

Research Paper

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Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Human Resources Management Practices Among the Millennial Workforce in the Chemical Industry in Ireland

Abstract

Companies around the globe are struggling to find the right talent. Therefore, the concepts of talent attraction and talent retention are central. Millennials are the most significant generational group in the current labor market in Ireland and worldwide. This study connects the Millennial workforce with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices through the lens of a green employer brand, using the framework of Social Identity Theory (SIT). Consequently, this study poses the question: What relevance does the Millennial workforce in Ireland place on CSR and SHRM when considering employment with a company? A survey was conducted using non-probability and snowball sampling techniques. Data were collected from 100 individuals who were part of the job market in Ireland. The data were analyzed using SPSS 26 for both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Two simple t-tests were conducted to analyze the relationship between the variables, which provided several practical implications.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainable Human Resources Management practices, Millennials, Employer attraction, Employer retention, Green employer brand, Employer Branding, Irish organizations, Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive.*

1 Introduction

Since 2013¹, businesses across the globe have been grappling with a growing shortage of qualified professionals, as evidenced by data from ManpowerGroup (2023). It is projected that by 2030, the global talent shortage will reach approximately 85 million individuals, resulting in estimated revenue losses of 8.5 trillion US dollars (Francino et al.,

2024). Employers must be mindful of the necessity to attract, engage, and retain talent (Chaudary, 2018), particularly in sectors of the economy where demand is intense (Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2021). This situation also applies to the chemical industry, where organizations are confronted with a shortage of skilled workers. As a result, they are required to anticipate and proactively engage in strategies to attract, retain, and develop these individuals from the outset of their careers, particularly during their training or academic pursuits (Evonik, 2024). The challenges that organizations face in attracting, engaging, and retaining

¹ Four out of five employers manifest to have difficulty to find skilled talent, which represents 77% in the global current market, more than double than reported in 2015. The most affected countries are Taiwan (90%), Germany (86%), and Hong Kong (85%) respectively. Ireland reports a high skilled demand percentage with 81% (Manpower, 2023).

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top talent are numerous and multifaceted (CIPD, 2021a; CIPD, 2019; Chaudary, 2018; Chambers et al., 1998).

First, the global economy is complex and interdependent, with multinational organizations and states operating in a demanding market. This environment requires talent with keen judgment, cultural awareness, IT literacy, and outstanding managerial skills (Henkel, 2024; RTE, 2022b; The Irish Times, 2022; IrishJobs.ie, 2021). Secondly, large corporations are competing with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to attract high-quality talent (Chambers, E. et al., 1998). Third, the current global market, which is characterized by a high level of interconnectedness, provides talented workers with the opportunity to relocate to different geographical areas and contexts (Alrazehi, H. and Noor Aina Amirah, 2020; Luna-Arocas, R. et al., 2020; Chambers, E. et al., 1998). Fourth, basic demographics (Chaudhary, 2018) indicate that in many European countries, the birth rates had been low for decades. A similar phenomenon is occurring in Japan and the United States. By 2030, the majority of the baby boomer generation will have retired from the workforce (Francino, et al., 2024; Chambers, E. et al., 1998).

Demographic data indicate that the current generation of leaders is the Millennial cohort (Chaudhary, 2018; Sengupta, D. 2017). The Millennials represent the most significant generational cohort in the contemporary labor market in Ireland and globally (Fry, R. 2022; TeamStage, 2022; Chaudhary, 2018; Sengupta, D. 2017). As of 2023, the population of Ireland reached 5.3 million, according to data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2024). Of the aforementioned population, over 1.46 million individuals were between the ages of 25 and 44 (Clark, D. 2024). The Millennial cohort represents the largest segment of the population in Ireland and is of paramount importance for the workforce. It is estimated that by 2025, Millennials will constitute 75% of the global workforce (TeamStage, 2022; Sengupta, D. 2017).

The subject of the correlation between the relevance that Millennials show towards certain constructs, such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Human Resources Management (SHRM) practices², is of significant importance. The present study focuses on the

relevance that the Millennial workforce gives to CSR and SHRM practices when deciding to work for an organization in the Republic of Ireland.

Prior research has been conducted among students (Wang & Chen, 2022; Chaudhary, 2019; Chaudhary, 2018; Klimkiewicz & Oltra, 2017; Guerci et al., 2016; Highhouse et al., 2003). In those studies, the samples consisted of students with minimal or no previous employment experience. The present study is particularly relevant as it empirically expands the existing body of research examining the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices, and the Millennial generation. It offers a novel contribution to the field by providing insights from the perspective of current employees in Ireland, regardless of the economic sector in which they are employed.

Furthermore, the studies in this field have been conducted in emerging economy nations, including Brazil, India, Turkey, and South Africa. In this context, this study is distinctive in that it proposes the implementation of a pilot measuring scale for CSR and SHRM practices in a developed economy³, specifically in the EU, which is regarded as one of the countries with the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita after Luxembourg (Honohan, 2021).

In order to gain insight into the relationship between CSR, SHRM practices, and the preference of Millennials to work for organizations in Ireland, the present study develops a scale to measure these factors.

This subject is of interest to people, practitioners, and leaders of organizations of all sizes because it has the potential to contribute to the body of knowledge that tends to improve the SHRM practices, identify methods for attracting talent, and ascertain how to retain it.

Aim and Objectives

This research employs the tenets of Social Identity Theory (SIT) to advance the existing literature on the nexus between CSR and SHRM practices. The objective is to construct a

2 The authors of the present study agree with Renwick et al., 2013 in their suggestion that the notion of sustainability applies to HRM itself. That is why instead of GHRM, is Sustainable Human Resources Management (SHRM) practices one of the constructs that is under analysis in the present paper. However, for the purpose of this paper, Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) and Sustainable Human Resources Management (SHRM) are going to be consider as equivalent.

