

Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee Engagement among Employees in the Corporate Sector of Pakistan: The Mediating Role of Organizational Pride

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ABSTRACT: The objective of the study was to fill a gap in the literature by evaluating the mediating role of organizational pride between perceived corporate social responsibility and employee engagement among employees working in the corporate sector of Pakistan. For this purpose, the study adapted a cross-sectional correlational study design and a purposive sampling technique to collect data from employees of both genders, i.e., men and women with a minimum age of 18. The study utilized standardized instruments to measure the study variables. Throughout the study APA 7th edition ethical code of conduct was utilized. Out of 300 employees, only 247 completed the questionnaires, comprising 119 men and 128 women; others withdrew from the study. The data was entered into IBM SPSS version 26 for analysis purposes. The Pearson product-moment correlation indicated a significant relationship among study variables, i.e., perceived corporate social responsibility, organizational pride, and employee engagement. The mediation analysis demonstrated full mediation as perceived corporate social responsibility did not significantly predict the employee engagement, while the indirect effect via organizational pride remained statistically significant. The gender i.e., men and women differences with respect to study variables, i.e., perceived corporate social responsibility and organizational pride, were not significant; however, women scored significantly higher on the study variable employee engagement than their men counterparts. The findings provided important practical and theoretical implications.

KEYWORDS: Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility, Employee Engagement, Organizational Pride, Corporate Sector, Pakistan

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Introduction

Pakistan is a country where reports of employee rights violations are common despite the constitution stating clear rights of employees, but on law is almost negligible, and might is right is the approach by many leaders, particularly in the contemporary organizational environments (Majeed & Shaikh, 2024; Shah & Sarif, 2023;

Zaheer et al., 2025). The labor law is not abided and employees have to face the emotional abuse on almost on a daily basis as the corporate social responsibility gets violated by contemporary leaders in the workplace setting (Arslan, 2020; Memon, 2024). Although the issue is commonly observed but rarely studied, the gap needs to be addressed by scholars and researchers.

Corporate social responsibility means the behavior that is proportionate to appropriate behavior towards the employees, customers, as well as communities (AJITERU, 2025; Deigh et al., 2016; Mandhachitara & Poolthong, 2011). From the organizational psychology perspective, CSR means how an organization acts ethically, and works beyond profit to reduce harm, and contributes effectively to the societal well-being. The ethical consideration that is routinely violated is the employees' ethical consideration by the organization leaders, which is contradictory to what corporate social responsibility is (Glavas, 2016; Jones & Rupp, 2018; Uwhejewwe-Togbolo, 2015).

Studies have depicted higher perception of corporate social responsibility is associated with higher employee engagement, and a lower perception of corporate social responsibility is associated with lower employee engagement. Employee engagement refers to the level of dedication, enthusiasm, and involvement the employee shows towards their organization and work. Engaged employees tend to be emotionally associated with their job, and are encouraged to perform better, and put extra effort beyond their salary and facilities provided by the organization to achieve the organizational objectives (David et al., 2025; Despotovic, 2025; Goyal et al., 2023; Montiero, 2025; Wibaselppa et al., 2025). A previous study conducted on 226 employees working in corporate sectors in Japan reported a positive and significant relationship between study variables, i.e., corporate social responsibility perception and employee engagement (Zuo et al., 2025).

Studies have also depicted that a higher perception of corporate social responsibility by employees is associated with organizational pride. Organizational pride can be defined as the positive feeling expressed by employees towards their organization. They sense of accomplishment, satisfaction, belongingness, and self-esteem from the organization being part of it (Badran & Mohamed, 2024; Haapakoski et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2025; Schilpzand et al., 2025). A previous study conducted in Hong Kong on managerial and non-managerial employees depicted that perceived corporate social responsibility has a positive relationship with organizational pride (Ng et al., 2019). Another previous study conducted on hotel employees in Pakistan reported that higher corporate social responsibility perception among employees enhances their organizational pride as well as their engagement at work (Raza et al., 2021). Another previous study conducted on 363 hotel employees in Guangzhou, China, reported that higher corporate social responsibility benefits not only customers but the employees too, as it enhances the organizational pride in them as well as their engagement with work (Youn & Kim, 2022).

