

# INTERFACE BETWEEN FACTORS DETERMINING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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**Abstract.** The study intends to analyze the relationship between employee engagement and corporate social responsibility. Scientific literature extensively examines the process of employee engagement and the peculiarities of the activities of a socially responsible organization, but there is a lack of complex research specifically on how they interact with each other, i.e., what the determinants of employee engagement may be in a socially responsible organization. To explore this issue, this research provides a comprehensive review of engagement stages, forms and domains, and links with social responsibility in organization. The research will seek to - identify the factors that determine the engagement of employees and disclose the interface of these factors with a socially responsible practices in an organization. This study develops a structure of the links between the factors determining the engagement of employees in a socially responsible organization, which creates criteria - tools that help to assess the current situation in the practical activities of the company

**Keywords:** employee engagement, corporate social responsibility, organization management, leadership.

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## INTRODUCTION

A new approach to business is evolving dynamically around the world. To gain a competitive advantage or stay in the market, companies face a common challenge - a new era of globalization. There is a constant need to create new business models and use the most advanced technologies that help to successfully develop and grow a profitable business, innovate, digitize information, connect interculturality. The main engine for achieving these strategic goals is the knowledge and skills of the company's employees, so it is very important to be able to keep these talented employees in the company and encourage them to voluntarily get involved (dedicate) to the company. The report "Effector's study on the Global Employee Engagement Index 2020™" (2020), prepared by the European company Effector, reveals that the global employee participation rate is still below 35%, and in the Baltic States it is only 19%, which means that organizations have a lot of untapped talent that is wasted and, at worst, a loss of company resources.

The lack of qualified and motivated people forces companies to improve and enhance working conditions, motivate employees to remain loyal and dedicated to the company. It is very important that the employee not only feels secure and willing to get involved in his / her workplace, but also is fully committed to his / her entire organization, thus contributing to the overall management processes of the organization and positive results. The larger the organization, the more it needs employees with different profiles and different talents and skills. So as to attract and retain talent, companies develop long-term strategies that incorporate socially responsible thinking. It is important for the management of a socially responsible organization how employees feel in the company, what the prevailing microclimate is, or appropriate working conditions, values, and so on. (Barker, Ingersoll and Teal, 2013; Sasaki et al., 2020).

However, the success, popularity, and progress of employee engagement in application socially responsible practices is not clear. Scientific literature extensively examines the process of employee engagement and the peculiarities of the activities of a socially responsible organization, but there is a lack of complex research specifically on how they interact with each other, i.e., what the determinants of employee engagement may be in a socially responsible organization. To explore this issue, this research provides a comprehensive review of engagement stages, forms and domains, and links with social responsibility in organization. The research will seek to - identify the factors that determine the engagement of employees and disclose the interface of these factors with a socially responsible practices in an organization.

This study develops a structure of the links between the factors determining the engagement of employees in a socially responsible organization, which creates criteria - tools that help to assess the current situation in the practical activities of the company.

## THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE ORGANIZATION

Organizational engagement involves the development of human resources throughout the company, a process that involves managers, colleagues, and the organization. The successful implementation of this

process is greatly influenced by the creation of a suitable workplace, personal attitude of employees, the tendency to get involved in work and positive emotions, which are reflected in relationships with colleagues. Seijts and Crim, 2006 emphasizes that an engaged employee is a person who is fully and enthusiastically involved in their work.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) state that engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities and see themselves as able to deal with the demands of their job.

First the concept of employee engagement was introduced by Kahn (1990) where he described it as the expression of a person's "preferred self" in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performances. Alongside he described three psychological conditions – meaningfulness, safety, and availability – and their individual and contextual sources.

Večkienė and Veršinskienė (2007) connect the concept of engagement with the modern “human” concept, which reveals a person's energy, desire to act and take responsibility for results. Employee engagement in an organization can be defined as an economically positive process of social exchange between an organization and an employee (Kavaliauskienė, 2012).

Macey and Schneider (2008) in the research disclose threefold nature of engagement: trait engagement (positive views of life and work), state engagement (feeling of energy, absorption), and behavioral engagement (extra-role behavior).

Mokaya and Kipyegon, (2014) distinguish three main characteristics of the employees involved:

- 1) Has a strong emotional and intellectual connection to the organization.
- 2) Makes the necessary discretionary efforts to help the organization realize better results for its organization. They are more creative and innovative and therefore offer progress in changing market conditions, allowing companies to develop positively over time. Engaged employees demonstrate traits such as loyalty, trust, and dedication to the organization.
- 3) Volunteer to take responsibility for their own engagement and commit to improvement.

