

The effect of corporate socio-political activism on employees'
organizational identification, organizational citizenship behavior, and
employee advocacy

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Abstract

Although corporate socio-political activism (CSA) may appear relatively novel when compared to corporate social responsibility (CSR), it has emerged as a momentous interest within modern society and the professional landscape, underscoring its inherent importance. Stakeholders expect organizations to take a stand on socio-political issues such as LGBTQIA+ rights, immigration, political ideology, and racism. As this pressure from stakeholders continues, organizations are increasingly engaging in CSA by publicly taking a stance on often polarizing and emotionally loaded socio-political issues. However, taking a stand on socio-political issues as an organization does not come without risks as it can either enhance or deteriorate stakeholder ties. Therefore, caution needs to be taken when an organization chooses to engage in CSA practices since it can negatively or positively alter the stakeholder's perception of the organization. While more management literature is emerging on CSA and its implications on the firm itself or its external stakeholders, very limited research has been done on the effect of CSA on employees and how this might alter employees' attitudes and behaviors. Hence, this study aims to gain more insights into the attitudinal and behavioral responses of employees when their employing organization engages in CSA.

In order to fill this research gap, an online survey was conducted to examine the impact of organizational CSA involvement on employees' organizational identification, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and employee advocacy. The moderator variable PO fit was also included in the survey and was expected to strengthen the relationship between perceived CSA and the outcome variables. A regression analysis was used to examine both the direct effects of perceived CSA on the outcome variables as well as the moderation effects of PO fit. The findings indicated that perceived CSA has a positive and significant effect on employees' organization identification, OCB, and employee advocacy. Further, PO fit proved to strengthen the relationship between perceived CSA and employee advocacy but did not strengthen the relationship between perceived CSA and organizational identification or OCB. Overall, this study shows the importance of organizational CSA

practices and the beneficial effects they can have on employees' attitudes and behaviors. It confirms the growing relevance CSA involvement has on organizational performance and the need for employee alignment with the CSA goals and practices of an organization.

KEYWORDS: CSA, corporate socio-political activism, organizational identification, OCB, employee advocacy, employees, organizational communication

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1. Introduction

Organizations, which were considered reluctant to participate in discussions about sociopolitical issues, are increasingly speaking out on controversial topics such as race, sexual orientation, and immigration (Pasirayi et al., 2022). Sarkar and Kotler (2018) add to this by stating that organizations can no longer stay neutral when it comes to sociopolitical issues. Furthermore, younger generations, in particular millennials and gen Z, are expecting organizations to take a stand (Schmidt et al., 2021). This younger generation is crucial for organizations since they can be considered future or current employees (Moorman, 2020). In agreement, research done by Austin et al. (2019) has found broad public support for organizations that try to improve society and take part in public debate, or what is otherwise defined as the term corporate sociopolitical activism (CSA).

Besides, gaining insights on the effects of CSA on employees and how this might alter employees' behavior and attitudes toward their employing organization can be crucial for organization's who choose to engage in CSA practices. Previous research has demonstrated that an organization's CSA stance can impact employees in various ways, influencing factors such as job applicant interest and employee retention (De Roeck & Farooq, 2018). Other benefits CSA might have on employees, are increased loyalty and a sense of pride towards the organization (Jamali et al., 2019; Ji & Hong, 2022), and employees are generally more willing to contribute to an organization who align with their personal values and goals when it comes to social issues that employees consider as relevant to society (Cha et al., 2013).

However, taking a stand on sociopolitical issues can also prove to be very challenging for organizations since stakeholders' different political values and ideals need to be considered (Austin et al., 2019). Prior research indicated both negative (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Hydock et al., 2020; Klostermann et al., 2022; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020) and positive (Dodd & Supa, 2015; Schmidt et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020) effects of CSA on organizations. This lack of consensus in the existing literature shows the complexity of CSA. Even though previous research has expanded CSA, several research gaps could be found. Firstly, most research focused on the consumers' perspective (Austin et al., 2019; Bhagwat et al., 2020; Dodd & Supa, 2015; Hydock et al., 2019; Hydock et al., 2019;

Klostermann et al., 2022; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020; Schmidt et al., 2021; Swaminathan et al., 2020; Weber et al., 2022) or the perspective of organizations (Dodd & Supa, 2014; Eilert & Nappier Cherup, 2020; Nalick et al., 2016). Second, most of the research listed above focused on the U.S. market but not on the European market. Third, limited research focused on the employee perspective. Finally, the prior literature that did focus on the employee perspective of CSA mainly focused on CEO activism (Brown et al., 2020; Hong & Ji, 2022; Ji & Hong, 2021; Lee & Tao, 2021). Thus, currently existing literature on the employee perspective so far has overlooked how the CSA stance might impact employees' perceptions about the organization and whether a fit or misfit with the CSA stance could lead to a change in employees' attitude or behavior. Taken together, the research gap that could be found lies in the employee perspective on CSA in the European market and the effect CSA might have on employees' attitudinal and behavioral work outcomes. As a result, the following research question (RQ) was developed.

RQ: How does the perceived corporate sociopolitical activism of organizations affect employees' organizational identification, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee advocacy? And to what extent does employees' person-organization fit (PO fit) moderate this relationship?

As the literature on CSA discussed above shows, an increasing body of literature is being built with regard to the relatively new concept of CSA. However, very limited research focuses on how employees respond to this new concept of CSA and how organizations can manage these employees' responses to CSA. This study, therefore, adds scientific relevance by further expanding the body of knowledge on CSA by examining the attitudinal and behavioral responses of employees to CSA. Scientific relevance can also be found in the contribution to the literature on organizational communication and public relations as this study examines how the CSA stance communication of organizations affects employee perceptions and attitudes towards an organization. According to Dodd and Supa (2014), CSA is relevant to public relations literature and practitioners alike as it is expected that the CSA stance of an organization will have a lasting effect on the organization's reputation and organizational outcomes. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature on social identity and organizational identification as it identifies how the CSA stance of an organization aligns with

employees' identities and values, and how this alignment in turn affects employees' organizational behavior and sense of belonging to the organization. Accordingly, examples of theoretical groundwork that will be used are social identity theory and organizational identification theory which will contribute to the scientific relevance of this study since these theories have not been researched in relation to the employee perspective on CSA. This study builds on corporate social responsibility (CSR) literature to link CSA practices and already existing CSR activities to further conceptualize CSA.

The societal relevance of this study can be found in the fact that it is crucial for organizations to understand and manage the perceptions of employees on CSA since employees are the most important internal stakeholders who contribute to and can seriously impact organizational performance outcomes (Dodd & Supa, 2014; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). Ensuring an alignment between the CSA stance and the socio-political values of an organization's employees plays an important role since negative employee sentiment towards the organization can result in higher turnover rates and loss of employee productivity (Bhagwat et al., 2020). Therefore, insights are needed into how organizations can gain support from employees when taking a CSA stance. Moreover, organizations have to operate in a divided sociopolitical climate (Lee & Tao, 2021), and thus need to be aware of the consequences of taking a CSA stance might have on their employees and the organization in general. This will help organizations navigate how to become or stay a desirable employer in order to retain and attract employees. Additionally, societal relevance lies in the impact of CSA on society at large as this can cause positive societal change when it comes to socio-political issues. Through CSA, companies can contribute to solving social and political problems that government and civil society organizations may not be able to address alone (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018).

2. Theoretical framework

2.2 Defining CSA

Several terms have been used to define corporate involvement in sociopolitical issues, however, a general consensus to describe corporate sociopolitical involvement is missing in the existing literature. To avoid confusion, CSA will be adopted in this research since this refers to both social and political salient issues. Moreover, activism is adopted instead of advocacy as this refers to not just speaking out about sociopolitical concerns but also taking noticeable action to create societal change. Therefore, in line with the definition of Bhagwat et al. (2020), CSA is defined as ‘a firm’s public demonstration (statements and/or actions) of support for or opposition to one side of a partisan sociopolitical issue’ (p.1). Also, CEO activism is considered a part of CSA but not as something separate since CSA is an organizational activity that can be enacted by any appointed spokesperson of the organization (Bhagwat et al. 2020).

