

## **Original Research Article**

### **The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Employee Retention in an Apparel Industry in Puttalam District**

#### **ABSTRACT**

The current research is intended to identify the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Employee Retention in an Apparel industry in Puttalam district. The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has gained much attention in recent years. It provides companies with a significant approach for achieving employee retention and considered a source for enhancing competitive advantage.

Data was collected using a research method, questionnaire survey. This project found that, the majority Garment Industries consider their CSR to society and CSR to their working environment undertaking various measures to conserve resources as well as retain their employees within the organization. Garment Industries provided little support to most internal CSR practices identified in this study. The conceptualization of the study demonstrated independent variables (Corporate Social Responsibility) of Economic responsibility, Ethical responsibility, Legal responsibility and Philanthropic responsibility how to effect on dependent variable of Employee Retention. A quantitative analysis was conducted with 100 of sample. The data was collected though distributing questionnaire among respondent. Further, univariate analysis and bivariate analysis were carried out through SPSS (21.0). The findings revealed that CSR and Employee Retention is in high level and Corporate Social Responsibility moderately and positively influence on Employee Retention. Furthermore, study found that there was positive and significant relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee Retention in an Apparel Industry in Puttalam district. The recommendations were provided, in order to further improvement in highest returns to their stakeholders, comply with all state laws and regulations, be compromise ethical norms of the society to achieve corporate goals, Strive to

provide community betterment. This study will be more beneficial both existing apparel industries and newly joint who will be doing the business in apparel sector in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Economic Responsibility, Legal Responsibility, Ethical Responsibility, Employee Retention

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Employee Retention in Puttlam District. CSR may come from various dimensions. The dimension of CSR from the study by Turker (2009) had identified five dimensions, which are CSR to social, CSR to employees, CSR to customers, CSR to government and CSR to environment. CSR is one of the most important factor in an apparel industry, Sri Lanka.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been defined as, activities that protect and improve both the welfare of society as a whole and the interest of the organization (Davis & Blomstrom, 1975). For the last few years, there has been a great of work on the external impact of CSR, but it is also important to understand the internal impact of CSR. Nowadays employee turnover has gained a great importance in the Organization. “A major challenge for enterprises today is to attract and retain skilled workers” (European Commission, 2001. p. 9). In this regard, socially responsible organizations should provide different kinds of support to their employees and should minimizing the negative outcomes for the enterprises themselves and for their employees (Stropnik, 2010).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept based on the idea that corporation should be responsible for all of their stakeholders who involved in the business processes in order to benefit the society (Freeman, 1984). The responsibility is taking voluntary actions to produce positive impact towards the society on top of the ordinary business and legislation obligation. CSR can be described as the continuing commitment by a business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as local community and society at large. Therefore, CSR has become an important part in most of the organizations and companies. Being a good corporate citizen is an

important aspect of the corporate identity, values and vision. It has been defined in several ways. CSR is action on the part of the firm that appear to advance, or acquiesce in the promotion of some social good, beyond the immediate interests of the firm and its shareholders and beyond that which is required by law (Waldman, Siegel, & Javidan, 2006). Besides this definition, CSR also been defined as the context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental performance (Zedeck, 2011).

Further, employee retention is one of the critical functions under human resource management. It refers to the techniques and strategies employed by the management to help the employees stay with the organization. Employee retention strategies involves motivate the employees to ensure they stick to the organization for the maximum time and contribute effectively. However, employee retention has become one of the major concerns in organizations. Employees that had been trained have a tendency to leave their organizations for better prospects which includes lucrative salary, comfortable timings, better environment and better career advancement. Employee turnover can be frustrating especially when the departures are unexpected and causing the administrators to spend precious time and effort to recruit, select and train new replacement employee (Buck & Watson, 2002). Therefore, it is crucial for the human resource management to implement some effective plan to enhance the employee retention rate. So, the trained and experiences employee will remain in the organization to render their best to the organization as long as possible.

