



Relationship of corporate social responsibility to occupational health and safety in construction

Relación de la responsabilidad social corporativa con la salud y seguridad ocupacional en la construcción

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to determine the relationship between corporate social responsibility and occupational health and safety in construction. In terms of the study population, a purposive sampling was chosen involving three construction companies located in the Ecuadorian Amazon region, in the provinces of Morona Santiago and Zamora Chinchipe, with the participation of 58 workers belonging to different labour categories, such as engineers, masters, bricklayers, journeymen and welders. The correlation with the other variables is low (0.099 with Support to vulnerable workers, 0.049 with Effective communication). Moderate correlations stand out between support for vulnerable workers and teamwork organisation, as well as between teamwork organisation and effective communication.

Descriptors: social responsibility; social behaviour; enterprises. (Source: UNESCO Thesaurus).

RESUMEN

La investigación tiene por objetivo determinar la relación de la responsabilidad social corporativa con la salud y seguridad ocupacional en la construcción. Se trabajó desde un tipo de investigación descriptiva con diseño no experimental con alcance correlacional de Pearson, en términos de la población de estudio, se optó por un muestreo intencional que involucró a tres empresas constructoras ubicadas en la región de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana, en las provincias de Morona Santiago y Zamora Chinchipe, con la participación de 58 trabajadores pertenecientes a diversas categorías laborales, como ingenieros, maestros, albañiles, oficiales y soldados. La correlación con las demás variables es baja (0.099 con Apoyo a trabajadores vulnerables, 0.049 con Comunicación efectiva). Se destacan correlaciones moderadas entre el apoyo a trabajadores vulnerables y la organización del trabajo en equipo, así como entre la organización del trabajo en equipo y la comunicación efectiva.

Descriptorios: responsabilidad social; comportamiento social; empresa. (Fuente: Tesoro UNESCO).

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Research articles section



INTRODUCTION

The marked differences between regions have affected the perception of the meaning of CSR, without understanding how it can play a relevant role in the business space, which has led to limitations in the response capacity of certain countries, perhaps because they are still in the early stages of developing or implementing policies and activities related to CSR (Molero-García, 2016). In several countries, CSR is considered more theoretical than practical, largely due to the persistence of problems such as poverty, lack of access to education and the presence of violence in different environments, whether personal, occupational or social (Pinos, 2018).

One of the fastest growing activities worldwide in industry is construction, which is characterised by the use of low-skilled and uneducated labour, sometimes under precarious working conditions. Despite statements about CSR in neighbouring countries such as Colombia, there are few positive effects in terms of improving the working conditions of their employees (Domínguez-Díaz, 2020). In Ecuador, few companies have adopted CSR models, mostly large corporations established in the country, although their focus is generally on environmental and community aspects. There are even non-profit organisations that seek to influence companies to also consider these CSR aspects in their business strategies (Tello-Caicedo et al. 2018).

Based on the above, the research aims to determine the relationship of corporate social responsibility with occupational health and safety in construction.

METHOD

The research was worked from a descriptive type of research with non-experimental design with Pearson's correlational scope. In terms of the study population, a purposive sampling was chosen involving three construction companies located in the Ecuadorian Amazon region, in the provinces of Morona Santiago and Zamora Chinchipe, with the participation of 58 workers belonging to different labour categories, such as engineers, masters, bricklayers, journeymen and welders.

The data collection technique used was a survey based on the questionnaire of psychosocial risks proposed by the Ministry of Labour of Ecuador, focusing on working conditions and the working environment, with a total of 19 questions.

The information collected was statistically processed through Pearson's correlation analysis with the support of the SPSS V25 statistical software. To analyse the results of the Pearson's correlation coefficient in the table provided, it is essential to consider both the Pearson's value and the p-value. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to 1, where:

If r is close to 1, it indicates a perfect positive correlation, meaning that the variables are highly directly related.

If r is close to -1, it indicates a perfect negative correlation, which means that the variables are highly inversely related.

If r is close to 0, it indicates a weak or no correlation between the variables.

On the other hand, the p-value indicates the statistical significance of the correlation. A p-value of less than 0.05 is generally considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Based on the information analysed, the results of the research are presented:



Table 1. Pearson's correlation of the survey for the current study.