This study is grounded in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) to explain the relationship between perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR) and employee engagement. When employees perceive their organization as socially responsible, they develop a positive social identity and emotional attachment to the organization (Blader & Tyler, 2009). This positive evaluation fosters organizational pride, reflecting employees' sense of self-worth derived from organizational membership. Heightened organizational pride motivates employees to reciprocate through increased

involvement, dedication, and absorption in their work, thereby enhancing employee engagement (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

The relationship among study variables can be explained using the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) as the employee when perceive the ethical practices in the organization and fair treatment this leads to their attachment with the organization as they reciprocate and consider themselves as being the asset of organization known as social identity which enhances their engagement at work (Blader & Tyler, 2009). The positive perception of the organization enhances the employee pride over the organization, which enhances the intrinsic motivation, involvement, and dedication to work, thereby fostering the employee engagement (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Although there is substantial literature regarding the relationship between perceived corporate social responsibility and employee engagement, limited literature has thrown light on the mediating role of organizational pride, particularly in Pakistan. Such studies are extremely limited; therefore, it is time to fill the gap in the literature and to come up with not only practical but also literature implications as well.

Hypotheses

- H1: There is a significant positive relationship among perceived corporate social responsibility, organizational pride, and employee engagement.
- H2: Organizational pride significantly mediates the relationship between perceived corporate social responsibility and employee engagement.
- H3: There are significant gender differences (men vs. women) in perceived corporate social responsibility, organizational pride, and employee engagement.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional correlational study design and purposive sampling technique to collect data from employees working in organizations in Pakistan, with a minimum age of 18 and at least a middle educational qualification (i.e., grade 8). Moreover, the study comprised both genders, i.e., men and women employees. Out of 300 employees approached, only 247 completed the questionnaire, while the others withdrew.

Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility (PCSR) Scale (Turker, 2009)

This scale comprised 42 items (Likert from 1 to 5). The Cronbach's alpha of the scale according to recent studies is 0.80 to 0.90. In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha for the PCSR scale was .86, which also reflects a high level of reliability. It was utilized to measure perceived corporate social responsibility among employees.

Organizational Pride

Organizational pride was assessed using 4 items subset (Likert 1 to 5) used by Blader and Tyler (2009). The subset demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$. In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha was .60, which is below the commonly accepted threshold of .70. This relatively lower reliability may be attributed to the small number of items in the scale, the limited sample size, and the use of self-reported data.

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9; Schaufeli et al., 2006)

The shorter version comprised 9 items (Likert ranges from 0 to 6) measuring work engagement. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale ranges from 0.85 to 0.92. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was .58, indicating lower internal consistency. This reduced reliability may be explained by contextual and cultural differences, respondents' interpretation of scale items, and reliance on self-reported data.

Ethical concerns related to APA 7th edition were fulfilled throughout the study. The authors were approached via electronic mail to obtain permission to use their instruments. Once permission was granted, the authors, along with the consent form, demographic questionnaire, and study instruments, started approaching different corporate sectors in Pakistan. First, the consent form was given to employees if they fulfilled the inclusion criteria mentioned earlier. The consent form outlined participant confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw from the study at any juncture. The authors also assisted participants in understanding the questionnaires. Once the data were gathered, it was entered into IBM SPSS version 26 for analysis.

Results

Table 1

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Age			24.71	7.31
Gender				
Men	119	48.2		
Women	128	51.8		
Education				
Middle	43	17.4		
Matric/ O- Level	52	21.1		
Intermediate/ A- Level	73	29.6		
Bachelor	53	21.5		
Master	26	10.5		
Experience				
1-5 Years	111	44.9		
6-10 Years	118	47.8		
11-15 Years	9	3.6		
More than 15 Years	9	3.6		
Socioeconomic Status				
Lower Class	170	68.8		
Middle Class	50	20.2		
Upper Class	27	10.9		

Note: N = 247, SD = Standard Deviation

The sample comprised 247 participants with a mean age of 24.71 years ($SD = 7.31$). Of the participants, 48.2% ($n = 119$) were men and 51.8% ($n = 128$) were women. Regarding education, 17.4% ($n = 43$) had completed middle-level education, 21.1% ($n = 52$) had Matriculation/O-Level, 29.6% ($n = 73$) had Intermediate/A-Level, 21.5% ($n = 53$) held a bachelor's degree, and 10.5% ($n = 26$) had a master's degree. In terms of work experience, 44.9% ($n = 111$) reported 1–5 years of experience, 47.8% ($n = 118$) had 6–10 years, while 3.6% ($n = 9$) each had 11–15 years and more than 15 years of experience. With respect to socioeconomic status, 68.8% ($n = 170$) belonged to the lower class, 20.2% ($n = 50$) to the middle class, and 10.9% ($n = 27$) to the upper class.

