EMBS THESIS EXPOSE

Organizational identification towards CSR policies from the employees perspective.

How can a company make their employees identify with their CSR/sustainable goals?

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Abstract

This study investigates the mediating role of leaders, CSR authenticity and employees' CSR perception in the process of employees' identification with the CSR goals of the company. Scholars have been mostly focusing on the external stakeholders such as customers while research on employees' perspective of CSR are limited..We would like to examine how company are promoting their CSR goals internally. Hence, this research aims to investigate which factors can influence employees to be more sustainable by transferring the goal of sustainability of the company to the identity of their employees. Since our aim is to discover which beliefs are employees and managers holding, a qualitative interview will be coherent for our study. Therefore, the interviews will be held with different employees and managers from different hierarchical positions at companies that are pursuing CSR missions. Our study is based on social identity and the concept of organizational identification . We expect to contribute to the literature of organizational identification (OID) as well as the CSR. Indeed, in the OID literature, scholars have mostly studied the process of identification without regards to the specificity of individual characteristics. Also, regarding managerial contribution, this study will provide them tools on how to enhance their sustainability strategy from their employees.

Keywords:

Authentic CSR, CSR perception, Organizational identification, Leadership, Sustainability internal communication.

Abbreviation:

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
OID: Organizational Identification

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Firms are increasingly held accountable about the way their business can impact the society and the environment (D'Amato, Henderson, Florence, 2009). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a self regulation model where company not only focus on their financial returns but also on the consequences of their activities on the social and environmental sphere. Different incentives can push companies to engage in CSR, they can be viewed as a strategic move, as to gain a competitive advantage or for genuine purposes (De Roeck, Delobbe; 2012).

Scholars have demonstrated that CSR usually have a good influence on the company and stakeholders relationships (McShane & Cunningham, 2012). Lot of studies have focused on the perception of customers (Alhouti et al., 2016), (Jose, Buchanan, Khare, 2018) and shareholders. However, the litterature on CSR perspective from employees is still very thin and leave room for lot of researchs, although it has started to be more investigated within the last decades (Glavas & Godwin, 2003). Some studies have been focusing on the employees perception of CSR strategy through the lens of ethical leadership (Torelli et al., 2012), (Walumbwa et al., 2011), of perceived external image (Desirée et al., 2019). According to the stakeholder's theory stating that company should create values to all actors participating in its business (Freeman, 1989), employees' point of view should also be investigated as they are part of the internal stakeholders. Moreover, through they engagment they are directly participating to the realization of company's goals. A positive perception of the CSR from employees can benefite the firms as empirical studies have found out that it can icnrease their commitment (Peterson, 2004), their performance (Lee et al., 2013), their organizational identification (Ashforth et al., 2008; McShane & Cunningham, 2012), which lead to decrease the turnover of the firm (Tinwala & Biswas, 2020).

One of the issues regarding CSR is its possible misuse by the company. Indeed, they can use it as window dressing, especially when stakeholder view them as unauthentic (McShane & Cunningham, 2012). This can lead to consequential damages on the company relationships (Jose et al., 2018). A dishonest CSR policy occurs when stakeholders judge that there is a misalignment between the company's CSR communication and their actions. Some studies have focused on the point of view of external stakeholders, such as consumers (Ellen et al., 2006), NGO leaders, and

government's members (Beckman et al., 2009). However, the literature on employee's perception of the authenticity of their CSR company goals remain scare (Schaefer et al., 2019) (McShane & Cunningham; 2012). Employees perspective should be more investigated. Since they are part of the private and internal environment, they can have more reliable information on how the firm is really engaging towards their CSR goals (Rupp et al., 2006). For firms that are genuinely engaging in shifting their business to be more environmentally and socially friendly, it is necessary to communicate the authenticity of their goals to their employees. Indeed, a perception of authentic CSR from employees can help them to enhance their organizational identification (McShane & Cunningham; 2012).

Although scholars have tried to develop frameworks and guidelines, developping and implementing CSR is not an easy task as it requires a collective effort and it to be spread horizontally across all the units of the firm. Moreover, one difficulty of the success of CSR missions lays on closing the gap between positive attitude and behaviours. Indeed, people can feel a positive attitude towards sustainability but not change their behaviours. For this reason, I choose to focus on CSR through the lens of organizational behaviour as it is crucial in shaping employees' behaviours, engagement, and commitment in the company. When an employee identifies with his organization, he will internalize the firm's value as his own and work harder to reach their common goal. In the recent year scholars have discovered how OID can increase employee's pro environmental behaviours (Afsar, Cheema, Javed, 2018), (Tinwala, Biswas, 2020).

I choose to focus on employees as the success of the company goals remains highly dependent on their behaviours and despite the vast literature on CSR, there is still a lot to discover on the factors that can enhance CSR's positive responses from the employees.

1.2 Research gaps

Although the literature on CSR and organizational identification is rich, we have identified several gaps that are worth to be investigated. First, scholars have mostly investigated the of CSR within the macro-foundation through "formal management systems, processes, structures and certifications" (Carmeli et al., 2017) while the literature in the micro-foundation of CSR remains thin. CSR micro-foundation refers to "foundations of CSR that are based on individual actions and interactions)" (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Secondly, companies are well trained to communicate their CSR and

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sustainability initiatives to external stakeholder. However, there is a gap in the literature on how a company can efficiently communicate their CSR goals to the employees with the aim to stress out their authenticity. Scholars have showed how employee's perspective of the CSR advertising can influence it (Schaefer et al., 2019). However, advertising is a channel commonly used to communicate to the outsiders. There is a lack in the literature on which channels company address their CSR policy internally.

