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# Do Millennials pay attention to Corporate Social Responsibility in comparison to previous generations? Are they motivated to lead in times of transformation? A qualitative review of generations, CSR and work motivation

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## Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative review is to analyze empirical studies on whether the existing generations differ in their work beliefs, i.e. in their internal CSR perceptions and their leadership motivation, especially Generation Y (born after 1980), in contrast to previous generations. According to the literature review, there is some evidence demonstrating that Generation Y is slightly different from the preceding Generation X in their work beliefs in some internal CSR features. However, this generation is not as special as suggested in popular media. As most research is conducted in the USA and Europe, as well as a few studies in Asia and Africa, the necessity of conducting more empirical research in different cultures is highlighted. The research outlook shows important implications for human resource management (HRM) as to whether HRM needs to handle employees differently across generations, or a general change in work values is occurring in this disruptive twenty-first century.

**Keywords:** Generation work values, Corporate social responsibility, Leadership motivation, Generational diversity at workplace, Affective commitment

## Introduction

During these dynamic, transformative and even disruptive times our world is experiencing, it is more essential than ever to include sustainability in CSR business strategies. This topic has been under discussion for some years now (Allen & Craig, 2016; Pisani, Kourula, Kolk, & Meijer, 2017; Turner, McIntosh, & Buckley, 2019). For example, employees perceive and judge the way their companies pro-actively engage within the environmental pillar of CSR. At present, it is critical to increase attention here by placing a serious focus on the stakeholder

approach, including ethical values for global business (see Kolk, 2016), as opposed to greenwashing or pseudo-responsibility in the form of an image campaign or as bribery for business deals. Coping with global, disruptive challenges means, for example, going beyond providing excellent products and services to customers by actively managing internal vs. external stakeholders. Particularly responsible, engaged employees and leaders should be enabled to take the lead in managing the current business transformations together in the twenty-first century.

In academic reviews (e.g., Kolk, 2016; Pisani et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2019), the impact of CSR pillars on business outcomes (employees, customers and financial) is

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analyzed and examined. Moreover, the external CSR actions for the benefit of society and the environment drive the employees' CSR perceptions. The benefits of a CSR-HRM framework (i.e., employee outcomes) include increased organizational commitment, work engagement and ultimately higher employee performance (see meta-analysis of Wang, Xu, & Wang, 2020 and review of Turner et al., 2019). However, whether the majority of working employees (Generation Y) perceive CSR differently compared to other generations has rarely been focused on. In our review, we consider this generational perception of CSR and link it to HRM concepts.

Corporate social responsibility is based on the stakeholder approach to sustainable business by achieving an obligation to internal vs. external stakeholders, impacting our society and our environment (Carroll, 1979). Our review relies on the definition of CSR by Glavas (2016, p. 2): "context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance" by following the definition of Aguinis (2011, p. 855). Historically, the definition of CSR is based on the four pillars of Carroll (Carroll, 1979, i.e., economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibility), which remain relevant for business today: A current global business example is BASF SE, a chemical global player and the current CSR winner of the German government (BASF, 2020), which introduced the value-to-society approach to measure the impact of business activities on society.

To cope with these current business transformations, companies should consequently pay attention to their committed and responsible employees. If the companies actively implement a CSR concept by integrating this in their business strategies, the employees' CSR perceptions will positively impact their work attitudes and behavior (see current HRM review of Turner et al., 2019 and Wang et al., 2020). We elaborate on this framework, linking CSR and HRM by perceiving CSR as an integrated part of a modern HRM approach, as Turner et al. (2019) do. We differentiate internal vs. external CSR by referring to Brammer, Millington, and Rayton (2007a, 2007b). Like Turner et al. (2019), we narrow down the overall CSR perspective by focusing on *internal CSR* (Workplace CSR, European Commission, 2008, 2011) rather than on external CSR dimensions (e.g., marketplace/customer and environmental CSR). According to ISO 26000 (ISO (International Organization for Standardization), 2010), *internal CSR* (ICSR) involves acting in an ethical and transparent way that contributes to the health and welfare of society and employees. Hence, the internal stakeholder approach keeps an eye on the employees as the company's stakeholders. This ICSR fits perfectly to the soft HRM approach of perceiving employees as the company's assets, who add value to

organizational performance (e.g., Ferreira & de Oliveira, 2014; Low, Ong & Tan, 2017; Obeidat, 2016; Radwan, 2015; Soni & Mehta, 2020; Turker, 2009; Wang et al., 2020). According to ISO 26000 and to diverse ICSR operationalization in empirical research (see Glavas, 2016; Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2015, 2016, 2017; Wang et al., 2020), common ICSR features cover the following important dimensions: diversity/equal opportunities, work-life balance, social benefits, health & safety, training & development, job security, and labor relations which are in line with modern HRM best practices/measures in global companies.

Our review mainly contributes by showing empirical ICSR evidence throughout this HRM employee life cycle, focusing in particular on three important ICSR phases of this cycle: attracting future candidates, then developing and retaining them, and increasing leadership motivation for talented employees to become future leaders. Moreover, the generational perspective is the additional layer of CSR in the HRM framework.