Table 2*Correlation among Study Variables*

Variables	1	2	3
1. Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility	-	.44**	.27**
2. Organizational Pride		-	.50**
3. Employee Engagement			-

Note: N=247, ** $p < .01$

A significant positive correlation was found between perceived corporate social responsibility and organizational pride ($r = .44, p < .01$), while corporate social responsibility was also positively correlated with employee engagement ($r = .27, p < .01$). Additionally, organizational pride showed a significant positive relationship with employee engagement ($r = .50, p < .01$).

Table 3*Mediation Analysis Using Hayes Macro Process 4.2, Model 4.*

Antecedents	Consequences							
	Organizational Pride (M)			EE (Y)				
	B	SE	p		β	SE	P	
PCSR (X)	A	3.93***	1.15	<.001	c'	.01	.01	.29
Organizational Pride (M)	-				b	.84***	.10	<.001
Constant	/	.06***	.009	<.001	/	16.72	1.90	<.001
	$R^2 = .19 F = 59.21$				$R^2 = .26 F = 43.36$			
	*** $p < .001$				*** $p < .001$			

Note: N = 247, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, PCSR = Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility, EE = Employee Engagement

According to Table 3, perceived corporate social responsibility had a significant positive effect on organizational pride ($\beta = 3.93, SE = 1.15, p < .001$). When organizational pride was included in the model, the direct effect of perceived corporate social responsibility on employee engagement became non-significant ($\beta = .01, SE = .01, p = .29$), while organizational pride had a strong and significant positive effect on employee engagement ($\beta = .84, SE = .10, p < .001$). The model explained 19% of the variance in organizational pride and 26% of the variance in employee engagement.

Indirect Effect

Indirect Path	Effect	β	LLCI	ULCI
Organizational Pride	.05	.21	.13	.29

Note: N = 247

The indirect effect of perceived corporate social responsibility on employee engagement through organizational pride was positive and significant (effect = 0.05, β = 0.21), with the bootstrap confidence interval not including zero (LLCI = 0.13, ULCI = 0.29), indicating that organizational pride significantly mediates the relationship between perceived corporate social responsibility and employee engagement.

Table 4

Gender Difference between Study Variable

	Men(n=119)		Women(n=128)		t (245)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
PCSR	126.34	24.33	123.89	25.71	.76	.44	0.09
Organizational Pride	12.26	3.95	12.96	3.92	-1.39	.16	0.17
Employee Engagement	28.21	6.34	30.38**	7.32	-2.47	.01	0.31

Note: N = 247, ** p < .01, M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, PCSR = Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility

Table 4 presents the gender differences in the study variables. The results demonstrated no statistically significant differences between men and women in perceived corporate social responsibility (PCSR), t (245) = 0.76, p = .44, Cohen's d = 0.09, or organizational pride, t (245) = -1.39, p = .16, Cohen's d = 0.17, suggesting small effect sizes. However, a significant gender difference was observed in employee engagement, with women scoring higher than men (M = 30.38 vs. 28.21), t (245) = -2.47, p = .01, Cohen's d = 0.31, indicating a moderate effect size.

Discussion

The study aimed to address a gap in the existing literature by examining the relationship between perceived corporate social responsibility and employee engagement among employees in Pakistan's corporate sector with a particular focus on the mediating role of organizational pride.

The first hypothesis of the study is proved as there is a significant relationship among study variables, i.e., perceived corporate social responsibility, organizational pride, and employee engagement among employees working in the corporate sector of Pakistan. The study aligns with a previous similar study that stated that perceived internal corporate responsibility is significantly associated with organizational pride and employee engagement among employees working in the corporate sector in Pakistan (Ali et al., 2024). The reason for study results in the cultural context of Pakistan could be since Pakistan is a collectivistic sort of country where the organizational responsibility particularly constituting employee rights, customers rights, government law abidance etc, enhances the emotional attachment among employees that likely to boost pride feeling as well as enhances the engagement of employees towards their work which ultimately increase the organizational productivity.