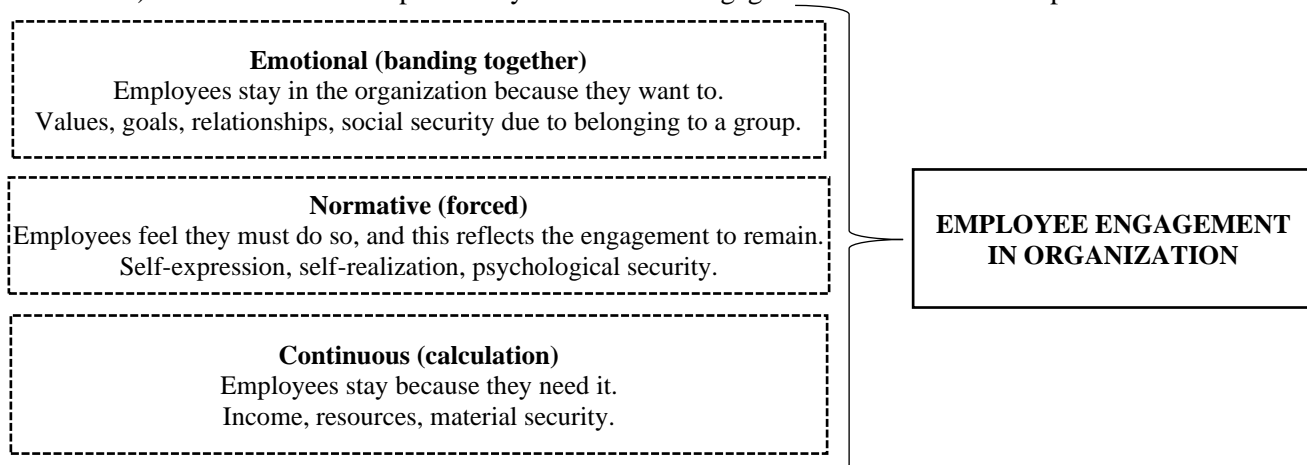


Figure 1. **Forms of employee engagement in an organization** (prepared by the authors based on Allen and Meyer, 1990; Kavaliauskiene, 2011; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Večkienė ir Veršinskiene, 2007).

The academic literature (see Allen and Meyer, 1990; Kavaliauskienė, 2011; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Večkienė and Veršinskienė, 2007;) identifies three forms / types of engagement in the organization, i.e., engagement can be related to:

- money (income, resources, material security). It is typical of employees who are convinced that they have no alternative but to stay with their current employer. Employees who have strong ongoing engagement remain because they need it, reflect the need to survive, stress the importance of exit costs (economic, calculating, or continuing engagement).

- organizational culture (values, goals, relationships, social security due to belonging to a group). Reflects an employee's desire to be a member of a developing organization, i. to stay in the organization for the sake of the organization itself, for which it is crucial to create a cozy and personally based work practice. Employees with strong emotional engagement stay because they want to (emotional, moral, concentration engagement).

- sense of duty (activity, its possibilities, self-expression, self-realization, psychological security). Employees who have a strong normative engagement remain because they feel they should do so,

reflecting the engagement to survive that results from internalizing the loyalty rate and / or receiving rebates that need to be repaid (normative, coercive, management engagement). The forms of engagement are illustrated in the figure 1.

These forms of engagement reflect the underlying reasons why an employee stays in the organization and what priorities he or she is more likely to have. It may also be the case that these three forms can merge to form a complementary structure throughout the organization.

In academic literature we can find that the researchers distinguish two form or employee engagement. Saks (2006, Saks and Gruman, 2014) explored employee engagement from two aspects - job and organization engagement – and made a distinction between them. Job engagement is associated with a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice, and meaningful and valued work. This encompasses work role. Organization engagement refers to a person's attitude and attachment towards their organization, economic and socioemotional resources and benefits provided by the organization. This encompasses persons role as a member of an organization.

Guest (2014) also saw differences between employee engagement and organizational engagement where employee engagement is more about nature of work, teamwork environment, personal development opportunities, relationship with management and their response to views expressed, motivation and inspiration. Organizational engagement is seen as vision and values of the organization, perceived support given to all employees, leaders' communication on vision and motivation, trust and respect, leaders demonstration that people are important to the company's success.