Perception of organizations being fair towards and caring for well-being of the employee directly have been found to be related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, evaluation of authority, organizational citizenship behaviors and performance (Colquitt et al., 2001). Apart from that, employees will be impacted by perception of what the organization is doing to others in addition to perceptions of how the employee is directly treated. It is important to understand the employee's perception of CSR because they can significantly influence workplace attitudes, behavior and performance (Bargh & Burrows, 1996). CSR has been found to be positively related to employee performance (Jones, 2010) and commitment (Maignan, Ferrell, & Hult, 1999). Besides, CSR also increase the attractiveness to prospective employees (Greening & Turban, 2000; Turban & Greening, 1997), organizational citizenship behaviors (Jones, 2010; Lin

et al., 2010; Sully de Luque et al., 2008), Engagement (Glavas & Piderit, 2009) and identification with the organization (Carmeli, Gilat & Waldman, 2007). Apart from that, CSR also improve creative involvement (Glavas & Piderit, 2009), employee relationships (Agle, Mitchell & Sonnenfeld, 1999; Glavas & Piderit, 2009) and also employee retention. CSR will help to improve the working environment in many aspects. Effective CSR can help to enhance the sense of belonging in employees, improved skills and motivation, better productivity, lower rate of attrition and thus lead to higher job satisfaction and increased in retention rate. This review will explore the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Employee Retention.

Nowadays organizations have to pay keen attention on employees and always should take steps to keep employees happy. The happy people are more creative, take fewer day off and are less likely to leave their job and they also add value to employers and brings success in a competitive work environment (Pryce-Jones & Scott, 2009). This is a main psychological factor that has not been taken into much consideration nowadays in business. If an unhappy employee continues to work in an organization the individual may get depressed and it may result in poor performance. This will also depict a high rate of absenteeism, low efficiency and finally cause employee turnover. Therefore CSR is very important to retain the employees.

In an apparel industry, the inter-relationship between CSR and human resource management (HRM) is of particular relevance. The apparel industry is characterized by certain features. It is distinguished by high staff turnover and relatively flat organizational structures in which employees are less likely to be promoted and/or critically change positions (Furunes & Mykletun, 2005). Aguilera et al., (2007) showed a positive relationship between CSR undertaken by the organization and employee satisfaction, morale, retention, and commitment.

There is a lot of news about some Apparel Industry holding charitable activities or supporting welfare foundations. In fact, CSR has been considered an efficient management strategy (Baron, 2003), and is a crucial factor in the company's success. The practice of CSR is an investment in the company's future, so it must be planned specifically, supervised carefully and evaluated regularly. From an outside perspective of companies, it is widely recognized and offered, and positive relationships are made with the government (McWilliams & Siegel, 2000; Trevino &

Nelson, 2004). From an inside perspective of companies, a good reputation is necessary to attract, retain and motivate quality employees. In light of CSR, significant strands of research have investigated whether CSR helps to increase Employee Retention in an apparel industry (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Orlitzky et al., 2003).

### **1.1 Problems Statement**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become increasingly more important as a strategic focus in today's workplaces (Lockwood, 2004). CSR is also called corporate responsibility, corporate citizenship, and responsible business. It is a concept whereby businesses consider a responsibility to society and environment by taking into account the impact of their activities on suppliers, employees, customers, shareholders, communities and other stakeholders (Ismail, 2009). Foote et al., (2010) identified four common obligations that encourage companies participation in CSR activities, including: (1) Moral obligation: The duty of the company to show good social conscience and do the right things, (2) sustainability obligation: The ability of the company to operate sustainably and support the environment and community, (3) legal obligation: The company's responsibility to operate in a licensed way and conduct business with the approval of stakeholders in the community, and (4) marketing obligation: CSR initiatives can improve firm's goodwill and lead to better business conditions. Affirmatively, Matten & Moon (2008) showed that, the organizations have increasingly adopted CSR initiatives to be able to compete in the market and meet the growing and dynamic expectations of their stakeholders as well as they use CSR as a strategic to retain employees within the organization. Examples of CSR initiatives include donations to charities, community programs, efforts to encourage employee diversity and reduce environmental impact (Albinger & Freeman, 2000).

Employees in an apparel industry come from different educational back grounds and cultural groups. Therefore, they have different competency levels and different expectations. Well-being (Happiness) at work exists when people are happy with what they do, how they are treated and how they get on with others (Armstrong, 2009). The retention of employees depend on the quality of working life and welfare services provided by their employers. The feelings of satisfaction and retention are arising from the work itself and work environment. Employees may be affected from personal life issues, work life issues and organizational culture. Nowadays, most of the apparel industries facing employee turnover, because there is no sufficient social and

welfare services from their organizations. Their expected productivity will go down, they cannot achieve their targets on time, they missed their productivity deadlines and those are reasons for damaging their image of the organization. A major challenge for enterprises today is to attract and retain skilled workers” (European Commission, 2001. p. 9).

In this regard, socially responsible organizations should provide various kinds of support to their employees and thus minimizing the negative outcomes for the enterprises themselves and for their employees (Stropnik, 2010). Employee expect CSR works for the quality of their working life and reduce some of their work life issues. Therefore, business has to pay keen attention on factors which can make employee retention. With these circumstances management of the business also seeking for reasons behind these issues because retain an employee is more beneficial than the recruiting a new employee.