Four underlying theories form the basis for reviewing the empirical evidence of this CSR in the HRM framework: the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model of Schneider (1987) as the employee life cycle model of HRM, the signal theory of Rynes, Bretz Jr., and Gerhart (1991) for the evaluation process between employee and company, the social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner (1985, 1986) for identifying with the company as an employee as a social category, and the organizational commitment model of Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) for the work behavior of employees. Schaefer, Terlutter & Diehl (2020) relied on the last two theories by examining and confirming their evidence in their CSR experiment.

For our review, studies on the ICSR concept are discussed for three phases of the HR cycle. In addition, studies on generational expectations of ICSR are included in our review of whether the generational perceptions of ICSR matter for these specific HRM phases. The goal of the review is to figure out if ICSR in the HRM framework needs to be customized for age groups, especially Millennials. The following Table 1 illustrates the review structure for ICSR in the HRM framework.

As employees are the human capital for enhancing business success, professional HRM concepts should meet the expectations of the working generations by analyzing their work attitudes and work behavior. In particular, it is worth taking their beliefs into account in internal CSR and work motivation as predictors for their positive, supportive work engagement, as major HR objectives include motivating and retaining the working employees.

By 2025, 75% of the global workforce (EY, 2015, 2016) will be comprised of a Generation Y called Millennials; this generation is the main focus of our review. The

**Table 1** ICSR in the HRM framework

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**1. HRM Phases:**  
 Attracting & Recruiting  
 Developing & Retaining  
 Leadership Motivation & Leadership Talents

**2. ICSR Dimensions**

- diversity/equal opportunities
- work-life balance
- social benefits
- health & safety
- training & development
- job security and labor relations

**3. Generational Expectations concerning ICSR:**  
 What about Millennials?

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term generation is used to define a cohort of people who were born in and shaped by a particular span of time. Although each generation possesses a variety of individuals with different attitudes and behaviors, Generation Y (born between 1980 and 1994) is globally described as special in popular studies (e.g., EY, 2015, 2016). Generation Y seems to attract a special focus internationally, as this generation covers the majority of the current employees. In popular studies, Generation Y is described as having different expectations of their work life and a different work ethic than more experienced colleagues: A balanced work-life situation, flexible working hours, constant feedback, transparency, and freedom in their work organization are the most important expectations of this generation (Hohaus, 2014). All of the Millennial expectations mentioned are covered by the features of an ICSR approach; thus this approach (e.g., Glavas, 2016; Mory et al., 2015, 2016, 2017) is worth adding to the generational research analysis to adjust current HR systems if generational differences occur in ICSR perceptions (Rank, 2020).

The aim of our review is to discuss research evidence concerning work beliefs, i.e., internal CSR perceptions, work, and leadership motivation in the light of the generational differences. We applied the qualitative review method by searching for the key words “generations, work values, leadership motivation, CSR, ICSR, external CSR (ECSR), and HRM” within academic databases (e.g., EBSCO) in relation to academic studies and studies by well-known consulting companies. The timeframe for the major search was from 2000 to 2020, even though some early “historical” studies are included as a starting point for our review. About hundred studies were ultimately integrated in our qualitative review.

The structure of this paper is as follows: After discussing the research on generational work values, we

structured our later ICSR review along different HR phases of the employee life cycle, i.e., the attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining, and leadership motivation of different generations. Finally, we draw conclusions about theoretical and practical implications for HR professionals (including limitations) concerning how to specify and define the existing HR measures for attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining those generations in their business careers.

**Deep dive on generational work motivation and values: are Millennials special?**

The first insight in generation research is: Why do we consider generations at work rather than just categorize by age groups, and is this correct from a research perspective? Generational cohorts are defined as being distinct from each other mainly because of the year of birth. As a consequence, they grew up with similar life experiences, similar values, and common historical and social events that are shared by all members that belong to this cohort. These shared features of individuals born in the same period influence their social patterns and behaviors in their personal and professional work life. Previous studies describe and stereotype various generations each owning distinct differences and characteristics (Gentry et al., 2011; Tolbize, 2008; Twenge, Campbell, & Freemann, 2012; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Even though each generation naturally consists of heterogeneous and diverse individuals, they nevertheless share a common value system and thoughts distinguishing them from other generations. Currently, the following generations are still in the workforce: retiring Baby Boomers, middle-aged Generation X and young Generation Y. As the new Generation Z is entering the workplace and currently not the majority of the workforce (Scholz, 2018), our focus excludes this generation, but future research should have an emphasis on this generation. Different authors use slightly different birth ranges to categorize generations. As an example, for Generation Y the lowest year of birth indicated in research is 1978, while the upper limit goes as high as 2002 (DGFP e.v., 2011; Tolbize, 2008). Table 2 shows the range of years that is usually used to study the three generations.