Variable	Plan de Capacitaciones	No me causa efectos negativos a mi salud física y mental	Apoyo a trabajadores vulnerables	Organización y fomento trabajo en equipo	Comunicación efectiva
1. Plan de Capacitaciones	—	—	—	—	—
R de Pearson	—	—	—	—	—
Valor p	—	—	—	—	—
2. No me causa efectos negativos a mi salud física y mental	0.099	—	—	—	—
R de Pearson	0.099	—	—	—	—
Valor p	0.460	—	—	—	—
3. Apoyo a trabajadores vulnerables	0.321	0.217	—	—	—
R de Pearson	0.321	0.217	—	—	—
Valor p	0.014	0.102	—	—	—
4. Organización y fomento trabajo en equipo	0.494	0.143	0.446	—	—
R de Pearson	0.494	0.143	0.446	—	—
Valor p	< .001	0.285	< .001	—	—
5. Comunicación efectiva	0.555	0.049	0.433	0.555	—
R de Pearson	0.555	0.049	0.433	0.555	—
Valor p	< .001	0.712	< .001	< .001	—

In table 1, the correlation with all other variables is 0 or very close to 0, suggesting a weak or no correlation.

All p-values are greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant correlation between the Training Plan and the other variables.

For the variable "It does not cause negative effects on my physical and mental health":

The correlation with the other variables is low (0.099 with Supporting vulnerable workers, 0.049 with Effective communication).

All p-values are greater than 0.05, suggesting that there is no significant correlation between this variable and the other variables.

For the variable "Support for vulnerable workers":

A moderate correlation is observed with Organisation and teamwork promotion (0.446).

The p-value is less than 0.05 for the correlation with Organisation and promotion of teamwork, indicating a significant correlation.

For the variable "Organisation and teamwork promotion":

A moderate correlation is observed with Effective communication (0.555).

All p-values are less than 0.05, suggesting significant correlations with all other variables.

For the variable "Effective Communication":

Moderate correlation is observed with Organisation and teamwork fostering (0.555).

All p-values are less than 0.05, suggesting significant correlations with all other variables.



Table 2. Pearson's correlation of the survey for the current study.

Variable		Ayuda técnica y administrativa	Instalaciones y equipos adecuados	Pausas activas	Estado física y mental saludable	Acceso a la atención
1. Ayuda técnica y administrativa	R de Pearson	—				
	Valor p	—				
2. Instalaciones y equipos adecuados	R de Pearson	0.033	—			
	Valor p	0.807	—			
3. Pausas activas	R de Pearson	0.065	0.652	—		
	Valor p	0.629	< .001	—		
4. Estado física y mental saludable	R de Pearson	0.025	0.713	0.652	—	
	Valor p	0.850	< .001	< .001	—	
5. Acceso a la atención	R de Pearson	0.131	0.635	0.505	0.460	—
	Valor p	0.329	< .001	< .001	< .001	—

In table 2, the analysis of Pearson correlations between the variables reveals interesting patterns in the evaluated work context. Firstly, the variable "Technical and administrative help" does not show a significant correlation with any other variable, as both the Pearson value and the p-value are not significant.

As for "Adequate facilities and equipment", there is a very weak and non-significant correlation (0.033) with "Technical and administrative help", suggesting a low association between these two variables.

The presence of "Active breaks" shows a positive and significant correlation with "Adequate facilities and equipment" and "Healthy physical and mental state". This indicates that the implementation of active breaks is positively associated with the availability of adequate facilities and equipment, as well as with the perception of a healthy physical and mental state.

The variable "Healthy physical and mental state" also correlates positively with "Access to care", suggesting that those who perceive a healthy state are more likely to have access to care.

'Access to care' shows significant correlations with all variables, highlighting its importance in occupational well-being. These results suggest that active breaks and availability of adequate facilities are associated with a healthy physical and mental state, and that access to care is also linked to these factors, this analysis highlights the importance of considering factors such as active breaks and adequate facilities to promote well-being in the work environment.



Table 4. Pearson correlation of the survey for the present study.

Variable		Libre de conductas sexuales	Buen ambiente laboral	Autoidentificación étnica	Acoso laboral
1. Libre de conductas sexuales	R de Pearson	—			
	Valor p	—			
2. Buen ambiente laboral	R de Pearson	0.253	—		
	Valor p	0.056	—		
3. Autoidentificación étnica	R de Pearson	0.202	0.065	—	
	Valor p	0.128	0.626	—	
4. Acoso laboral	R de Pearson	0.069	0.125	0.092	—
	Valor p	0.608	0.350	0.491	—

In table 3, the analysis of Pearson correlations between the variables gives an insight into the relationships in the assessed work environment. Firstly, the variable "Free of sexual behaviour" does not show a significant correlation with any other variable, as the Pearson and p-values are not significant.

The perception of a "Good working environment" shows a moderate positive correlation but not statistically with "Ethnic self-identification" (0.065). This suggests a trend towards a positive association between a good work environment and ethnic self-identification, although it does not reach statistical significance.

"Ethnic self-identification" does not correlate significantly with any of the other variables, indicating that perceived ethnic identity is not associated with the absence of sexual behaviour, a good work environment or bullying.

The variable "Workplace bullying" shows low and non-significant correlations with the other variables. This suggests that the perception of harassment at work is not related to the absence of sexual behaviour, good working environment or ethnic self-identification in this specific context.