Besides the definition of the new concept of CSA, there are several characteristics of CSA that differentiate it from similar concepts such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate political activities (CPA). First of all, CSR activities are not considered controversial and are often met with positive responses from stakeholders. In contrast, CSA involves taking a stand on controversial sociopolitical issues which means that some stakeholders will be alienated because they disagree with the CSA stance of the organization. Corporate political activities (CPA) refer to lobbying for favorable policies that will benefit the organization’s bottom line. Further, while CPA is kept quiet and is, therefore, not communicated to stakeholders, CSR and CSA are promoted publicly through public statements and/or business practices (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Hydock et al., 2019; Nalick et al., 2016). To illustrate, public statements include; marketing campaigns, press releases, and CEO statements or comments (Dodd & Supa, 2015; Hydock et al., 2020).

In the context of this research, the way CSA is perceived by the employees of an organization can be crucial because when attempting to comprehend someone's behavior, perception plays a significant role (Glavas & Godwin, 2013). Furthermore, especially the perceived attractiveness of an organization’s image by the employee will influence certain behavior from the employee (Dutton et al. 1994). A distinction can be made between perceived internal and external images. The perceptions that employees

have of what outsiders believe of their organization are known as perceived external images (Glavas & Godwin, 2013). On the other hand, perceived internal image posits the perceptions employees themselves have of their own organization (Glavas & Godwin, 2013). For this research, the perceived internal image perception of CSA will be used since the research aims to understand the responses of employees on an organization's CSA initiatives.

2.2 Employees and CSA

Previous research has shown that the CSA stance of an organization can have an effect on employees. For example, it can influence job applicants' desire to work for an organization as well as influence employee retention and employee outcomes such as commitment and job satisfaction (De Roeck & Farooq, 2018). Besides, it is important for organizations to gain insights into the circumstances and motivations underlying employee support or opposition towards CSA practices in order to prevent potential risks and foster positive outcomes (Lee & Tao, 2020). Gaining the support from employees when it comes to the organization's CSA practices becomes even more relevant considering that employees are seen as credible sources of information by external stakeholders, especially by consumers (Lee & Tao, 2020), and the way employees either speak positively or negatively about the organization to external stakeholders will help shape the perception of external stakeholders of the organization. Thus, understanding employees perception on CSA practices as an organization is crucial for maintaining an organization's favorable reputation to both internal and external stakeholders. According to Lee and Tao (2020), a good organization-employee relationship is needed in order to gain support from employees and align them with the CSA practices of the organization.

Additionally, research done by Ji and Hong (2022) on the impact of CEO activism on employees indicated employees' reaction to CEO activism influences not only their loyalty towards the organization, but also, their work performance. CEO activism is closely related to CSA since the only difference lies in who communicates the CSA practices, for CSA this includes the organization as a whole and for CEO activism CSA is solely communicated by the CEO. Therefore a similar effect on employees loyalty and work performance is expected from CSA practices undertaken by the organization which further underlines the relevance for organizations to understand employees perception

and responses to CSA practices. In the same research conducted by Ji and Hong (2022), transparent leadership communication by the CEO was an indicator and essential in building trust, a positive internal work culture, and fostering good working relationships with employees. Similarly, transparent CSA communication by an organization is expected to positively effect employees' trust and build a healthy working environment.

On the other hand, stakeholders' perceptions and behavioral responses towards an organization can be explained through the expectation confirmation theory (ECT) developed by marketing scholar Oliver (1980). According to this theory employee responses toward CSA can be explained as when the CSA stance of the employing organization confirms the expectation of the employee, they are more willing to show behavioral support such as advocating or organizational citizenship behavior. However, if the expectations are disconfirmed it can lead to negative employee responses such as employee activism (Brown et al., 2020). This theory is relevant for this research since it indicates that the CSA expectations employees might have of their employing organization will help the employee make an evaluation of the organization and act based on the evaluation made (Ji & Hong, 2022). Understanding employees' expectations of CSA will, therefore, help with understanding behavioral and attitudinal actions of employees which directly influence the performance of the organization. This kind of reasoning is also echoed by Jamali et al. (2019) who states that, 'the ability of companies to meet the ethical and social expectations of their stakeholders has progressively become a necessary and strategic asset to develop positive ethical identities and to strengthen stakeholders' identification, trust and pride from affiliation with socially responsible organizations" (p. 362).

Besides the organizational benefits CSA might bring, the CSA stance of an organization equally matters to its employees since they increasingly want to see their company leaders and organizations alike to advocate for the values that they stand for and align with (Lee & Tao, 2020). Furthermore, employees anticipate their organization to function and conduct its operations in a manner consistent with the ethical standards prevailing in society (Carroll, 2016). Another reason why CSA matters to employees, can be found in employees, especially Millennial workers, who seek meaningful employment and place great importance on the ability to actively participate in significant social

dialogues and contribute to endeavors that hold significance for the world (Moorman, 2020).

2.3 Organizational identification

Organizational identification refers to the extent to which individuals identify themselves with the organization they work for, considering it as a part of their self-concept and taking pride in being associated with the organization (Dutton et al., 1994; Kim et al., 2010). While social identity theory and organizational identification theory are well-established theories. Research concerning the relationship between CSA and these theories is limited. That said, prior research can be found on the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the organizational identification of employees (Kim et al., 2010; Turker, 2009). As the most important internal stakeholders, employees influence the performance of organizations significantly. Consequently, the behaviors and attitudes of employees will likely be in favor of an organization when they strongly identify with the employing organization. Taken together, as Glavas and Godwin (2013) state, if an employee perceives the position or action of the organization towards CSR as positive, they will identify stronger with the organization.

The theory of organizational identification was essentially developed from social identity theory. The way individuals categorize themselves and others into different social groups can be defined as social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Accordingly, Mael and Ashforth (1992) state, “organizational identification is a specific form of social identification where the individual defines him or herself in terms of their membership in a particular organization” (p. 105). As stated by Dutton et al. (1994), social identity theory can be seen as a powerful theory since it theorizes that members of an organization, or in this case organizational social group, may alter their conduct simply by changing their perspective on their employer. Consequently, members of the organization are likely to alter their behavior when they evaluate a shift in organizational identity, perceiving the organization as either more or less attractive. Considering the possible controversial response to CSA from employees also indicates the power of social identity theory and essentially organizational identification of employees with the organization.

From the perspective of these theories and the previous research on CSR, it can be assumed that employees who identify with the CSA stance of the organization are more likely to perceive the organization positively since the perception increases the self-image of the employee as well as the sense of belonging to the organization. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Perceived CSA affects employees' organizational identification positively.

2.4 Employees' organizational citizenship behavior

Pro-social behavior described by Eisenberg and Mussen (1989) refers to 'voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals' (p.3). The pro-social behavior of individuals can be expressed through actions such as volunteering, helping others, donating, etc. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) can be considered an organizational pro-social behavior since this is defined as the voluntary actions of an employee that contribute to the organization's and society's well-being (Cha et al., 2013). The organizational citizenship behaviors can be divided and analyzed in two dimensions, namely OCBI and OCBO. OCBI refers to OCB of employees directed at individuals in the organization such as supporting colleagues. OCBO, on the other hand, describes the OCB directed at the organization's objectives (El-Kassar et al., 2017). For this research, the OCBO dimension is adapted and OCB is considered a pro-social behavior outcome of employees when the employing organization engages in CSA.

Furthermore, previous research indicated that a relationship could be found between the perceived CSR of the organization and the organizational behavior of employees (Hansen et al., 2011). According to Cha et al. (2013), when employees perceive their organization to be positively involved in CSR activities, employees will be more likely to express OCB. Thus, it is assumed that when an organization engages in CSA, it can signal to employees that the organization is committed to positively impacting society. This can foster a sense of pride and connection among employees, as they feel that their work is contributing to something larger than themselves. In turn, this can increase employees' motivation to engage in OCB, as they see their actions as having a direct connection to the company's values and goals. Based on this assumption the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2. Perceived CSA affects employees' organizational citizenship behavior positively.

2.5 Employee advocacy

Another outcome of pro-social behavior when it comes to CSA is employee advocacy. Advocacy is the active promotion of an organization by an employee through favorable word-of-mouth and defense against criticism which can be essential to an organization since employees interact with customers and are seen as credible sources of information. This is also confirmed by Kim and Rhee (2011) who suggest that how employees interact with the external public can have an impact on the public relations outcome of an organization. Essentially, employees can be seen as the ultimate representatives of an organization since they know the products and services by heart which makes them the experts (Thelen, 2020). Therefore, employees find themselves in an extremely influential position as brand advocates because they can attract talent through positive promotion for the organization. Thus, employee advocacy can contribute to the human capital of organizations. Furthermore, employee advocacy can positively impact employee retention and engagement. Both Thelen (2020) and Levinson (2018) showed through the findings of their individual research that employee advocacy increases the retention of employees. Also, Thelen (2020) found that employee advocacy can play a significant role in the issue management of an organization since employees can help build a better reputation through promoting and defending the organization to external publics.

