BUSINESS RESEARCH METHODS

SESSIONAL ASSIGNMENT

Date of submission: 15th June 2020.

Select a topic of your specialised/interest area (HRM, Marketing, Finance). Write a complete Research Proposal on your selected topic.

Note: Research Proposal should comprise of all the components.

All the components have been discussed in detail (online class).

REG NO : 15426-MS Software Engineering

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Research proposal on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and strategic Human resource management

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to develop a conceptual framework in order to analyse and concentrate on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and strategic human resource (HR) management. Thus far away, both disciplines have advancement in isolation. Therefore, this paper aims to examine if a combination of these written research lines can provide competitive advantages for enterprises.
Specifically, we will analyse in this that how a socially responsible orientation in the HRs practices can contribute to the achievement of these advantages through performance variables, such as work environment and intellectual capitals.

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1) **<u>Introduction</u>**

The uncertainty of the current environment underscores the importance of institutional factors and unmanageable resources in the process of adaptation and firm's survival (Gómez-Mejía and Balkin, 2002;; Kang and Snell, 2009). Guided by theoretical perspectives, such as the resource-based view of the firm (Arthur and Boyles, 2007;; Wright et al., 2001), human capital theory (Lepak et al., 2006) or social capital approach (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Moran, 2005),, academics have demonstrated how human resources (HR) represent a key mechanism to unlock the organizations value and therefore one of the main sources of competitive advantages (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009). Considering the framework proposed by Miles and Snow (1978), the success of an organisation is not based only on its internal strengths but also on their environment . Hence, it is necessary to establish a strategic fit between both the internal resources of firms and their environment. To facilitate this adjustment, this study proposes an emergent strategic variable in management literature like corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Carroll, 1999; Galbreath, 2010; Lockett et al., 2006). CSR is defined as "the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development,and   working with employees, their families, the local community and   society at large to improve their quality of life" (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2000). The empirical evidence shows that those companies undertaking   CSR actions can address more efficiently the pressures and social demands from the environment and their stakeholders (Bhattacharya et al., 2008a; Freeman et al., 2010;Husted and Allen, 2007).Apart from these external benefits, the incorporation of CSR into business strategy can provide internal benefits to firms. In this sense, organisations that carry out a set of   socially responsible practices:

- 1 appropriate employment relations and working conditions
- 2 communication, employee involvement and social dialogue
- 3 education and training
- 4 occupational health and safety
- 5 diversity and equal opportunities.

Literature on management shows that this kind of practices can generate a positive working on environment among their employees (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Commission of the European Communities, 2001; Global Reporting Initiative, 2006; Gould-Williams, 2007; Muncherji and Gupta, 2004).
These circumstances improve the communication, trust and cooperation within organisation – social capital (Carmeli et al., 2009; Evans, 2005), and facilitates the exchange of knowledge, skills and attitudes among workers – human capital (Leana and Van Buren, 1999). As a result of these enhancements, the intellectual capital of the organisation will increase, encouraging the achievement of competitive advantages (Burgman and Ross, 2007; Youndt and Snell, 2004). If we add the importance of HRs into the development of business and CSR strategies (Lockwood, 2004; Sharma et al., 2009), we will reach the main objective of this study: to analyse whether a socially responsible orientation in the   HRs practices can help companies to accomplish their goals and economic performance through two ways :

1: From an external adjustment between society and stakeholders expectations and their

satisfaction by firms (Barnett, 2007; Harrison and Freeman, 1999).

2: From an internal adjustment between business strategies and HRs strategies (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 1988; Miles and Snow, 1984; Wright and McMahan, 1992). In this regard, we focus on the improvements that this adjustment could generate in variables, such as working environment and intellectual capital (Surrroca et al., 2010; Youndt and Snell, 2004).

Following the institutional approach (Campbell, 2007; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995) and stakeholder's theory (Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984), this study examine how organisations can achieve synergies stemming from CSR and strategic human resource management (SHRM).

2 Theoretical background and research propositions are below

In recent decades the concept of CSR has gradually obtained greater significance in academic and professional fields because in (Carroll and Shabana, 2010; Crane et al., 2008). Researchers from distinct disciplines display that how businesses that contain social responsibility in their movements can achieve higher profits from their competitors (Table 1). These research illustrate how groups that develop CSR moves can implement.

- 1 can increase their financial performance.
- 2 improve the relationship with their stakeholders to gain more
- 3 enhance the commitment of their employees to achive goals.

