller-Camen (2020) to make HRM more sustainable and to contribute to the growing theoretical base of sustainable HRM.

## Internal CSR dimensions and sustainable HRM

Internal CSR includes ethical and transparent action that contributes to the health and welfare of employees as well as to society (ISO 26000, 2010). Employees can add value to organizational performance through their sustainable behavior (e.g., Ferreira & de Oliveira, 2014; Radwan, 2015; Obeidat, 2016; Low, Ong, & Tan, 2017; Soni & Mehta, 2020; Turker, 2009; Wang, Xu, & Wang, 2020). According to Aust, Matthews, & Müller-Camen (2020), internal CSR is an integrated part of a sustainable HRM approach by contributing to the overall sustainability of the organization in the current times of climate change. Through a high level of organizational engagement and sensitive actions towards the environmental and social pillars of internal CSR, all members of an organization can contribute to human transformation, e.g., by enhancing social work standards and achieving an awareness of and support for pro-environmental behavior (Aust, Matthews, & Müller-Camen, 2020; Rank & Contreras, 2021). This extra-role behavior beyond their day-to-day work is commonly referred to as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and has a strong impact on the implementation of sustainable business strategies (e.g., Dumont, Shen, & Deng, 2017; Paillé et al., 2014).



Sustainable HRM practices can support social and environmental goals. For example, sustainable HRM practices can support the recruitment of CSR-motivated job seekers, the setting of sustainable employee performance goals, and green awareness training to encourage managerial and employee behavior that contributes to sustainable business strategies (Amrutha & Geetha, 2020; Yong, Yusliza, & Fawehinmi, 2019). Hence, sustainable HRM is “the adoption of HRM strategies and practices that enable the achievement for financial, social and environment goals, with an impact inside and outside of the organization and over a long-term time horizon while controlling for unintended side effects and negative feedback” (Ehnert et al., 2016, p. 20). Aust, Matthews, & Müller-Camen (2020) argue that the goal of sustainable HRM is to develop an integrative framework with the pillars of internal CSR so that the organization can monitor its level of maturity. In short, sustainable HRM can foster an attractive, sustainable, greener and more socially minded employer than before by creating a positive candidate and employee experience for the social cause (Deloitte, 2017). Thus, internal CSR should be an integrated part of a sustainable HRM approach as suggested by Aust, Matthews, & Müller-Camen (2020) and Turner et al. (2019).

As the theoretical foundation of our research question, we now discuss six different, integrative approaches to show the importance of the fit between individual personal values and internal CSR preferences with regard to sustainable HRM of a company. The first three of the six approaches deal with sustainable HRM, while the fourth through to sixth approaches examine the value congruence (fit) of employee and employer concerning internal CSR which is fostered by sustainable HRM practices.

First, in their multi-stakeholder perspective Stahl et al. (2019) favored an active contribution of sustainable HRM practices to the organization’s CSR strategy by applying two sides of the same coin: (1) by doing good and (2) avoiding harm for the organization. On the one hand, sustainable HRM practices ‘by doing good’ could focus on recruiting candidates with a high sensitivity to personal values or providing green training fostering sustainable innovation for the organization. On the other hand, Stahl et al. (2019) argue that unethical acts that harm the sustainable organizational strategy should be punished by the top management team (e.g., past gasoline scandal in the automotive sector).

Second, in line with the ‘doing good’ approach of Stahl et al. (2019), Piwowar-Sulej (2021) provided a review of the HRM practices that influence the environmentally-friendly behavior of employees and therefore act as enablers of sustainable HRM. These practices included recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, compensation, training and development and HR staffing. Piwowar-Sulej (2021) notes the impact of these practices and argued that they should be implemented in order to strengthen internal CSR awareness and the pro-active behavior of employees.

