Leadership and Corporate Social Responsibility: The Role of Spiritual Intelligence

Authors : Meghan E. Murray, Carri R. Tolmie

Abstract : This study aims to identify potential factors and widely applicable best practices that can contribute to improving corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate performance for firms by exploring the relationship between transformational leadership, spiritual intelligence, and emotional intelligence. Corporate social responsibility is when companies are cognizant of the impact of their actions on the economy, their communities, the environment, and the world as a whole while executing business practices accordingly. The prevalence of CSR has continuously strengthened over the past few years and is now a common practice in the business world, with such efforts coinciding with what stakeholders and the public now expect from corporations. Because of this, it is extremely important to be able to pinpoint factors and best practices that can improve CSR within corporations. One potential factor that may lead to improved CSR is spiritual intelligence (SQ), or the ability to recognize and live with a purpose larger than oneself. Spiritual intelligence is a measurable skill, just like emotional intelligence (EQ), and can be improved through purposeful and targeted coaching. This research project consists of two studies. Study 1 is a case study comparison of a benefit corporation and a non-benefit corporation. This study will examine the role of SQ and EQ as moderators in the relationship between the transformational leadership of employees within each company and the perception of each firm's CSR and corporate performance. Project methodology includes creating and administering a survey comprised of multiple pre-established scales on transformational leadership, spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, CSR, and corporate performance. Multiple regression analysis will be used to extract significant findings from the collected data. Study 2 will dive deeper into spiritual intelligence itself by analyzing pre-existing data and identifying key relationships that may provide value to companies and their stakeholders. This will be done by performing multiple regression analysis on anonymized data provided by Deep Change, a company that has created an advanced, proprietary system to measure spiritual intelligence. Based on the results of both studies, this research aims to uncover best practices, including the unique contribution of spiritual intelligence, that can be utilized by organizations to help enhance their corporate social responsibility. If it is found that high spiritual and emotional intelligence can positively impact CSR effort, then corporations will have a tangible way to enhance their CSR: providing targeted employees with training and coaching to increase their SQ and EQ.
Keywords : corporate social responsibility, CSR, corporate performance, emotional intelligence, EQ, spiritual intelligence, SQ, transformational leadership
Conference Title : ICCSR 2020 : International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility
Conference Location : Athens, Greece
Conference Dates : October 22-23, 2020