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2008), employee engagement can have a positive impact on job performance and create a spiral of positive profits. The process gains momentum when employees voluntarily use personal resources, which is important when employees face high work demands and need a larger workforce. At this stage, the need to retain engaged employees, which helps to ensure operational efficiency, is particularly strong.

It is important for the organization's management to notice the changing trends related to this phenomenon in time to ensure that employees' expectations are met and to prioritize engagement, commitment programs, practices or other activities that facilitate the management of the engaged workforce and successfully ensure proper employee engagement. process formation in the company.

Thus, in the context of day-to-day operations, employee engagement can be defined as engagement in activities, dedication to the company, passion, enthusiasm, assimilation, focused efforts to contribute to the success of the company, and energy that is geared toward the right job. Engaged employees are focused on performance, which is critical to the organization. In order to gain a long-term advantage in the competitive struggle for talent, employee engagement should be strengthened and encouraged for both the job and the organization. The problem, however, is that management, while trying to motivate employees to retain them, does not always know exactly why some employees are reluctant to get engaged in their work or lack something to embrace this condition. (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Chung and Angeline (2010); Kavaliauskienė, 2012; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010). Therefore, in this regard, it is expedient to find an appropriate way of internal communication and to clarify the reference areas of the factors determining the engagement of employees in the organization and to envisage the programs implementing them.

## **INDICATIVE AREAS OF DETERMINANTS PROMOTING ORGANIZATIONAL ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES**

Different research show that companies can achieve incredible results with the engaged employees. An organization concerned with the development of engagement hopes to reduce employee turnover, downtime and increase productivity, and make it easier to attract new employees by creating an attractive employer image. It is therefore crucial to pay attention to such factors as communication, work-life balance, leadership and organizational culture, dedication, motivation, trust, and loyalty (Gujral and Jain, 2013; Pandita and Bedarkar, 2015).

Employee engagement in an organization is determined by demographic factors such as age, gender, seniority, education, and position held. Employee relations with co-workers and manager, internal communication, organizational values, work-life balance, career perspectives, job content, managerial competence, degree of independence, salary and involvement and participation in organizational management (Kumpikaitė and Rupšienė, 2008, Guest, 2014, Shuck and Kevin, 2013, Glavas, 2016).

Mokaya and Kipyegon (2014) argue that employee engagement is strongly influenced by performance management, personal development and growth, rest in the workplace, health, and well-being, and pay packages.

Self-assessment plays a very important role in engagement. The higher the self-esteem, the greater the engagement. If employees feel the work is worthwhile, the work environment is reliable and has enough resources, then they tend to get more engaged. Fair treatment of employees and a service-minded organizational environment are also significant (Danish, Ahmad, and Khan, 2014).

Every employee is looking for the best working conditions for himself and self-realization. However, it is important to mention that Generation Y is not so attached and loyal to one employer, i. e. their approach to work differ from that of older generations. Therefore, regular communication with the employee to understand his needs is becoming increasingly important, as this builds trust between managers and employees.