Third, various studies have examined how employee behavior can contribute towards the environmental goals of CSR (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2012; Renwick, 2018). Renwick (2018), for example, linked Green HRM processes with the ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000) since Green HRM is understood as a subset of sustainable HRM (Wagner, 2013; Renwick, 2018; Paulet, 2021).<sup>1</sup> By applying the AMO model employees should increase their green skills (abilities) through green training, employee motivation should be promoted through targeted performance reviews and rewards, and employees should gain opportunities for green behavior through active participation and engagement in voluntary green projects. An integrative Green HRM framework was elaborated by Ren, Tang, & Jackson (2018) with antecedents, mediators, and outcomes on organizational and individual levels respectively. Paulet, Holland, & Morgan (2021) provide a comprehensive overview of Green HR practices within their review which includes Green recruitment and selection (e.g. Adjei-Bamfo et al., 2019), Green training (e.g. Stefanelli et al., 2019), and Green employee empowerment (Tariq, Jan, & Ahmad 2016). Furthermore, Malik et al. (2020) showed in China that Green HRM activities (perceived Green recruitment, selection performance appraisal and rewards, training) contribute to OCB, which is ultimately a mediator for sustainable

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1 Cheema & Javed (2017) defined Green as follows: first, protecting the environment against negative change, loss and harm; second, safeguarding for the future cohorts on earth by minimal usage and conservation of the natural environment; third, avoidance of environmental pollution; and finally, avoidance of contamination of the atmosphere, water and air, and decrease of waste.





performance. Amrutha & Geetha (2020) and Yong, Yusliza, & Fawehinmi (2019) confirmed the linkage between Green HRM and organizational performance. Thus, we support the view that Green HRM could be integrated as a valuable component in a sustainable HRM approach.

Fourth, Jones, Willness, & Glavas (2017) elaborated on the interdependencies of three CSR levels in organizations (macro vs. meso vs. micro level). At the macro level the societal impact of CSR is in focus, while at the meso level the firm-level CSR practices and corporate performance is considered. We focus, however, on the third level of Jones, Willness, & Glavas (2017), the micro level, which deals with individual beliefs, values and behavior in the workplace, to explore the relationship between personal values and the internal CSR preferences of employees with regard to sustainable HRM.

Fifth, Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & McKinnon (2017) in a recent evidence-based review suggest that the identity of the employer as an organization and the employee should be in congruence. They described this congruence as a dynamic continuum from “low” to “intertwined” CSR. Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & McKinnon (2017) differentiated CSR into two perspectives of corporate vs. employee social responsibility. The latter covers our definition of internal CSR preferences from the employee perception, but is not consistent with the previous definitions such as ISO 26000 or Brammer, Millington, & Rayton (2007). Furthermore, when there is complete perceived congruence on corporate vs. employee focus, i.e. PO fit intertwined in their model, this leads to engagement and retention of current employees. Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & McKinnon (2017) further elaborated this model in the form of a mediator model. The congruence of corporate and employee social responsibility is the mediator between engagement and organizational outcome like environmental, social and economic performance. Organizations can influence the level of congruence through sustainable HRM (i.e., recruitment, selection, etc.) resulting in long-term employee engagement. The distinction between corporate vs. employee focus sheds some light on the overall structure of internal CSR, which helps to separate the focus at an organizational vs. individual level (Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2015, 2016, 2017). Consistent with the PO-fit approach (Kristof, 1996; Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith,

1995), this proposed congruence of internal CSR fit of employer vs. employee (Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & McKinnon, 2017) could be a key factor for sustainable HRM, e.g., by recruiting candidates with high values fit with employer's values, or existing staff with a high fit for internal green projects, or transforming the workplace culture into transparency and ethical values. However, which specific personal values of the employees could increase the congruence with the CSR values of the organization remains open and should be specified.

Sixth, Aguinis, & Glavas (2019) developed a mediator model with an underlying mechanism of "sensemaking" based on employee perception, in a similar way to Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & McKinnon (2017). Derived from empirical findings, sensemaking is defined by the perceived meaningful work of the employees.<sup>2</sup> Aguinis & Glavas (2019) found that CSR operates on three levels: (1) intra-individual level: which concerns work orientation, ecological and community values, moral identity; at the (2) intra-organizational level: in terms of top-down vs. bottom-up CSR measures; and (3) extra-organizational level: culture, external stakeholders. When CSR measures are implemented in companies, then employees assess the meaningfulness of their work and their extra-role behavior, e.g., by getting involved in green organizational projects at these different levels. In line with our focus, Aguinis & Glavas (2019, p. 17) confirmed the importance of our central research question at levels 1 and 2: "Will the positive effect of environmental values on meaningfulness depend on work orientation such that the relationship will be stronger for individuals with a stronger calling orientation" (i.e., belong to meaning of work and altruistic value) "compared to those with a weaker calling orientation?"