However, too little has been researched approximately the benefits of CSR practices in the HR
management field (Cuganesan, 2006). Until now,the different researchers have emphasised the relation of HRs inside the implementation and develop of CSR objectives and strategies (Garavan and McGuire, 2011; Sharma et al., 2009). In this manner, Rupp et al. (2006) spotlight that organisations dreams which carry out CSR practices
can acquire greater pleasure and dedication from their employees working. According to a have a look at conducted by way of Sirota Survey Intelligence1 (2007) in more than 700 groups in the course of 2007, 70% of workers are extra glad and devoted to those corporations which have social and environmental obligations of their fields. In this way, Bhattacharya et al. (2008b) proclaim that CSR activities comprise a legitimate, compelling and increasingly crucial manner to
draw and maintain appropriate stakeholderss personnel as well as a appropriate tool to satisfy customers with the aim to differentiate the business enterprise from its competitors within the market. Considering this historical past and
relevance approximately CSR and HRM, this paper proposes a conceptual framework with two main desires: firstly, to give an explanation for the relationships
between both fields; and secondly, to observe the outside and internall adjustment
lthat firms must perform to acquire competitive blessings from this process.

OWN ELOBORATION..

Table 1   Empirical studies on the relationship between CSR and performance

Study	Country	Data	Findings
Waddock and Graves (1997)	EE.UU.	469 firms	Companies that carry out a set of CSR practices to improve the relationship with their stakeholders (employees, customers, communities and environment) and consequently increase their financial performance
Hillman and Keim (2001)	EE.UU.	308 firms	There is a positive correlation between CSR and the value creation for the stakeholders and the shareholders of the company
Simpson and Kohers (2002)	EE.UU.	385 firms	There is a positive link between CSR actions and social and financial performance of a enterprise
Déniz-Déniz and De Sáa Pérez (2003)	Spain	50 firms	Companies that engage socially responsible human resources practices meet the expectations of their employees, achieving greater performance and commitment from this group as a result
Tsoutsoura (2004)	EE.UU.	500 firms	There is a positive linkage between CSR and financial performance that enables to invest in a improvement of employee relations, environmental concerns and community relations
Mittal et al. (2008)	India	50 firms	Companies that implement CSR initiatives (codes of ethics and conduct that listed in their annual reports) generate a significant economic and market value
Rettab et al. (2009)	Dubai	280 firms	CSR has a positive impact on organisational performance: financial performance, employee commitment and corporate reputation
Surrroca et al. (2010)	Spain	599 firms	CSR practices provide an improvement of intangible variables of the organisation (innovation, human capital, reputation, culture and economic performance)

Source: Own elaboration

2.1 External adjustment of CSR

Companies play a critical role in the improvement and welfare of society (employment generation, economic wealth, distributing items and services, etc.), so they want to assume additional responsibilities that go beyond their financial and criminal obligations (Davis, 1960). In this sense, many organizations have included social, ethical and environmental commitments to fulfill the society and stakeholder's expectations (Logsdon and Wood, 2002; Matten and Crane, 2005). The expression of these commitments has resulted in

the integration of CSR by using the use of a large variety of organizations that allows you to valid their interest and growth their competitiveness (Aguilera et al., 2007; McWilliams and Siegel, 2001; Porter and Kramer, 2006). On the other hand, corporations that manage their assets in an irresponsible way are punished with heavy grievance by way of the market. This reasons an erosion of their picture and value, damaging critically their stakeholder's relations (Dowling, 2004; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). Some relevant examples of the social effect of businesses are the accounting manipulations of information with the aid of the usage of Enron Corporation, the environmental pressures on Shell Oil's or the pressures on Nike approximately their employment policies (Wheeler et al., 2003). These organizations were forced to redirect their behaviour closer to sustainability models to comply to society requirements (Global Reporting Initiative, 2002, 2006; Principles for Responsible Management Education, 2009). For these reasons, literature based totally at the stakeholders approach underlines the importance of considering the wishes of the corporations interest agencies (society, government, customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, etc.) who can affect the firm's outcomes (Argandoña, 1998; Barnett, 2007). According to the instrumental view of stakeholder theory, agencies that combine the delight of the interest organizations with the accomplishment of its goals can behavior their activities with greater guarantees of achievement as properly as improve the relations with those groups (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Jones, 1995; Odgen and Watson, 1999). Likewise, the technique of adjustment between corporations and their surroundings requires the internalisation of a set of institutional elements with the aid of firms to be able to be accepted with the aid of the network and acquire greater competitiveness (Dacin, 1997; Dacin et al., 2008; Scott, 2001). Thus, Meyer and Rowan (1977, 1991) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) show how establishments that:

1 mimic the practices and strategies of greater success companies in their markets – mimetic isomorphism

2 establish and maintain good relations with their stakeholders – coercive isomorphism

3 get the support and institutional legitimacy of their community – normative Isomorphism

can improve their market position, image, reputation and, consequently, their economic returns enhancing as a result a better adjustment with their context (Husted and Salazar, 2006; Mackey et al., 2007; Weaver et al., 1999).

