

Micro-foundations of corporate social responsibility: Examining the relationship between employees' perception of CSR and unethical behavior, as mediated by work enjoyment and prosocial motivation

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Idea development

- Corporate stakeholders have become more interested in the **contributions** organizations can and should make **to society**.
- Given the importance of relationships to effectiveness in business today, **reputation for integrity is an essential ingredient for success and personal satisfaction**.
- This is even truer in an age of **social networking** that can send **news of bad behavior** to a broad audience in seconds.



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Idea development



Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is defined as “context-specific **organizational actions and policies** that **take into account stakeholders’ expectations** and the **triple bottom line** of economic, social, and environmental performance” (Aguinis, 2011, p. 858)

Idea development



Idea development

Employees, as one of the most significant internal stakeholders, are usually **the ones who plan, influence, and are influenced by the organization's CSR strategy and activities** (Seivwright & Unsworth, 2016).

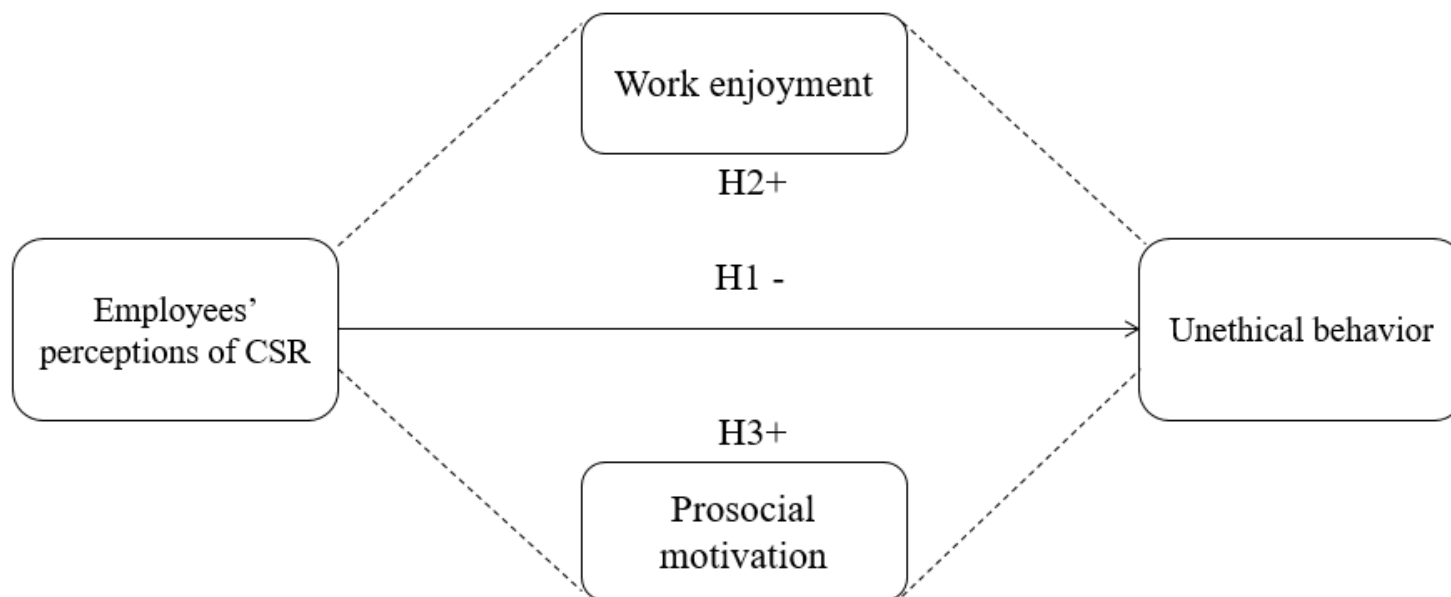


Micro-level CSR

... is defined as **“the study of the effects and experiences of CSR (however it is defined) on individuals (in any stakeholder group) as examined at the individual level of analysis”** (Rupp & Mallory, 2015, p. 216)