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2 Meaningful work (MOW) is a multi-dimensional concept about one's experience of the self-concept, personal growth and with a focus on being other-oriented (e.g., helping others and contributing to the greater good, Allan et al., 2019; Bailey et al., 2019). In their meta-analysis, Allan et al. (2019) reported that MOW strongly correlates with work engagement, commitment and job satisfaction; moderate with life satisfaction, meaning in life, general health and withdrawal intentions. Thus, MOW might be considered as a potential moderator for internal CSR preferences on organizational commitment.

In summary, the theoretical approaches show how the interplay of organizational vs. individual levels might contribute to an ethical work culture as part of internal CSR, sensemaking organizational purpose, sustainable HRM practices and meaningful work. Further, internal CSR with its subscales might clarify how maturity on the organizational vs. individual level could be enhanced.

## Comparison of different internal CSR constructs

In seven studies, El Akremi et al. (2015) validated a general CSR scale including an external vs. internal focus which impacted the organizational commitment mediated by organizational support. From an internal CSR perspective, only the employee-oriented CSR dimension was considered. This has to be viewed critically because the external dimensions focused on five subdimensions (e.g., community-oriented, natural environment-oriented, supplier-oriented, customer-oriented and shareholder-oriented CSR).

According to ISO 26000 mentioned earlier, the social pillar of internal CSR includes the following internal HR practices such as (1) work-life balance; (2) health and safety; (3) training and development opportunities; (4) diversity and equal opportunities; (5) job security and labor relations, but these are each operationalized differently in studies as preferences (Glavas, 2016; Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2015, 2016, 2017; Wang, Xu, & Wang, 2020). Due to the Green HRM research (Renwick, 2018; Ren, Tang, & Jackson, 2018), the environmental pillar should be integrated into the internal CSR framework. The next issue in our review is therefore an overview of existing internal CSR constructs and their sub-scales. In our further discussion we focus on the main studies by Bustamante et al. (2020) and Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel (2015, 2016, 2017) who elaborated different internal CSR constructs, and subscales (i.e. preferences), examining in particular what they have in common and where they differ.

Bustamante et al. (2020), for example, showed that some preferences belong to the workplace category of internal CSR, while the others are linked

to the employee responsibility category of internal CSR (see figure 1). They also differentiated between non-CSR and CSR preferences, which, however, corresponds neither to ISO 26000 nor EU definition (2008, 2011) cited earlier for internal CSR. They argue that some preferences directly affect employees' self-concept and enhance individual self-enhancement values (e.g., workplace attractiveness, employee responsibility), whereas other dimensions (like responsibility towards society and environment) rely on the doing good perspective such as self-transcendence values. This distinction of personal values derives from Schwartz's value approach (Schwartz, 1992, 2003; Schwartz et al., 2012).

In contrast, Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel (2015, 2016, 2017) identified two independent factors (employee vs. organizational CSR dimension) in several studies that form a latent construct of internal CSR (an orthogonal factor with these two dimensions). In addition, the employees' perception of the overall internal CSR factor impacted their assessed affective commitment, which supports sustainable HRM research (e.g., El Akremi et al., 2015). However, the environmental pillar was less represented within internal CSR dimensions, see figure 1.

Overall, the internal CSR dimension of Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel (2015, 2016, 2017) differs from that of Bustamante et al. (2020); however, we have sorted these internal CSR dimensions according to similarity in content (see figure 1). Further empirical validation will be necessary in future studies to determine which of the internal CSR dimensions contribute to the internal latent CSR construct.