In this paper, we focus on the coercive isomorphism. Concretely, we study the relationships between company and its employees as internal stakeholders. According to Lockwood (2004) and Sharma et al. (2009), workers play a key role in the development of CSR strategies. The level of employees' participation increases the welfare of firms as well as provides internal benefits from their commitment and loyalty (Brammer et al., 2007; Collier and Esteban, 2007; Cullen et al., 2003). A strong organisational culture reinforced by responsible HR management practices can ensure high levels of success in the market by the improvement of employee's satisfaction, their productivity, customer loyalty, legal compliance and the approval of society (Sharma et al., 2009). For these reasons, a strategic approach in the way of managing human capital can be crucial in the process of integrating CSR (Fuentes-García et al., 2008). Based on these arguments, our second objective is to explain the benefits that organisations can achieve by developing and implementing a CSR orientation in their HR practices.

2.2 Internal adjustment of CSR

Regarding the company's inner frame, literature stresses the significance of linking business approach to HRs practices for improving the organisational performance (Becker and Gerhart, 1996; Miles and Snow, 1984; Youndt et al., 1996). The SHRM concept as Martín-Alcazar et al. (2005, 2008) noted represents an evolution of the traditional concept of HRs towards a brand new integrative perspective which include: a vertical hyperlink with the strategic control process, a horizontal link with the HR practices and an outside hyperlink with other organisational and surroundings factors. The assessment on SHRM underlines that HR system can be a unique supply of sustainable competitive gain if there is a match among its internal and outside components (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 1988; Wright and McMahan, 1992). Muncherji and Gupta (2004) examine, in this sense, how sociocultural values can have an effect on the improvement and constructing of HR practices in organisations. Recently, Peters et al. (2009), and Galbreath (2009, 2010) have discussed about the consequences and advantages of a social phenomenon like CSR on organisation's approach and their performance. The analyses of both authors recommend that CSRcan't be separated from corporate approach, showing an critical hole of studies among CSR and the HR strategy. Considering these theoretical dissertations, this look at targets to analyse whether or not a suit among business techniques towards CSR and the configuration of the HR practices may be in the long time a source of sustainable aggressive advantages for enterprises. In addition, this paper explores if positive upgrades in variables such as work environment and intellectual capital can positively affect the organisational performance as a result of HR practices with a socially accountable orientation. Thus, our first studies proposition is:

Proposition 1: *Companies that develop a socially responsible orientation in their strategy can achieve sustainable competitive advantages.*

Different studies and research in CSR show how the integration of a social orientation in the firm's strategy can impregnate the HR policies and practices as well as the organisational culture of the company (fair labour rights, health and safety, quality of work, etc.) (Brammer et al., 2007; Greening and Turban, 2000; Peters and Vassar (2009); Peterson, 2004). According to the Commission of the European Communities (2001) and the Global Reporting Initiative (2002, 2006), this paper has focused on five socially responsible practices to analyse their effects on organisational performance:

1 appropriate employment relations and working conditions
2 communication, employee involvement and social dialogue
3 education and training
4 occupational health and safety
5 diversity and equal opportunities.
Hence, the second proposition is:

Proposition 2.: *Companies that develop a socially responsible orientation in their strategy should extend these values to its HR practices.*

According to the literature, HR practices with socially responsible guidance can improve the working environment within the company (Gould-Williams, 2007; Patterson et al., 2004; Rogg et al., 2001). Moreover, in a context in which workers are treated fairly and equitably it is easier to create a work environment based on harmony and welfare, where the employees feel more committed and happy, reaching in this way in the long term

more productivity and efficiency (Aguilera et al., 2007; Dutton et al., 1994; Phusavat et al., 2009). In this regard:

Proposition 3: *A socially responsible orientation in the HRs practices can provide an improvement of the working environment of organisations.*