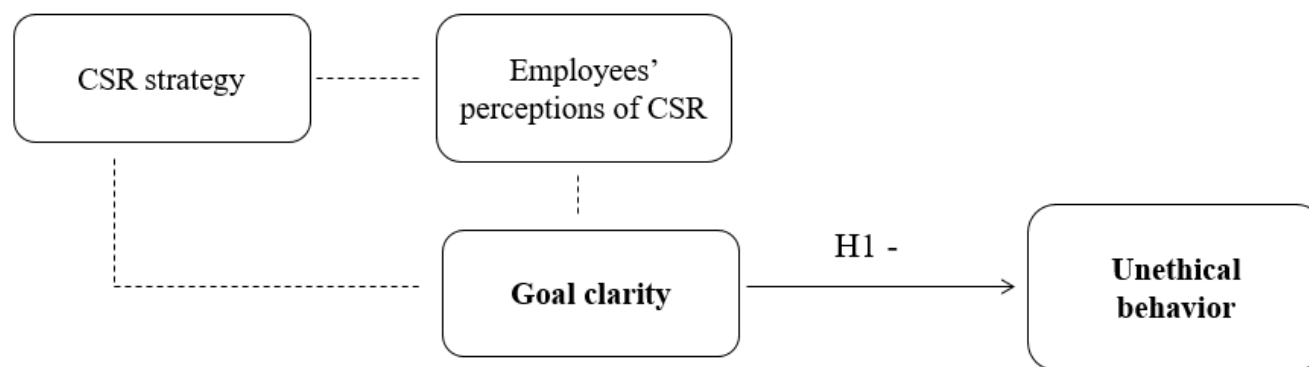
Theoretical model



Employees' perceptions of CSR and unethical behavior (H1)

- **CSR defined** as “*caring for the well-being of others and the environment with the purpose of also creating value for the business.*” (Glavas & Kelley, 2014, p. 171)
- **Perception of CSR**, defined as “*perception of caring and fairness for others*” (Glavas & Kelley, 2014, p. 181)
- A company's commitment to **CSR** might ultimately **shape the ethicality of employees' decisions** in the presence of temptation for personal gain (Beaudoin et al., 2018).
- We argue that employees who perceive their organization positively due to its CSR acts are less likely to choose to behave unethically because they are aware that **such behavior will not be rewarded.**

Employees' perceptions of CSR and unethical behavior (H1)

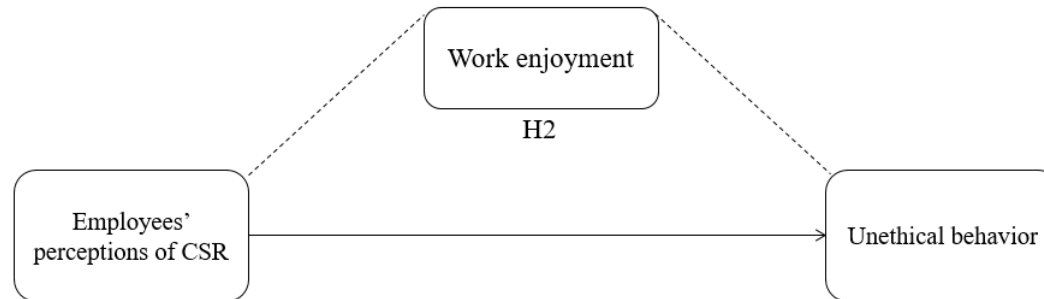


- CSR strategy and corresponding programs and actions should be communicated across the entire organization.
- Organizations that emphasize the role of CSR should define and **implement clear CSR strategy** and **CSR-related goals** (Carroll, 1991).

Work enjoyment as a mediating construct (H2)

- According to Maignan, Ferrell, and Hult (1999), employees enjoy acting in organizations with **goals beyond the mere maximization of profits.**
- **CSR motivates employees to seek enjoyment** from their job and personal challenge **beyond external rewards.** Studies suggest that some employees are motivated and willing to work in socially responsible companies even though they will receive lower salaries (Heslin & Ochoa, 2008).
- When the degree to which employees perceive a company supports the activities related to a social cause (i.e., **employees' perception of CSR**) is **high**, employees receive **clear signals that socially responsible behavior is desirable behavior** in the organization.

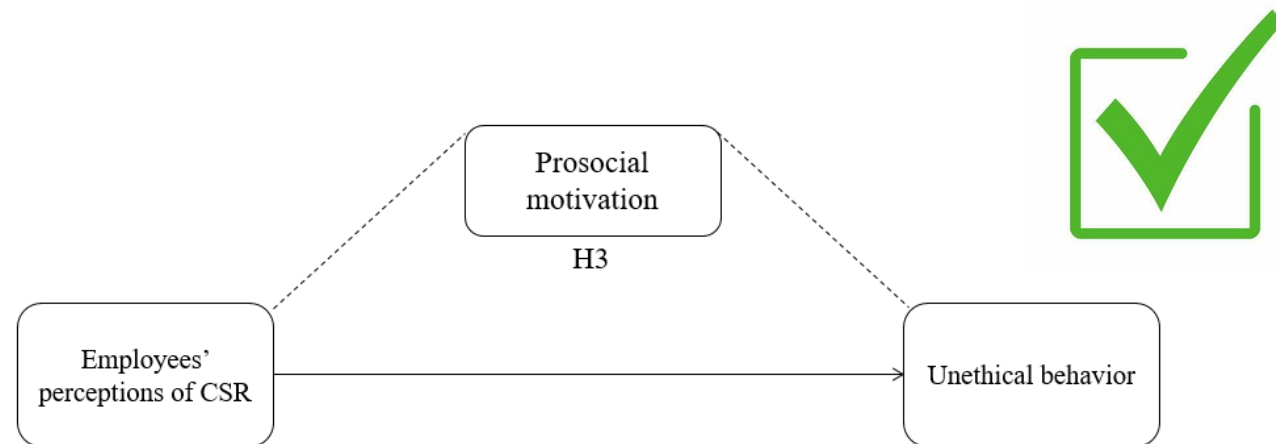
Work enjoyment as a mediating construct (H2)