According to a comprehensive research review by Jorgensen (2003), generational differences are actually not that strong. The generalizations the popular media

**Table 2** Range of years and ages of baby boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (Tolbize, 2008)

	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Gen Y
Range in birth	1946–1964	1965–1979	1980–1994
Age 2020	56–74	41–55	26–40

makes about generational cohorts rarely match the findings of scientific research (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). While some research shows large distinctions among these three generations, other research shows that they tend to be more similar than different (Gentry et al., 2011). Therefore, the researchers recommend being careful and not relying on stereotypes when interpreting small generational differences, related attitudes and behaviors. Although previous research shows that generational differences in values are not as strong as could be expected, differences in the way generations behave in work settings can still be observed (Jorgensen, 2003; Wong et al., 2008).

As stated before, today four generations are working side by side in companies to cope with the challenging, disruptive transformations. Many countries are facing an aging workforce population in general and an impending shortage of experienced executive managers in particular (e.g., Germany, China, Japan). The retirement of older generations and the influx of members of Generation Y to the workplace are significant issues for companies. Thus, there are practical implications when it comes to the recruitment and management of organizations' workforce and future leaders (Twenge et al., 2010; Twenge et al., 2012). Understanding the biggest generation in the workplace, Millennials or Generation Y, helps to understand how they will behave as future leaders in organizations. Because they grew up in times of economic uncertainty and insecurity, Generation X developed a greater sense of skepticism about employer loyalty, but feels more individualistic and tolerant of risk when it comes to work. Just like Generation Y, they value a work-life balance and are more technologically advanced than the Baby Boomers (Tolbize, 2008). Generation X is often said to be stuck in between the Baby Boomers and Generation Y when it comes to their work values, attitudes and expectations.

The important longitudinal study of Twenge et al. (2010) examines generational differences in work values with data collected over time in three different years (US high school students in 1976, 1991, and 2006) to separate generational differences from age and career differences. This time-lag method, compared to one-off studies, analyzes people at the same age at different time periods. Consequently, any differences between them must be caused by the generational cohort they belong to rather than by their age. Values are defined as indicators of people's decisions and actions, whereas work values are defined as the outcomes of what people desire and feel they have to attain through their professional work. Twenge et al. (2010) differentiate between extrinsic and intrinsic values. Extrinsic work values are tangible rewards that are external to an individual and the outcome of work achieved (e.g., income, status, or

advancement opportunities). Intrinsic values are intangible rewards of work. They focus on the process of work itself rather than the outcome (e.g., the opportunity to be creative or the learning potential work offers). Some other work values include influence, autonomy, job security, social and leisure rewards (Twenge et al., 2012). In comparison to older generations in the workforce (Baby Boomers and Generation X), Generation Y places a stronger value on leisure time (Twenge et al., 2012). Furthermore, Generation Y values work that provides extrinsic rewards more than previous generations, which actually seems contrary to their value of more leisure time. On the other hand, Generation Y shows a declining importance attributed to intrinsic values. As a result, they do not necessarily search for meaningful and satisfying work. However, this is contradicted by various other popular German studies (Huber & Rauch, 2013; Ries, Wittmann, & Wagner, 2012). These authors asserted that social rewards are rated lower by Generation Y than the previous two generations, indicating that they feel less of a need to belong to work groups (Twenge et al., 2010; Twenge et al., 2012). One reason for this might be that Generation Y does not rely on their professional work to make friends (Twenge et al., 2010). Likewise, Twenge et al. (2012) extended their value structure of life goals and included values like concern for others and civic orientation among three different generations. Compared to Baby Boomers at the same age, Gen Xers and Millennials rated goals related to extrinsic values (money, image, fame) more highly than intrinsic values (self-acceptance, affiliation, community).

According to cross-sectional study results of Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons (2010), five predominant themes can be identified concerning the work expectations of Generation Y. Generation Y places a strong emphasis on a substantial work-life balance, and chooses work that does not excessively compromise their private life. They expect good and fair pay and benefits from their work, which might reflect their sense of entitlement and also their self-imposed high personal standards. In connection with that, Generation Y expects the prospect of fast advancement when it comes to job promotions or pay raises, while also receiving constant feedback from superiors and team members in order to improve. Generation Y expects their work to be meaningful and fulfilling with an organization that is also aware of its corporate social responsibility. Lastly, this generation seeks challenging and stimulating work, combined with a chance to broaden their horizons, and national and international job mobility (Ng et al., 2010). Linking these results to the ICSR concept, all ICSR features are covered in this study and positively valued by Generation Y.

Further, according to the popular survey Deloitte's Millennial Survey (2014), more than half of Generation

Y's future leaders might not favor traditionally organized business, preferring to work independently and on their own individual terms. Some even go as far as describing Generation Y as "Generation Career Deniers", because their motivation and willingness to strive for a career in a leadership position is apparently diminishing for some young people, at least when it comes to the "traditional" form of leadership positions and career aspirations (Werle, 2012). We questioned whether this is really true.