Additionally, the improvements in the working environment facilitate the communication, trust and cooperation among its members – social capital (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). A positive work environment encourages the relations and the frequency of formal and informal communication within organisation, providing a higher cohesion among employees and the achievement of organisational goals (structural dimension of social capital) (Chen et al., 2009; Galán and Castro, 2004; Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998). This network of relations enhances the trust and reciprocity among workers, facilitating a collective welfare and a stronger commitment between them (relational dimension of social capital) (Prusak and Cohen, 2001; Putnam, 2001). The improvement and quality of the relationships promote an exchange of knowledge, skills and their experience among employees – human capital, increasing in this way the intellectual capital within the organisation, encouraging the achievement of sustainable competitive advantages through this capital (Youndt and Snell, 2004). Hence, our third and four propositions are:

Proposition 4: *An improvement of working environment resulting from socially responsible HRs practices can increase the intellectual capital of organisations.*

Proposition 5: *Companies with a socially responsible orientation in their HRs practices can achieve competitive advantages resulting from an improvement in the intellectual capital of organisations.*

The research propositions are reflected in the conceptual model shown below (Figure 1).

OWN ELABORATION

Figure 1 Conceptual model
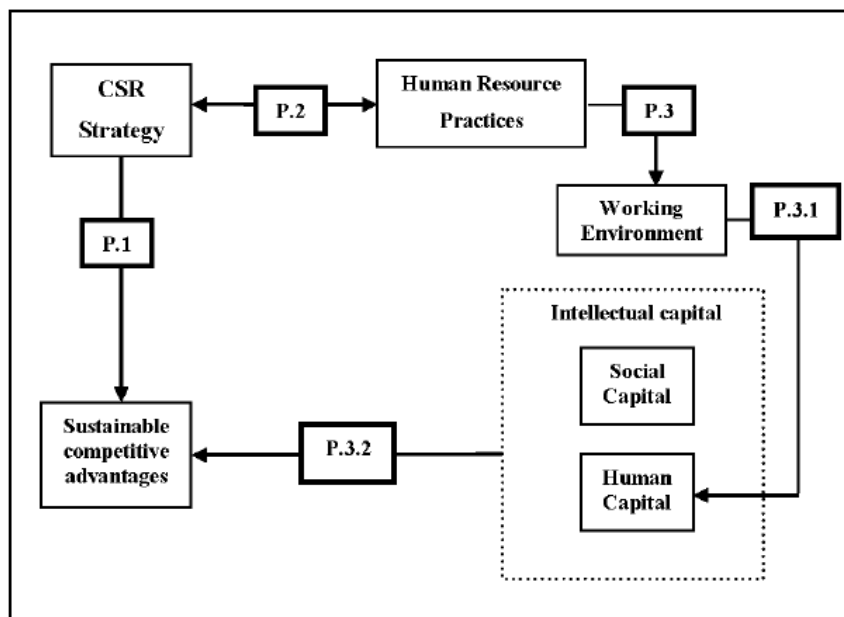
Source: Own elaboration.

2.2.1 Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a company's commitment to manage the social, environmental and economic effects of its operations responsibly and in line with public expectations.CSR activities may include: Company policies that insist on working with partners who follow ethical business practices.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a new idea, one in which the corporate sector incorporates social and environmental concerns in its strategies and plays a more responsible role in the world. ... If properly understood and executed, CSR is a win-win strategy that benefits the company, as well as society.

2.2.2 Strategic human resource management;:

can be defined as the linking of human resources with strategic goals and objectives in order to improve business performance and develop organizational culture that foster innovation, flexibility and competitive advantage.

The four main human resource strategies: These include recruitment, learning & development, performance appraisal, compensation, and succession planning. An example of an HR strategy is an HR mission statement and HR vision, with concrete, high-level actions about how to execute on this mission and vision.

3) <u>Concluding remarks or conclusion</u>

This paper examines the issues of development and testing of a conceptual model which analyses the casual relationships between CSR and SHRM. The literature review shows the importance of institutional factors (Campbell, 2007; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2001) and stakeholder's expectations in the internal and external adjustment process of CSR (Aguilera et al., 2007; Barnett, 2007; Donaldson and Preston, 1995). Specifically, this study has focused on employees due to the importance of human capital in the process of integrating CSR strategies (Lockwood, 2004; Sharma et al., 2009).

The research objectives proposed are:

1 analysing how a external and internal fit regarding CSR can provide competitive advantages for organisations

2 show the benefits that organisations can achieve by developing and implementing CSR in their HR practices and strategies.