In order for employees to voluntarily share positive information about the organization, a good relationship needs to be built between the employee and the organization (Kim & Rhee, 2011). As clearly stated by Kim and Rhee (2011) long-term quality relationships between organizations and employees can foster employee advocacy, especially in times of crisis and turbulence which could be essential when organizations decide to engage in CSA activities that could be perceived as controversial by employees within said organization. In times of crisis, if a good relationship is built with the employee, the changes of the employee viewing the crisis or problems of the organization as their own and therefore support their organization through favorable advocacy increases. Consequently, when there is an absence of a good quality

relationship between the organization and the employee, the empathy that employees might have for the organization in crisis decreases (Kim & Rhee, 2011).

In addition to building good quality relationships with employees, social exchange theory indicates that organizations that succeed in communicating in a supportive and effective way can intensify the commitment of employees and consequently increase the willingness to advocate for the organization (Walden & Kingsley Westerman, 2018). According to the social exchange theory, the quality of one's social connections creates unwritten duties to repay favors to persons or entities that have engaged in one's interest (Blau, 1964). In turn, this may enhance the motivation of employees to engage in positive attitudes and behaviors such as employee advocacy (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Walden & Kingsley Westerman, 2018).

Similar to OCB, employee advocacy is seen as a voluntary action beyond job requirements (Men, 2014). Based on the similarity to OCB, it is assumed that when an organization communicates CSA to its employees it can increase the motivation of employees to advocate for the organization. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3. Perceived CSA affects employees' advocacy positively.

2.6 Person-organization fit as moderator

According to Kristof (1996), person-organization (PO) fit can be defined as 'the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when at least one entity provides what the other needs or they share similar fundamental characteristics or both.' (p. 4). When there is a match between the values of the employee and the values of the organization it is called value congruence. Favorable value congruence is crucial for an organization since this creates fulfillment in the daily operations of employees, decreases turnover costs for organizations, and stimulates positive extra-role behaviors such as employee advocacy and OCB (Edwards & Cable, 2009). To be more specific, values are defined as the set of beliefs about desirable behaviors that serve as guiding principles for individuals (Edwards & Cable, 2009). For this research, the supplementary fit perspective of PO fit will be used since this focuses on the congruence of individual and organizational identity, needs, and values. More specifically, this research will focus

on pro-social PO fit as this can be seen as the alignment between an employee's and an organization's pro-social identity. The supplementary fit perspective is an important type of fit because it can guide employees' behavior (Kristof, 1996). In line with the supplementary fit perspective is the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) framework developed by Schneider et al. (1998). According to this framework, employees tend to be attracted to, selected by, and stay in organizations that validate and match their personal values (Vianen, 2018).

In addition, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) indicate that PO fit can increase prosocial behavior such as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB). A similar effect is assumed for employee advocacy as this can be influenced through PO fit. Besides, Kim et al. (2013) indicate that high PO fit is preferable for the organization since this can lead to other positive employee outcomes such as, increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance. On the contrary, when PO fit is low, and thus a PO misfit can occur where the values of the employee do not align with the values of the organization, it can lead to negative employee outcomes such as increased turnover intentions, decrease in job attitude and performance, and deviant behaviors that do not contribute to the organization (Brown et al., 2020).

In previous CSR research, Du et al. (2015) and Glavas (2016) found that employees would find more meaning in their work when they perceived their employing organization to be positively involved in CSR activities. Consequently, these employees would identify more strongly with their organization since they began to view the organization not just as a place to work but as a place that shared their values. In this sense, it is assumed that if the perceived CSA stance of an organization is aligned with employees' pro-social identity, it will increase the pro-social PO fit and therefore the organizational identification of the employee. As a result, if an organization takes a CSA stance on a sociopolitical issue that is at odds with an employee's pro-social identity, the pro-social PO fit will decrease and so will the organizational identification of the employee. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H4. Employees' pro-social PO fit moderates the impact of perceived CSA on employees' organizational identification. When the pro-social PO fit is strong, the proposed relationship will be strengthened.

H5. Employees' pro-social PO fit moderates the impact of perceived CSA on employees' organizational citizenship behavior. When the pro-social PO fit is strong, the proposed relationship will be strengthened.

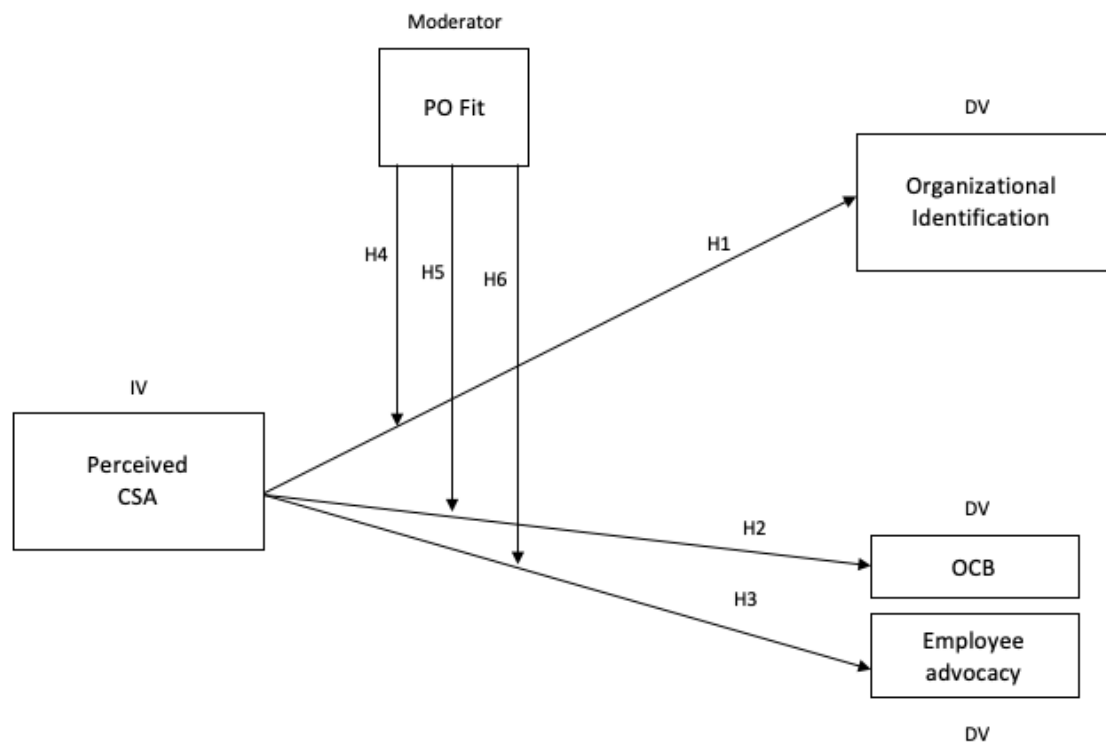
H6. Employees' pro-social PO fit moderates the impact of perceived CSA on employees' advocacy. When the pro-social PO fit is strong, the proposed relationship will be strengthened.

2.7 Conceptual model

All hypotheses and variables are shown in the conceptual model below.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model



3. Methodology

This third chapter will discuss the decisions that were made in relation to the design of the research, the sampling method, the data collection, and the operationalization of the theoretical concepts. The methodology will form the base for adequately testing the conceptual model stated in the previous chapter.

3.1 Research design

In order to answer the research question a quantitative research method, namely an online survey, was deemed most appropriate. Moreover, the quantitative research method allows for a deductive approach where certain expectations derived from theory are formulated in hypotheses and then tested to find out whether these expectations actually occur (Babbie, 2015). As Sapsford (1999) also states, quantitative research is about studying the relationships between variables. The conceptual model at the end of Chapter 2 clearly shows the relationship between independent, dependent, and moderating variables that this research aims to examine the effects of. It becomes clear that this quantitative research as Neuman (2014) said, “uses the language of variables and hypotheses” (p.10), meaning measuring variables that can be quantified and analyzed to find out if there is an effect to be found across numerous cases. Thus, a quantitative research method was seen as most suitable since the aim of this research is to test relationships between variables.