Several studies stress out the importance of leadership for perception and the acceptance of CSR by their employees. However, most of them are only focusing on a specific type, which is the ethical leadership (Zhu et al., 2014) (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Ethical leadership is "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown et al., 2005, p. 120). Scholars have mostly focused on the way ethical leadership can be an enhancer of the CSR. They fail to consider also how leaders through their behaviours or communication can be disruptive in the CSR perception process. Moreover, scholars have focused only on the top bottom influence, leaving a gap in the literature on how social pressure from peers can also moderate the CSR reception of the employees.

Most of the literature is focused on how CSR can be a mean to enhance the organizational identification of the employees (Tinwala & Biswas, 2020) (Glavas & Godwin, 2012). OID is the process when the organization and the employee's identity are merging. In those studies, CSR is the moderator factor while organizational identification is the outcome. However, the researches on the process of identification with the CSR goals remain scare. Only in the few last year scholars have started to investigated on the mediating role of OID in the process of fostering pro-environmental behaviour from employees (Afsar et al., 2018), involvement in the sustainability goals (Carmeli et al., 2017). To my knowledge, only the study of Tinwala & Biswas (2020) focus on the drivers that can make employees integrate sustainable practices into their identity. Their research focuses mostly on motives attributions; therefore, I wish to go deeper with my study by also integrating the concept of authenticity and social influences from leaders and peers.

I also have identified gaps in the OID literature that are worth to be investigated. Most of the literature on OID ignore how the process can be moderated by individual characteristics. Following the research of Hongwei He, Andrew D Brown (2013), I wish

to address those gaps by offering empirical results on the moderating role of individuality in the identification process. Thus, the research questions are stated as follow: RQ1: How is employee's identification with CSR goals externally mediated within the company? And RQ2: How do the identification process interfere internally with employees' individuality and characteristics?

1.3 Research purpose

My study is aiming at going deeper at investigating in which way social interactions through hierarchy and peers can moderate the process of employee's identification with the CSR missions of the company. Overall, the purpose of the research is to know how a company can make their employees identify with their CSR goals.

This study can beneficiate the literature in several ways. I aim to offer new insights in the literature of CSR authenticity. How it can be communicated through words and actions, especially from a micro-foundation perspective, taking into the employees' point of view, which remain under-developed. There is also a contribution to the organizational identification literature as our study will focus on the moderating role of individual personality and the way companies can shape their employee's identification. From a managerial point of view, our study can provide managers new insights on how to efficiently implement and communicate CSR strategy to their employees.

The study will be structured as follow, I will review the theoretical framework on CSR and stakeholders theory. Then, I will also discuss the process of organizational identification and the social theory behind it as it important to understand why and how this process is taking place. Further, I will present our literature review and introduce our propositions for our research, then the methodology of the study will be explained. We will then present and discuss our findings. Finally, the reader can find the expected scholars, managerial and society contributions as the last part of our paper.

2. Theoretical Framing

This part presents the theoretical background that supports this study. First, I aim to give the theoretical background of the CSR literature. As it is a vast concept; it has

multiple definition and interpretation as well as different scope. Therefore, in this part, I will introduce the key features of CSR which are its predictors, moderators, mediators, and outcome based on the work of Anglinis & Glava (2012).

As mentioned in the previous parts, this study aims to investigate how a company can enhance the identification of the employees with their CSR goals. Therefore, I will explain in the second part what is OID, and the social theory that it comes from. To have a better understanding of the process of OID, I will introduce its different components and also explain why it is important.

2.1 Organizational identification

I decide to focus my study on organizational identification as it is playing an important role in the knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes of the employees regarding the organizational objectives (Witting, 2006). Therefore, this study applies the concept of OID on CSR as recent paper have stressed out the importance of OID in in the implementation of sustainability within the company. Employees that integrate sustainability as part of their identity would be more committed and engaged voluntarily in practice that would help the firm to reach their sustainability goals. In this study, I seek to research how a company, which makes CSR goals as a priority, can offer a place where the employee can develop and incorporate sustainability as part of his own identity. To explains the mechanisms that underline the psychological linkage that an employee may feel towards his organization, scholars have introduced the concept of Organizational identification. It is useful when looking at organizational behaviours, especially how employees' attitudes and behaviours are shaped (Witting; 2006).

Scholars showed in previous literature how enhanced organizational identification can be beneficial for employees, through increase involvement (Riketta; 2005), reducing turnover (Cole & Bruch 2006; Mael & Ashforth, 1995; Wan-Huggins et al. 1998), feeling of well-being in the workplace (Jetten, 2012). Alternative theories can also explain mechanisms of organizational behaviours, such as social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). It states that when employees perceive a support from their organization, they show a reciprocate behaviours towards them leading to increase their organizational performance participation (Afsar, et al., 2018). However, the study of Van Knippenberg & Sleebos (2006) shows that social exchange theory refers rather to commitment than identification, as there is no merging of identity in this case.

