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Influence of corporate social responsibility on the elements of affective commitment to the employer brand in companies in the manufacturing sector

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to develop a theoretical framework in which the components of the employer brand's affective commitment—long-term orientation (LTO), enthusiasm for the employer brand (EEB), and emotional attachment (EA)—are influenced by corporate social responsibility (CSR). An online questionnaire was used to conduct the survey, which gathered data from 366 employees of Lima, Peru, businesses. Using SmartPLS software and the partial least squares path modeling method, the data were analyzed to test the hypotheses of the proposed research model. According to the findings, CSR significantly improved LTO, EEB, and EA. In conclusion, it can be stated that organizations that adopt sustainable practices and promote CSR within their business strategy not only benefit society and care for the environment but can also strengthen the emotional connection of employees with the company. With which they can improve morale, productivity, and talent retention, creating a more positive and sustainable work environment in the long term.

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SUBJECTS
Business, Management and Accounting; Industry & Industrial Studies; Communication Ethics

I. Introduction

The manufacturing sector, known for its vital role in driving the nation's economy, has faced unprecedented challenges since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, including labor transformations and sheer business survival. However, in pursuit of a sustainable future, socially inclusive industrial policies are being advocated, as noted by (United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2021). In this context, as the sector works hard to recover economic growth and employment by 2030, as stated in the (Nationes Unidas, 2023) it becomes imperative to implement employee-centered practices. These practices are not only aimed at boosting high performance and productivity, but also seek to actively involve workers in achieving the company's objectives (Othman & Mahmood, 2022; Subramaniam et al., 2019). Since workers are a fundamental part of the organization, it would be an advantage to involve them in the CSR practices developed by the organization (Bachnik et al., 2020; Budhiraja & Yadav, 2020).

Studies on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the manufacturing sector cover a wide range of topics. From the challenges for its implementation in US companies (Kapelko & Oude Lansink, 2022), to the analysis of the impact on firm value in Indonesia (Gede Adiputra & Hermawan, 2020), the research extends to various geographical and problem areas. Aspects such as CSR reporting disclosure on company websites in India are explored (Bihari & Khanuja, 2019), along with the barriers and consequences of ethical leadership in this country context (Basavaraj & Bala, 2022; Goyal & Kumar, 2017). In addition, the relationship between CSR and green investment and innovation in China and Saudi Arabia has been examined (Yannan et al., 2022), as well as its influence on the sustainable development of community services in India (Srivastava & Dhiman, 2022). Comparisons have been made between manufacturing and service companies in the Republic of Croatia (Lackovi Vincek et al., 2017),

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and the impact of CSR on total quality management in developing countries has been studied (Hassis et al., 2023). In addition, the influence of CSR on corporate competitiveness and business performance in China has been investigated (Huang et al., 2023), as well as stakeholder pressures to adopt CSR in Ethiopia (Ying et al., 2021). The relationship between environmental investments and financial performance in Nigeria has also been analyzed (Shabbir & Wisdom, 2020), as well as the institutional environment and operating performance in Korean manufacturing industries (Lau et al., 2018).

In Latin America, studies indicate that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is undergoing a significant transformation from a purely philanthropic approach to a more strategic one (Flores et al., 2007). However, this change is taking place in a context where organizations face challenges in maintaining their competitiveness and profitability (Vives & Peinado-Vara, 2006), especially in Latin American countries that are less economically developed and find it difficult to implement CSR actions (Peinado-Vara & Vives, 2011). Despite this, employee engagement plays a crucial role in driving innovation and productivity within organizations, although there is concern that a significant percentage of workers worldwide lack engagement, while in Latin America this percentage is notably higher (Hewitt, 2016; Steelcase, 2016). In addition, it has been observed that younger employees, particularly millennials and Generation Z, are highly influenced by the social and environmental values and practices of organizations, which may affect their job tenure (Deloitte, 2023).