According to Matthews and Ross (2010) and Neuman (2014), a survey or questionnaire is used to collect opinions, attitudes, characteristics, or even past and present behaviors from a large number of people. This research is interested in finding out about employees’ perspectives on CSA within an organization and how this might have an effect on how employees behave within an organization. Therefore, a quantitative research method, more specifically an online survey, was chosen since this was found to be the most effective to fulfill the aim of this research.

Also, choosing a survey as a research method has certain advantages. Firstly, data can be gathered from a large number of people in a standardized way. This allows to reach a population that would have been too large to observe directly (Babbie, 2015). Additionally, access to a large number of people also enables gathering a larger sample size which helps with generalizing results (Rice et al., 2017). Furthermore, the gathered

data can be considered factual. Also, surveys are flexible since they can be conducted in different formats and can be adjusted to the target audience (Evans & Mathur, 2005). Rice et al. (2017) also emphasize the importance of anonymity that comes with conducting a survey as this ensures more honest data. Finally, the data can be gathered in a short amount of time if necessary and costs are low (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Besides the advantages, Matthews and Ross (2010) mention some disadvantages of the quantitative research method. For example, a questionnaire will give limited insights into people's in-depth feelings or experiences because respondents are restricted in the way they can fill in questions. In addition, in case of a low response rate the sample of a questionnaire will be biased and it will not be possible to generalize results. However, outweighing the advantages of this research method against the disadvantages it can be concluded that a questionnaire is deemed as a suitable method to find out about employees' perspectives and behavior towards CSA.

Lastly, when considering previous research on CSA and employees or similar research conducted on topics such as CSR and employees or CEO activism it was found that a quantitative research method, more specifically a survey, was chosen as a suitable method. This indicates that a quantitative survey is an appropriate research method for this research as well.

3.2 Sampling and sample

3.2.1 Sampling strategy

For this research, the target audience is a diverse set of employees working in the European market for organizations ranging from smaller to larger in organization size. Ideally, the organizations that the target audience works for are CSA-involved but this has not been taken as a necessary requirement since the employees whose organization does not involve themselves with CSA can still perceive CSA involvement of organizations in a certain way and form a relevant opinion. Further, the age criterion of the respondents is formulated as ranging between the age of 18-67 years as this includes all ages of employees working in Europe (European Commission, n.d.). In the second quarter of 2022, a total of around 197.6 million people were employed in the European Union in all 27 member states which is the highest employment number since 2005 (Statista, 2023). As this is a large population and it is impossible to reach everyone from

this population, a sample was taken from the population. Therefore, the aim was to reach at least 300 respondents for this research in order to arrive at a representative sample.

Based on the requirements stated above, a non-probability sampling method was used. Non-probability refers to a technique where not all participants in the population have an equal chance of being part of the sample but are rather selected on subjective terms (Etikan et al., 2015). More specifically, because the respondents were chosen from the online platform Prolific, where respondents are selected on a "first-come, first-serve basis," the convenience sampling method, a form of non-probability sampling, is applicable for this research (Prolific, 2023a). In order to obtain the required number of respondents the online platform Prolific was utilized. Prolific is a crowdsourcing platform that allows researchers to collect data from a pool of diverse respondents (Prolific, 2023b; Sheehan, 2017). Furthermore, respondents from the Prolific pool were selected based on the following criteria, participants had to be employed, had to be between the ages of 18-67 and live in a European country. This pre-screening of participants through Prolific indicated that the purposive sampling method was applied to this research since only participants that suit the study according to the researcher's judgment were included (Babbie, 2011; Etikan et al., 2015).

The use of convenience and purposive sampling can have certain disadvantages such as not being able to arrive at a representative sample which could impact the generalizability of the results. Considering the disadvantages, convenience sampling is suitable for this research since it allows for a fast and cost-effective way of gathering respondents (Sarstedt et al., 2018). Also, according to previous research, Prolific has been proven to deliver high-quality data (Douglas et al., 2023; Peer et al., 2017).

3.2.2. Data collection

The data for this research was collected through a survey created on Qualtrics. The results were analyzed with the help of the statistical software SPSS Statistics (version 27). However, before the data collection started and the results were analyzed, a pre-test was conducted to filter out any errors or ambiguities in the questions. A total of 9 volunteers were sent a link to the survey to evaluate the survey based on structure, comprehensiveness, and spelling mistakes. This resulted in valuable feedback which

improved the survey and helped create a final version that was sent out for data collection. An example of an element of the survey that was altered after feedback was the explanation of the concept CSA by Bhagwat et al. (2020) which was found to be too complicated and academic. This was, therefore, changed to a more comprehensible explanation. Also, the question at the beginning of the survey stating 'Is the organization you work for currently involved in corporate sociopolitical activism or has been involved in corporate sociopolitical activism in the past?' was split into two questions to avoid asking a double-barreled question. Furthermore, the question at the beginning of the survey asking 'Are you currently employed?' was removed since Prolific already selected respondents based on their employment status, either full-time or part-time, as part of the pre-screening criteria. Thus, Prolific automatically ruled out any respondents who are not currently employed and, therefore, the question about employment status was deemed unnecessary. Another alteration was made to items of the variable organizational citizenship behavior where 'the organization' in every item was changed to 'my organization' to make it more clear to the respondents that the question is about their personal experience. Finally, the demographic question at the end of the survey asking about the respondents' political orientation was altered so that the answer options were more diverse. So, instead of 'Liberal, neutral or conservative' which is more U.S. orientated the answer options were changed to 'Left-wing, center-left, center, center-right, right-wing' which is more representable for the EU since political orientation can be viewed as more diverse. The final version of the survey can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Data collection took place from 11 April up until 15 April 2023. Within this time frame, a total of 352 respondents filled in the survey. However, it appeared that there had been a glitch in the survey that was posted on Prolific which resulted in 15 respondents who did not fill in the survey or who terminated the survey after answering only two questions. These 15 respondents, therefore, had to be excluded from the sample. What's more, the 9 volunteers who agreed to do the pre-test had to be excluded from the sample since the survey was adjusted in response to their feedback. Lastly, 3 respondents were removed from the sample because they had suspicious duration times, meaning they finished the survey in under 1 minute. Thus, it is presumed that these 3 respondents did not consider the questions and answer them properly. After

data cleaning, the final sample size that was used for further analysis consisted of 325 cases.

3.2.3. Final sample

After cleaning the data, the total sample consisted of 325 respondents ($N = 325$) of which 40.6% ($n = 132$) were female, and 58.2% ($n = 189$) were male, with an age ranging between 18 and 67 years old. The mean age of the respondents is 31.07 years ($SD = 9.50$). The majority of the respondents were highly educated with 28.3% ($n = 92$) having obtained a bachelor's degree, and 27.7% ($n = 90$) possessing a master's degree. Further, at least 20.3% ($n = 66$) of the respondents indicated that they at least have a high school degree. Additionally, 13.8% of the respondents ($n = 45$) stated that their employing organization operates in the professional, scientific, and technical industry sector, 11.4% ($n = 37$) of the respondents stated that their employing organization operates in the education services industry, and the third largest group in the sample stated that their employing company operates in the information industry sector (10.5%, $n = 34$). Besides the industry sector of the employing organization, the company size of the organization the respondents work for is quite equally distributed with 43.1% ($n = 140$) of the respondents that work for a large organization, 24.6% ($n = 80$) working for a medium-sized organization, and 31.7% ($n = 103$) working for a small-sized organization.

On top of that, a majority of the respondents indicated that the organization they work for is not currently involved in CSA (65.2%, $n = 212$) or has not been involved in CSA in the past (66.5%, $n = 216$). Finally, most of the respondents claimed to have a left-leaning political orientation with 20.3% ($n = 66$) indicating that they are left-wing orientated and 26.8% ($n = 87$) indicating a left-center political orientation.

3.3 Reliability, validity and ethics

For this quantitative research, ensuring the reliability, validity, and ethics of the research and the research method is considered of great importance to the researcher. Matthews and Ross (2010) indicate that the validity of the research tool depends on whether the survey actually measures what is supposed to be measured. Accordingly, Matthews and Ross (2010) point out that the help of a pre-test, where a group of a few respondents tests the survey on inconsistencies and other validity-related problems, will

ensure the validity of the research tool since this can be adjusted and improved before the start of the research. Further, the validity of this research was assured by employing scales from earlier studies that were scientifically validated. More specifically, by using pre-existing scales the convergent validity was assured since these scales can ask questions in a similar way in order to arrive at the same information, thus, improving the convergent validity of this research (Matthews & Ross, 2010). An example of this can be found in the perceived CSA scale where two similar items are posed twice, 'I believe that large companies should position themselves politically', and 'Companies should get involved in politics'.