3 The need to contribute to the discussion and conceptual development of SHRM practices in a national context, in a developed country, and from the individual perspective, was highlighted by Yong et al. (2020) in their review of the extent literature of green HRM practices (Yong et al., 2020).

scale for gauging the significance attributed to CSR and SHRM by the Millennial workforce in the Republic of Ireland. To this end, the following research question is posed:

What is the perceived relevance of CSR and SHRM practices among the Millennial workforce in Ireland?

Research Objectives

- *To examine the relevance of CSR for the Millennial workforce in Ireland. This study seeks to address the perceived need for HR professionals in Ireland to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of CSR for the Millennial workforce. By gaining this understanding, organizations in Ireland can enhance their strategies for attracting, engaging, and retaining key talent.*
- *To ascertain whether the Millennial workforce in Ireland exhibits a preference for SHRM practices. The findings of this study could potentially indicate the necessity for the implementation of SHRM practices in the future, with the aim of attracting, engaging, and retaining high-skilled talent.*

2 Theoretical Background & Hypotheses

Attracting Key Talent: Millennials

Global pressures regarding the environment have prompted organizations to implement environmental management initiatives by adopting policies and practices that are environmentally friendly. Human Resource Management (HRM) has garnered attention in the academic literature concerning the integration of traditional HRM practices with environmental concerns or green practices (Chaudhary, 2019). Prior research has indicated that the Millennial demographic exhibits concern about environmental issues (Powell, 2021; Robinson, 2019; Chaudhary, 2018; Sengupta, 2017). It has been posited that individuals in the Millennial demographic are inclined to leave their organizations if they perceive a lack of alignment between the values espoused in their work and their personal values (Rigoni & Adkins, 2016; Alrazehi & Noor Aina Amirah, 2020; Luna-Arocas et al., 2020; Chaudhary, 2018).

The concept of “prestige” has been employed to elucidate the phenomenon of organizational identification among employees within the framework of Social Identity Theory (SIT).

Prospective employees tend to gravitate toward organizations that adhere to CSR principles, and the

identification relationship is mediated by anticipated pride and employer reputation (Wang & Chen, 2022; Chaudhary, 2018).

Social Identity Theory (SIT), Employer Brand, and CSR

Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1997) was developed to elucidate the phenomenon of intergroup prejudice, with a particular focus on ethnocentrism. In SIT, group conflict can be instigated by awareness and affiliation with different groups. The theory introduces the concepts of an ingroup (i.e., the self) and an outgroup (i.e., the other). It posits that there is a tendency for members of the ingroup to perceive their ingroup more positively than they perceive the outgroup. According to SIT, the outcome of social comparison and the drive to compete with others is prestige (Worley, 2021). In alignment with SIT, individuals tend to affiliate with groups that can enhance their self-concept and self-esteem, thereby reinforcing their social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1997).

The influence of employer brand attributes, such as organizational support, on employee commitment and talent retention has been demonstrated (Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019). An organization that conducts its business ethically instills pride, motivation, and purpose in its employees (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). This research posits that the implementation of CSR and SHRM practices by an organization can enhance its prestige, which in turn can be conveyed through its employer brand. When employees develop an affinity for an organization through its employer brand, they may experience feelings of pride, motivation, and leadership, and may also be less likely to consider leaving their jobs.

Therefore, it can be inferred that the Millennial workforce would likely prefer to work for organizations that apply CSR and SHRM practices over those that do not. In alignment with SIT, individuals who exhibit a high level of identification with their employer may be prone to experience positive emotions derived from the organization (Wang & Chen, 2022). SIT has also been employed to elucidate how implemented CSR components can impact employee conduct within organizational contexts (Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2021). Additionally, it has been utilized to examine the preferences of job seekers regarding organizations that adhere to SHRM practices (Wang & Chen, 2022; Sulich, 2021; Chaudhary, 2018; Renwick et al., 2013).

In particular sectors of the industry, such as the chemical sector, corporations require a substantial number of highly qualified employees to maintain a competitive advantage and remain at the forefront of the market (Evonik, 2024; Henkel, 2024). These organizations are beginning to implement SHRM practices at all stages of their HR process, utilizing employer branding to attract and retain high-skilled talent.

The theoretical framework of SIT is relevant for examining the phenomenon of employer branding and the role of CSR in shaping organizational identity. In the case of Evonik, the organization deliberately utilizes its employer brand to position itself as an employer of choice among target groups (Evonik, 2024).

CSR and SHRM

The activities undertaken by organizations as part of their inherent business processes may result in environmental degradation, thereby rendering them accountable for such consequences. In response to these environmental concerns, a developing Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) model or Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices suggests a green approach to people management within organizations. The development of literature and research in SHRM is still ongoing (Yong et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2018; Renwick et al., 2013). There is a need to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying processes through which SHRM influences employee attitudes and outcomes (Yong et al., 2020; Chaudhary, 2018; Shen et al., 2018).

Consequently, there has been a notable surge in interest surrounding the nexus of CSR and SHRM, as evidenced by the growing body of literature on the subject (CIPD, 2021b; Yong et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2018). Research related to these constructs has seen a significant increase in recent years, with new studies emerging in 2007, a notable peak in 2016, and continuing to the present (Yong et al., 2020). The implementation of the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) has resulted in an increased demand for sustainability information (The European Council, 2022). In the chemical industry, for instance, some organizations recognize their human capital as a key determinant of their business success (Evonik, 2024; Henkel, 2024). Furthermore, it has been affirmed that the chemical industry is under substantial pressure due to environmental concerns (Schneider, 2024).

Other organizations have acknowledged the importance of

disclosing sustainability-related information, recognizing that doing so can enhance investor confidence, support financial market stability, and foster trust among customers, business partners, employees, and other stakeholders, as well as the general public (BASF SE, 2024).