**Figure 1.** Comparisons of internal CSR dimensions

<b>Bustamante et al. (2020):</b>	<b>Mory, Wirtz, &amp; Göttel (2015, 2016, 2017):</b>		
<p><b>Workplace attractiveness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Salary and material wealth</li> <li>▪ Career opportunities</li> <li>▪ Work atmosphere</li> <li>▪ Challenges at work and task variety</li> <li>▪ Participating in decisions</li> <li>▪ Independence &amp; ownership</li> <li>▪ Continuing staff education &amp; training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work environment</li> <li>▪ Capabilities &amp; competencies</li> <li>▪ Job security</li> <li>▪ Diversity</li> <li>▪ Work life balance</li> <li>▪ Employee involvement</li> <li>▪ Responsibility in the job</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employee CSR</b></p>	<p><b>Internal CSR</b></p>
<p><b>Responsibility towards employees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Services to advance security &amp; health</li> <li>▪ Work life balance / family friendly policies</li> <li>▪ Job security / social services</li> <li>▪ Fairness and anti-discrimination policies</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Responsible corporate management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corporate transparency</li> <li>▪ Ethical principles</li> <li>▪ Stakeholders' concerns</li> <li>▪ Fairness towards partner, suppliers &amp; competitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transparency</li> <li>▪ Ethical values</li> <li>▪ Fairness</li> <li>▪ Engagement / Corp. Mission</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organiza- tional CSR</b></p>	
<p><b>Responsibility towards society and environment (i.e., external CSR)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social engagement</li> <li>▪ Volunteer programs</li> <li>▪ Energy &amp; resource efficiency</li> <li>▪ Reducing emissions</li> <li>▪ Eco-friendliness of products</li> <li>▪ Green and social issues in supply chain</li> <li>▪ Commitment to sustainability standards</li> </ul>	<p>(Missing the environmental pillar with sustainable and Green HRM, e.g., HR concepts supporting employee green behavior)</p>		

Following the PO fit approach (Kristof, 1996; Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith 1995) we can learn from internal CSR evidence which aspects of a potential employer can attract highly skilled job seekers as potential candidates so that they increase their intention to apply (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019;

Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & McKinnon, 2017). From a sustainable HRM perspective, these target groups could fit the CSR values of the employees vs. the organization (Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2015, 2016, 2017) and could act as CSR ambassadors for the organization's sustainability projects in the future.

As mentioned earlier, previous research on the impact of CSR on organizational attractiveness operationalized internal CSR heterogeneously (as well as external CSR, Gond et al., 2010; see Glavas, 2016 for a complete review). To show how internal CSR is perceived by young job seekers and impacts their job decision or organizational attractiveness rating, we summarize the most important studies below (for a recent overview see Rank & Contreras, 2021).

Ng & Burke's (2005) study of MBA job seekers focused on whether internal diversity management programs influence job selection decisions. Women and ethnic minorities rated diversity management as important when accepting job offers. Jones Willness, Madey (2014) tested the signal-based mechanisms of CSR on job seekers' interest and found that the value congruence between the candidate and the organization is another facet related to CSR. Gully et al. (2013) examined job seekers as to whether CSR activities in the area of social and environmental responsibility of organizations had an impact on their job choice. The findings suggested that the impact on job choice depended on the intentions of the job seeker and their own desire to have a significant impact on their work. Montgomery & Ramus (2011) showed that MBA students (Millennials) in the US and Europe gave intellectual challenge (internal CSR) the highest priority when asked about job factor preferences. In addition, the organization's reputation for internal care for employees and ethics for products and services played a key role in the choice of employer. Catano & Morrow Hines (2016) conducted an experiment with Canadian students and showed that the effect of CSR activities and psychologically healthy workplaces increased the employer attractiveness; in addition, they found that personal values such as openness moderated this relationship. Finally, Zhang et al. (2020) found that the influence of social CSR on organizational attractiveness is mediated by the cognitive and affective perceptions of employees in China.

In summary, these studies have operationalized dimensions of internal CSR in various ways, but revealed that internal CSR preferences might play a role



when choosing a job in an organization. In particular, as operationalized in the studies discussed above, some preferences of internal CSR (i.e., intellectual challenge, caring about employees, personal development, flexible work time, diversity / equal treatment) significantly influenced the attractiveness of the employers as well as employee's organizational commitment. These preferences can be assigned to the dimensions of employee responsibility and workplace by Bustamante et al. (2020) and on employee CSR and ethical behavior on the organizational CSR dimension by Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel (2015, 2016, 2017). This is consistent with the ISO 26000 standard for internal CSR at an individual micro level (see Jones, Willness, & Glavas, 2019).