Besides the validity of the research, reliability refers to whether a measurement can be measured in a consistent way. Thus, can the same research be repeated and deliver the same results while using the same measurement (Taherdoost, 2016). Through a reliability test, the consistency of the different items that belong to the measurement instrument can be tested. Therefore, a reliability test was conducted for this research to ensure that the items of each scale measure the same construct (Taherdoost, 2016). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to measure the internal consistency reliability as this is deemed the most appropriate measure when using Likert scales (Brown, 2002). Generally, when the reliability or Cronbach's alpha score is above .7 the scale indicates high reliability, thus, all items of a scale are highly correlated with one another. In the current research, all five measurement scales; perceived CSA, organizational identification, OCB, employee advocacy, and PO fit, proved to be above .7 after conducting the reliability tests and were considered highly reliable. The exact Cronbach's alpha scores can be found in section 3.4 of this chapter.

Furthermore, ethical issues that might arise from executing survey research were considered for this research. In order to protect the safety and privacy of the respondents the data gathered through the survey remained anonymous. Meaning that the personal information of the respondents will not be shared with a third party and the results of the research will only be used for scholarly purposes. On top of that, personally identifiable data was not gathered or available to the researcher or to any third party which equally ensured the anonymity of the respondents. Also, respondents were informed that their participation is completely voluntary and they can choose to withdraw from the research at any moment and respondents were informed about the

intentions of the research. Additionally, only if the respondents agreed with the terms of the research, thus giving consent, did the research continue. The aforementioned steps were taken to prevent any unethical practices from occurring.

3.4 Operationalization

In this section, operationalization refers to the procedure that will be used to measure the different variables of this study. In order to measure these variables a scale is needed where respondents can indicate their behavior often ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' (Matthews & Ross, 2010). For this study, already existing measures were adapted from previous research in the field of organizational communication. Because the survey was designed for European employees, English was chosen as the official language of the survey, ensuring that all respondents could answer the questions. If respondents met the pre-screening criteria, they were directed from Prolific to the questionnaire on Qualtrics, an online software tool from which the questionnaire was created. Before the start of the survey, the respondents were asked if they are above the legal age of 18 and whether they agreed to the terms of the questionnaire. Furthermore, in the welcome message respondents were informed about the intentions of the research, that their participation is completely voluntary, and that they will remain anonymous. Also, at the end of the welcome message, the contact details of the researcher were included in case the respondent had questions related to the research. Then, if respondents agreed to the terms of the questionnaire and clicked 'yes' to give their consent the survey would commence. If respondents did not agree to the terms of the survey and clicked 'no' the respondent would immediately be directed to the end of the survey.

After the welcome message and the agreed consent, the respondents were explained what CSA entails to ensure all respondents were familiar with this new concept. The survey consisted of 42 questions, 34 of which were related to different concepts such as perceived CSA, organizational identification, OCB, employee advocacy, and PO fit. These 34 items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) which allowed respondents to express how strongly they feel about each item. The remaining 8 questions were related to demographics such as age, gender, level of

education, job position, etc. In the sub paragraphs below, the concepts or measures of the survey will be discussed in more detail.

3.4.1. *Perceived CSA*

As far as the researcher is aware there are currently no existing scales to be found in the academic literature that measure corporate sociopolitical activism. The absence of a reliable scale for CSA was also found by Villagra et al. (2021). Therefore, Villagra et al. (2021) developed their own “corporate activism” scale based on items from related scales from Austin et al. (2019), Borden (2019), and Edelman (2019).

This scale measures perceived CSA based on three dimensions, corporate social activism, corporate political activism, and corporate reactionary political activism, and was adapted from Villagra et al. (2021). It includes 9 items in total with a Cronbach’s alpha above .7 for all cases. According to Pallant (2013), all values of .7 and above are deemed acceptable for scale reliability. For this research, all items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

Corporate social activism includes 3 items, ‘companies should defend social positions’, ‘companies have an ethical obligation to promote social change’, and ‘companies and governments should participate equally in solving social problems’.

Corporate political activism consists of 3 items, ‘I believe that large companies should position themselves politically’, ‘companies should get involved in politics’, and ‘CEOs of major companies have an obligation to express publicly their political preferences’.

Corporate reactionary political activism includes 3 items, ‘When the government tries to pass an unfair or little ethical law, a company should try to stop it’, ‘Companies should take initiatives against bad governments or bad politicians’, ‘When the government does not solve citizens’ problems, large companies should take the initiative’.

After data collection, the reliability of the “corporate activism” scale was tested which included all the above-mentioned 9 items. The reliability test showed a Cronbach’s alpha of $\alpha = .88$ and, thus, can be considered reliable. Accordingly, a new variable was constructed with all 9 items named “perceived CSA” ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.17$).

3.4.2. Organizational identification

The level of organizational identification was measured on a 6-item scale and was adapted from Mael and Ashforth (1992) with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .84$. The following 6 items of the scale were included: 'When someone criticizes the organization it feels like a personal insult', 'I am very interested in what others think about the organization', 'When I talk about this organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'', 'This organization's successes are my successes', 'When someone praises this organization, it feels like a personal compliment', and 'If a story in the media criticized the organization, I would feel embarrassed'. In order to validate the scale a reliability test with all 6 items was conducted. The reliability test indicated an internal Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .90$, making it a highly reliable scale. Thus, all 6 items of the original scale were combined to construct a new variable "organizational identification" ($M = 3.92, SD = 1.43$).

3.4.3. Organizational citizenship behavior

The OCB scale was adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991) and Lee and Allen (2002) and includes 8 items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$) measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The following items were included: 'I attend functions that are not required but that help my organization's image', 'I keep up with developments in my organization', 'I defend my organization when other employees criticize it', 'I show pride when representing my organization in public', 'I offer ideas to improve the functioning of my organization', 'I express loyalty toward my organization', 'I take action to protect my organization from potential problems', and 'I demonstrate concern about the image of my organization'. After conducting a reliability test, the scale was found to be highly reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .90$, making this scale again highly reliable. Therefore, all items of the OCB scale were included to construct a new variable "OCB" ($M = 4.22, SD = 1.30$).

3.4.4. Employee advocacy

In order to measure the level of employee advocacy a 6-item scale was adapted from Thelen (2019) with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .90$. For this study, all items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). This scale intends to measure employees' voluntary extra-role behaviors such as volunteering or

recommending the organization to others. The following items of the scale were included: 'I recommend my organization's brands, products or services to others', 'I recommend my organization as a great place to work', 'I disprove biased opinions about my organization', 'When applicable, I would support my organization in public policy issues that impact the business', 'I show pride when representing my organization in public', and 'I willingly participate in volunteer work or community relation activities in which my organization is involved'. A reliability test was conducted to validate the scale and this indicated a Cronbach's alpha score of $\alpha = .90$. Then, with all items a new variable was computed "employee advocacy" ($M = 4.21, SD = 1.32$).

3.4.5. Person-Organization fit

The 5-item scale from Cable and DeRue (2002) and Saks and Ashforth (2002) was used (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$) and measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). This scale aims to measure to what extent the respondents or employees match with their employing organizations when it comes to shared values between the organization and the employee. The items of the scale included: 'There is a match between my own values and the values of the organization I work for', 'In my organization, there is a match between my own values and the values of the other employees', 'In my organization, there is a match between my own values and the values of the managing directors', 'In my organization, there is a match between my own values and the characteristics of the work I perform', and 'In my organization, there is a match between my personal expectations and provided opportunities'. After conducting a reliability test, the scale was found to be highly reliable with a Cronbach's alpha score or $\alpha = .92$. Lastly, all items of the scale were combined to compute a new variable "PO-fit" ($M = 4.35, SD = 1.30$).

3.5 Data analysis

To examine the six hypotheses that were stated in the theoretical framework, several regression analyses were conducted as well as mediation effects were tested. However, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, before conducting any of the analyses a reliability test of all the measures had to be executed to ensure that the results could be used for further analyses. The reliability tests showed that all measures used in the

survey are around or above .90 which indicates that the items belonging to each measure are highly correlated with one another (Shrestha, 2021). Therefore, a total of five new variables were constructed of which one IV, three DV'S, and one moderator variable. The average of all the items per measurement was used to create a new variable. For example, the new variable perceived CSA was constructed by taking the average or mean score of the total 9 items of the measurement. The new variables can be found under the following names in the SPSS dataset; NEW_Perceived_CSA, NEW_Org_identification, NEW_OCB, NEW_Employee_advocacy, NEW_PO_fit. For this research, a correlation analysis is conducted before the regression analyses but has a different purpose than a regression analysis, as this examines the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables (Zou et al., 2003).