OID is a psychological process when the employee's and the firm's identity are merging, in this way the interest of the company become the ones of the individual (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). In other terms, organizational identification happens when the employees use their membership in the company as part of their self-identity. Mael F & Ci defined it as "perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization, where the individual defines him or herself in terms of the organization(s) in which he or she is a member" (1992). OID comes from the Social identity theory which has been theorized by the psychologist Tajfel in 1979. It states that individual base their identity on their membership and belongness to a group. Indeed, Tajfel define it as "knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership". The theory says that people strives to belong to a group and to self-categorize themselves.

When an employee identify with his organization, the theory state that he will tend to seek for deepening his identification within the group and work to strengthen the identity of the group in order to remain distinct from the others. OID has two components which are self-categorization and self enhancement. The former refers to cognitive factors of the OID, it shows the need of individual to keep their group being distinct from outsiders. (Turner et al., 1987). Applying it on the CSR topic, scholars posit that an employees that identify with the CSR goals of the company will not only work to strengthen his identity towards this concept but will also work towards this goal in order to enhance the company public image, especially to remain distinct from their competitors (Farook et al., 2019). The incentive for self enhancement is attached to affective components. It illustrates the needs for individual to be part of a group that increase their self-esteem. This can happen when the employees is proud to be part of the organization, thanks to its success (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998) or external prestige (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), or when he feels accepted and valued in his work place. The study of McShane & Cunningham (2012) illustrate how CSR can enhance self-identity of the employees. In the in-depth interview, employees relate how their job helped them to feel a sense of purpose and integrity because their company were engaged in social and environmental causes.

The literature shows that different factors can influence the process of organizational identification, such as the perceive external image, (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Dutton et al.1994; Fuller et al. 2006).; organizational trust (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012), perceived external prestige (Witting, 2006). Internal communication (Smidts et

al., 2000). Smidts and associates have posited the importance of the communication in the process of identification of their employees. They distinguish the content and the climate components. Their empirical studies show that climate (how the messages are communicated) have a stronger effect on the process rather than the content. Therefore, the company must take a closer look at the way it is communicating internally its CSR goals, if they want their employees to identify with it. Moreover, scholars have found that in the case of company which hold social or environmental responsibilities, the identification is even stronger as the employees feel more connected to the firm (Pratt, 1998). When identifying with the CSR goals, the employees incorporate the sustainability values, norms, goals, and interests in his self-concept. By working to achieve his self-interest related to this topic, he will also participate to the collective goal of the company (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006).

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

In addition to carrying out their everyday business, companies are today also pressured to be accountable in term of sustainability. Indeed, they should not only focus on the financial aspect of their business, but rather try to improve their triple bottom line which are financial, social, and environmental. CSR is defined by the European Conseil as *"A concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis"* (2001). The concept of CSR is not a new field in the literature as already in the 1970's some scholars have started to investigate it. However, during the last decades, there has been an increase of interest on sustainability both in the social and environmental components due to different factors. Indeed, before firms were only meant to focus on their profits and financial results, whereas today they are also accountable against the social and environmental costs (Gjolberg, 2009).

The success of the CSR strategy depends upon different drivers, and each step from the designing to the implementation and the communication are important for its success (Schaefer et al., 2019). CSR is a vast concept that englobe different components, although CSR are policies taking by the organization, its success depends upon different actors. It requires a multidisciplinary approached as it can be viewed through the lens of innovation, legal framework etc… (Farooq et al., 2019). Moreover, CSR is discussed in different literature fields such as Human Resources Management, Organizational Behaviour, Strategy etc… Hence, corporate sustainable management has

become a primary focus for different actors from scholars to the managerial point of view (Farooq et al., 2019). Therefore, to understand better which aspects of CSR this study will focus on, helped by the work of Anglinis & Glava (2012), I will present the components of CSR that are relevant for this research.

Scholars have differentiated CSR according to the scope that they are reaching. Macro CSR refers to institutions and organization while micro CSR focus on the aspects of individual spheres (Carmeli et al., 2017). CSR at the institution level refers to the certifications (Christmann & Taylor, 2006), regulations and standards (Fineman & Clarke, 1996) required in the specific industry. The organization level focus on the actions that the company is taking regarding CSR. Finally, the micro level analysis examines the CSR through the lens of individual people. Scholars have mainly focused on the CSR on the macro level, there is still a lot to discover regarding the effects and relations of CSR on the individual level (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). As I want to focus on the effect and perception of CSR by the employees, it is necessary to look at the individual foundation and therefore this study will take a micro level look.