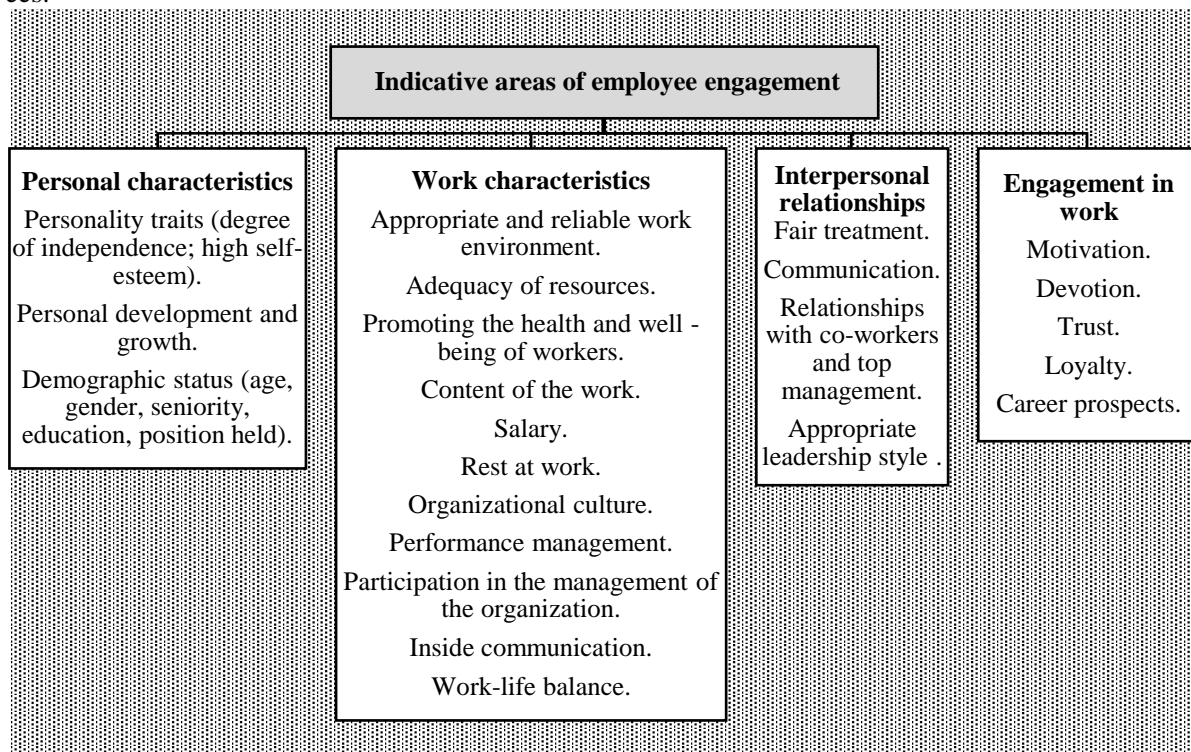


Figure 2. **Indicative areas of employee engagement** (compiled by authors).

The way / style of leadership plays a very important role in achieving these goals. Researchers note positive relationships between leadership style and employee engagement, which are particularly important in the early stages of careers among young employees. It is stated that:

- Using a transactional leadership style, managers motivate subordinates by rewarding and evaluating their followers only for the tasks they perform at their own discretion (Mirvis, 2012);
- Transformational leadership style inspires and motivates employees to achieve organizational goals. Managers select the best from their subordinates, expressing confidence in their abilities and creating an atmosphere of employee satisfaction with their activities. Transformational leadership evokes positive associations in employee attachment and social exchange processes (Besieux, Baillien, Verbeke, & Euwema, 2018; Popli and Rizvi, 2016);
- Charismatic leadership style is especially characterized by the ability to present a vision, nurture relationships, take personal risks, self-confidence, exceptional behavior;
- Service leadership style is characterized by loose leadership of employees. This is described as managerial care, support, concern, promotion of training (De-la-Calle-Durán and Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2021).

Summarizing all the research insights on employee engagement determinants, it should be emphasized that the development of employee engagement is a complex process consisting of various elements - factors. They can be grouped according to their respective functions. In turn, these factors can be grouped into four dominant categories - reference areas, which Kavaliauskienė (2011) identifies as:

- personal characteristics;

- working characteristics;
- interpersonal relationships;
- engagement in work.

Indicative areas of employee engagement are visualized in Figure 2. This figure is prepared using inductive logic, i. e. when individual comments from different authors are collected in one plane.

### **THE CONCEPT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)**

In companies, the CSR program is most often reflected in the diversity of management policies, interest group management, corporate citizenship, environmental management, local community involvement and active participation of the business community, sustainable development, business ethics and corporate social performance.

Sustainable and transparent activities of the company have a positive impact on society. The sincere care of employees receives special attention when analyzing the topic of social responsibility. Social responsibility initiatives are attractive to employees and increase the likelihood of retaining them in the organization.

However, the impact of CSR is broader and can be described as the policies and practices that organizations pursue to bring about positive social, including environmental, change for different stakeholders. It is important to note that this is a voluntary approach (Ferreira, Pedro, and Elizabeth Real De Oliveira, 2014).

Waldman, Siegel, and Javidan (2006) define CSR as actions related to a part of a company that moves forward or agrees to promote some social good, going beyond the direct interests of the firm and its shareholders, and going beyond what is required by law.

It should be emphasized that the implementation of socially responsible business principles depends on the expectations of the management, but the executors of the CSR program are the company's employees. Therefore, human resource management as a component of governance plays a crucial role in the implementation of CSR policies. (Lapiņa, Maurāne and Stariņeca, 2014).