However, as is the case with any nascent field of study, current research in SHRM practices is primarily concerned with delineating its theoretical underpinnings. Nevertheless, the authors posit that SHRM confers a competitive advantage upon organizations and can be utilized as a tool to attract key talent (Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2021; Chaudhary, 2021; Kivinda et al., 2021; Sulich, 2021; Yong et al., 2020; Renwick et al., 2013). It is crucial to highlight the lack of clarity surrounding the distinction between CSR and SHRM practices in the corporate realm (Sulich, 2021).

In this context, the objective of the present study is to ascertain the significance attributed by the Millennial workforce in Ireland to CSR and SHRM practices. To this end, the two constructs will be subjected to a joint analysis, leading to the formulation of the following hypotheses:

Research Hypotheses

H1 There is a positive correlation between CSR and the Millennial workforce in Ireland.

H2 There is a positive correlation between SHRM practices and the Millennial workforce in Ireland.

3 Methodology

Research Paradigm

A paradigm represents a philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline. Within this framework, theories, laws, and generalizations are formulated, and experiments are conducted to support the body of knowledge. In essence, a paradigm represents a perspective that is widely accepted by theorists as the fundamental basis for their research approach (Armstrong, 2012).

To facilitate the formulation of generalizations and enhance the credibility of research, it is essential that studies of human behavior adopt a research paradigm. The specific paradigm adopted by a researcher may vary depending on the nature of the phenomenon under study and the researcher's individual preferences. This decision plays a pivotal role in shaping the investigative approach and defining the researcher's identity (Kankam, 2019). The four most widely researched

paradigms are pragmatism, interpretivism, positivism, and post-positivism. The appropriate application of a research paradigm allows researchers to approach a phenomenon of interest in a clear and systematic manner (Kankam, 2019).

The positivism paradigm maintains that researchers should direct their attention toward the observation of empirical phenomena, as outlined by Armstrong (2012). In interpretivism, the focus is on the meaning of phenomena, with qualitative methods typically employed for data collection (Armstrong, 2012). Despite the use of diverse instruments to examine a phenomenon in close detail, post-positivism asserts that no universal truth can be identified (Panhwar et al., 2017). Given that social phenomena are subject to change over time and exhibit considerable variation across geographical locations, the utilization of a post-positivist paradigm is advised, as it permits the investigation of a phenomenon from multiple perspectives, employing a variety of methods and contextual frameworks (Panhwar et al., 2017).

The authors of this study adhere to a post-positivist paradigm, recognizing that this research approach enables the researchers to circumvent the limitations of both positivism and interpretivism. Post-positivism is situated at the midpoint of the research paradigm continuum (Chui, 2015), offering a "pluralistic approach" that balances the tenets of both positivism and interpretivism (Panhwar et al., 2017). Additionally, it facilitates a more reflexive analysis that incorporates the researchers' values and the contextual factors inherent to the research setting.

Type of Study and Sample procedures

This study employs a quantitative methodology with a cross-sectional design, utilizing primary data collection. Its cross-sectional nature enables an examination of the extent to which Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices correlate with one another within the generational cohort of Millennials in Ireland.

The present study focuses on Millennials, a demographic cohort born between 1981 and 1996 (TeamStage, 2022), who were either currently employed or seeking employment in the Republic of Ireland at the time of the study.

The study employed a non-probability sampling strategy. Data were collected from individuals residing and working in the Republic of Ireland based on their availability (convenience sampling) and snowball sampling techniques. The researchers identified a number of participants and

requested that they identify other potential participants, inform them about the study, and encourage them to complete the survey.

The instrument was administered via self-report. A QR code and a direct link to a questionnaire containing the scales were disseminated via various social media platforms, including LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Telegram, phone text messages, and emails, to individuals residing and working in the Republic of Ireland, who were invited to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. The survey was accessible for a period of 10 days. Once the 10-day period had elapsed, the link and QR code ceased to accept further responses. The data were anonymized prior to analysis. A sample of 100 individuals was successfully reached within the specified timeframe during which the survey was still active. Of the 100 individuals surveyed, two were not residing or employed in Ireland. The remaining 13 respondents were identified as belonging to Generation Z (ages 16-24), while the remaining 17 respondents were classified as Generation X (ages 42-55). As these 30 individuals represent distinct generational groups apart from Millennials, they were excluded from the present study.

A sample of 68 Millennials (ages 25-41) was selected and surveyed. The respondents completed the survey successfully and were residing in Ireland and participating in the labor market at the time of the study. For details, please refer to Figures 1 and 2.

Millennial Sample	Individuals	Percentage
Male	30	44,12%
Female	38	55,88%
Total sample	68	100%

Figure 1. Millennial sample disaggregated by gender

Millennial sample



Figure 2. Graphic of the sample distribution according to gender

Scholarity level of the Sample	% Female	% Male	Total Percentage of Both
High-school	1,47	5,88	7,35
Post-Secondary School	4,41	2,94	7,35
Undergraduate	2,94	1,47	4,41
Bachelor Degree	11,76	22,05	33,81
Graduate Studies	5,88	1,47	7,35
Master Degree	27,94	10,29	38,23
Doctorate	1,47		1,47

Figure 3. Scholarity level of the sample discriminated by gender

The questionnaire was used to collect basic demographic data, including current location, gender, educational level, and job status. Non-personal or identify data were not collected; see Figure 3 for details.

The inquiries pertaining to the employment status of the participants were as follows:

- I am currently employed and I am not looking for a job ____
- I am currently employed and I am actively looking for a new job ____
- I am currently unemployed and I am not looking for a job ____
- I am currently unemployed and I am actively looking for a job ____
- Others. ____ Please specify: _____

Furthermore, the questionnaire included an item inquiring about the tenure of respondents within their respective organizations. As participation in the study and completion of the survey were both optional, no IP addresses or other identifying information was collected.