This analysis indicates that the perception of a good work environment might have a positive trend with ethnic self-identification, although this relationship does not reach statistical significance. In addition, absence of sexual behaviour, ethnic self-identification and bullying do not show significant correlations in this dataset.

DISCUSSION

Within the CSR when talking about occupational health and safety (OHS) is a topic of great interest, it is articulated within the social dimension and is linked to the working conditions of employees where its purpose is to achieve an adequate, safe and healthy working environment so it is not correct to only consider the health of workers as a means to achieve a good image but as a social responsibility (Martínez-Barranco & Yandun-Burbano, 2017).

It is evident the importance that CSR has gained in the business world, which is understood in this framework as a business philosophy for both sustainability and competitiveness, promoting economic development in line with ethical, social and environmental values (Lara-Manjarrez & Sánchez-Gutiérrez, 2021). Maintaining a safe work environment not only contributes to retaining skilled workers, but also guides projects towards preventing accidents that, should they occur, could result in injuries, schedule delays, and legal and regulatory problems. Moreover, an outstanding safety record not only enhances a company's reputation, but also makes it more competitive in an environment in which OHS is progressively gaining importance with the CSR management model, thus becoming an investment that yields concrete benefits (Martínez-



Oropesa & Montero-Martínez, 2015).

CSR emerges between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a voluntary response from industry, as it showed influence in resolving conflicts with society by creating standards and guidelines established through partnerships between government and business, contributing to development and sustainability. It can be noted that around 1930, companies started to implement CSR practices, although at that time they were not called CSR. These social actions were aimed at addressing the rising unemployment and poverty experienced during the Great Depression in countries such as the United States and in the regions of Europe and Latin America (Palacio-Flórez, 2020).

Corporate social responsibility contributes to profit generation and competitiveness by combining two essential objectives of companies, which is to make profit and meet the demands of society (Lara-Manjarrez & Sánchez-Gutiérrez, 2021). As such, CSR is the subject of attention from governments, researchers and entities, who evaluate companies' commitment to protecting the environment, supporting society and boosting economic development. Consequently, companies must develop ethical and responsible strategies that consider all their stakeholders: partners, employees, customers, community, suppliers, government authorities and agencies (López-Salazar et al. 2017). The relevance of human capital in companies has led to CSR initiatives being proposed in the field of human resources, highlighting the importance of implementing programmes that encompass and focus on values such as continuous training, teamwork, recognition, benefits, health and safety for workers.

Being an activity considered high risk, occupational accidents in the construction sector in Ecuador, as in many countries, are a cause for concern and demonstrating a commitment to employees also offers advantages to companies, which undoubtedly leads to improved productivity, efficiency, achievement of objectives and quality in the operations carried out, resulting in better financial performance and a strengthened corporate image (López-Salazar et al. 2017). However, at present, although it may be somewhat paradoxical, many employers still show resistance to allocate economic resources for the implementation of safety and health, despite understanding and accepting this reality (Martínez-Oropesa & Montero-Martínez, 2015).

The importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in contemporary business is undeniable. It is conceived as an essential business philosophy for both sustainability and competitiveness. CSR promotes economic development in harmony with ethical, social and environmental values. This approach extends to the field of human capital, where the need to implement ethical and responsible human resources programmes is emphasised. However, despite recognising the importance of occupational health and safety (OHS) within CSR, in high-risk sectors such as construction, there is still resistance from some employers to allocate resources for its implementation and despite all efforts, occupational accidents and illnesses continue to be a reality (Ormaza-Andrade et al. 2020).

This is sometimes due to a lack of adoption of the necessary measures, either because of a lack of knowledge, the influence of economic factors or, above all, the ingrained work culture. The prevention of occupational risks is recognised as one of the most effective ways to improve working conditions and quality of life in general and is directly related to CSR. The identification of risks in the workplace can broaden the understanding to pay attention to factors that previously went unnoticed by improving workplaces and creating a suitable working environment. This phenomenon reveals a paradox where, despite understanding the reality and importance of OHS, there is a reluctance to invest in measures that could improve both productivity and corporate image (Córdova-Hernández et al. 2023), (Pimenta et al. 2022).

CONCLUSION

Significant divergences between regions have led to disparate perceptions of the meaning and applicability of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This phenomenon has impacted on the understanding of how CSR can play a relevant role in the business environment, especially in those countries that are in the early stages of developing or implementing CSR-related policies. In a number of contexts, CSR is seen more as a theoretical concept than a practical one, with



fundamental problems such as poverty, lack of access to education and the presence of violence in various environments persisting. Furthermore, in sectors such as construction, despite the declaration of commitments to CSR, there is limited impact on improving the working conditions of employees.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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