The differences related to the work values, attitudes and expectations attributed to Generation Y reported in our review seem to indicate that Generation Y is somehow "special" in comparison to the previous generations concerning their work values: The difference is slight rather than as large as assumed. However, the scientific evidence is inconclusive, because methodological constraints may occur, i.e., effects related to work experience, tenure with the company or gender might interact with the generation or an age group effect (see review of Parry & Urwin, 2011).

### **Reviewing the impact of ICSR on enhanced employer attractiveness and employee commitment: do Millennials concern themselves with ICSR?**

Employee perception of the external CSR activities of their companies (i.e., social performance in communities and legal or ethical behavior of companies) was the first focus of CSR studies: Brammer, Pavelin, and Porter (2009) specified a general CSR attitude from corporate social performance (CSP). CSR is a perception based on CSP resulting from an evaluation of the concrete external CSR activities of a company for the benefit of society or social welfare. Paul, Meyskens, and Robbins (2011) defined CSR as a mindset or sensitivity for CSP. They found that students from the USA with a high cross-cultural sensitivity were more sensitive to CSR. Their conclusion was that a global mindset of international managers requires external CSR and cross-cultural sensitivity. Intercultural differences occur between countries concerning whether civil rights are respected or not (Brammer et al., 2009) and whether CSR has a basic national infrastructure (Halkos & Skouloudis, 2016). Research discovering the link between internal CSR and organizational attractiveness concentrates on the external CSR reputation related to social welfare as well as on the internal CSR related to the workplace (see Glavas, 2016; Gond, El Akremi, Igalens, & Swaen, 2010).

First, we briefly review ICSR research by focusing on two phases of the HRM employee life cycle: attracting & recruiting and developing & retaining. Concerning the first phase, attracting and recruiting, most of the research was conducted by exploring CSR perceptions of students in the USA representing the young job-seeking

generations. In other cases, the sample and the country are specified below. For each of the HR phases, we finally focus on our specific key issues of whether studies report generational differences in CSR perceptions.

#### **Attracting and recruiting**

Important studies determined the relations between CSR, i.e., social reputation, and employer attractiveness. Turban and Greening (1997) revealed the first relationship between CSR perceptions and employer attractiveness. Albinger and Freeman (2000) researched into the extent to which the reputation index of companies concerning social performance is linked to employer attractiveness. This is only true if the job seekers' choices are high-level. Luce, Barber, and Hillman (2001) detected that for students who are highly familiar with the company, the impact of CSP on employer attractiveness is stronger than for students who are less familiar with the company.

Next, researchers included the internal dimensions of CSR. Relevant studies are depicted in this review (see Glavas, 2016): with the scenario-based technique KLD ratings, Greening and Turban (2000) revealed that potential job applicants (students) more likely choose jobs from highly socially responsible firms than from less responsible ones. The KLD ratings (now replaced by the MSCI KLD 400 Social Index, 2018) cover the dimensions ICSR concept. Backhaus, Stone, and Heiner (2002) revealed that the dimensions of CSP influence employer attractiveness differently: Only environmental, community relations and diversity aspects impacted the organization's attractiveness to a large extent. Ng's & Burke's study (Ng & Burke, 2005) with MBA job seekers focused on whether diversity management programs influence job selection decisions. Women and ethnic minorities rated diversity management as important when accepting offers of employment.

An internal focus on CSR was chosen within the studies of Jones, Willness, and Madey (2014). In a lab experiment in Canada and a field experiment at job fairs in the USA they tested the signal-based mechanisms of CSR on job seekers' interest. They confirmed that CSR is linked to the three following reasons: pride at being affiliated with the company, perceived value fit with the company, and fit with expectations concerning employee treatment at the company. The value congruence between candidate and company is an additional facet with respect to CSR. Gully, Phillips, Castellano, Han, and Kim (2013) tested job seekers on whether CSR activities of companies impacted their job choice. This depends on job seekers' intentions and their own desire to significantly impact their work: "Advertisement messages about an organization's social and environmental responsibility

values interact with applicants' desire to have a significant impact through work to influence job pursuit intentions".

To sum up, there is evidence that CSR goes beyond the pure perceptions of external CSR and corresponds with a pre-attitude of the candidates concerning CSR and the value fit between person and organization. These results can be linked to the work values concept of Twenge et al. (2010; Twenge et al., 2012). The common sample participants were students. If we focus on current studies (conducted after 2010), the perceptions of the generation have been assessed indirectly.

However, concrete evidence of generational differences in work values and ICSR is clear: Montgomery and Ramus (2011) revealed that MBA students (Millennials) in the USA and Europe gave intellectual challenge the first priority when asked about job factor preferences. Further, the organizational reputation concerning internal caring about employees as well as ethics about products and services plays a key role for the choice of employer. No effects of nationality or countries occurred.