Having presented evidence for internal CSR and the importance of these preferences in establishing modern workplace attractiveness and culture, we now move closer to our central research question of whether the personal values of potential candidates or current employees could predict their internal CSR preferences.

## Personal values as a predictor for internal CSR preferences

Schwartz (1992, 2014) developed a theory of basic values from intercultural research, which comprises 57 values items, and grouped them into ten different types of values that are important for human life: universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction; and divided them into four clusters: self-transcendence, conservation, self-enhancement and openness to change. Sagiv et al. (2017, p. 1) argued that these values predict attitudes, preferences and behavior of individuals as underlying foundations and give direction as to "what is good and worthy", are trans-situational goals, and act as guiding principles.

The connection between these values and sustainable behavior in companies has been tested in a number of studies (see a review by Rickaby, Glass, & Fernie, 2020). We base our research questions on Schwartz's value orientations

model and ask to what extent personal values orientations predict internal CSR preferences towards sustainability; in particular, which personal values are predictors for the different internal CSR preferences (compared to figure 1)?

Evidence of the interplay between Schwartz's values and CSR preferences (i.e. mix of general vs. internal vs. external CSR) is primarily provided by studies with students. The evidence is based in particular on the student sample and their willingness to engage in community initiatives. Since the (internal vs. external) CSR preferences were operationalized differently in these studies drawing comparisons are problematic. Thus, after discussing this evidence, we will transfer these findings to the internal CSR perspective as there may be a research gap for internal CSR and its presumed link to personal values which we will address within our conclusion. In keeping with the focus of our research question, the universalism and benevolence of Schwartz's value model might be important predictors for internal CSR belonging to the 'self-transcendence' cluster, as the following studies may support this notion.

Evans & Davis (2011, p. 1), for example, carried out an experiment with students in the USA which showed that "perceived corporate citizenship impacted the job applicants' attraction for those individuals who received prior education regarding CSR and for those who were higher in other-regarding value orientations."

In a further experiment in the USA, Kim & Park (2011) operationalized CSR as a communal program sticking to the social pillar of CSR only and a fictitious PO fit was presented and rated by the students as job seekers. The degree of PO fit mediated between (good vs. poor) CSR reputation and organizational attractiveness or intent to apply.

Among Taiwanese students in the study by Lin et al. (2012), they perceived that corporate citizenship of real and successful Taiwanese companies impacted the job seekers' perceived firm attractiveness and, interestingly, potential career success expectations of the students' job applications. These findings contradict the argumentation of Bustamante et al. (2020) that doing good like citizenship is based on self-transcendence and not on self-enhancement values. But corporate citizenship was operationalized based on the CSR concept of Carroll (1979, economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic citizenship), i.e., specified as the external and not the internal view of CSR.



Wang & Juslin (2011) examined the relationship between value patterns and CSR perceptions of Chinese university students. The results showed that the altruistic values of the Chinese students are negatively associated with their perceptions of CSR performance, whereas the egoistic values are positively associated with CSR. Further, the well-known gender effect on CSR attitudes was shown based on earlier studies that women are more in favour of CSR than men (e.g. Ng & Burke, 2005). For these Chinese students, social and economic responsibility was overall more important than environmental responsibility. Wang & Juslin (2011) conclude that CSR education is culture-specific and needs to be tailored to the target group, as they had less knowledge about CSR at the time of the study.

In a cross-cultural study involving 17 countries, Mueller et al. (2012) found that certain cultural dimensions increased the influence of CSR preferences on affective commitment (Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2015, 2016, 2017): human orientation was the strongest moderator followed by institutional vs. in-group collectivism, future orientation and low power distance on affective commitment (see House et al., 2004). The CSR construct was a general scale of some internal vs. external CSR characteristics (i.e., a mixture of CSR characteristics by Bustamante et al., 2020).

González-Rodríguez, Díaz-Fernández, & Simonetti (2015) showed that Spanish social sciences' students with higher ethical values (universalism and benevolence) displayed positive perception of social initiatives; the typical gender effect accompanied this pattern (higher for women).