Although these studies offer a broader understanding of the study of CSR in the manufacturing sector in various contexts, it is still a developing area and more research is needed, especially in its relationship to employee engagement with the employer brand. Therefore, this study examines the following question: How does corporate social responsibility (CSR) affect the components of the affective commitment to the employer brand of Lima manufacturing companies? This research will be relevant for those organizations that aspire to be socially responsible because it proposes a theoretical model in which Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) influences the elements of affective commitment to the employer brand (ACEB), which is composed of the long-term orientation (LTO), enthusiasm (EEB) and emotional attachment (EA) to the employer brand. When companies embrace social responsibility, research results will help them determine the degree of employee dedication to the employer brand.

This research has the following sections: 1) Introduction and literature review, 2) Methodology, 3) Results, 4) Discussion and conclusions.

Literature review

Corporate social responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has various definitions, but basically refers to the practice of integrating social and environmental considerations into business operations and interactions with stakeholders (Dahlsrud, 2008; García-Salirrosas & Gordillo, 2021). Companies that adopt CSR seek not only to comply with legal and ethical obligations, but also to contribute to sustainable development and the well-being of society in general (Mu et al., 2024). This involves making decisions that take into account the social and environmental impact of business actions. CSR practices promote the attraction and retention of employees, and in turn the reputation of the company (Farndale & Atli, 2016). These practices must be aligned both with the company's objectives and with the objectives of the organization's collaborators, in order to satisfy and engage them (Ellemers et al., 2013; García-Salirrosas, 2023). At the beginning of the 20th century, social responsibility activities implemented in companies with their employees had a positive impact on the employer brand and the quality of life of their employees (Lindholm, 2018). Labor costs are lower for companies that commit to CSR (Nyborg & Zhang, 2013). There is a relationship between CSR and organizational management; The way managers make decisions, through CSR strategies, will improve the work development of their employees (Severino et al., 2021). Socially and environmentally responsible organizations influence the behavior of their employees, making them feel proud and identified with their organization (John et al., 2024). Likewise, social responsibility influences the permanence of employees in the organization (Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2021). Therefore, CSR is the means of connection between the organization and society and the environment, so the employee's performance is fundamental (Budhiraja & Yadav, 2020).

Affective commitment to the employer brand

Affective commitment is defined as the emotional bond between the employee and the organization, generated by the employee's emotions, desires and voluntary impulses (González & Guillén, 2008). It is also the 'identification, participation and emotional attachment to the organization'(Allen & Meyer, 1996). Studies indicate that if the organization is committed by showing more support to its employees, the greater their emotional commitment will be (Li, 2013). Likewise, the higher the level of emotional commitment, the lower the stress and conflicts between work and family (Meyer et al., 2002).

On the other hand, the employer brand is the set of work experiences that employees have with the company (Biswas & Suar, 2016) and is useful for the strategic management of organizations (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004); It is the essence for the success of the organization because it impacts the attraction, retention and performance of employees (Azhar et al., 2024). Likewise, a positive employer brand produces greater employee motivation and greater retention in the organization (Kumar et al., 2021).

Corporate social responsibility and emotional commitment to the employer brand

Loyalty and the person-organization relationship are important elements of employee-company connections (Buzzao & Rizzi, 2024; Stojanovic et al., 2020). The literature supports the idea that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a positive impact on long-term orientation towards the employer brand (Van der Westhuizen & Malan, 2023). Organizations that truthfully and transparently communicate the purpose of their CSR activities to employees obtain good feedback and generate emotional commitment from them (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2020; Santhosh & Baral, 2015). For example, in the hotel industry, CSR has an impact on emotional commitment to the organization and they feel satisfied at work, showing greater well-being (Hayat & Afshari, 2022). This is why investment in CSR practices, both internal and external, is related to more satisfied employees, which contributes to greater commitment to the organization (Story & Castanheira, 2019). Likewise, employees' affective commitment is strengthened when they actively participate in CSR activities and have the opportunity to influence decisions related to their development (Kucukusta et al., 2016). For example in the telecommunications sector in the country of Pakistan when they apply CSR practices, it increases the commitment of employees and decreases the costs incurred in the organization (Zaman & Nadeem, 2019). In addition the collaborators of the university sector in Turkey, mention that the development of CSR practices increases the affective commitment of the organization (Ozhan et al., 2018). These findings suggest that CSR impacts long-term orientation toward the employer brand, since employees identify with a company committed to ethical values and social responsibility.