For CSR to become an integral part of an organization's identity, all its employees must be involved in the process of forming and implementing social responsibility, and the declared values of the organization must be understood and accepted by them, whereas the ability to build close relationships with stakeholders is a source of sustainable competitive advantage that is very difficult to copy for competitors (Jones, Harrison and Felps, 2018; Mousiolis and Zaridis, 2014).

Different stakeholders (groups) play different roles in the field of social responsibility. Identifying stakeholders and involving them in joint activities is the basis of social responsibility. The organization should identify those with an interest in its decisions and activities in order to understand their impact. It is important not only to identify stakeholders, but also to identify their needs and expectations as accurately as possible, to give different priorities to make them as easy as possible to meet.

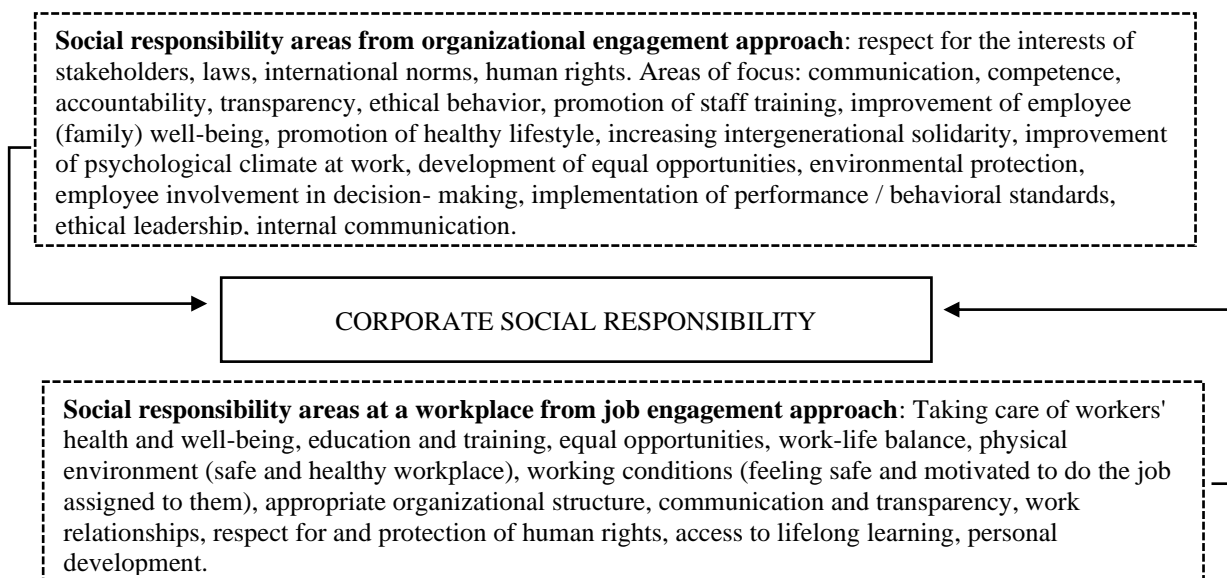


Figure 3. CSR areas from employee perspective



Social responsibility in an organization must be focused on several areas such as the workplace, society and the community, the environment, and the market. An important area in analyzing employee engagement in this study is social responsibility in the workplace. Workers feel safe and motivated to do their jobs by working in a favorable environment and in a safe and healthy workplace, with respect for and protection of human rights, equal rights for different social groups at work and access to lifelong learning.

In this way, the awareness of employees in the field of social responsibility is promoted and the opportunities to reveal the individual creative potential, which can help to create innovations in the company team, increase. When the conditions are right for work, it is not so easy for competitors to lure professionals. An appropriate work environment encourages employees to create, acquire knowledge, continually improve, and improve others. Therefore, while implementing social responsibility, it is important to take into account the following areas and actions: promotion of staff learning; organization of employees '(families)' leisure time; promotion of a healthy lifestyle; increase of intergenerational solidarity; improvement of the psychological climate at work; development of equal opportunities; improving the well-being of workers' families; environmental protection; promotion of transparent business.

Giving an outline of what was said in previous chapters about employee engagement and social responsibility, a framework of corporate social responsibility areas from employee perspective is devised.