The study of Bustamante (2014) focuses on the current Generation Y in Germany. This study linked the research on work values with ICSR studies by operationalizing the workplace in order to investigate the relevance of work-related CSR for this generation. In general, personal development was of the highest importance. However, gender impacted all ICSR values, with women placing higher values than men. In addition to workplace security and development, approximately 2/3 of the respondents valued flexible work time, support at the career start and equal opportunities. Catano & Morrow Hines (2016, p. 1) conducted an experiment with Canadian students to discover the impact of CSR and psychologically healthy workplaces on employer attractiveness: "The inclusion of both pieces of information significantly increased the attractiveness of an organization as a good workplace as well as the attractiveness of its reputation". Further, personal values like openness moderated this relationship.

Klimkiewicz and Oltra (2017) ran a current study on external CSR (i.e., social and ethical company behavior) on employer attractiveness with a sample of Generation Y in Poland. They confirmed that the individual attitude toward CSR plays a key role for job seekers' perception of employer attractiveness. If the Millennials affectively perceive CSR as positive, the CSR perception enhances the employer's attractiveness. However, if the attitude of Generation Y toward CSR is negative from the beginning, the employer attractiveness is not increased by the positive reputation due to the company's CSR activities.

In Ghana, Hinson, Agbleze, and Kuada (2018) revealed that CSR perceptions of job seekers positively related to

the employer's attractiveness. However, the analyzed impact of age was not significant. Instead, work experience, gender and nationality predict the positive CSR perceptions of employer attractiveness. Surprisingly, the male job seekers were drawn more by the CSR impact on employer attractiveness than the female candidates, reflecting the male dominant influence of African culture. Zhang, Cao, Zhang, Liu, and Li (2020) discovered that the impact of ICSR on organizational attractiveness is mediated by cognitive and affective perceptions of employees in China.

In a nutshell, the specific studies focused on above provide some evidence that internal CSR workplace attributes (i.e., intellectual challenge, caring about employees, personal development, flexible work time, diversity/equal treatment, and ethical behavior) might play a key role when Generation Y chooses a job in a company. However, these studies lack a comparison with previous age groups like Generation X or Baby Boomers, which should be included in the research design to discover the age effects on work values and ICSR. Further, some gender effects could occur (see Brammer et al., 2007a, 2007b; Bustamante, 2014), with higher CSR values for women than for men. Moreover, Europe and the USA were the main focus of the research on discovering the preferences of Generation Y concerning CSR impact on employer attractiveness, with a few studies in China and the opposite results in Africa.

Future studies should investigate a cross-sectional comparison among different job seekers or employee demographics (with age/generations, gender, and nationality), as the interactive impact should be identified in different national contexts. As diverse workforces coming from different local contexts work together globally, future research should incorporate those demographic settings (like nationality) for comparing those settings and predicting interactive effects on ICSR.

### **Developing and retaining**

In accordance with these HR phases, it is interesting that the research is more diverse and conducted across different regions and countries. Common studies focused on the relationship between positive employee CSR perception and higher work engagement or organizational commitment. This impact is explained by the social identity theory (Gond et al., 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1985, 1986) that belonging to a favored group/entity strengthens one's own self-concept; e.g., self-esteem.

Early studies revealed that the corporate image (i.e., social impact on community) is positively linked to job satisfaction and negatively linked to turnover (Riordan, Gatewood, & Bill, 1997). Maignan and Ferrell (2000) surveyed French managers: Corporate citizenship had a positive influence on employee commitment. Peterson

(2004) found that corporate citizenship is positively related to employee commitment, especially for ethical aspects. Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, and Ganapathi (2007) operationalized CSR as perceptions of CSR belief and CSR awareness in India, revealing a strong influence of CSR on employee commitment and job performance mediated by the social exchange relationship. Carmeli, Gilat, and Waldman (2007) found a positive influence of external social performance perceptions on employee identification and job performance in an Israeli company. Valentine and Fleischman (2008) detected a mediating role of perceived CSR between an ethics program and job satisfaction. In a survey with Taiwanese companies, Lin (2010) showed that perceived corporate citizenship affects work engagement directly and indirectly via the mediation of organizational trust. Brammer et al. (2007a, 2007b) identified gender effects moderating the impact of external CSR on employee commitment. In Korea, Kim, Lee, Lee, and Kim (2010) identified that active CSR participation directly influenced employee identification, which in turn impacted employee commitment in contrast to mere CSR perceptions.

A considerable number of studies across countries confirm this relationship. However, external CSR activities within the social community were the main focus of the reviewed studies. Some current studies investigated ICSR perceptions.

Ferreira and de Oliveira (2014) conducted a research survey with three different groups of respondents faced with three different CSR scenarios (general, internal, and external), and finally respondents' employee engagement was measured. Employees only exposed to internal CSR scenarios were more engaged than those only exposed to external CSR scenarios.

In Jordanian banking companies, Albdour and Altarawneh (2012) researched the impact of five internal CSR practices (i.e., training and education, human rights, health and safety, work-life balance, and workplace diversity) on the two dimensions of employee engagement: job engagement and organizational engagement. The impact of internal CSR practices on organizational engagement was greater compared with job engagement.