Furthermore, since this study consists of variables that were all continuous, a simple regression analysis could be conducted in order to discover the impact of the predictor variable, or independent variable, on the outcome variables also known as the dependent variables (Zou et al., 2003). Each dependent variable was tested against the independent variable, thus, three separate regression analyses were conducted in total with one independent variable and one dependent variable. For example, the regression analysis examined the predictor perceived CSA on the outcome variable organizational identification. This regression analysis was then repeated for the other two dependent variables. After the regression analysis, three moderation effects were performed to examine the relationship between the independent variable, the moderator variable, the interaction effect, and each dependent variable separately. The moderation effects were tested through regression analysis.

The first step before the regression analyses can be performed involves checking the assumptions of the regression analysis. The assumptions that needed to be checked are linearity, normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. According to Casson and Farmer (2014), linearity can be checked by plotting the outcome variable against the predictor variable in a scatterplot on SPSS. The pattern that shows on the scatterplot should be in a straight line where the cases or dots find themselves close to one another. Next, to check the assumption of normality a P-P plot was examined. When examining the P-P plot both normality and linearity can be checked. Further, to check the assumption of homoscedasticity a scatterplot with the standardized residual and the

standardized predicted value was examined. A violation of homoscedasticity would be if the residuals are unevenly scattered and are therefore not evenly distributed around 0 when a line is horizontally drawn (Osborne & Waters, 2002). The fourth and final assumption, lack of multicollinearity, was not checked since this assumption only needs to be checked for a multiple regression analysis when there is more than one independent variable. In the case of multiple regression analysis, the lack of multicollinearity needs to be checked to find out if the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other (Poole & O'Farrell, 1971). After having checked all assumptions described above, there were no deviations found and it can, thus, be stated that all assumptions were met and the regression analyses could be performed.

4. Results

This results chapter will discuss the analyses that have been conducted in SPSS. Therefore, the three direct effects between the independent and the dependent variables, and the moderation effects will be presented in this chapter. Also, the six hypotheses will be tested. As stated in the last paragraph, 3.5 data analysis, of the previous chapter, all assumptions for regression analysis were checked before conducting the regression analyses. The discussion of the results will follow in the next chapter.

4.1 Correlation analysis

A correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between the different variables of this research which were the independent variable (perceived CSA) and the dependent variables (Organizational identification, Organizational citizenship behavior, and employee advocacy). The correlation analysis was used to find out about the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables (Pallant, 2013). To determine the strength and direction of the variables the Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used. The Pearson's r can vary from a negative correlation with a maximum value of -1 to a positive correlation with a maximum value of $+1$, with either the minus or plus sign indicating whether the association between variables can be considered positive or negative. Also, a correlation of 0 indicates that there is no correlation between two variables. In order to evaluate and interpret Pearson's r values the guidelines indicated by Cohen (1988) were used. The guidelines of Cohen (1988) entail that, $r = .10$ to $.29$ is a small relationship, $r = .30$ to $.49$ is a medium relationship and $r = .50$ to 1.0 is a large relationship. Before the correlation analysis was performed and as previously stated in the methods chapter, there were no violations of the assumptions of linearity, normality, multicollinearity, or homoscedasticity, and therefore the correlation analysis could be executed.

After conducting the correlation analysis, the results showed a significant relationship between the independent variable, perceived CSA, and all three dependent variables, organizational identification, OCB, and employee advocacy. To begin with, the relationship between the independent variable, perceived CSA, and the dependent variable, organizational identification showed a positive significant correlation with a

small relation ($r = .29, p < .001$). Next, perceived CSA was found to have a positive significant relationship with OCB, and the strength of this relationship between the two variables can be considered medium ($r = .33, p < .001$). This correlation indicates that the more employees consider their employing organization to be positively involved in CSA, the OCB of employees will increase as well. Then, the correlation between perceived CSA and employee advocacy was found to be positive and significant with a medium relation between the variables ($r = .30, p < .001$). Similar to the correlation between CSA and OCB, this shows that the change that employees positively advocate for their employing organization to others outside the organization increases when an employee perceives the CSA involvement of their organization positively.

Besides the direct effect between the independent variable and the three dependent variables, there was also a moderator variable. The results of the correlation analysis showed that the moderator variable, PO fit, had positive significant relationships with all three dependent variables. Firstly, the relationship between PO fit and organizational identification was found to be a positive significant correlation with a strong relation ($r = .62, p < .001$). Second, PO fit showed a positive significant relationship with OCB with a strong relation ($r = .65, p < .001$). Finally, PO fit and employee advocacy proved to be strongly related with a positive significant relationship ($r = .71, p < .001$). The relationship between the moderator, PO fit, and the independent variable, perceived CSA, was also found to be positive and significantly correlated, however, the relation was considered weak ($r = .26, p < .001$). The results of the correlation analyses are shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1*Results Correlation Analyses*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Perceived CSA	4.15	1.17	-				
2. Organizational identification	3.92	1.43	.289**	-			
3. OCB	4.22	1.30	.329**	.807**	-		
4. Employee advocacy	4.21	1.32	.301**	.760**	.843**	-	
5. PO fit	4.35	1.30	.259**	.621**	.645**	.710**	-

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.2 Regression analysis

A linear regression was conducted after the correlation analysis since this type of regression is usually performed after the correlation analysis. Regression analysis is used to test hypotheses for one, in the case of simple linear regression, predictor variable to find out if the dependent variable (outcome) can be predicted by the independent variable (predictor)(Privitera, 2012). In total, there were three regression analyses conducted for this research. The first regression analysis (model 1) was conducted between the independent variable, perceived CSA, and the dependent variable, organizational identification. This analysis proved to be significant, $F(1, 323) = 29.39, p < .001$. Therefore, it can be stated that the regression model can be used for predicting organizational identification, however, the predictive strength was not that strong since 8.3 percent of the differences in organizational identification could be explained by perceived CSA ($R^2 = .08$). The second regression analysis (model 2) that was conducted was between the independent variable, perceived CSA, and the dependent variable, OCB. This second model proved to also be significant, $F(1, 323) = 29.18, p < .001$. Thus, the model is a useful predictor for OCB, but the predictive strength is again weak with 10.8 percent of the differences in OCB that could be explained by perceived CSA ($R^2 =$

.10). The third and final regression model (model 3) was performed with the independent variable, perceived CSA, and dependent variable employee advocacy. The results of the regression analysis showed a significant model $F(1, 323) = 32.07, p < .001$. Also for this model, the predictive strength was found to be low with 9 percent of differences in employee advocacy that could be explained by perceived CSA ($R^2 = .09$). All results of the regression analyses are shown in Table 4.2 shown below.

Table 4.2

Results Regression Analyses

Variables	Model 1 Organizational identification	Model 2 OCB	Model 3 Employee advocacy
Perceived CSA as IV	.289**	.329**	.301**
R ²	.083	.108	.090
F	29.34	39.18	32.07
N	324	324	324

Notes. Reported effects are standardized (Beta) coefficients.

Significance levels: ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$.

4.3 Testing direct effects

4.3.1. Hypothesis 1

For the first hypothesis, it is assumed that perceived CSA influences organizational identification positively, meaning that the employees who would view the CSA involvement of their organization, thus involvement in activist initiatives and taking a public political stand, positively are more likely to feel a sense of belonging toward their organization and therefore the organizational identification will increase. The linear regression analysis indeed showed that perceived CSA is a positive significant predictor for organizational identification ($b = .29, t = 5.42, p < .001$). The results showed that when perceived CSA increases by 1 organizational identification increases by .29. Thus, the

hypothesis is accepted but it must be noted that predictive strength is on the weaker side with only 8.3% of the variance in organizational identification that could be explained by perceived CSA.

4.3.2. Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis assumed that when employees of an organization perceive the CSA involvement of their employing organization as positive they will be more likely to show OCB. Thus, the hypothesis stated that perceived CSA will positively influence OCB. After the regression analysis was conducted the results showed that perceived CSA is a positive significant predictor of OCB ($b = .33, t = 6.26, p < .001$). The analysis showed that when perceived CSA went up by 1, OCB increased by .33. Therefore, it can be stated that the second hypothesis is supported, however, also with this hypothesis it is relevant to state that the predictive strength of the model is considered weak.