Scale Development Methodology

The development of scales is a challenging undertaking that necessitates a significant investment of time and patience. The reliability and accuracy with which the construct can be operationalized, as well as the extent to which true covariance between the variables of interest can be observed, are key factors influencing the success of scale development (Hinkin, 1995). As stated by the American Psychological Association (cited in Hinkin, 1995), psychometric scales

should possess proven content validity, criterion-related validity, construct validity, and internal consistency.

Content validity is defined as the quality of a scale in accurately measuring the intended construct (Talavera, 2004; Hinkin, 1995).

Criterion validity pertains to the relationship between the scale and another established scale. Construct validity concerns the underlying attributes of the construct and their relationship with the scale itself. Finally, internal consistency refers to the homogeneity of items within a scale, indicating the extent to which each item's partial score correlates with the total score obtained after the scale is applied (Hinkin, 1995).

The extent to which the scale items reflect the conceptualization of the construct under investigation is referred to as content validity (Talavera, 2004). This can be regarded as the fundamental psychometric requirement for the creation of a new scale, which must be developed through the item generation process (Hinkin, 1995). An inductive or deductive approach may be employed in the development of items for a psychometric scale. In the deductive approach, a typology of the construct is utilized as a preliminary step, followed by data collection (Hinkin, 1995).

In the present study, a deductive approach was utilized. At the outset of the item creation process, a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical foundations of the construct was achieved. Following the completion of the literature review on CSR and SHRM, the authors of this study developed two new scales to measure CSR importance and SHRM relevance.

CSR Importance_Éire_Scale SHRM Importance_Éire_Scale

The items, CSRImportance_Éire6 and CSRImportance_Éire7, were self-developed items and were derived from the existing literature on the subject matter.

Furthermore, it is essential to emphasize that the content validity of the present study was ensured by the preceding studies on which it was based (Esen and Süral 2020; Chaudhary, 2019; Chaudhary, 2018; Klimkiewicz and Oltra; 2017). The authors of this present study have confidence in the content validity analyses conducted by the authors who developed the previous items; that were used to create the new simplified scale applied in the present research. The questionnaire was comprised of two sections, with a total of 22 items. The initial section, comprising six items, pertained to the demographic characteristics of the participants. The items that collected data pertaining to the participants' demographics employed straightforward, unambiguous, and closed-ended questions. The second section of the questionnaire, comprising 16 items, was designed to assess constructs related to CSR and SHRM. All items in this section employed a five-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The use of a five-point Likert scale has been demonstrated to enhance the reliability coefficient alpha (Hinkin, 1995).

Research Instrument

CSR Importance_Éire_Scale

In order to ascertain the relative importance of CSR, items from the scale developed by Klimkiewicz and V. Oltra (2017) were employed in conjunction with two items that had been specifically devised for this purpose. The items "CSRImportance_Éire6" and "CSRImportance_Éire7" were developed by the authors of this study. The two items were created with the intention of simplifying the scale by substituting the two final items proposed by Klimkiewicz and V. Oltra's scale. These items were designed to elicit respondents' perceptions following exposure to study cases. As no study cases were utilized in the present research, only the aforementioned questionnaire was employed. Consequently, the two items were removed, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Prior research in this field has employed case studies to provide participants with illustrative examples of organizational practices pertaining to CSR. These examples

have been presented in the context of two distinct organizational approaches: one that adheres to CSR principles and another that does not. Notable examples of research that employed study cases or two scenarios in which subjects participated prior to answering the questionnaires include those of Wang H-y and Chen Z-X (2022), Chaudhary R. (2019), Chaudhary R. (2018), and Klimkiewicz and V. Oltra (2017).

In their study, Klimkiewicz and V. Oltra (2017) proposed investigating the measurement of employer branding policies and the attraction of Millennials. Tanwar and Prasad (2017) proposed that studies related to employer branding in developed countries be conducted in a cross-industry context and using cross-sectional data. Bharadwaj and Yameen (2021) proposed that future research should investigate the impact of CSR on employee attraction and retention in sectors other than information technology (IT).

SHRM Importance_Éire_Scale

Four items were adapted from the second phase of the study conducted by Esen and Süral Özer (2020) regarding the development of an instrument to measure SHRM. The items of SHRM explored the following areas: working conditions, development, and happiness (items 11, 13, and 14) and sustainable employment policies (item 12). Given that studies of this nature rely on voluntary participation, the objective of the item adaptation was to devise a more straightforward and expedient scale for administration, namely the SHRM_ÉIRE Scale.

The SHRM_ÉIRE Scale is concerned with a number of key areas, including working conditions, the development and well-being of employees, and employment policies.

The pursuit of meaning and purpose in the workplace, the search for effective leadership, and the desire for professional growth and opportunities for personal fulfillment are the primary reasons why Millennials tend to leave their jobs (Gallup, 2016; Rigoni, B. and Adkins, A. 2016; TeamStage, 2022). Millennials seek organizations that demonstrate social responsibility, possess a clearly articulated mission, and exhibit exemplary leadership (Gallup, 2016; Rigoni, B. and Adkins, A. 2016; TeamStage, 2022). Furthermore, an item was included to explore sustainable employment policies, as recommended by Klimkiewicz and V. Oltra (2017). Consequently, the process yielded two streamlined new scales for gauging the significance of CSR and the relevance of SHRM practices.