Predictors are the reasons that push the company to engage in CSR. It can be reactive, as company are pressured by different stakeholders to adopt CSR missions such as consumers (Christmann & Taylor, 2006), the local community (Marquis, Glynn, & Davis, 2007), the media (Davidson & Worrell, 1988). However, company can also engage in CSR on a voluntary basis due to different purposes. For some, CSR is used as a strategic move, therefore CSR is seen as an opportunity to grow and a mean to reach the company goals rather than for its philanthropic aspect (Pohle & Hittner, 2008). Indeed, firms are aware that it can provide them a competitive advantage against their competitors (Porter & Kramer, 2011), it can improve their financial bottom lines, their brand reputation and public image etc... Firms can pursue CSR goals to increase their bottom line or to genuinely become a good corporate citizen. Following this, several scholars classify the motives for engaging in CSR as internal or for external motives. Internal motives arise when company choose to do CSR for genuine purposes while external motives refers to the wish of the firm to appear a certain way from the public eyes (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012). Regarding individual, several motives can push them to engage in CSR. For example, they can do it as it is aligned with their own personal values (Bansal, 2003) or because they themselves are personally concerned with these issues (Bansal, 2003; Bansal & Roth, 2000). However, several scholars have

discovered that the perception of authenticity in the motives of the firm to do CSR can influence employees to engage or not in the CSR missions.

Authentic CSR can be defined as "a set of CSR initiatives driven by core, enduring, and central organizational values and beliefs" (Schaefer et al., 2019). It is highly important because when stakeholders detect a misalignment between the CSR communication and the activity of the firm, this can damage their relationship and lead to distrust. Scholars have investigated the importance of perception of authentic CSR as it can moderate its acceptance and its reception by the stakeholders (Beckman et al. 2009). Moreover, authentic CSR can lead to the increasing of social connection within the firm, a sense of pride, satisfaction, and organizational identification from employees (McShane, Cunningham; 2012). McShane & Cunningham (2012) highlight in their qualitative study the components with what employees judge the authenticity of their company's CSR. The empirical results show that thanks to their authentic approach to CSR, firms were able to communicate to employees that their CSR missions were a reflect of the company identity rather than just a window dressing. The research of Schaefer & associates showed that the perception of authenticity was affected by a misalignment between the firm's communication and their actions. It also contributes to the OID literature as they proved that authenticity perception of CSR moderates the employees' identification process with the firm (2019).

Anglinis & Glava (2012) in their work also explain the difference between moderators and mediators of CSR. While the former defines the factor that can influence the outcome of CSR, the second explain the underline mechanisms on why the outcome of CSR will be likely occur. My study will consist of searching both possible moderators and mediators influencing the identification of employees with CSR. The moderator factors include the place, which refers to the location where the activities take place. For example, some country due to their national regulation or cultural specificity may influence positively or negatively the CSR outcome. The perceived cost of CSR, the profile which are the specific characteristics of the organization, and the people are also moderating factors in the CSR outcomes. As my study focus on a micro level and stress on the individual CSR outcome, I will mostly focus on the category of people. It includes the influence of supervisor through their commitment to ethics (Muller & Kolk, 2010) or their equity sensitivity (Mudrack, Mason, & Stepanski, 1999), employee's discretion and awareness of CSR. Anglinis & Glava (2012) have classified the mediators, which answer to the question why this

variable has an influence on the outcome, in two categories: relationships and values. Relationship refers to "associations between parties such as a firm and its internal and external stakeholders or between employees and their supervisors" (Anglinis & Glava , 2012) on the micro level it can take the form of employee's perception of visionary leadership (Sully de Luque et al., 2008). Scholars have studied the role of leaders and managers in the success of CSR implementation. Some types of leadership style are more likely to influence positively the CSR outcome than other through. Regarding values, which are the principles shared by the organization or the individual, organizational identity and organizational pride can be an example of mediators in the CSR outcome at a micro level.

Finally, the authors address the outcome of the CSR which are the results that the organization is expecting. Scholars have classified the outcome of CSR as externally or internally oriented. The former refers to outcome beneficiating external stakeholders or improving firm reputation in the public eyes for example. While the latter aims at to affecting internal stakeholders within the company such as employees. One outcome could be to increase the well-being of the employees (Farooq et al., 2014), or improve demographic diversity within the organization (Johnson & Greening, 1999). CSR can be also beneficial for the company as several studies posit that CSR can improve the stakeholder's relationship with the company (e.g., Laufer 2003). Indeed, scholars have focused on the cases of customers and shareholders. A good CSR perspective can lead to customer trust. The literature also shows that CSR can contribute to the employees-company relationship increasing employee's commitment (Joyner & Payne, 2002), performance and identification (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012). When company engage in CSR, employees can feel that their company care about them and their well-being at the workplace. The Stakeholder theory that was introduced by Freeman in 1984 is aligned with the idea of CSR as it explains that "for any business to be successful it has to create value for customers, suppliers, employees, communities and financiers, shareholders, banks and other people with the money." (Freeman, 1984). Following this theory and because the literature on employees' perspective is very thin, I choose to focus on employees as they are part of the internal stakeholders and therefore, firms should also aim at creating value for them, in this case by educating them to be better citizen.

I choose to focus my research on companies for three main reasons. First, following the stakeholder theory, I believe that it is one of the firm duties to give back

to the community and to have a positive impact on the society (Freeman, 1984). Secondly, the size of the company can leverage the process of increasing awareness and identification with sustainability from the people. Lastly, professional environment is an important place for socialization for an adult. Scholars have argued that the social environment of company is the one that offer the employees the strongest membership value and where they take part most of their identity components (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Moreover, firm offers communication channels reachable by employees while the managers are considered most of the time as a legitimate figure of authority.