4.3.3. Hypothesis 3

When it comes to the third hypothesis, it was assumed that perceived CSA would positively influence employee advocacy. This would mean that employees that evaluate the CSA involvement of their employing organization to be positive would be more likely to recommend or speak highly about their employing organization to individuals outside the organization. The regression analysis indicated that perceived CSA is a positive significant predictor of employee advocacy ($b = .30, t = 5.66, p < .001$). The results of the analysis show that every time perceived CSA increases by 1, employee advocacy increases by .30. It can be concluded that the third hypothesis is accepted but indicates a weak relationship between the two variables which also shows in the amount of variance of 9.0% employee advocacy that is predicted by perceived CSA.

4.4 Testing of moderation effects

4.4.1. Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis assumes that with PO – fit as the moderator, the relationship between perceived CSA and organizational identification will strengthen if the PO-fit is strong. This means that when the fit between the employee and the organization, when it comes to pro-social values, is high the employee will be more likely to identify with the

organization since they share the same values when it comes to CSA involvement of an organization. After testing this hypothesis by conducting a moderation analysis, the results showed a positive ($b = .28, t = 1.26, p = .209$), but insignificant effect. It can be concluded that the fourth hypothesis is rejected and that there was no moderating effect of PO fit on the relationship between the variables perceived CSA and organizational identification.

4.4.2. Hypothesis 5

This hypothesis formulated that PO fit as a moderator will strengthen the relationship between perceived CSA and OCB, indicating that when the PO fit is strong the perceived CSA and OCB relationship will strengthen as well. This assumes that employees with a high PO fit would be more likely to express OCB since there is a congruence between the values of the employing organization and the employee. After conducting the moderation analysis, it showed that there was a positive but insignificant effect found ($b = .32, t = 1.49, p = .136$). Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is not supported and it can be stated that there is no moderating effect of PO fit on the relationship between perceived CSA and OCB.

4.4.3. Hypothesis 6

The final hypothesis assumes that the relationship between perceived CSA and employee advocacy will strengthen if the PO fit is high. This would mean that a strong fit of the employee's values and the organization's values regarding CSA involvement will motivate employees to speak about their employing organization in a positive way to other individuals outside the organization and even recommend the organization to others outside the organization. After testing this assumption with a moderation analysis, the results showed a positive and significant effect ($b = .63, t = 3.18, p = .002$). Also, the variance of 53.4 percent in employee advocacy can be explained by the predictor perceived CSA which shows the increase in strength between perceived CSA and employee advocacy. To conclude, the sixth and final hypothesis can be accepted and it can be stated that PO fit does indeed moderate the relationship between perceived CSA and employee advocacy.

Table 4.4*Results Moderation Analyses*

Variables	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Organizational identification	OCB	Employee advocacy
Perceived CSA as IV	-.033	-.021	-.256
PO fit as moderator	.407**	.397**	.279*
CSA x PO fit	.281	.322	.630**
R ²	.406	.448	.534
F	73.07	86.85	122.37
N	324	324	324

Notes. Reported effects are standardized (Beta) coefficients.

Significance levels: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$.

4.5 Additional findings

After conducting the moderation analysis the data showed some further relevant findings. Even though two out of the three moderation effects were found to be insignificant (model 4 and model 5), the results showed that the moderator variable PO fit had a direct and significant effect on all three dependent variables. Specifically, PO fit had a significant positive moderate effect on organizational identification ($b = .41, p = .006$), a significant positive moderate effect on OCB ($b = .40, p = .006$), and a weak positive significant effect on employee advocacy ($b = .28, p = .034$). Meaning that when the moderator variable PO fit increased by one point, organizational identification increased by .41, OCB increased by .40, and employee advocacy increased by .28. Thus, these results indicate that PO fit has a stronger effect on organizational identification and OCB than the independent variable perceived CSA.

5. Discussion

Even though CSA is a relatively new concept, the younger generation of employees finds it increasingly important that their employing organization takes a stand on socio-political issues that they deem relevant and are in line with the values of the employee. However, taking a stand on often controversial socio-political issues can be difficult to navigate for organizations as this can backfire when it comes to an employee's attitude and behavior but also financially (Moorman, 2020).

Therefore, for this research, the main aim was to better understand how employees respond to the concept of CSA within their employing organization or within an organization in general. Also, the research aimed to find out whether an organization's CSA involvement would cause attitudinal or behavioral responses in the workplace.

5.1 Theoretical implications

It was hypothesized that the employees' positive CSA involvement perception of an organization will strengthen the organizational identification with the employing organization. This means that the identification of the employee with the organization increases if the image of the organization's CSA involvement is viewed as more appealing by the employee. Similar to previous research done on the relationship between CSR and organizational identification, the organizational identification of the employee with the organization will increase because they perceive the virtues and characteristics of the organization to be good and equal to their own virtues and characteristics (Kim et al., 2011). On the other hand, a negative perception of the organization's CSA involvement would mean a decrease in employee organizational identification and could lead to negative behavioral and attitudinal changes in the employee.

This research has found a positive relationship between perceived CSA and organizational identification. The research finding aligns with the work of Dutton et al. (1994), who conducted a previous study on organizational identification. According to their research, employees are more likely to positively identify with organizations when they believe that the virtues and character of the organization are favorable. In the context of the current study, perceived CSA refers to how employees perceive their organization's commitment to sociopolitical practices. The research indicates that when employees perceive their organization as being ethical and actively promoting social

change or positioning themselves politically, they are more likely to identify strongly with the organization. The positive relationship between perceived CSA and organizational identification implies that employees who perceive their organization as socially and politically involved will be more likely to feel a sense of belonging, loyalty, and attachment to the organization. They may view the organization's values and actions in line with their own beliefs and values, leading to a stronger identification with the organization.

Overall, this research suggests that organizations that prioritize and demonstrate CSA can foster a sense of identification among their employees. This can have several potential benefits, including increased employee engagement, commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (Dutton et al., 1994). Additionally, the accepted hypothesis is in line with similar findings of Kim et al. (2011). Kim et al.'s research explored the relationship between CSR and employee company identification. While CSR and CSA are distinct concepts, a comparison can be drawn between them since both CSR and CSA involve organizational practices that promote certain standards and values. The similarity lies in the fact that both CSR and CSA can influence employee perceptions and attitudes toward the organization. When organizations emphasize and demonstrate CSR practices or CSA, employees may perceive the organization as more ethical, trustworthy, and aligned with their personal values. As a result, they are more likely to identify with the organization and feel a stronger connection to the work environment and the organizational culture. The positive correlation between CSR and employee company identification found in the research conducted by Kim et al. (2011) supports the notion that organizations' commitment to social responsibility can foster a stronger sense of identification among employees which indirectly supports the effect of perceived CSA on organizational identification for this research. The finding of this first hypothesis is also in line with social identity theory and organizational identification theory since the respondents indicated that the sociopolitical beliefs and values, or CSA initiatives, of their employing organization, are congruent with their personal beliefs and values. This suggests that organizational identification is an essential component of organizations and especially for organizational culture. However, it must be noted that even though CSR and CSA share similarities, CSA is much more complex compared to CSR.

The second hypothesis of this research, suggests a positive influence of perceived CSA on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) of employees. Perceived CSA refers to how employees perceive the CSA practices of their employing organization. If employees perceive these practices positively and view the organization as committed to bringing about social change and improving society, it is hypothesized that they will be more willing to engage in OCB in the workplace. OCB, as defined by Cha et al. (2013), represents work behavior that goes beyond standard job requirements, such as helping colleagues, suggesting improvements, or participating in activities that benefit the organization and its stakeholders. According to the hypothesis, the positive influence of perceived CSA on OCB occurs when employees perceive the organization's CSA involvement as significant. In other words, if employees perceive the organization's commitment to CSA as being important and impactful, they are more likely to be encouraged to go beyond their formal job requirements and engage in OCB.

This is in line with research done by El-Kassar et al. (2017), who state that employees' perception of the organization's initiatives to engage and create social change to better society at large, needs to be significant and positive to motivate employees to go beyond their job requirements. For the current research, this implies that mere perception of CSA may not be sufficient to stimulate OCB; it is the perception of significant and positively perceived CSA involvement that drives employees to engage in OCB.