Item	Taken from
I am skeptical toward organisations that define themselves as socially responsible*Reversed scale	$P_3 \text{ CSR}_{\text{Positiv}}$, Klimkiewicz and Oltra
Including social and environmental issues in corporate policies enhances company competitiveness.	$P_6 \text{ CSR}_{\text{Positiv}}$ CSR-Based employer Klimkiewicz and Oltra
Socially responsible companies operate both in their own interest and in the interest of the whole society	$P1 \text{ CSR}_{\text{Positiv}}$ CSR-Based employer Klimkiewicz and Oltra
When I want to get some more information about a concrete employer, it happens that I read social reports or analyse CRS rankings.	$I_3 \cdot \text{CRS}_{\text{Importance}}$ Klimkiewicz and Oltra
If I would have to decide whether to work for a company or another, I would base my decision on corporate values, the way the organisation treats its employees, and how ethical and sustainable the organisation is.	Self- developed item, $\text{CSR}_{\text{Importance Éire6}}$
I look to work for organisations that care about reducing their environmental impact.	Self- developed item, $\text{CSR}_{\text{Importance Éire7}}$
While reviewing job offers, I pay attention to whether the company is socially responsible.	$I_2 \text{ CSR}_{\text{Importance}}$, CSR-Based employer Attractiveness Klimkiewicz and Oltra
It is important for me to find a job in a company that I consider socially responsible.	$I_1 \cdot \text{CSR}_{\text{Importance}}$, CSR-Based employer Attractiveness Klimkiewicz and Oltra
CSR brings profits for organisations.	$P_2 \text{ CSR}_{\text{Positiv}}$, Klimkiewicz and Oltra
Generally, socially responsible companies, compared to other employers, offer more attractive working conditions.	$I_4 \cdot \text{CSR}_{\text{Importance}}$, CSR-Based employer Klimkiewicz and Oltra
Employees should be encouraged to take part in social responsibility projects	I_{24} Taken from Freitas et al., 2012:152
Elderly employees, female employees, disabled employees and employees of different nationalities should be employed at an adequate level	I_{25} Taken from Jepsen & Grob, 2015:166-168; Freitas et al., 2012:152
Material and non-material awards (salaried leave, leave, gifts, cash, points, promotion) should be given to employees due to their voluntary services that contribute to the environment or society	I_{13} Taken from Masri & Jaaron, 2017:487; Jensen et al., 2013:1719
Employees should be trained on sustainability	I_8 Freitas et al., 2012:152; Masri & Jaaron, 2017:487
Socially responsible companies, in comparison with other firms, are more reliable employers.	$I_5 \cdot \text{CSR}_{\text{Importance}}$, Klimkiewicz and Oltra
Companies should not engage in solving social problems, as it is a state matter. *Reversed scale	$\text{CSR}_{\text{Positiv}}$ Klimkiewicz and Oltra

Figure 4. Scale items and sources

Data Analysis Method

The following section outlines the methodology employed in the data analysis. The data were analyzed using the statistical software package SPSS 26, with the aim of conducting descriptive and inferential statistics. In order to analyze the relationship among the variables, two simple T-tests were conducted.

4 Results

In regard to the reliability of a scale, two crucial concerns emerge: the internal consistency of the items within the scale and the stability of the results produced by the scale over time (Hinkin, 1995). The most commonly employed criterion for evaluating the reliability of a scale is internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha (Ooi et al., 2007; Hinkin, 1995).

To evaluate the internal consistency of the newly developed scales, CSRImportance Éire and SHRM Éire, a Cronbach's Alpha analysis was conducted. Out of the total number of participants, 68 individuals were selected based on the targeted demographic criteria. These 68 subjects were identified as belonging to the Millennial demographic and provided complete and valid responses to the two scale items. The results of the reliability analysis for each scale are presented below:

CSR _Importance_Éire_Scale

→ Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	67	98.5
	Excluded ^a	1	1.5
	Total	68	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.810	7

Figure 5. Reliability CSR _Importance_Éire_Scale.

SHRM ÉIRE_ Scale

→ Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	66	97.1
	Excluded ^a	2	2.9
	Total	68	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.803	4

Figure 6. Reliability SHRM _Éire_Scale

As illustrated in the Cronbach's Alpha analysis, both scales exhibit satisfactory levels of reliability, as evidenced by Figures 5 and 6.

For CSRImportance Éire

As evidenced by the mean score of 3.61, the majority of respondents demonstrated a high level of relevance regarding the importance of CSR.

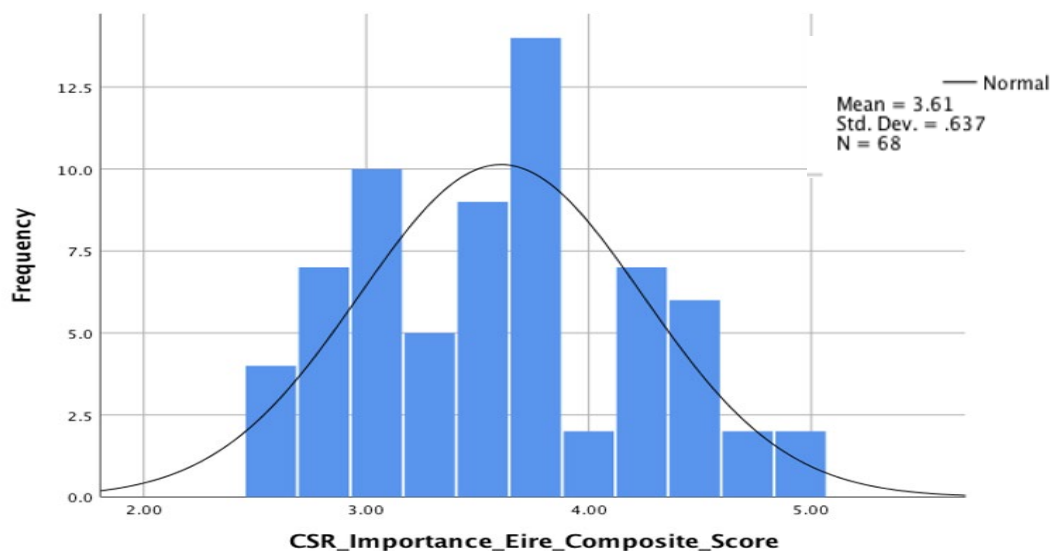


Figure 7. CRS _Importance_Éire_Scale_ Composite Score

H1 There is a positive correlation between CSR and the Millennial workforce in Ireland.