Mueller, Hattrup, Spiess, and Lin-Hi (2012) examined the impact of CSR on affective organizational commitment across 17 nations: "The perceptions of CSR were more positively related to affective commitment in cultures higher in humane orientation, institutional collectivism, ingroup collectivism, and future orientation and in cultures lower in power distance."

Skudiene and Auruskeviciene (2012) found that internal and external CSR activities positively correlate to internal employee motivation in Lithuanian companies: Internal CSR was found to be more strongly related to

internal employee motivation than the external CSR dimensions were.

Mory et al. (2015, 2016, 2017) found a remarkable effect of internal CSR on affective organizational commitment, which in turn was positively related to normative commitment (construct of Meyer et al., 2002). First, the internal CSR perceptions (2017) of Mory et al. (2015, 2016) were defined on four dimensions of *perceived organizational CSR*: CSR transparency, organizational justice, ethical culture, and organizational engagement focusing more on a trustworthy company culture, which might be the basis for modern HR programs. Next, Mory's internal CSR construct (Mory et al., 2017) is extended by the *perceived employee CSR*, including the following seven dimensions: employment stability, working environment, skills development, workforce diversity, work-life balance, tangible employee involvement, and empowerment. The first five dimensions are similar to the ICSR of Bustamante (2014). Both internal employee and organizational CSR perceptions together defined as an internal CSR construct impact affective organizational commitment, which in turn is the mediator to normative commitment. They recommended integrating all HR activities in a combined CSR approach for both internal vs. external CSR categories to create trustworthiness in the company's complete CSR approach. Internal and external CSR activities should certainly be consistent to strengthen the CSR approach.

Age-related or generational effects were reported in the reviewed studies above. The assumption needs to be proven whether this is true for all generations or whether Generation Y is special and less willing to engage and identify with a company, as they are motivated more by extrinsic values than by intrinsic ones (see Twenge et al., 2010). Pereira, Duarte, and Trindade (2015) discovered that the employees' perceptions of CSR marketplace and workplace mediate the impact of age and seniority on work engagement. El Akremi, Gond, Swaen, De Roeck, and Igalens (2015) achieved a validation of an internal and external CSR scale across seven studies. They showed the proven CSR effect on organizational pride, identification, job satisfaction, and affective commitment, which was mediated perceived organizational support. In one study, tenure was correlated with internal ICSR (called employee-oriented CSR), but not with age. The latter was correlated with customer CSR. In the Netherlands, Wisse, van Eijbergen, Rietzschel, and Scheibe (2018) revealed that CSR has a stronger positive effect on employee satisfaction for older employees than younger ones. Jia et al., (2019) examined the impact of ICSR and ECSR on employee work engagement in China. They identified different mediators on work engagement: ICSR is mediated by perceived organizational support, whereas ECSR impacts

work engagement via organizational pride. Zaman & Nadeem (2019) showed that CSR significantly predicted affective organizational commitment mediated by organizational identification in Pakistan. Soni and Mehta (2020) showed that ICSR impacts employee engagement via organizational trust in India. The impact of the three pillars of CSR on affective commitment was mediated by organizational trust in an Indian study by George, Aboobaker, and Edward (2020).

Finally, the current meta-analysis of Wang et al. (2020) closed the existing research gap in a systematic overview of how the employees' CSR perceptions impact work outcomes (i.e., work attitudes and behavior) by checking the moderating influence of employee demographics (e.g., age, gender, national culture). Beyond the expected CSR effects on work attitudes and behavior, it was interesting that this study revealed a significant positive impact of ICSR perception on organizational identification and work engagement. The impact of ECSR also emerged. Within the focus of our review, the moderating effect of age, gender and nationality on CSR perceptions is supported. Thus, the surprising effects of employee demographics have to be figured out in detail: A higher average age positively moderates the relationship between perceived CSR and organizational trust, job satisfaction and organizational deviance. However, age negatively moderates the link between perceived CSR work engagement, job performance, and creativity. Further, there was no moderating age impact on the pattern of perceived CSR and organizational identification or commitment. In contrast to previous results (e.g., Brammer et al., 2007a, 2007b), a higher proportion of male employees (than female employees) enhances the relationship between perceived CSR and the following five outcomes: the external prestige of the company, work engagement or job performance, organizational citizenship and deviance. Moreover, national culture, in particular Hofstede's values like individualism, negatively moderates the relationship between perceived CSR and job satisfaction, job performance, and citizenship, but positively moderates the link between perceived CSR and organizational trust or work engagement.

In general, a positive impact of internal and external CSR perceptions on employer attractiveness, job satisfaction, employee identification, affective commitment, and work engagement can be identified. In this disruptive twenty-first century with its major transformations, this is good news for establishing CSR as an excellent basis for sustainable business with positive CSR work values and behavior.

Wang et al. (2020) showed that the influence of age/generations on work attitudes and behavior has to be analyzed in detail to set up appropriate HR concepts: The ICSR beliefs of younger people increase their work

engagement and commitment, whereas the impact of ICSR perceptions of older people enhances their job satisfaction and organizational trust.