In two experiments with young job applicants, Rupp et al. (2013) revealed that the impact of CSR (communal and environmental pillar) on organizational citizenship behavior was mediated by distributive justice. Furthermore, the desired moral identity of job seekers e.g., "caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind" (Rupp et al., 2013, p. 907) interacted with the CSR preferences in relation to the intentions of the job search.

Pereira, Duarte, & Trindade (2015) examined the relationship between Schwartz's values, CSR preferences and work engagement of Portuguese students. The path of CSR's preferences and work engagement was confirmed for the specific CSR dimension workplace and marketplace, but the relationship between personal values and the different CSR dimensions was surprisingly

negative; however, specific employee characteristics (age and seniority) positively predict CSR preferences and work engagement in general.

Hameed et al. (2016) examined dual mediating paths (via internal respect vs. external prestige) of internal vs. external CSR on employee identification. In line with Aguinis & Glavas (2019), the calling orientation (part of the meaning of work) moderates both pathways of mediation, giving us some clues to personal values and motivation. However, the interplay of work meaning (Steger, Dick, & Duffy, 2012) with Schwartz's personal values is another avenue of research (see Ros, Schwartz, & Surkiss, 1999).

In an international study in 21 countries, Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & Leigh (2020) examined the effects of responsible management education on CSR. These effects related to the students' values in self-transcendence, the development of conservation values and a positive attitude towards CSR. CSR attitudes served as mediators for students' CSR behavioral intentions (willingness to sacrifice salary in order to work for a responsible employer). Thus, the values and attitudes of the students played an important, mediating role between the countries. The typical gender effects were shown, but none of age and work experience on the dependent variables.

For young job seekers, Bustamante et al. (2020) argued that the choice of employer depends heavily on the applicant's own well-being, choosing preferences like flexible work time models, development opportunities, as opposed to the other CSR preferences like employer's environmental or social well-being. Based on their results, the preferences such as workplace attractiveness (see figure 1: highest values for employee responsibility or work environment) are shown as drivers for the choice of employer. In Bustamante et al.'s (2020) study one of Schwartz's self-transcendence values (i.e. universalism) had an effect on internal CSR preferences. The first part of an assumed mediation model was tested in this study, and doing good values (i.e., self-transcendence in contrast to self enhancement values) influenced certain CSR preferences (workplace, socio-ecological responsibility and governance & ethics, see figure 1). However, a confirmatory factor analysis should be conducted to examine the proposed latent CSR subscales shown in figure 1. Bustamante et al. (2020) differentiated between non-CSR vs. CSR preferences without reporting evidence as



this distinction is inconsistent with previous terminology (Brammer, Millington, & Rayton, 2007; EU, 2008, 2011; ISO 26000; Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2015, 2016, 2017). Furthermore, the influence of the mediators on the intention to apply or the attractiveness of the employer should be tested as dependent variables.

In our discussion, samples of students in different regions (USA, Europe and Asia) were examined on the central research question we outlined earlier. We have briefly summarized specific research results on the relationship between personal value orientations and CSR preferences, mostly operationalized heterogeneously with internal vs. external CSR. Thus, different results of positive vs. negative pathways were identified. For this reason, there is a need for further research to examine the relationship between personal values orientations and internal CSR preferences of young job seekers. Moreover, in the focus of the reviewed studies, the following personal values appear to be relevant: self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement of Schwartz's approach (e.g., Bustamante et al., 2020; Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & Leigh, 2020; Hameed et al., 2016).

## Conclusions and directions for future research

In order to precisely determine the relationship between personal value orientations and internal CSR preferences of potential candidates and employees, the following suggestions should be further researched. First, the operationalization and validation of the internal CSR construct differs. Future research could test the internal, latent CSR construct based on employee vs. organizational factors (Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2015, 2016, 2017; Bustamante et al., 2020). After the validation phase, this internal CSR scale can be a solid analytical tool for companies to assess their degree of maturity of internal CSR. Sustainable HRM practices (see Piwowar-Sulej, 2021) could be integrated to foster organizational values for CSR (Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2015, 2016, 2017) and increase the internal CSR maturity level. Further, across seven countries Sargisson, de Groot, & Steg (2020) showed that socio-demographics had less influence on personal