H1. CSR positively influences the long-term orientation towards the employer brand.

Employer brand enthusiasm is positively linked to the implementation of CSR practices. Authenticity in the application of CSR, where employees know the true purpose of these practices, influences their behavior and contributes to the pride they feel in their organization (Glavas, 2016; Servaes et al., 2023). The active participation of the organization in CSR practices encourages employees to be more productive, establishing a positive relationship between the perception of CSR and affective commitment (Jalil et al., 2023; Rafael et al., 2017). Furthermore, through the development of CSR practices, an emotional connection is achieved with the collaborator since there is a positive effect between CSR practices on the emotional commitment of the collaborator. Therefore, the collaborator identifies with an organization that supports society, the environment and the economy (Piñeros Espinosa, 2022). These results support the hypothesis that CSR positively influences employees' enthusiasm for the employer brand, since they feel identified with a company that supports society and the environment.

H2. CSR positively influences enthusiasm for the employer brand.

The emotional attachment to the employer brand is strengthened by the development of CSR practices. The active implementation of CSR practices, focused on primary and secondary stakeholders, improves job satisfaction and fosters a sense of belonging and continuity in the company on the part of employees (Mu et al., 2024). Además, a medida que las prácticas de CSR evolucionan y son moldeadas por determinados valores culturales, aumenta el compromiso organizativo afectivo de los empleados

(Mueller et al., 2012). For instance, employees in Indian cultures are primarily concerned with the environment, and they become more emotionally and confidently committed to their organization when they see that the organization is ethical and responsible with its environment (George et al., 2021). It affects collaborators' behavior and emotions in the service industry, which manifests in how they interact with clients (Khan et al., 2021). The development of CSR practices influences the sense of belonging and identification between the employee and the organization, as well as the adoption of better work behavior and therefore better performance (Bizri et al., 2021). Since CSR fosters an environment in which employees feel emotionally attached to their work and the organization, it supports the hypothesis that CSR contributes positively to long-term emotional attachment to the employer brand.

H3. CSR positively influences the emotional attachment to the employer brand.

Methodology

The purpose of this research is to develop a theoretical framework in which the components of the employer brand's affective commitment—long-term orientation (LTO), enthusiasm for the employer Brand (EEB), and emotional attachment (EA)—are influenced by corporate social responsibility (CSR). The research adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional, and non-experimental design, using a self-administered questionnaire for data collection (Hair et al., 2019).

Participants and methodology

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the EPG at Universidad Peruana Unión (2023-CE-E-EPG-00045). Data collection followed a non-probability convenience sampling method (Hair et al., 2013). An online survey was conducted via Google Forms, with the link distributed through WhatsApp. In addition, Informed consent was obtained from all participants. This consent was presented at the beginning of the online questionnaire, and to access the questions, respondents had to select the option 'yes, I agree to participate in this research'. Only after accepting could they continue with the questionnaire. Participants were previously informed that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that the collected data would be used exclusively for research purposes. Additionally, they were assured that all responses would be analyzed anonymously and kept confidential along with the other results. The study was applied during the first half of 2023. The research was focused on people who stated that they were working in a company in the industrial sector at the time of the survey. These workers had to be of legal age, 18 years or older, and could be men or women. It was only required that everyone be willing to participate, which is why informed consent was requested at the outset of the online questionnaire for respondents to take part in the survey. Everyone was previously told that participation was completely voluntary, that the data would be used only for that purpose, and that it would be anonymously analyzed for scholarly and investigative reasons. Approximately 800 individuals working and living in Lima were invited to participate in the survey. However, only 366 fully completed questionnaires were collected and deemed valid for the statistical analyses conducted in this study. Details of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Measures

To evaluate CSR in this study, the work developed by Tkalac and Dubravka (2018) was taken into account and to evaluate the dimensions of affective commitment to the employer brand, the scale developed by Fernandez-Lores et al. (2016). Since the instruments were found in English, in order to adapt them to the Spanish language, they went through the process of back-translation with a specialist in the English language, and later for the semantic validation, interviews were conducted with four workers in the industrial sector, to find out if they understood the items of the questionnaire, and their observations were taken into account, then a pilot test was conducted with forty employees in the manufacturing sector and observing that everything was in accordance with the reliability, the questionnaire was applied.