The second hypothesis of the study is also proved, as the perceived corporate sector responsibility after controlling for organizational pride did not significantly affect the employee engagement, while the indirect effect via organizational pride in the mediation model is significant, indicating full mediation. The result of this study is similar to a study conducted on employees in Austria, that study stated a significant mediating role of organizational pride between corporate social responsibility and employee positive attitude and attachment towards the organization (Schaefer et al., 2024). The reason for the significant mediating role of organizational pride between perceived corporate social responsibility and employee engagement could be due to the positive influence of organizational practices on employees. When employees perceive such ethical and responsible practices, they tend to feel pride to be part of that organization, which ultimately enhances their engagement at work.

The third hypothesis of the study is also partially proved, as no statistically significant difference was found among men and women for the variable perceived corporate responsibility and organizational pride, while women scored statistically significantly higher on employee engagement than men. A previous study conducted on business students depicted that women scored significantly higher on corporate social responsibility than their counterparts in South Africa (Fatoki, 2016). Another, similar study conducted in Toronto, Canada, reported that women from midlife to retirement age scored significantly higher on corporate social responsibility in both the private and public sectors (Magee, 2015). Another recent study contradicts the findings of this study, which reported that data gathered from two companies in South Africa reported that men scored significantly higher on employee engagement than their counterparts (Steyn & Grobler, 2016). However, another study aligns with the result of this study for employment gender related differences. The study reported that female academicians scored higher than male academicians; the data were gathered from the Central University of Kashmir, the University of Kashmir, and the Islamic University of Science and Technology in India (Gulzar & Teli, 2018). The reason for non-significant result between men and women with respect to study variables perceived corporate responsibility and organizational pride could be due to similar perception of both men and women towards these variables, while the significant higher score of women on employee engagement could be the women higher intrinsic motivation to engage in work when they are given right environment, recognition, employee rights they tend to surpass men in engagement at work.

Limitations and Recommendations

The study, although fulfilling its hallmark, possesses several shortcomings, i.e., limited sample size, cross-sectional study design, purposive sampling technique, English version scales for Pakistani employees, which included under-metric employees too, and limited demographics. The future studies need to overcome these limitations by including a larger sample size for the study's generalizability, and adopting a stratified sampling technique and Urdu version scales for Pakistani employees. Also, there is a need to include demographics like public sector employees or private sectors, and to include designations of employees as well.

Implications

The study's findings comprise several practical and theoretical implications. Practically, the correlational analysis of the study indicates there is a need for an effective design for corporate social responsibility as the

employees get emotionally involved with the organization. With corporate social responsibility being high, this also enhances employee engagement, which ultimately enhances organizational productivity. The full mediation analysis depicts the crucial role of organizational pride between perceived corporate social responsibility and employee engagement, the indirect significant effect of perceived corporate social responsibility on employee engagement via organizational pride indicates that organizational higher managements must work on pride-building practices i.e. employee recognition, value-based leadership, transparency of reward and bonuses, fair and merit based promotion, considering employees as an important asset of the organization and taking effective steps for their rights. Women have a significantly higher score on employee engagement than men, indicating that there is a need to identify factors that heightened the women's engagement to apply those factors to men and make policies to engage men's engagement at work too. The inclusive management and flexible work policy may close the gap between men's and women's employee engagement.

Theoretically, the study demonstrates a clear understanding of how corporate social responsibility perception of employees enhances the engagement of employees at work via a mediator. This study finding extended the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), which depicted that when employees perceive the organization as socially responsible, they tend to feel pride in being part of it and which subsequently strengthens their emotional attachment and enhances their engagement. Further, the study result is congruent with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), that employees reciprocate the responsibility and favor of organizational action in terms of good behavior and attitude. However, the non-significant direct effect of perceived corporate social responsibility depicts that reciprocity does occur towards the organization by employees, but via an internal psychological state that is organizational pride rather than corporate social responsibility alone. The finding advances the corporate social responsibility engagement theories (Ali et al., 2024; Glavas, 2016; Kavya & Padmavathy, 2017; Rupp et al., 2018) by clarifying that emotional mechanism, i.e. organizational pride, is a critical explanatory pathway between corporate social responsibility and employee engagement.

Women scored significantly higher than their men counterparts on the study variable employee engagement, which indicates women tend to possess higher affiliation with organizational values, as depicted by social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012). The findings also extended the previous engagement theory developed by Kahn (1990), which stated that work meaningfulness, psychological ownership, and availability can be differently perceived by men and women depending on the cultural and social context. Pakistan is a society where women are expected to balance professional responsibilities with family and social roles, which may strengthen their emotional attachment to organizations and influence their engagement levels.

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