3. Propositions

Most of the literature of firm's authenticity of their CSR goals, are focusing on the customers perception (Jose et al., 2018), through their brand concept (Torelli et al., 2012). Some studies on the employees perception have been focusing on their view of firm's motives to do CSR, on their perceived authenticity (Desirée et al., 2019), either if the motives are internal or for external reasons (Tinwala & Biswas, 2020), or on the positive impact of ethical leadership on the employee's perception of their firm CSR (Torelli et al., 2012), (Walumbwa et al., 2011). However, there is a gap in the literature on the mediating role of leaders and the channels used to communicate the CSR goals to the employees.

Within the last years, scholars have started to focus on the influential role of leaders on the implementation of CSR policies within the company. Angus-Leppan et associates research on the different leadership styles that are needed to implement either implicit or explicit CSR. Some scholars have focused on how an organizational Ethic of care, which is a moral theory when organization emphasizes "a felt concern for the good of others and for community with them" (Baier, 1987) can foster pro sustainable activities from the employees. The authors suggest further research on how practices such as "narrative practices, positive organizational psychology, compassionate approaches to leadership, and forgiveness, among others" can influence the employees' attitudes and behaviours towards sustainable activities. Moreover, managers have a legitimate role in the action of helping the employee's identification as they are the one who should best know the needs and motivation of their teams. (Smidt et al.,2000). Following this, it makes sense to focus on the role of leaders as they are the one with the required power and tools to implement such practices.

3.1 Leaders behaviours

Leaders can influence their employees through different means. The research of several scholars (Detert & Treviño, 2010; Detert et al., 2007; Mayer et al., 2009 and Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009) which focus on ethical leadership posits that the most efficient way to educate the employees and teach them which way to behave is through role modelling. Indeed, leaders can moderate the behaviours of their employees through their own behaviours as they serve as an example to the others by showing which way to behave and act. Some scholars have studied the moderating role of leaders in employee's perception of the CSR as well as the role of servant leadership in the relationship between employee's perception of CSR and their pro-environmental behaviours (Afsar et al., 2018). The study of Afsar & associates empirically supports that organization where leaders encourages sustainable friendly practices are more likely to have employees that engage in pro environmental behaviours. Therefore, we aim to investigate if further than the pro-environmental behaviours, leaders acting in an authentic way can foster employees' identification with the CSR goals of the company.

P1a: Managers' behaviours can influence employees's identification with the CSR goals.

3.2 Firm internal communication

Certain leaders' way of communication can facilitate organizational identification, such as "openness and trustworthiness" (De Cremer et al., 2008; McAllister, 1995; Sluss & Ashforth, 2008; Smith et al., 2006). Moreover, through their feedbacks, managers have the possibility to encourage or discourage certain types of actions from their subordinates. Afsar & associates stress how important is it for leader to recognize and encourage employees that are showing pro-environmental behaviours (2018). One of the means to show this support is through communication. The research of Smidts & associates (2000) shows how can communication influence the process of organizational identification from employees. They posit a distinction between the content and the climate of communication. The former refers to what is communicated while the latter is about the way it is formulated. The empirical results prove that rather than what it is communicated, the communication climate which consist of the "openness and trust in communication, the experience to have a say in the organization and supportiveness" is more important in the process of identification of the employee. I

therefore suppose that the way leaders communicate about their CSR strategy will shape how employees identify with it.

P1b: Manager's internal communication on CSR can influence its employee's identification.

3.3 Motives attribution

CSR authenticity is defined as "a set of CSR initiatives driven by core, enduring, and central organizational values and beliefs". (Schaefer et al., 2019). From the previous empirical studies, perception of the motives to engage in CSR are not correlated with employee's perspective on the authenticity of their firm to do so. Meaning that the CSR activities do not have to be only supported by philanthropic motives to be judge as being authentic by the employees. However, empirical study shows that perceived selfishness of the motives to engage in CSR activities were correlated with the perception of unauthenticity by the employees (Schaefer et al., 2019). Selfish motives refer to when the company engage in CSR activities as an obligation and the motives are mostly self-centred. They do not pursue the CSR goals as an altruist action, to have a good impact on society but rather to improve their bottom line. The study of Sen & ci found out that customers were identifying more with the brand when their attribute the company's motive on CSR to be honest and genuine. Following this, we posit that employee's perception of either the motives of company to engage in CSR are altruist or egoist will mediate their identification with it:

P1c: Employees identification to the CSR/sustainability goals are mediated by their perception of the company's selfishness motives to do so.

3.4 Individual characteristics

The process of OID is mediated by the managers but I also aim to investigate if other factors drives the process. Indeed, the research of He & Brown put the light on how some personality traits type are mediating the employee's identification with their firm (2013). Some people, due to their individual characteristics might be more inclined to identify with their community. Triandis (1995) differentiate people that are more individualist or collectivist. Collectivist people tends to incorporate in their self-identity more of their membership to a group whereas individualist people prefer to keep their own identity distinct. For example, people with higher need for affiliation or with higher agreeableness are more likely to identify as they are naturally more inclined to agree

and follow the instructions of the leaders. Whether people that are more neurotic might experience more bad feeling within the workplace and that can disrupt their process of identification. (He & Brown, 2013). Hence, I posit that some type of individual traits are more likely to identify with the CSR goals of their company.