The questionnaire consisted of 14 items designed to assess four key constructs: corporate social responsibility (CSR) (2 items), emotional attachment (EA) (4 items), employer brand enthusiasm (EEB) (4 items), and

Table 1. Sociodemographic data of the participants (n = 366).

	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Man	305	83.3
	Women	59	16.1
	I prefer not to say	2	0.5
Age range	19–25	60	16.4
	26–35	180	49.2
	36–45	98	26.8
	46–61	28	7.7
Civil status	Married	133	36.3
	Cohabitant	73	19.9
	Divorced	eleven	3.0
	Single	139	38.0
	Widower	10	2.7
Academic level	Postgraduate	28	7.7
	Primary	1	0.3
	Secondary	90	24.6
	Advanced technician	176	48.1
	University (undergraduate)	71	19.4
Company Size	Large company (more than 200)	335	91.5
	Medium company (51–200)	16	4.4
	Microenterprise (0–10)	3	0.8
	Small business (11–50)	12	3.3
Work area	Strategic level (senior management, businessman..)	9	2.5
	Operational level (supervisor, inspector, sales manager, production manager, ….)	25	6.8
	Tactical level (Managements, headquarters, area, section or department coordination	23	6.3
	Advisory staff (accounting, legal, image…)	8	2.2
	Assistance personnel (assistants, assistants, ….)	30	8.2
	Technical staff / Operator / …	271	74.0
Antiquity	From 1 to 3 years	140	38.3
	3 to 5 years	97	26.5
	5 to 7 years	42	11.5
	From 7 to 9 years	26	7.1
	From 9 to 11 years	9	2.5
	More than 1 years	4	1.1
	More than 11 years	2	0.5
	Less than 1 year	46	12.6

long-term orientation (LTO) (4 items). All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented 'Strongly disagree' and 5 indicated 'Strongly agree'. The digital questionnaire was structured into two sections: the first included the 14 aforementioned items, while the second gathered sociodemographic information from participants, such as age, gender, and other relevant details.

Data analysis

For data analysis, two statistical software packages were utilized. First, IBM SPSS version 25 was employed to calculate the frequency distributions of participants' sociodemographic data (see Table 1). Subsequently, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was applied to statistically analyze the data, including reliability tests, convergent and discriminant validity assessments, and hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2014). This analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 4.0.

The PLS-SEM approach was chosen because it integrates both measurement and structural components, allowing for the simultaneous examination of relationships between multiple variables within a multivariate conceptual model (Hair et al., 2013; 2019). Additionally, PLS-SEM was selected due to its effectiveness in supporting theory development (Hair et al., 2011) and its suitability for testing the theoretical model, which explores the influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the elements of affective commitment to the employer brand (ACEB) (see Figure 1).

The assessment of the measurement instrument involved three key indicators:

Internal consistency and reliability were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), both of which were expected to exceed 0.70.

Convergent validity was ensured when all construct items had loadings above 0.70 and the average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded 0.50.

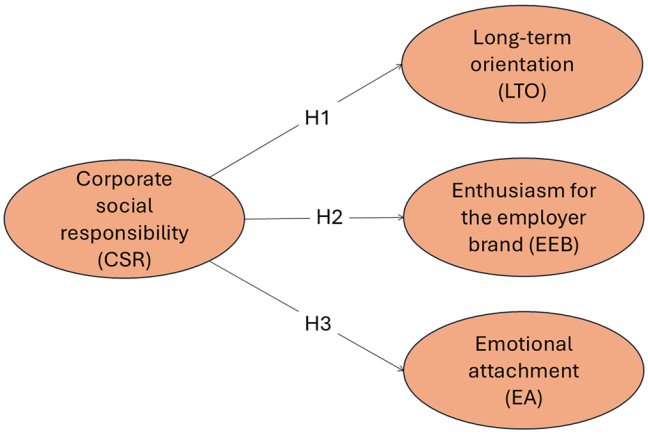

Figure 1. Research model.