Therefore, future research should include both concepts to identify the generational differences, i.e., higher scores for Generation Y (vs. X) in extrinsic (vs. intrinsic) values, in specific internal ICSR preferences (i.e., intellectual challenge, caring about employees, personal development, flexible work time, diversity/equal treatment, and ethical behavior). In turn, whether these drivers increase assessed affective commitment for Generation Y or whether this is a stable phenomenon across generations should be tested in global companies or international settings. Based on our review, this forecast might be true for European and North American samples with high individualism (Hofstede & Minkov, 2013).

### **Generational differences in leadership motivation for succession management**

Due to a focus of Generation Y on more extrinsic work values (Twenge et al., 2010), we suppose that Generation Y could be less interested in the challenging job of a leader. The role of a leader's motivation and personality plays an important part in leadership research as a predictor for a leader's success (Felfe & Gatzka, 2012). Generation Y's attitude and their assumed decreasing leadership motivation make it imperative to learn more about and closely examine their potential as future leaders in the work environment. With the impending retirement of many older workers and the entering of young talent in the form of Generation Y, it is necessary to analyze these issues in terms of succession management identifying new talented employees as future leaders. Furthermore, it is important to understand this generation's motivation toward assuming leadership positions.

Leadership research (e.g., Van Iddekinge, Ferris, & Heffner, 2009) proposes a multistage model including distal, semi-distal and proximal drivers for leadership performance. Examples of distal drivers are cognitive ability or personality traits, examples of semi-distal influencers are leadership motivation or experience, and finally proximal antecedents include knowledge, skill, and abilities as good examples. Our research assumption concerning Generation's Y motivational stage for a leader's workplace focuses on one element of this leadership model. One can especially postulate whether their specific work values influence their potential leadership motivation to become a future leader.

According to Felfe and Gatzka (2012), motivation comes through specific motives, which convert neutral aspects into incentives and, as a consequence, generate goals. Felfe and Gatzka (2012), who build on Chan and Drasgow's (2001) research, define Motivation to Lead



(MTL) as the individual preference to assume leadership responsibilities (Elprana & Hernandez Bark, 2014). Further, MTL is identified as a strong predictor for leadership potential, participation in leadership training, leader emergence, and leadership performance (Stiehl, Gatzka, Elprana, & Felfe, 2015). Felfe and Gatzka (2012) adapted their German construct for use in English and changed or extended the items in the questionnaire for counseling purposes (Elprana & Hernandez Bark, 2014). It includes two main concepts that investigate leadership motivation based on motives (Felfe & Gatzka, 2012). The first relevant concept concentrates on implicit or learned motives and explains people's behavior based on three fundamental individual motives: power, achievement, and affiliation. This motive constellation is labeled the Leadership Motive Pattern (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982): Leaders with such a motivational profile are more successful in a long-term study than leaders without these characteristics. However, high power, high achievement and, to a low extent, affiliation motives are considered general motives and are not necessarily specific concepts connected to the adoption of leadership responsibility (Felfe & Gatzka, 2012).

Based on Chan and Drasgow (2001), Felfe and Gatzka (2012) developed the core elements of MTL, split into three different facets shown: the affective facet (emphasizes positive and internal emotional feelings toward leadership tasks), the calculative facet (does not look for any advantages or disadvantages coming from leading) and the normative facet (stirred by a feeling of duty and expectations of others, Felfe & Gatzka, 2012).

Empirical studies confirmed the validity of the construct: If all motives are congruent, a strong intrinsic motivation develops, while a deviation will lead to barriers and inner conflicts concerning leadership responsibility (Felfe & Gatzka, 2012). Leadership-like interests reflect incentives that additionally motivate someone to assume a leadership position. They make leading attractive and cover the six fields of interest. The four components (basic motives, MTL, leadership interests, and motivational barriers) are analyzed to see whether a person has a certain leadership motivation. The basic motive, MTL, and motivational barriers of Felfe & Gatzka (2012) were elected to discover generational differences in leadership motivation.

Before stepping into our research assumptions, a brief literature review on generational differences in leadership motivation is relevant: Wong et al. (2008) compare managers vs. young professionals with regard to personality traits and motivation. They showed differences in personality and motivational drivers between generations Y and X. However, leadership motivation was not explicitly assessed. Dries, Pepermans, and De Kerpel (2008)

explored generational differences in career types, and in general, no generational differences were found. D'Amato and Herzfeldt (2008) researched by surveying a sample of managers: Generational differences were identified among managers in learning orientation and leadership development intentions. In their study in the USA, Deal et al. (2013, p. 1) tested whether managerial level explains work motivation better than generation does: "Although Gen Xers, Late Boomers and Early Boomers did differ in external and introjected work motivation, there was substantially more variance in work motivation explained by the managerial level. Individuals at lower managerial levels had higher levels of external motivation than those at higher managerial levels, whereas individuals at higher managerial levels had higher levels of intrinsic, identified, and introjected motivation". However, Generation Y was not included.