Therefore, this study tries to identify whether Apparel Industries in Puttalam district use CSR activities to retain the employees. So, the research question of this study is;

***“What is the Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Employee Retention in an Apparel Industry in Puttalam district”***

### **1.2 Research Questions**

01. What is the level of employee satisfaction with CSR activities in an Apparel Industry in Puttalam district?
02. What is the level of employee retention in an Apparel Industry in Puttalam district?
03. What is the relationship between CSR and employee retention in an Apparel Industry in Puttalam district?
04. How does CSR impact on employee retention in an apparel industry in Puttalam district?

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

01. To examine the level of employee satisfaction with CSR activities in an Apparel Industry in Puttalam district.
02. To examine the level of the employee retention in an Apparel Industry in Puttalam district.

03. To examine the relationship between CSR and employee retention in an Apparel Industry in Puttalam district.
04. To investigate the impact of CSR on employee retention in an apparel industry in Puttalam district.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility**

Corporate Social Responsibility is an independent variable. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been defined as activities that protect and improve both the welfare of society as a whole, and the interest of the organization (Davis & Blomstrom, 1975). Other definitions have been put forward (Maignan & Ralston, 2002; Michael, 2003), but the general concept is consistent. In fact, CSR has been considered an efficient management strategy (Baron, 2003), and is a crucial factor in the enterprise's success. The practice of CSR is an investment in the company's future, so it must be planned specifically, supervised carefully, and evaluated regularly. From an outside perspective of companies, it is widely recognized and offered, and positive relationships are made with the government (McWilliams & Siegel, 2000; Trevino & Nelson, 2004).

#### **2.1.1 Economic Responsibility**

The first responsibility of business is to be a properly functioning economic unit and stay in business (Mattila, 2009). Profitability is key to the organization functions and sustainability. That's why many economic theories dwelled around the topic of profit maximization (Galbreath, 2006). Profitable organization is important to employees because profit is what pays for the employees' salary and bonuses. Profit will also determine the employees' employment. When organization fail to sustain their income, retrenchment and cost cutting measures will be implemented.

#### **2.1.2 Legal Responsibility**

Legal responsibilities are the expectation of the society on organization to abide by the law and 'play by the rules of the game' although this can mean additional cost to organization (Mattila, 2009). Organization must fulfill their legal responsibility because any legal actions on the

organization can force a financially healthy firms such as Texaco Incorporated and the Manville Corporation into bankruptcy (Barney, Edwards, & Ringleb, 1992).

### **2.1.3 Ethical Responsibility**

Ethical Responsibility is where organization need to do what is right, just and fair even when they are not compelled to by the legal framework (Mattila, 2009). Research findings suggest that, in the long run, ethical organizations financially outperform unethical organizations. Researchers have found that organizations with a strong ethical culture not only attract high quality employees, customers, suppliers, and investors, but also retain their loyalty as well (Collins, 2010).

### **2.1.4 Philanthropic Responsibility**

Philanthropic responsibility is voluntary activities that are not mandated, not required by law and not even generally expected of businesses in an ethical sense (for example, providing day care center for working mothers and committing to philanthropic donation) (Carroll, 1979). It focuses more on issues within the corporation's discretion to improve the quality of life of employees, local communities and ultimately society in general (Mattila, 2009). Organizational achievement increases correspondingly. When philanthropic behaviors are increased (Basim, SESEn, SOZen, & Hazir, 2009).

## **2.2 Employee Retention**

Employee retention is dependent variable & it recognized as an important subject of inquiry by researchers. The Harvard Business Essentials (2002) defined retention as the converse of turnover being voluntary and involuntary. Retention activities may be defined as a sum of all those activities aimed at increasing organizational commitment of employees, giving them an overall ambitious and myriad of opportunities where they can grow by outperforming others (Bogdanowicz & Bailey, 2002). It is a voluntary move by an organization to create an environment which engages employees for a long term (Chaminade, 2007). Literature has overwhelmingly proved the importance of retaining valuable workforce or functional workforce for the survival of an organization (Bogdanowicz & Bailey, 2002).

### **2.2.1 Job Support & Recognition**

Staw, (1980) argues that reward systems of the job ought to be a significant sphere of innovation for employers. The increasing diversity of the workforce, she says, suggests the need for more

creative approaches to tailoring the right job to the right people. The category “Job support and Recognition” is in some ways a catch-all phrase as it includes a diverse range of formal and informal, financial and non-financial, incentives given to individual employees, groups of employees or to an entire staff. In general, and for the purposes of this study, “Job support and Recognition” covers all of those incentives that are not captured under the other categories of retention measures described in this report, and we may tentatively make the observation that while they are not generally seen to be the decisive elements in ensuring good retention, they often do much to sustain a workplace culture that is aware of the contributions of its members, while at the same time helping to reinforce positive behavior.