Discriminant validity, assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which requires that the square root of each construct's AVE be greater than its highest correlation with any other construct (Hair et al., 2014).

For the structural model evaluation, the significance of the relationships within the model was first verified, requiring a *p* value below 0.05. Next, the model's predictive power was assessed using the R^2 coefficient. According to W. Chin (2010), adjusted R^2 values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 are classified as weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively. In behavioral studies, an R^2 value of 0.2 is also deemed acceptable (Hair et al., 2014).

Results

The PLS-SEM evaluation process consisted of two stages: (1) assessment of the measurement model and (2) assessment of the structural model. In the first stage, the validity and reliability of the measurement model were examined, analyzing the relationships between each construct and its corresponding items. In the second stage, the structural model was analyzed with a focus on examining the relationships among the constructs (Hair et al., 2014).

Assessment of the measurement model

To assess the internal consistency of the measurement model, both convergent validity and construct reliability were examined. Convergent validity is considered adequate when the factor loading of each indicator exceeds 0.7 (Hair et al., 2011). Similarly, composite reliability (CR) should be greater than 0.70, and the average variance extracted (AVE) should be above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2014). Additionally, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess reliability, as CR and alpha values tend to be similar when factor-based algorithms are applied (Kock, 2015). As shown in Table 2, all 14 items in this construct had loadings above 0.7. Likewise, the Alpha and CR values for all three constructs exceeded 0.7, and all AVE values were greater than 0.5. Therefore, the measurement model demonstrated strong convergent validity.

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to evaluate the discriminant validity of the model (Hair et al., 2014). According to this criterion, the square root of each construct's AVE must be higher than its highest correlation with any other construct in the model. As shown in Table 3, all bold diagonal values exceed the corresponding correlations. Consequently, the measurement model satisfies the required assumptions, allowing for the structural model evaluation to proceed.

Structural model evaluation

The structural model was evaluated using two key criteria: (1) the significance of the path coefficients and (2) the R^2 value of the endogenous constructs. To assess the model, path coefficients were calculated for each relationship, along with their corresponding *p*value. The acceptable R^2 value varies depending

Table 2. Convergent validity of the measurement model.

Variable	Code	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability (CR)	Mean variance extracted (AVE)
Emotional Attachment (EA)	EA1	0.844	0.869	0.870	0.718
	EA2	0.851			
	EA3	0.868			
	EA4	0.827			
Enthusiasm for the Employer Brand (EEB)	EEB1	0.819	0.801	0.801	0.629
	EEB2	0.715			
	EEB3	0.783			
	EEB4	0.848			
Long-term Orientation (LTO)	LTO1	0.868	0.832	0.844	0.666
	LTO2	0.799			
	LTO3	0.745			
	LTO4	0.847			
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	CSR1	0.916	0.777	0.784	0.817
	CSR2	0.892			

Note. Cronbach's alpha (α) for all variables is >0.7, the composite reliability (CR) >0.70, the mean-variance extracted (AVE) >0.50, indicating a significant validity of the model.

Table 3. Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larker criterion).

	EA	EEB	LTO	CSR
EA	**0.848**			
EEB	0.585	**0.793**		
LTO	0.621	0.746	**0.816**	
CSR	0.622	0.511	0.607	**0.904**

on the research field. According to Chin (1998), R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. In behavioral studies, an R^2 value of 0.2 is deemed acceptable (Hair et al., 2014; Kock, 2015).

In this study, the R^2 values for LTO, EEB, and EA were 0.368, 0.261, and 0.387, respectively. These values indicate that all three constructs reached acceptable levels. Therefore, the findings suggest that the CSR variable in this study accounts for a significant proportion of the variance in the endogenous variables LTO, EEB, and EA (see Figure 2).