Our review indicates that the development of a socially responsible orientation in HR practices (Brammer et al., 2007; Greening and Turban, 2000; Peterson, 2004) allows companies to obtain an improvement in variables, such as working environment (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Gould-Williams, 2007) and intellectual capital (Kang and Snell, 2009; Youndt and Snell, 2004), leading to obtaining sustainable competitive advantages through this process. According to a report published by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC)2 in 2010 aimed at managers and professionals of different parts of the world, recruitment and retention of talent are one of the most important current concerns of organisations regardless of their size. The professional consultant underscores that the 85% of HR managers believe that attracting and retaining talented people can offer companies a significant long-term advantage of differentiation, which could result in a positive way to their account results. It is clear that companies must provide in their HR practices: issues and social improvements which can meet the expectations of their

current and prospective employees.

Therefore, the integration of CSR in the field of SHRM represents an opportunity to improve the engagement, sense of belonging and productivity of employees (Brammer et al., 2007; Collier and Esteban, 2007). CSR has become in this sense, in a key partner that contributes to the value's generation in the HR management, helping to retain and motivate the human capital and improving the firm's performance and sustainability of firm's (Aguilera et al., 2007; Galbreath, 2009). To sum up policies and organisational practices represent the principal initiatives of HRM to internalise social responsibility and ensure that CSR issues become part of the firms (Agrawal, 2007).

4 Future research

This research is at an early stage of analysis and construction of the theoretical Framework thou. Once the propositions can be tested, we will offer a series of indicators to clarify and quantify & qualify the benefits of HR policies with a socially responsible orientation.

The sample of this study will compose of large-scale Spanish companies (more than 500 employees) that have HR department, belonging to different industry sectors in order to contrast the institutional theory and make comparisons.

Based on Dess and Davis (1984) and Robinson and Pearce (1988), we will develop three questionnaires aimed at the general managers for, HR directors and employees in order to analyse the following issues:

- 1 strategy of the company main strategy
- 2 internal measures of CSR coporate social responsibility
- 3 strategies and human resource policies
- 4 intellectual capital
- 5 working environment
- 6 organizational performance.

The questionnaire uses a Likert scale to measure these items. We will use the social classes of practices from KLD Analytics, Inc. (http://www.Kld.Com) and the GRI (http://globalreporting.Org) to analyse the effects on worker and organisational overall performance. Regarding intellectual capital, we comply with the technique proposed by Bontis et al. (1999) and Hung (2004) to shape and degree the intangible asset in three one-of-a-kind aspects: structural, social and human capital. Moreover according to McGuire et al. (1988), we keep in mind expert opinions and additionally the content material of annual CSR reports and different corporate files to contrast the information. Depending on the range of valid responses and the development of the investigation, we will decide the statistical methodology to put in force one of a kind analysis techniques. Through the statistical results, we will proceed to comparison the hypotheses and evaluation of the conclusions reached within the academic & professional field. Likewise, there's a terrific interest in analysing the social orientation of HR practices in other nations to make comparisons. In this sense, Brewster (1995, 1999) and Gooderham et

al. (1999) show that the environment affects the performance and corporate strategies as well as the improvement of the HRs policies.

Another significant aspect could be studying the effects of socially responsible HR policies in social capital dimensions: structural and cognitive. Schoemaker et al. (2006) proposed that CSR can be integrated with greater effectiveness in organisations where social capital is more developed. In addition, Degli-Antoni and Saconi (2010), propose the idea of a virtuous circle between the different levels of social capital and the implementation of CSR practices, encouraging the creation of a cooperative networks between the firm and all its stakeholders as well as the promotion of social norms of trust, trustworthiness and cooperation. For these reasons, social capital plays an important role in the process of integration and development of CSR.

Finally, the effective implementation of HR strategy, oriented towards social responsibility, not only depends on the variables that we have showed upon. The status of individual employees (behaviours, attitudes, reactions, experiences, job satisfaction, etc.) and the perception that they have about the organisation and carrying out their policies are very important in the process of implementation CSR (Liao and Rupp, 2005). According to Colquitt et al. (2001), workers feel more identified, satisfied and engaged with companies that exercise social responsibility. Therefore, we believe that contributions based on organizational justice theory (Fortin, 2008; Rupp et al., 2006) can help us to analyse the behaviour of employees in the process of implementing CSR through the analysis of three kinds of employee's perceptions: procedural, distributive and interactional.

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