### **2.2.2 Compensation & Career Growth**

Along with job security, compensation/pay has been one of the top contributor to job satisfaction of employees indicated that it was very important to their job satisfaction. In addition, some commentators hold that competitive compensation packages can signal strong commitment on the part of the company, and can therefore build a strong reciprocal commitment on the part of workers. However, to the extent that it contributes to retention, competitive compensation is also likely to affect both desirable and undesirable turnover, it will help to retain workers, irrespective of the quality of their contribution to the company. While there is general agreement about the importance of competitive compensation for employee retention, there is also a growing consensus that competitive, or even generous compensation will not single-handedly guarantee that a company will be able to keep its most valuable employees.

### **2.2.3 Organizational Culture**

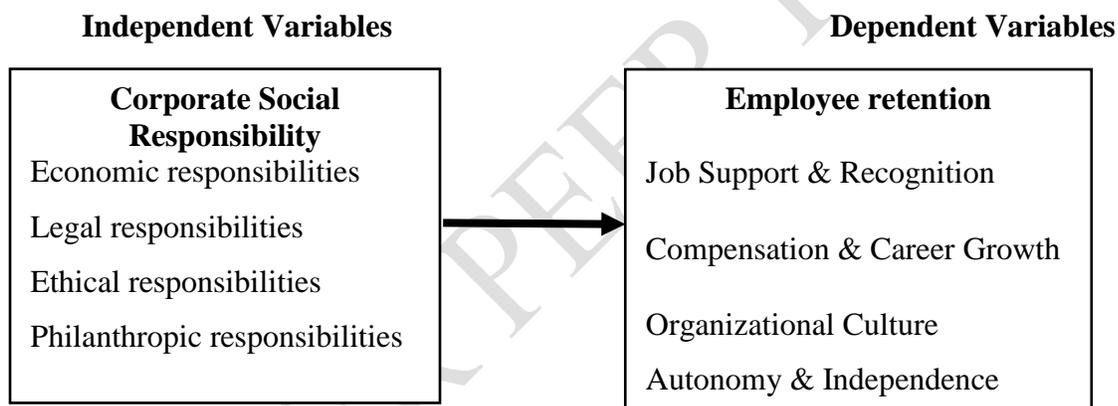
There exists a keen interest in the concept of company or workplace ‘culture’ and its connection with an employee’s sense of ‘commitment’ to his or her employer. Authors in the Human Resource field speak increasingly of the need to ensure retention by nurturing ‘affective commitment,’ or, simply put, an employee’s desire to remain a member of a particular organization for motives beyond compensation or obligation (March, & Simon, (1958).A ‘culture of commitment’ is more than just the sum of particular Human Resource policies or retention initiatives. It is related rather to overall organizational culture, in other words, not just particular programs but rather how such programs fall into a company’s overall values, how it communicates with its employees about those values, and how employees perceive their own role within the company and the value that the company attaches to their individual contribution

(Hunter & Hunter, 1984). Because workplace culture depends a lot on how individual perceptions and feelings hold together, it can of course be difficult to say exactly what decisively makes up a particular company's culture.

### 2.2.4 Autonomy & Independence

The key to increasing autonomy and independence, and as such empowering staff, has been ensuring staff are properly trained and developed to take on higher responsibility and raising staff levels of technical ability, discretion and autonomy (Gallie et al., 1998). This recognition has been reflected in the rising investment in qualifications and training by professional staff in the last few years (Green and Felstead, 1994). According to Guest's (1999: p.14) survey, 84 per cent of employees feel that their employer provided them with 'sufficient opportunities for training and development' to improve their skills and, through such development their opportunities to exercise discretion and autonomy in the workplace.

### 3 Fig 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS



(Source: Choi, Yongrok & Yanni Yu, 2014).

### 3 METHODOLOGIES

The total population of the study was 1000 of employees in an apparel industry in Puttalam District. Out of these employees, only 100 employees are selected as sample by using stratified sampling method. This study totally depends on primary data. The final questionnaire includes utilized scale is Likert's five-degree range. Regarding objectives of this study unit of analysis is the employees who are working in the Orit Apparels Lanka (pvt) Ltd, Union Apparel (pvt) Ltd, Sellers Apparel (pvt) Ltd, Kristerline Apparels (pvt) Ltd in Puttalam District.