Hypothesis testing

The hypotheses illustrated in Figure 2 and summarized in Table 4 were evaluated based on path coefficient values, *p*value, and t-statistics. Path coefficient values indicate the strength of the relationships between variables, with values closer to +1 representing stronger associations and lower values indicating weaker relationships (Hair et al., 2014). The acceptance or rejection of the proposed hypotheses was determined by analyzing the *p*value and t-statistics. The conceptual model in this study includes three hypotheses, and Table 4 presents a summary of the results obtained from their testing. H1 is accepted, which proposed that CSR positively influences the long-term orientation towards the employer brand of companies in the Manufacturing sector ($\beta = 0.622$, $p < 0.000$, $t = 15{,}001$); H2 was accepted, which proposed that CSR positively influences enthusiasm for the employer brand of companies in the Manufacturing sector ($\beta = 0.511$, $p < 0.000$, $t = 9.853$) and H3 was accepted, which proposed that CSR positively influences with the emotional attachment to the employer brand of companies in the Manufacturing sector ($\beta = 0.607$, $p < 0.000$, $t = 12.818$). In this way, all three hypotheses of the model were tested and from these findings it is clear that organizations that adopt sustainable practices and promote CSR within their business strategy not only benefit society and care for the environment, but also, They can strengthen employees' emotional connection with the company (see Figure 2 and Table 4).

The evidence consistently supports the first hypothesis (H1), demonstrating that the effective implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices is positively associated with long-term orientation toward the employer brand. Transparently communicating the purpose of CSR activities generates emotional commitment, and investing in these practices contributes not only to the present,