In order to ascertain whether there was evidence to suggest that there was a significant relationship between the importance of CSR among the Millennial workforce in Ireland, a single sample t-test was conducted.

The results of the single sample t-test indicated that the observed difference was statistically significant. Therefore, H1 is accepted. The sample size was 68, with a mean of 3.60, standard deviation of 0.07, and a p-value of less than 0.05, which was considered statistically significant.



One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CSR_Importance_Éire_C omposite_Score	68	3.6057	.63717	.07727

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 4.3

	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CSR_Importance_Éire_C omposite_Score	-8.985	67	.000	-.69426	-.8485	-.5400

Figure 8. CSR_Importance_Éire_Scale_ T-Test

For SHRM Éire

As evidenced by the mean score of 4.10, the majority of Millennial respondents demonstrated a high level of relevance toward SHRM practices. This construct was rated higher than CSRImportance Éire.

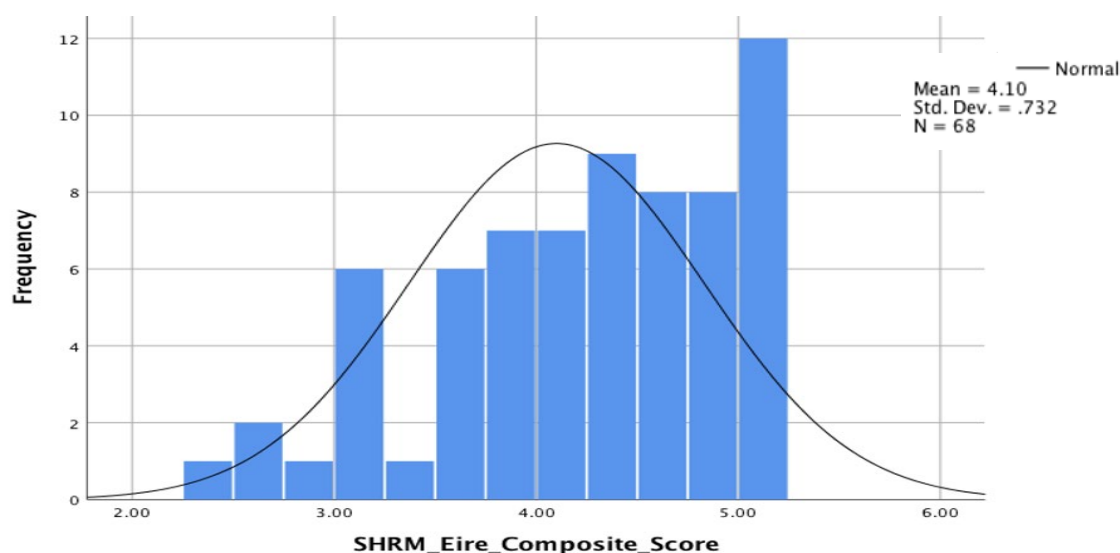


Figure 9. SHRM _Éire_Scale Composite Score

H2 There is a positive correlation between SHRM practices and the Millennial workforce in Ireland.

In order to ascertain whether there was evidence to suggest that there was a significant relationship between the perceived importance of SHRM among the Millennial workforce in Ireland, a single sample t-test was conducted. The results of the single sample t-test indicated that the observed difference was statistically significant.

Therefore, hypothesis H2 is accepted. The sample size was 68, with a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.73. The p-value was less than 0.05, which was considered statistically significant.

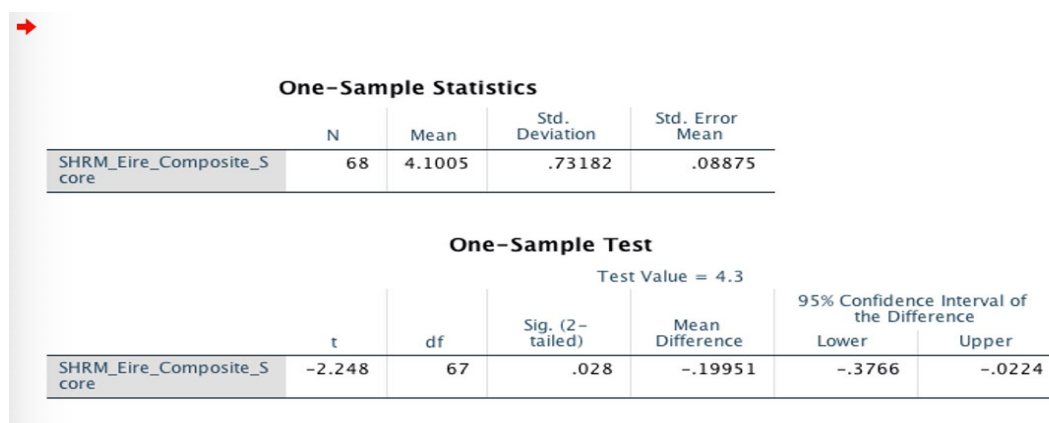


Figure 10. SHRM _Importance_Éire_Scale_ T-Test

In light of these findings, it can be argued that the relevance that Millennials ascribe to CSR is positively correlated with three key outcomes: job applicant attraction (Wang H-y and Chen Z-X, 2022), employee engagement (Shen et al. 2018; Renwick et al., 2013) and improved job retention (Wang H-y and Chen Z-X, 2022; Bharadwaj and Yameen, 2021; Shen et al. 2018). Prospective employees indicate a preference for organizations that implement CSR (Wang H-y and Chen Z-X, 2022). Additionally, SHRM practices have been demonstrated to influence employee workplace outcomes, including organizational identification, task performance, and the intention to quit (Shen et al., 2018).