## 4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES

### 4.1 Reliability Analysis

Overall Cronbach's alpha value for the corporate social responsibility is 0.893 and Overall Cronbach's alpha value for the employee retention is 0.920.

### 4.2 Univariate Analysis

**Table 1 univariate Analysis of Independent and Dependent variables**

Dimensions	Mean	Std deviation	Decision attribute
Economic responsibilities	3.76	0.796	High level
Legal responsibilities	3.97	0.725	High level
Ethical responsibilities	4.04	0.740	High level
Philanthropic responsibilities	4.15	0.704	High level
<b>Corporate Social Responsibilities</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.615</b>	<b>High level</b>
Job Support Recognition	4.06	0.751	High level
Compensation & Career Growth	4.08	0.718	High level
Organizational Culture	4.03	0.810	High level
Autonomy Independence	4.06	0.792	High level
<b>Employee Retention</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>0.680</b>	<b>High level</b>

*(Source - Survey Data)*

According to table 1 overall corporate social responsibility mean value is **3.97** with the standard deviation **0.615**. It shows that, there is high level of corporate social responsibility in apparel industry in Puttalam District. It shows that there are high level of economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility and philanthropic responsibility of corporate social responsibility in an apparel industry in Puttalam District.

The overall employee retention mean value is **4.05** with the standard deviation **0.680** It shows that, there is high level of employee retention in apparel industry in Puttalam District. It shows that there are high level of job support and recognition, compensation and career growth,

organizational culture and autonomy and independence in an apparel industry in Puttalam District.

### 4.3 Bivariate Analyses

#### 4.3.1 Regression Analyses

**Table 2 Model Summary of Corporate Social Responsibility on Employee Retention**

<b>Model Summary</b>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.804 <sup>a</sup>	0.647	0.643	0.47941

a. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate social responsibility

*(Source: Survey Data)*

According to table 2, the R square statistics 0.647 indicating corporate Social Responsibility of independence variable have 64% impact on dependent variable of Employee Retention. Adjusted R square statistic indicated that the 64.3% of the variation in the Employee Retention is explained by Corporate Social Responsibility. In other words the independent variable of Corporate Social Responsibility in the regression model account for 64.7% of the total variation in the Employee Retention in an apparel industry Puttalam District.

**Table 3 Coefficients' of Personality Traits on Organizational Commitment**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.884	0.315		2.807	0.006
1 Corporate social responsibility	1.048	0.078	0.804	13.400	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

According to table 3 the unstandardized constant statistic 0.884 units show that the model would predict of the independent variables were zero. Regression result indicate that the significant of p value of personality traits is 0.000 it is less than 0.05 and the b value of Corporate social

Responsibility is 1.048 it means the personality traits are positively and significantly impact on Employee Retention.

Based on above table 3 the equation for the regression line is:

$$Y = 0.884 + 1.048 X_1$$

Where,

$X_1$  = Corporate social Responsibility

$Y$  = Employee retention

According to the regression analysis Corporate Social Responsibility positively and significantly impact on the Employee Retention in an apparel industry in Puttalam District.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The descriptive statistics, correlation and regression were used in order to come up with findings related to the research problem. The study is conducted with hundred employees throughout the Puttalam District. Frequency analysis used to understand the profile and descriptive statistics used to investigate the extent to which Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee Retention exist among the apparel industries in Puttalam District. The level of Corporate Social responsibility and its dimensions of economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility, philanthropic responsibility and the level of employee retention and its dimension are high level in both collectively and separately in selected apparels industry in Puttalam District.

The results of this study showed that corporate social responsibility and employee retention are at high level. The results of the regression analysis indicated that there is a positive impact of corporate social responsibility and employee retention. This study is very important to the garment factory in Puttalam District as it contributes to an understanding of the impact of corporate social responsibility on the employee retention. This study has been the first study conducted in this field in Puttalam District.

### **5.2 Recommendation**

Corporate social responsibility is very important determinant factor to apparel industry for achieves their targets. Based on the research findings, some recommendation would be given to

improve the corporate social responsibility and employee retention among the employees. Thus, help to increase the corporate social responsibility and increase the employee retention in selected apparels industries in Puttalam District.

For the benefits of future research on corporate social responsibility and employee retention, a few suggestions are proposed. A further research should be carried out using different instruments for each variable as a mean of comparison. Its purpose is to identify the set of instruments that represent the employees of apparel industry in Puttalama, the most. Furthermore, the study should also looks at other possible items to be included in the tested instruments that will be more suitable to the employees in Puttalama.

#### **COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:**

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist. The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors

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