Saks (2006) in the study explored employee engagement from two aspects - job and organization engagement. – and made a distinction between them. Job engagement is associated with a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice, and meaningful and valued work. This encompasses work role. Organization engagement refers to a person's attitude and attachment towards their organization, economic and socioemotional resources and benefits provided by the organization. This encompasses persons role as a member of an organization.

## **RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND CSR**

Certain factors have a decisive influence on employees' decisions to stay in or leave the organization. Employees retain or leave an organization for six main reasons: financial gain, job characteristics, career development, recognition, subtleties of employee management, and work-life balance (Aguenza & Som, 2018). It is therefore crucial to integrate socially responsible activities into the routine environment of employees in a timely manner, i.e., create favorable conditions in the workplace.

Mirvis (2012) identifies and examines three different approaches to how firms engage their employees through CSR:

- A transactional approach, where programs are implemented that meet the needs and interests of those employees who want to participate in the socially responsible efforts of the company;
- a relational approach, where the organization and its employees jointly commit to social responsibility;
- a developmental approach, where the company seeks to increase social responsibility in the company and to train its employees to be responsible citizens of the company.

Companies link CSR and employee engagement in three ways:

1. Many aspire to be a responsible employer. How employees are treated is a test of a company's CSR credibility.
2. Companies create a package of programs and build a good reputation to show their commitment to CSR in different ways.
3. Companies directly engage employees in voluntary and work-related CSR activities.

Engagement theory focuses on the relationship between the individual and the organization. In CSR theory, the relationship between organization and society is important. Combining the management principles of both theories it is possible to create holistic benefits for both the organization and society (Glavas, 2016).

Social responsibility towards employees is reflected in the company's actions to ensure aspects such as employee well-being, favorable working conditions, career prospects, justice, implementation of family-friendly policies in the organization, learning and development (Farooq, Farooq, and Jasimuddin, 2014). Therefore, promotion and prevention programs should focus on factors in the workplace, i.e., they should aim to increase labor resources to promote engagement and involvement (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008). CSR as a relationship-building strategy that can strengthen the bond between an organization

and its employees creates a mechanism of mutual trust in terms of dedication and satisfaction (Dhanesh, 2014). When employees' personal needs are met, they seek to identify with the company.

A review of research shows that a strategy to support corporate social responsibility covers a wide range of areas, such as fostering relationships, promoting personal development, and learning, and is a tool for increasing employee engagement and creating an attractive workplace. Employees tend to get involved and work in a company whose managers and co-workers behave ethically and together create the right atmosphere, share and nurture values, and promote the well-being of the physical and psychological work environment.

Covering such a variety of determinants requires an appropriate policy within the organization. Policies to increase employee engagement and promote social responsibility vary from organization to organization but should cover the employee engagement benchmarks analyzed in this study, which focus on the socially responsible organization and the workplace.

In order to identify the factors that determine employee engagement in this process, it is appropriate to look for common reference areas for employee engagement comparing employee engagement and activities of a socially responsible organization both in the workplace and throughout the company. Therefore, a structure of links between the factors determining employee engagement in a socially responsible organization is created (see fig. 4).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Depicting the research direction and visualizing the integration of employee engagement in company social responsibility framework are the contributions of this study that provide insights for both practitioners and researchers who are eager to find solutions for employee engagement using socially responsible practices.

This research was carried out to present the state of the art of employee engagement forms (continuous (deduction), normative (forced), emotional (concentration) and areas which are named as personal characteristics, work characteristics, interpersonal relationships, and engagement in work.

The main contribution of this study is a disclosure of possible integration areas of employee engagement and corporate social responsibility. The revealed concept of corporate social responsibility enables to highlight the responsible business practice based on the principles of ethical behavior and modern global agreement, which is identified through the organization's ability to integrate all implemented economic, environmental, social processes with external and internal stakeholders. The paper identifies the dimensions of corporate social responsibility that shape business in philanthropic, ethical, legal, and economic aspects. This manifestation can be internal or external. Dimensions can be categorized according to the area (workplace, market, community, or environment) they are focused on. The main role in supporting the CSR program is played by the company's employees, as they are the direct disseminators of the CSR culture.

This research provides the insights of various authors on CSR emphasizing how it helps the society to form a positive attitude via promotion and development of various values. The following core values are distinguished: respect for nature, a person and his/her desire for perfection, communication and relationships that take into account the needs of various stakeholders, and sincere care for their employees.