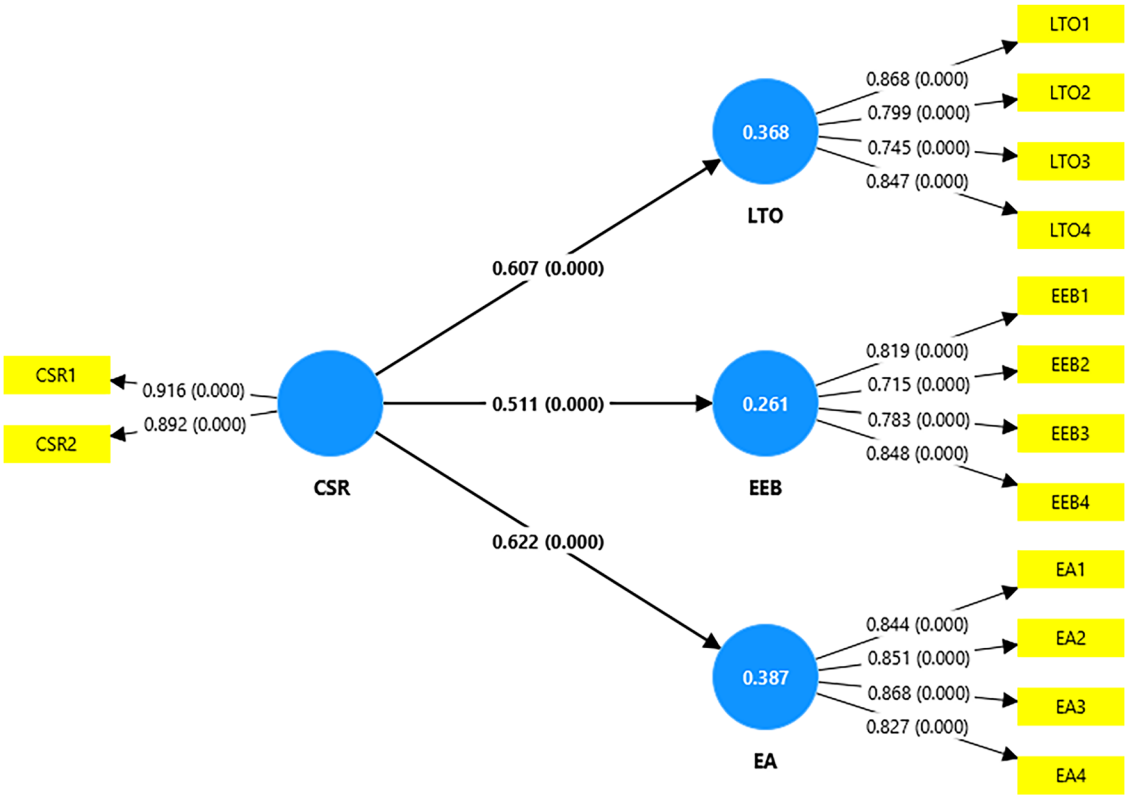

Figure 2. Structural model.
Note. The influence of CSR on the elements of emotional commitment to the employer brand in companies in the Manufacturing sector of Lima.

Table 4. Hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient (PC)	Standard deviation (SD)	T statistics (PC/SD|)	P values	Results
H1	CSR -> LTO	0.607	0.047	12,818	0.000	Supported
H2	CSR -> EEB	0.511	0.052	9853	0.000	Supported
H3	CSR -> EA	0.622	0.041	15,001	0.000	Supported

but also to building a lasting relationship with employees. The second hypothesis (H2), according to which employer brand enthusiasm is positively influenced by CSR, has also been validated. When CSR practices are applied authentically and the organization participates in these activities, it creates a level of excitement that enhances employees' affective commitment and emotional connection. It is confirmed that the third hypothesis (H3) is true. Actively putting CSR principles into practice—with an emphasis on morality and community service—improves job satisfaction and builds a sense of community and emotional ties to the employer brand. Moreover, the genuineness of corporate social responsibility has a direct impact on worker conduct, fostering a sense of pride and affiliation with the company.

Discussion

The present research built a theoretical model where corporate social responsibility (CSR) influences the elements of the affective commitment of the employer brand (ACEB), composed of long-term orientation (LTO), enthusiasm (EEB) and emotional attachment (EA) with the employer brand. The research results contribute to the literature on corporate social responsibility research and its influence on ACEB, as well as information for the strategic decision making of an organization's executive leaders. In the literature there is minimal information on the influence of corporate social responsibility on the elements of the brand's affective commitment, which causes greater job satisfaction and performance.

The results show that CSR positively influences the long-term orientation towards the employer brand of the company, which verifies the research of Boğan and Sarıışık (2020), which states that when employees know the good that the organization does with society there is an increase in affective commitment; as well as the research of Santhosh and Baral (2015), who state that CSR activities when communicated through social networks, employees have a better perception of the purposes of such activities. And consequently show, higher performance and job satisfaction (Story & Castanheira, 2019). This means that CSR practices are so important and influential in the participation of collaborators, so the commitment and satisfaction on their part will be oriented in the long term towards the employer brand.

Likewise, the results confirm the positive influence of CSR on the enthusiasm for the employer brand; which means that the worker will give the best of himself, fulfilling his functions, feeling a greater commitment to his work (Glavas, 2016); identifying with the employer brand (Servaes et al., 2023). In this sense, the research of Jalil et al. (2023) describes that during the covid-19 pandemic the CSR positively influenced the affective commitment of the collaborators, improving their psychological capital, in addition, an improvement in the participation of the collaborators with the organization is observed (Rafael et al., 2017); on the other hand there is improvement in the social identity of the organization and greater identification on the part of the collaborators (Piñeros Espinosa, 2022). These results show that the development of CSR practices has an influence on the behavior of workers, showing that they identify with the employer brand, which has an impact on the enthusiasm towards the development of their functions and duties towards the organization.

The results of this study also confirm the positive influence of CSR with the emotional attachment with the employer brand, which corroborates the research of (Mu et al., 2024), which mentions that the development of CSR fosters in employees the sense of belonging and continuity in the company as well as job satisfaction, also, (Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2021), state about the positive influence of CSR on the permanence of employees in the organization. Consequently, employees identify with the organization, improve their work behavior and performance when CSR is developed (Bizri et al., 2021). In the Indian culture, the development of CSR activities focused on the environment leads to a more emotional and trusting commitment of employees to their organization (George et al., 2021), which indicates that the development of CSR practices produces greater emotional attachment, sense of belonging of employees to the organization, as well as their permanence with the employer brand.