To sum up, there is a lack of research analyzing the leadership motivation across age groups or generations. Affective MTL is probably the most important motive to have when assuming a leadership position, and it is the most effective predictor of leadership emergence (Elprana & Hernandez Bark, 2014). Generation Y might assume leadership positions in order to expect benefits from it, receiving motivation through a cost-benefit balance that is in their favor. This is a complex scope, but it supports the results of Twenge et al. (2010): Generation Y is guided by extrinsic values (income, status) more than by intrinsic values (learning potential, creativity). They might only take on leadership positions out of their own conviction if they believe that their own personal development could benefit and retain their work-life balance with enough leisure time. Therefore, we argue that Generation Y possesses a higher calculative MTL than previous generations and takes on leadership roles if there are extrinsic values. In consequence, they might possess a lower affective MTL, as they are cautious about enjoying leading and losing their leisure time. Similarly, Generation Y might also possess a lower normative MTL than previous generations. They would move on to the next company if they believed that their own personal development stopped. Lastly, in relation to the previous hypotheses, Generation Y shows higher leadership avoidance, meaning they have higher motivational barriers to accepting leadership positions than their predecessor generations in order to save their work-life balance credo. Naturally, managers who already assume leadership positions do not have high leadership avoidance, since that would be contrary to their job. They would not be managers in leading positions in the first place if they would possess high leadership avoidance. One reason for the lowest score of Generation Y could be that they still have some concerns about what exactly their path to a leadership position could look like, as they are

young professionals. In a nutshell, Generation Y should possess higher leadership avoidance than the previous Generation X, who already assumes a leadership position. Interaction effects with age and maturity need to be tested, too. Within companies, the motivational differences for leadership should be carefully considered for retention programs of future leaders. The cross-cultural and generational view of leadership motivation is especially interesting for international companies, as they need to recruit and develop future international leaders in Generation Y. The challenge for HR managers might be to customize employer branding programs and leadership development programs to expectations/ICSR beliefs of different generations, genders, and cultural demands.

## Conclusion

### Theoretical implications

After reviewing big research streams (work motivation and values, impact of ICSR beliefs on attracting/recruiting, developing & retaining and leadership motivation), we slightly identified the generational impact: Millennials are concerned about ICSR, but HR managers have to consider the context of their workforce. Therefore, we conclude that solely focusing on expectations of different age groups in the working teams to adapt HR measures is too simple. Moreover, the interplay of employee demographics and ICSR beliefs is worth analyzing by including the gender aspect and cultural dimensions or nationality. As Macky, Gardner, and Forsyth (2008) stated, most of the studies have been conducted in the Anglo-American culture, where similar values are shared (Hofstede, 2005; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). However, subsidiaries of international companies are located around the globe. Therefore, cross-cultural research is necessary to understand generational leadership motivation differences across the European, American and Asian work cultures. There is evidence that Europeans show higher values for personality traits like locus of control than Asians (LOC, i.e., a pro-active attitude to make things happen). The high individualism of the Anglo-American culture is found to correlate highly with an internal LOC (Spector et al., 2001). Therefore, when it comes to implementing globalized leadership programs concerning Generation Y, their specific pattern of leadership motivation needs to be recognized. In addition, cultural differences are expected to interact with the generational motivational pattern. Halkos and Skouloudis (2016) revealed that CSR is positively perceived in countries with a long-term orientation and indulgence, and perceived negatively in countries with uncertainty avoidance. No impact was found for individualism, power distance and masculinity. In contrast, Wang et al. (2020) showed that individualism positively moderates the relationship between

perceived CSR and organizational trust or work engagement. The research of the cultural impact on ICSR beliefs shows evidence, but with heterogeneous results. Therefore, further field study in different countries should be conducted.

### Limitations

The range of the literature review is limited. The applied review method was more of a qualitative review than a quantitative meta-analytic method. Therefore, this paper serves as an introduction to this field of ICSR research. Future applied research should be conducted to better understand how generational, gender-driven and cross-cultural ICSR perceptions (in broader terms: employee demographics) could foster positive work values, work/leader motivation and work behavior in field settings in international companies, as conducted by Mueller et al. (2012).

### Practical implications

Overall, diverse workforces make HR work more complex in customizing HRM measures to their needs, but this is worth it for HRM, as innovation and performance rates HRM increase. Thus, the divergence of HRM, i.e., adapting to employee demographics and local needs (Mayrhofer, Brewster, Michael, Morley, & Ledolter, 2011) is essential to attract, recruit, develop, and retain employees globally. ICSR is a valid basis to work on in HRM to increase organizational performance and manage the big transformation of our twenty-first century. Why this is so important goes along with our major global disruptions: Nowadays, the mission of business goes beyond purely financial business objectives in terms of stakeholder approach, in order to create responsible work behavior and sustainable business success to help our planet survive.

### Abbreviations

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; HR: Human Resource; HRM: Human Resource Management; ICSR: Internal Corporate Social Responsibility; ECSR: External Corporate Social Responsibility; MBA: Master's in Business Administration; MTL: Motivation to Lead

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