5 Discussion

The objective of this study was to determine if CSR and SHRM practices are of relevance for the Millennial workforce residing and working in Ireland. In order to achieve this objective, the present study employed the scale proposed by Klimkiewicz and Oltra (2017) and proposed two new scales to measure CSR importance and SHRM relevance:

The CSR Importance Éire Scale and the SHRM Importance Éire Scale for Ireland were developed for the purposes of this study.

The results of the present study support the assumptions of this research. With the theoretical background of Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), it can be asserted that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices are highly relevant for the Millennial workforce in Ireland. It can be inferred that these constructs are expressed through the employer brand within organizations, and the Millennial workforce in Ireland recognizes these constructs and practices environmental concerns and values through the psychological process of identification within their organizations (Wang & Chen, 2022; Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). The study also demonstrates that SHRM practices are perceived as extremely important for Millennials in Ireland.

This suggests that organizations should focus on SHRM to improve the attraction of high-skilled talent and enhance employee retention and engagement. Prior studies of this nature have been conducted on prospective employees, the majority of whom were college students with minimal or no prior workforce experience (Wang & Chen, 2022; Chaudhary, 2019; Chaudhary, 2018; Klimkiewicz & Oltra, 2017; Guerici et

al., 2016; Highhouse et al., 2003). In contrast, the present study was conducted among individuals belonging to the Millennial generation who were actively employed and residing in the Republic of Ireland.

Moreover, other research of this nature (Wang & Chen, 2022; Chaudhary, 2019; Chaudhary, 2018; Klimkiewicz & Oltra, 2017) employed hypothetical organizations to assess CSR and SHRM practices. In contrast, this study utilized data from the organizations with which the target audience was affiliated at the time of the study, ensuring the confidentiality of both the organizations and the respondents.

It is notable that other studies conducted in the field of employer branding, CSR, and SHRM practices have been performed in various geographical regions, particularly in emerging economies such as Brazil, India, Malaysia, Ghana, Turkey, and South Africa. This is the inaugural study of its kind conducted in a developed country that is also a member of the European Union.

The authors of the present study assert that this is the first study of its kind conducted in the Republic of Ireland. No prior studies have elucidated the interrelationship between the constructs of CSR, SHRM practices, and the Millennial workforce. This represents a significant issue for HR practitioners, organizations, and employees alike, as it lays the groundwork for further research in this field. It has the potential to foster a more robust stance from various entities within Irish organizations regarding sustainability, climate change concerns, and the necessity to address national indicators such as actual individual consumption (AIC). This would occur regardless of the economic sector, the size of the organization, and whether it is private or public.

Contribution of the Study

The present study has developed a novel scale for measuring Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices with the objective of elucidating the motivational factors that attract key talent to organizations in Ireland. A paucity of studies has been conducted in this field among employees, and there is a dearth of research examining the factors influencing SHRM practices at the individual level (Yong et al., 2020).

Building on the existing research in this field, the present study aimed to make a significant contribution to the development of theory and methodology while addressing a considerable gap in knowledge. To this end, the study proposed an integrative model of CSR and SHRM practices

with the objective of enhancing employer attractiveness and employee retention within sectors that are experiencing difficulties in recruiting talent, such as the chemical industry. The findings of this study align with the conclusions drawn by several prominent researchers in the field, including Bharadwaj and Yameen (2021), Sulich (2021), Wang & Chen (2022), Chaudhary (2018), Shen et al. (2018), Klimkiewicz & Oltra (2017), Sengupta (2017), Tanwar & Prasad (2017), Renwick et al. (2013), and Chambers et al. (1998). These researchers have highlighted the crucial role of CSR and SHRM practices in contemporary business.

Therefore, the findings of the present study support the assertion that CSR and SHRM practices are of significant importance for the Millennial workforce in the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, it can be proposed that organizations should invest in SHRM practices to attract and retain skilled personnel, given that the SHRM Éire Scale was rated as more relevant than the CSR Importance Éire Scale.

The scale may be utilized by practitioners and scholars to assess the relevance of CSR and SHRM practices within organizations, thereby identifying the need for further training and development, designing and identifying policies and practices pertaining to CSR and SHRM, diagnosing requirements for the reinforcement of the employer brand, and generating programs to attract and retain key talent within organizations. Moreover, government bodies may utilize this scale as a preliminary framework for future research in the field, thereby facilitating the development of public policies that contribute to a more homogeneous indicator of the development of the Irish economy in the EU.

Managerial Implications

The recent scale demonstrates sufficient psychometric attributes and can be utilized as a valuable tool for HR professionals, business practitioners, policymakers, and scholars to assess the relevance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices among the Millennial workforce in the Republic of Ireland.

It is incumbent upon managers to recognize the value of CSR in fostering positive relations with internal stakeholders (i.e., employees). Moreover, they should prioritize investment in SHRM practices, as evidenced by their relevance for the Millennial workforce in Ireland. The results demonstrate the value of a sustainable approach to people management.

It is recommended that organizations implement CSR and SHRM practices, as well as a green employer brand, as part of a long-term strategic effort. This approach will enable them to create greater value for all stakeholders.

Costs

The financial implications of integrating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices are considerable for organizations in Ireland, irrespective of their size or business sector. The implementation of both CSR and SHRM practices often necessitates structural changes in existing procedures. In some cases, this may result in increased costs associated with the development of specialized programs for internal stakeholders or the surrounding community. Nevertheless, these costs should be regarded as an investment, as organizations would otherwise incur expenses related to recruiting and training new talent or attempting to retain their best employees.