P2a: Some types of personalities are facilitating the process of the employee's identification with the CSR/Sustainability goals of the company.

3.5 Influence of peers

Managers and leaders are not the only one influencing the OID of employees. Indeed, there is also influence of peers through social pressure, when "people in a social group are subject by social pressure, as member of the group they judge what is correct according to what the other see. Srivastava & associate (2006) explain that other employees can be enhancers of pro environmental behaviour towards their colleagues through persuasion. One of the way through which it can happen is with knowledge sharing. It is defined as 'team members sharing task relevant ideas, information, and suggestions with each other'' (Srivastava et al., 2006). Therefore, I aim to investigate further how colleagues can be enhancer or disruptive in the process of identification of the employees.

P2b: Employees' peers can mediate their identification with the CSR goals.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research approach

The aim of this study is to investigate what are the different drivers in the process of employee's identification with the CSR goals of their company. I will investigate the mediating role of internal communication, leaders, peers and individual characteristics. Therefore, the target is broad and multidisciplinary. Moreover, I aim at discovering new insights and address the gap in the literature that have been previously presented. To my knowledge, no scholars have focus yet on the internal communication and channels used to raise awareness on CSR in the company. Consequently, a qualitative research is more appropriate in this study, as I want to focus on the employees' identification "process and meanings" through their perception. Moreover, qualitative approach should be used when the aim of the research is "observing and interpreting reality with the aim of discovering a theory that will explain what was experienced" (Ridenour & Newman; 1999). Secondly, as I want to focus my study on a

micro level and consider individual specificities, my goal is to investigate how those can influence the process of identification. Most of the researches in this literature have been conducted through quantitative studies (Afsar et al., 2018)(De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012; Tinwala & Biswas; 2020; Zhu et al., 2013). Quantitative method aims to measure, analyse, and test the causality between variables. Therefore, it uses randomization, large sample in order for its model to be representative. Due to its characteristics, it fails to discern the individuality of the people, the beliefs, and meanings behind their perceptions. Moreover, as what I aim to investigate is new, I will discover important insights throughout the interviews, therefore there is a need for flexibility that a quantitative research cannot provide. Indeed, as stated above, my topic of investigation is broad and relates to human sociologic nature such as personality, feelings, self-identity etc… Therefore, I would like to give opportunity to the participants to express freely and fully their opinions. A qualitative approach can give more insights when studying sociologic phenomena through investigating the "meaning" of phenomena for the people or culture under examination" (Ridenour & Newman, 1999). Thus, I choose to conduct a qualitative approach as the self-identity, social identification are sociologic concepts.

4.2 Research design
        The research will be based on a comparative study. Comparative study is relevant when the aim of the research is to analyse multiples case and to understand why some phenomena happens in a case rather than another (Ragin, 1999). Thus, we think methodology is the most appropriate for our research, as we want to compare how the process of CSR identification differ between multiples companies.

        My choice of the firms is based on wether they incorporate environmental or societal goals in their business or not and how implicit or explicit their communication about it is. To decide that, I will first have a look on their website to see if they communicate such goals. Thus, I will take as comparatives cases companies that explicitly express their CSR goals and other that still have environmental or societal project but that are more discreet about it.

        Based on those choices, one of the cases would be a multinational Swedish energy company, they respect the criteria as one of their mission is to offer a more sustainable and renewable energy. I choose this company as they are engaging in environmentally friendly missions and we can also have access to their contacts in their

firm located in Germany. The other companies should also be seeking for the environmental and social missions and be situated in Europe or in a western country to reduce as much as possible the effect of national culture divergences.

The aim of the research is to interviews employees working in the same company as to be able to get and compare different insights. I choose to have different employees as participants to see how they individually respond to the vertical and horizontal's influences, from their hierarchy and their peers. The employees should be working in the company for at least five months so to be sure that they are familiar with the working environment. Moreover, by interviewing managers, I aim to also acknowledge how they perceive their actions and their role regarding the process of their employee's identification. My research is conducted this way to see if the perception change from the top to the bottom of the firm. Then I can analyse if there are misalignments through the top-bottom hierarchy.

4.3 Interview design

The research is based on a problem focus interview as my main goal is to investigate the drivers of employee's identification with the CSR goals. Problem focus interview goal is conducted to "gather objective evidence on human behavior as well as on subjective perceptions and ways of processing social reality" (Witzel, 1982, 1985). Indeed, our purpose with this research is to have a deeper understanding of employee's perception, beliefs and how they identify themselves towards the sustainable goals of their company. Therefore, my research questions are stated as follow: How is employee's identification with CSR goals externally mediated within the company? How do the identification process interfere internally with employees' individuality and characteristics?

During the interview, I will ask questions related the participant's beliefs, meanings and self-identification towards sustainability. For example: *Do you think that the actions of your managers reflect the sustainability concerns that your company have? Usually, how do you get the information regarding update or events happening in the company? Why do you think your company wants to be greener?* The interviews are estimated to last from 45 minutes up to one hour as we want to discuss different topics.

The interview will be conducted via Zoom or Skype depending on if it must be done remotely, the recording will make the analysis easier since it will also be possible to analyse the facial and body expression. However, face to face interviews would be

privileged when possible as it is more spontaneous. In this case, the interview will be recorded by microphone. The data collection will consist of the verbatim transcription which will be done via Google docs or other software.