Based on the analysis of scientific literature and research conducted, a framework of relationships between the factors determining employee engagement in a socially responsible organization is formed, where verified criteria are defined - personal characteristics, work characteristics, interpersonal relationships, involvement in work. Thereby, our research by bringing together the latest approaches of employee engagement and corporate social responsibility and their interface provides a framework that can be valuable for academics continuing research in this field and for business practices.

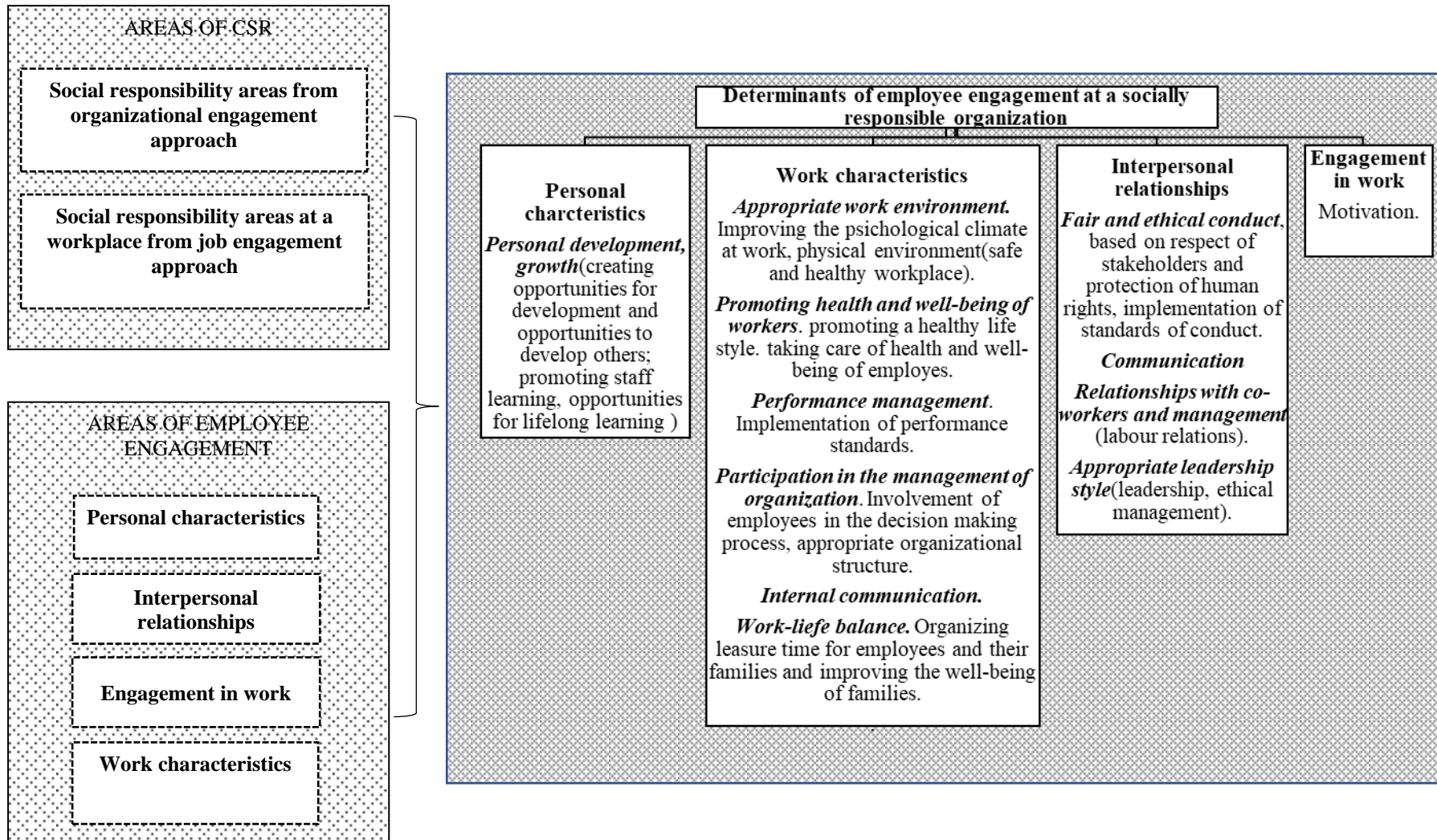


Figure 4. Framework of Integration of reference areas of employee engagement into a socially responsible organization and workplace (devised by the authors).



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