Conclusions

The analysis's findings clearly show that corporate social responsibility, or CSR, significantly and favorably influences employees' long-term attitudes toward the employer brand, their enthusiasm for it, and their emotional attachment to it. In addition to bolstering affective commitment today, genuine, and successful CSR implementation builds the groundwork for meaningful and enduring relationships between the company and its workforce. The strategic significance of CSR in talent management and creating a strong corporate culture is reaffirmed by these findings.

Accepting the hypotheses that suggest that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) positively influences long-term orientation towards the employer brand, enthusiasm for the brand and emotional attachment of employees has several significant implications for the industrial sector. One of them is focused on greater employee retention, since employees who experience affective commitment, enthusiasm and emotional attachment tend to remain in the organization in the long term. This reduces employee turnover and costs associated with hiring and training. Likewise, the positive perception of the organization as an employer committed to CSR can make it more attractive to attract talented professionals who share the organization's ethical and social values.

Another important implication is that the successful integration of CSR can contribute to the formation of a positive organizational culture. Engaged, enthusiastic, and emotionally connected employees may be more likely to contribute positively to the work environment and collaborate effectively with colleagues. Another important implication is that emotional connection and attachment to the employer brand not only affects employees but can also influence how the company is perceived externally. A positive reputation derived from strong CSR practices can strengthen customer relationships and improve the company's image in the market.

These findings also have policy implications in that companies may choose to develop stronger Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies, which could include increasing investment in CSR programs, setting specific goals related to enhancing the employer brand, and developing strategies to communicate these initiatives both internally and externally. In addition, companies can adjust their HR strategies to focus on attracting and retaining talent that values social responsibility and is aligned with the employer brand. This could involve including CSR messaging in their recruitment strategies and developing employee engagement programs that promote emotional connection to the employer brand.

The present study has some limitations that need to be pointed out, one of which has to do with the fact that the research was based on non-probabilistic convenience sampling, which limits the generalization of the results to the total population of the manufacturing sector. In addition, the sample size was relatively small, with only 366 respondents, which could affect the representativeness of the findings. Another limitation that is important to highlight is related to the profile of the participants, since most of the respondents were male, the results could be biased towards that specific gender. On the other hand, the research was conducted through an online questionnaire, which may introduce self-selection biases and limit the participation of individuals who do not have access to the Internet or who prefer other means of communication. This could influence the representativeness of the sample and, therefore, the external validity of the results.

Based on the limitations detected, there are several areas that could be explored in future research to expand our understanding of the influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on affective brand engagement in the manufacturing sector. Future research could seek to increase the sample size and diversify the sample demographically, including equal representation of gender, age, and socioeconomic levels. This would allow for a better understanding of how different demographic groups perceive and respond to CSR practices in the context of brand engagement. Also, it would be interesting to compare how CSR influences affective brand engagement in the manufacturing sector compared to other industry sectors, such as technology, food, or services. This could shed light on the differences and similarities in the effects of CSR in different business contexts.

Also, longitudinal research that follows employees and companies' CSR practices over time could provide a more complete picture of how affective brand engagement develops in relation to CSR initiatives. This would allow an examination of causal relationships and the long-term effects of CSR on brand engagement.

On the other hand, complementing quantitative data with in-depth qualitative studies, such as interviews or focus groups, could help to better understand the underlying mechanisms linking CSR and affective brand engagement. This could provide insights into the motivations, values, and experiences of employees that influence their emotional connection to the brand.

Finally, investigating possible mediators and moderators of the relationship between CSR and affective brand engagement, such as organizational identity, ethical leadership, or work climate, could help identify specific conditions in which CSR has a more significant impact on brand engagement.

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Author' contributions

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Data availability statement

Data available on reasonable request from the corresponding author.

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