Furthermore, it is crucial to emphasize the immeasurable loss that organizations experience when they lose talent that cannot be replaced, taking with it invaluable tacit knowledge. Additionally, the implementation of CSR and SHRM practices provides a competitive advantage in a dynamic market (Yong et al., 2020).

Limitations

Previous studies that have sought to ascertain the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and job attraction or intention among Millennials have employed methodologies that incorporate case studies in addition to the items included in the survey. Respondents were presented with two organizations: one that demonstrated CSR practices and another that exhibited a disregard for such practices. Subsequently, the items from the questionnaires were applied.

In the analysis of the results, the authors identified the necessity of providing definitions for CSR and SHRM practices prior to the survey. The authors presumed that the concepts of CSR and SHRM were already familiar to the Millennial workforce in Ireland, given that previous research has indicated that Millennials tend to prioritize environmental concerns (Powell, 2021; Robinson, 2019; Sengupta, 2017).

It is crucial to highlight that an enlarged sample size would enhance the potential for further generalization of the study. Given that Ireland has a population of approximately 5.3 million, it can be reasonably concluded that a sample size of 68 individuals represents a sufficiently robust sample for the purposes of this study.

Future studies would benefit from broadening the demographic section of the survey. It is recommended to include a question regarding the sector of employment of the respondents. Conducting further studies to ascertain whether there are notable discrepancies in the perceptions of respondents from a diverse range of sectors—including technology, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, healthcare, hospitality, and others—would be beneficial. Additionally, it would be valuable for policymakers and government leaders to explore whether there are significant differences in the perceptions of CSR and SHRM practices among public officers and those in the private sector.

It would also be interesting to ascertain whether there are significant changes in the level of importance that employees ascribe to CSR and SHRM practices compared to contractors and other categories of workers, such as temporary staff. Finally, a study could be conducted to determine whether there are differences in the perceptions of talent in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) compared to those in large companies.

6 Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices is crucial for organizations seeking to attract and retain the Millennial workforce. The existing literature on CSR and SHRM is limited. This study establishes a link between the Millennial workforce and CSR and SHRM through the lens of a green employer brand, drawing upon the tenets of Social Identity Theory.

Furthermore, it can be stated that few studies have been conducted in the field of CSR and SHRM practices from the perspective of current employees. To investigate the relationship between CSR, SHRM, and the preferences of Millennials to work for organizations in Ireland, this study develops a scale to measure these factors.

It is imperative that all industry sectors, at all levels of organizations, and in all corners of the world give due consideration to the importance of CSR and SHRM practices. The scope of the new EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) is more expansive than that of its predecessor, the Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD). The CSRD is legally binding for Member States, employs hard law, and introduces fines and other penalties. Conversely, the necessity for organizations to disclose sustainable data is paramount at this juncture. Not only must large organizations comply, but SMEs and, in select instances, other organizations outside the EU—subject to certain financial and branching criteria—are also obliged to report (Gilbert-d'Halluin, 2024; The European Council, 2022).

Organizations must provide both forward-looking information and retrospective data. In accordance with the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), s1 relates to the social dimension of working conditions, equal treatment for all, and the organization of the workforce. These aspects serve to measure the proposed scale.

It is imperative that leaders in all industries and sectors comprehend the underlying causes of the increasing resignation rates within their organizations and devise effective responses to workers' needs (Cook, 2021; Fuller & Kerr, 2022; TeamStage, 2022). The solution lies in the implementation of SHRM practices and CSR as long-term organizational strategies.

In light of the growing demand for skilled professionals in various economic sectors, an increasing number of organizations are turning to SHRM practices to recognize their human capital as a cornerstone for success in a globalized economy. Prominent examples include BASF (2024), Evonik (2024), and Henkel (2024).

The advent of the global pandemic has brought to light a long-standing issue that requires urgent attention: the significance of human capital in organizations extends beyond mere financial considerations. Furthermore, the pandemic highlighted the vulnerabilities of workers and the interconnectivity of value chains within organizations (European Council, 2022). It is imperative that organizations consider the mental health of their employees and the work-life balance of their staff at a strategic level, and that this consideration be ongoing.

The implementation of SHRM practices within organizational frameworks offers a multitude of advantages. Firstly, this approach aligns with four of the ten disclosure requirements outlined by the CSRD. Secondly, it enhances awareness among organizations and stakeholders regarding pertinent aspects of sustainability. Thirdly, it responds to the growing demand for corporate sustainability information, particularly from the investment community. Fourthly, other stakeholders, such as business partners and internal clients, may utilize the implementation of SHRM practices and this information to analyze and foster comparisons within organizations and market segments. A fifth advantage is that policymakers and environmental agencies could use this information to maintain close observation of the needs of staff and workers, thereby gaining a more comprehensive understanding of them and better anticipating social and environmental trends.

It is worth noting that organizations are beginning to integrate AI into their operations with the dual objective of maintaining competitiveness and reducing costs. Notwithstanding the aforementioned factors and the accelerated expansion of generative AI, one conclusion remains indisputable: organizations continue to rely on human input. It could be argued that enterprises, businesses, services, and products are contingent upon the planet's continued existence. The findings of the present study demonstrated that the Millennial workforce in Ireland attaches significance to CSR and SHRM practices when evaluating potential employers and determining their long-term commitment to an organization. The results indicate that it would be advantageous for leaders and policymakers to implement these practices within their organizations to retain their key talent.

It is also noteworthy that, despite the general population's lack of perception of CSR and SHRM practices as important, sustainability remains a significant concern. The reality of climate change is indisputable, and the necessity for enhanced efficiency in consumption levels is a matter of survival for all.

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