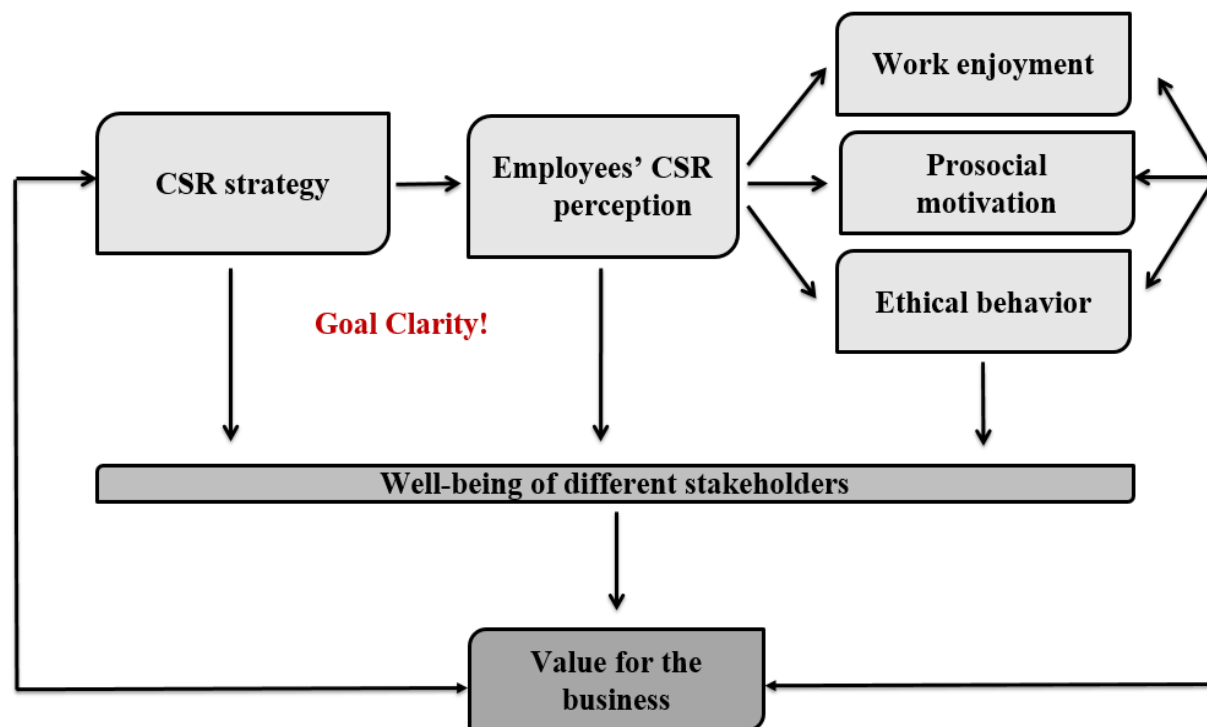
- Thus, we argue that when **employees' perception of CSR is high**, employees will more likely experience and engage in **enjoyable work activities**, which will in turn **decrease the emergence of unethical behavior**.

Prosocial motivation as a mediating construct (H3)

- **Prosocial motivation** is the desire to benefit other people (Batson 1987).
- When **employees' perception of CSR is high**, employees are aware of the beneficial effects of their actions on others; therefore, they will have even **greater desire to make positive differences in others' lives** (Lemoine, Parsons, & Kansara, 2015).



Conclusions



- #1: Align employee goals with CSR strategy and thereby mitigate unethical behavior
- #2: Clearly communicate the CSR strategy and corresponding programs and actions across the entire organization

Future research

- Employees' perceptions of CSR → the influence of national culture?
- CSR strategy → Employees' perceptions of CSR → outcomes in Europe and China?





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