4.4 Sample description

The number of participants will highly depend on the data saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1987). The concept explain that number of interviews is reached when addition of another data does not bring any new insight anymore. Regarding the proportion of employees and managers, it will depend on the company and on its hierarchical structure.

4.5 Data analysis

After the transcription, the data collective will be analysed with the help of a qualitative analysis software Maxdaq. I will also use the methodology of Gioia & associate (2012) for data structuring to extract meaningful insights for our research from the raw data collected. Indeed, the data structuring allow to go from data to the building the theory and the model. Thus, the data collected will be separated into different categories as the first order. At the second stage of the analysis, categories which share similarities will be converged together as to create the second order. Those second orders are categorized into different theorical themes that can help to explain the framework. Then those categories will be again merge to into aggregate dimensions which are the final concepts that we can extract from the interviews. Structuring the data is important as to see if our finding are aligned with the previous literature and if we discovered new theories. (Gioia et al., 2012)

5. Expected Contributions

5.1 Scholar contribution

This study is expected to contribute to both OID and CSR literature. For the former, following the study of Hongwei He & associates (2013) on the development of identification process, I aim to contribute the literature by bringing empirical results on the role of leaders, and how individuality of employees may positively or negatively influence the process. Also, taking example on the study of Corley (2004) on the discrepancy between the perception of identity through the company hierarchy, I aim to apply the same type of vertical interview to see how the point of view of managers and

employees differs on their perception of the different drivers of identification process. Thus, one of our expected finding is to see if employees perceive that their managers' communication and behaviours is aligned with the mission of the company to enhance sustainability from their employees. Additionally, my research will also offer findings on how the process of identification can be shaped by horizontal influences, this topic is very limited in the current literature. Indeed, I aim to study the role of leaders and managers as well as the moderating role of peers and the effect of social pressure on the identification of the employee. Regarding the CSR, my research contributes for the literature on the micro level by showing how differently managers and employees at multiples hierarchical levels are internalizing the CSR goals of the company. Moreover, the empirical results will also contribute to the literature of authentic CSR, especially from the employee's perception where the literature is very thin. Indeed, I aim to provide additional insights on the different drivers of authentic CSR according to the employees.

5.2 Manageurial contribution

Regarding the practical contribution, the study will specially help H&R or managers who wish to enhance sustainable behaviours from their teams. Indeed, the research can offer a guideline on the actions to take and how /what to communicate to the employees to enhance their identification with their CSR goals. More generally, the study also shows how the process of OID can be navigated both vertically from the hierarchy but also horizontally from the colleagues. This should help managers understand better how do to enhance identification from their employees. Several studies attested that when an employee's organizational identification is strong, this can benefit the company through enhanced performance, commitment, and engagement. Moreover, it also shows them how the process of OID is influenced by the individual personality and therefore managers should be flexible and adapt their strategy according to the personality type of their employees.

5.3 Societal contribution

This study can also contribute to the society as the research can be used elsewhere as a guideline for any organization that wish to educate citizen to identify and foster sustainable and environmentally conscious behaviours. One of the goals of this work is to contribute building a better society, more conscious about sustainability and environmental matters. We intend to do that by bringing awareness and by providing

leaders with useful framework to encourage this development. Indeed, sustainability has become a concern for a lot of firms but to put it in practice is not an easy task. The study focuses on the process of identification as we believe that to see long term changes and commitment, it is necessary for our society to shift their identity to one that include sustainability concerns (Tinwala & Biswas; 2020). This would have an impact on people's mentality, leading them to adopt more sustainable practices in their everyday activities as they are aware that the planet's resources are limited.

6. Thesis chapters overview

As state above in the agenda, first the thesis will give an introduction on the topic, providing the background, a brief view of the literature and its gap and limitations. Then, we can find the theoretical framework were the theory that are supporting the research are more developed. Following is the discussion of the proposition and what are their implications. After, the methodology is discussed through the research and interview design, the samples and how the data will be analysed and coded. Then we will discuss our findings and present the limitations of the study. Finally, a part on the literature, managerial and societal contribution will be given.

7. Literature overview

The papers in pink refers to the literature on CSR and identification. The blue part is about studies that are focusing on leadership and CSR authenticity. Finally, the green part provides the literature on organizational identity and identification.

Authors	Title of the publication	Year	Main results & contribution
Bilal Afsar, Sadia Cheema, Farheen Javed	Activating employee's pro-environmental behaviours: The role of CSR, organizational identification, and environmentally specific servant leadership	2018	Perceived CSR has both a direct and an indirect influence, through organizational identification, on pro-environmental behaviour. Support of interactive effect of environmentally specific servant leadership with CSR in predicting employee pro-environmental behaviours.
Kenneth De Roeck , Nathalie Delobbe	Do Environmental CSR Initiatives Serve Organizations' Legitimacy in the Oil Industry? Exploring	2012	Try to explain the underlying mechanisms that drive employees' favourable responses to CSR. How Constructed image, Organizational trust, Perceived CSR, Attribution motives of CSR of the firm can impact