values (i.e., altruistic vs. egoistic values); only gender was a strong influencing factor. It is therefore important to examine the influence of personal values, for example, on behavioral climate change campaigns by choosing ambassadors with strong personal values (e.g., self-transcendence). Good advice is to follow the congruence model of Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & McKinnon (2017). For example, a scale could be developed to examine the internal CSR construct assessing the sustainable level of HRM in order to improve the sustainable behavior of employees. In addition, this PO value fit tool could support the search for potential employees for initiatives such as Green campaigns. Should this personal value-internal CSR-path be confirmed by validation in future studies, this value analysis tool could be designed as a cultural matching tool for potential candidates on the organization's website in order to check the degree of the candidate's organizational value fit.

Second, a mediation study design should be conducted for proofing the power of values prediction on CSR preferences as mediators on employee outcomes. The mediation model could be extended by mediators such as meaningful work or sustainable psychological empowerment resulting in outcomes such as employee social and ecological performance or work engagement or intention to stay. However, Purc & Laguna (2019) showed that the values of self-enhancement and openness to change (as opposed to conservation and self-transcendence values) are related to perceived job autonomy in the workplace, acting as mediators between these personal values and their innovative behavior. They conclude that the specific personal value set is of importance based on the specific work situation in which employee behavior is required. An experimental research design with various fictitious employer descriptions could be a further step to test the influence of the independent variable personal values on internal CSR vs. non-CSR preferences of a fictitious employer.

Third, the cross-cultural perspective should be included, which focuses on samples from different nationalities and cultures (Mueller et al., 2012). Due to this cultural perspective, specific cultural dimensions, i.e. collectivism and human orientation, might be drivers for CSR activities in the same vein as we argued for the impact of personal values (Schwartz, 2014) on internal CSR. However, self-enhancing values could weaken this path. Witte, Stanciu, &

Boehnke (2020), however, criticized Schwartz (2014) for comparing cultural values within (across) cultures, sticking to the distribution instead of the averaging approach. Based on their results on the intercultural comparison of Schwartz's value preferences, they postulated a two-dimensional structure: a) alteration vs. preservation and b) amenability vs. dominance. Schwartz & Rubel (2005) found that the typical gender differences in personal values was moderated by cultural dimensions in an unexpected pattern. Schwartz & Rubel (2005, p. 1023) argued that for countries with less gender equality "increased independence and equality of women in the labor force may encourage them to express distinctive values rather than to accommodate their values to those of their husbands". Whether there is a significant relationship between Schwartz's personal value orientations and the cultural dimensions of House et al. (2004) should be tested in future cross-national studies as Mueller et al. (2012) have applied. Across seven European countries, Sargisson, de Groot, & Steg (2020) identified the typical gender effect rather than an age or country effect on Schwartz's value orientations (i.e., altruistic, biospheric, and egoistic values). Therefore, further research is needed to assess both personal and cultural values and to test how they interact with each other to answer our open question: Who are the future potential talents in society and organizations pushing the activities against the climate change?

Fourth, in addition to student surveys, international organizational samples should be used in different sectors in order to test the mediation path on affective commitment in a field study such as Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel (2015, 2016, 2017). Then it might be possible to expand the perspective from the job seekers to the employees and to develop sensemaking internal CSR measures for organizations. This could therefore serve as a guide on how a cultural shift towards sustainability should be addressed and implemented, along with a change in people's mindsets and behavior. Finally, based on the different CSR concepts from Aguinis & Glavas (2019), Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & McKinnon (2017) and Stahl et al. (2019), sustainable HRM should be integrated into an overall framework that includes the individual, team, and department level as well as organization and community. What we could learn from these concepts for the implementation of internal CSR measures in organizations is to consider

the interaction of different levels for a trustworthy and sustainable success instead of a greenwashing campaign. For example, Li et al. (2020) showed that transformational leadership increases environmentally conscious behavior in employees, which was mediated by employees' environmental passion and autonomous motivation.

As the clock ticks fast for climate action to enable our next generations to survive on our planet Earth, as early adopters, those committed to sustainable action can mobilize the other organizational population (i.e., the early and late majority) to implement the SDGs in companies and our society.

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