	Employees' Reactions Through Organizational Identification Theory		favourable employees' attitude.
Schaefer, Terlutter, Diehl	Is my company really doing good? Factors influencing employees' evaluation of the authenticity of their company's corporate social responsibility engagement	2019	Study on how "the evaluation of CSR advertising, the perceived fit between corporate culture and CSR engagement and two perceived CSR motives" can influence Employee's perception of the authenticity of the company CSR engagement.
A.Carmeli, S.Brammer, E.Gomes, and S.Y., Tarba.	An Organizational Ethic of Care and Employee Involvement in Sustainability-related Behaviours: A Social Identity Perspective	2017	Ethic of care lead employees through affective reasons to O. sustainability -> involvement in sustainability related behaviours. EoC is both directly and indirectly, through enhanced OID , related to employees' satisfaction with organizational sustainability; How EoC can drive employee's involvement in sustainability.
Raesah Tinwala, Urmi Nanda Biswas	Perceived Sustainability Practices, Turnover Intentions, and Organizational Identification in Hotel Industries	2020	Effect of employees' perception of their hotel's sustainability practices and motive (internal =sincere or external?) to undertake those practices on their identification with the organization and their intentions to quit.
Zhu, Y., Sun, L. Y., & Leung, A. S	Corporate social responsibility, firm reputation, and firm performance: The role of ethical leadership	2013	Ethical leadership has an indirect and positive effect on firm reputation and therefore on firm performance.
Walumbwa, F. O., Mayer, D. M., Wang, P., Wang, H., Workman, K., & Christensen, A. L.	Linking Ethical Leadership to Employee Performance: The Roles of Leader-Member Exchange, Self-Efficacy, and Organizational Identification	2011	We argue that the reason why ethical leadership predicts performance is that ethical leadership behaviour enhances high-quality LMX, employees' self-efficacy, and identification with the organization. In turn, high-quality LMX, self-efficacy, and organizational identification improve employee performance. we examined how a form of leadership central to these constructs impacts self-perceptions (self-efficacy) as well as one's social identity (identification).
Lindsay McShane, Peggy Cunningham	To Thine Own Self Be True? Employees' Judgments of the Authenticity of Their Organization's Corporate Social Responsibility Program	2012	how employees differentiate between authentic and inauthentic CSR programs (1) How CSR is aligned with OI2) How developed is CSR activities), and how these judgments influence their perceptions of the organization.
Ale Smidts, Cees B.Mn Van Riel and Th.H Pruyn	The impact of employee communication and perceived external prestige on organizational identification	2000	How two dimensions of communication (content and how) can be employed by managers to improve organizational identification. Communication climate is most important.

Ante Glavas, Lindsey N. Godwin	Is the Perception of 'Goodness' Good Enough? Exploring the Relationship Between Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee Organizational Identification		perceived corporate social responsibility affects organizational identification when perception and reality are aligned or misaligned. When employees have a positive perceived internal or external image of CSR of their employer, their organizational identification is strengthened.
Saju Jose, Nilesh Khare, F. Robert Buchanan,	Customer perceptions of CSR authenticity	2018	Dishonest marketing schemes were detrimental to CSR perceptions of the firm. But the organization may not always find it necessary to deprioritize profit, or to attempt to weave CSR actions into every aspect of their business.
Glen E.Kreiner and Blake E.Ashforth	Evidence toward an Expanded Model of Organizational Identification	2004	Multiple ways people can define themselves through organizational attachments; four dimensions: Positive Identification, Dis-identification, Neutral and ambivalent identification. Understanding the multiple paths by which a person might derive his or her identity vis-a`-vis the organization.
Hongwei He, Andrew D Brown	**Organizational Identity and Organizational Identification**	**2013**	**Leadership and OID, Social exchange and OID, OID development process -> Individual employee's personality impacts. Future research: Study "how OID may play a role in how CSR affects employees' attitudes and behaviours in the workplace." & "little guidance on how organizations may intervene to foster employee OID".**
Marjon Witting	**Relations between organizational identity, identification, and organizational objectives:**	**2006**	**The relations between organizational identity, identification and organizational objectives were investigated among the employees of five municipalities. Employees' identification was influenced by centrality, behaviour and perceived external prestige. As employees identify more strongly with the organization their knowledge, attitude and behaviour are likely to be positively influenced. This result is consistent with other research that found positive relations between identification and employees' beliefs and behaviours**
Daan Van Knippenberg and Edsleebos	Organizational identification versus organizational commitment: Self-definition, social exchange, and job attitudes	2006	Identification is uniquely aligned (i.e., controlling for affective commitment) with the self-referential aspect of organizational membership, Identification reflects psychological oneness. Different managerial techniques to enhance identification and commitment (the latter is more based on the social exchange theory).

8. Workplan

Plan of work - EMBS Master Thesis																						
ACTIVITES		September					October				November				December					January		
		36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	1	2	3
Reading	CSR perception																					
	Process of OID																					
Methodology	Interview design																					
	Gathering contacts																					
	Interviews																					
Writing	Coding																					
	Analysis of the results																					
	Integration framework																					
	Conclusion																					
	Review																					
Presentation	Speech																					
	Powerpoint																					
	Dissertation preparation																					
Deadlines						30.09															13.01	19.01

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