The results of this research supported the hypothesized positive relationship between perceived CSA and OCB. This shows that the employees perceive their organization's CSA practices positively and significantly, and they are more likely to exhibit OCB in the workplace. As far as the researcher knows previous research on the direct and positive effect of perceived CSA on OCB does not currently exist. However, there are prior studies that found a positive effect of perceived CSR on the OCB of employees (El-Kassar et al., 2017; Fu et al., 2014; Gao & He, 2017). As mentioned earlier, even though CSR and CSA are different concepts they share similarities and that is why the positive effect of employees' perceived CSR on OCB found in previous research is being used as findings that support the second hypothesis of this research.

The results from the prior studies indicate the importance that CSR perceived by employees can have on their OCB. Employees were more willing to engage in behavior that exceeded their job requirements if they perceived the CSR efforts of the

organization as favorable. As stated by El-Kassar et al. (2017) positive extra-role behavior of employees will lead to support towards co-workers and towards the organization as a whole. This positive extra-role behavior toward the organization not only allows for the employees' support for the organization's strategies and goals but also, allows for resources that can create a competitive advantage for the organization. For the current study, a comparison to the previous studies on CSR and OCB will be made and this implies that perceived CSA if perceived favorably by the employees, will motivate employees to perform extra-role behavior in favor of the organization which suggests a more healthy work environment and an alignment with the organization's CSA practices. Employees may willingly contribute their time, energy, and resources to support initiatives that are in line with the organization's CSA practices. It also implies that employees perceive their work as meaningful and believe that their actions contribute to something larger than themselves. This alignment with the organization's CSA practices fosters a sense of pride and a shared sense of purpose among employees which is in line with the social identity theory and organizational identification theory (El-Kassar et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2015). Furthermore, colleagues are likely to experience increased support and cooperation, leading to enhanced teamwork and collaboration. This positive work environment can lead to increased job satisfaction, higher levels of commitment, and improved overall organizational performance (Cha et al., 2013).

In sum, the accepted positive relationship between perceived CSA and OCB indicates the potential of CSA initiatives to create a work environment where employees feel compelled to contribute more than what is expected of them. It signifies that the organization's efforts to address sociopolitical issues resonate with the employees' own values and beliefs. This alignment creates a sense of collective responsibility, where employees feel a personal need to contribute to the organization's broader objectives beyond their assigned tasks.

This shared commitment to the organization's values and goals extends to employee advocacy, which, similar to OCB, represents a pro-social work behavior where employees actively promote or defend the organization to others (Men, 2014). In the context of this research, it was hypothesized that perceived CSA would have a positive influence on employee advocacy. This implies that when employees perceive the organization's CSA practices in a positive light, they are more likely to be motivated to advocate for the

organization to others. Employee advocacy holds significant importance as a pro-social work behavior because it leverages employees' networks to promote or defend the organization. The actions and words of employees can have a substantial impact on public relations outcomes for the organization, shaping how it is perceived by external stakeholders. In today's working environment, where social media platforms play a prominent role, ensuring that employees engage in positive advocacy becomes even more crucial (Men, 2014). The expanded reach of employees' personal networks through social media platforms allows information and opinions to spread rapidly to a large audience. Therefore, employees who positively advocate for the organization can amplify its messages, enhance its reputation, and strengthen its relationships with external stakeholders (Thelen, 2020).

Conversely, negative advocacy can have detrimental effects on the organization's public image. By fostering a workplace environment where employees perceive CSA practices positively, organizations can encourage employee advocacy. When employees believe in the organization's commitment to CSA, they are more likely to feel a sense of pride and identification with the organization. These positive emotions and attitudes motivate employees to proactively share positive information about the organization, recommend its products or services, and defend its reputation when necessary (Kim & Rhee, 2011).

The results of this research provide confirmation of the hypothesized positive relationship between perceived CSA and employee advocacy. The respondents indicated that there is an alignment between their personal values and the organization's values regarding CSA practices. This alignment serves as a motivating factor for employees to act as brand ambassadors on behalf of the organization. As a result, employees are driven to engage in advocacy behaviors and indicate that they are willing to actively communicate positive messages about the organization to individuals outside the organization. The finding that employees are willing to act as brand ambassadors suggests that the relationship between employees and the employing organization is in good standing. This implies that the organizational environment causes supportive behaviors from the employees which encourages the employees to share information with the external public. When organizations effectively and adequately communicate their CSA practices to their employees, it creates a sense of empathy and understanding

among employees. Consequently, employees feel valued and develop a strong sense of connection with their employing organization (Walden & Kingsley Westerman, 2018).

The findings of this research align with the principles of social exchange theory, which posits that individuals have the desire to reciprocate favors or positive interactions with those who have acted in their best interests (Blau, 1964). In the context of employee advocacy, the quality of social interactions between employees and the organization plays a crucial role. When organizations demonstrate a commitment to CSA practices, it is most favorable if employees perceive it as a positive social exchange. Then, in response, employees exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors, such as engaging in advocacy on behalf of the organization.

The implications of these findings are significant for organizations. By fostering a positive relationship with their employees and effectively communicating their CSA practices, organizations can create a social exchange environment that motivates employees to become advocates for the organization. This, in turn, enhances positive employee attitudes, strengthens their connection to the organization, and facilitates the spread of favorable information to the external public. The accepted hypothesis aligns with previous research conducted on employee advocacy, further supporting its validity. This is consistent with the findings of Liu et al. (2022), who investigated the relationship between employees' perception of CSR and employee advocacy and found a positive correlation. These findings highlight the significance of employees perceiving the organization's CSR efforts positively in motivating them to engage in advocacy behaviors. Additionally, the research conducted by Lee and Tao (2020) and Lee and Dong (2023) emphasizes the importance of transparent leadership communication in fostering employee advocacy. When leaders effectively communicate with transparency, employees feel a sense of shared accountability, inclusion in decision-making processes, and being heard. This type of communication creates a conducive environment that encourages employees to become advocates for the organization.

The relevance of transparent communication becomes particularly important when considering the potential controversial effects of engaging in CSA as an organization. Given that CSA initiatives may alter the favorable perception of the employees towards the organization, transparent communication can help mitigate any potential misunderstandings or negative perceptions among employees. It allows leaders and the

organization as a whole to effectively address concerns, provide context, and ensure that employees understand the organization's intentions and motivations behind its CSA efforts.

Overall, the results of this hypothesis confirm that perceived CSA positively influences employee advocacy. This finding underscores the relevance of aligning personal and organizational values, as well as cultivating supportive social exchange relationships and transparent communication, in fostering employee advocacy behaviors.

Additionally, according to Edwards and Cable (2009), the relevance of quality communication in organizations can also be found in sharing similar standards and expressing these standards so a framework is developed of what values are important within the organization. In organizational context, values are central to the organization's culture and determine what is desirable behavior. When there is a match between the values of an employee and the organization it can lead to value congruence or PO fit.

For the last three hypotheses, it was expected that the moderator PO fit would strengthen the relationships between perceived CSA and the dependent variables of organizational identification, OCB, and employee advocacy. The concept of PO fit refers to the extent to which an individual's values and beliefs align with those of the organization (Brown et al., 2020). In the context of this research, it was assumed that a high PO fit, characterized by a strong alignment of values, particularly social values related to sociopolitical issues, between employees and the organization would strengthen the relationship between perceived CSA and the outcome variables. When employees share similar pro-social values with the organization, it was expected that they will experience a high PO fit. This alignment of values creates a sense of congruence between the individual and the organization, leading to positive outcomes. A high PO fit is anticipated to positively influence the relationship between perceived CSA and the dependent variables, namely organizational identification, OCB, and employee advocacy.

On the other hand, when there is a low PO fit, indicating a significant incongruence between employees' pro-social values and those of the organization, the relationship between perceived CSA and the outcome variables may weaken. In such cases, employees may perceive the organization as less attractive and may be less inclined to invest their efforts and resources in the organization. Negative behaviors and attitudes

may arise due to perceived value incongruence, leading to a weaker relationship between perceived CSA and the dependent variables.

Surprisingly, no significant effect was found for PO fit as a moderator between the relationship of perceived CSA and organizational identification which goes against the findings of Edwards and Cable (2009). It also contradicts the findings of Cha et al. (2013) who found that a fit between the prosocial identities of the employee and the organization had an impact on both the organizational identification and OCB of the employee. However, it must be noted that the approach of Cha et al. (2013) when testing the variables of organizational identification and PO fit was different since the direct effect between the two variables was tested instead of PO fit as a moderation effect. Also, no prior research has been conducted where perceived CSA was assumed to be a stronger predictor of organizational identification, OCB, or employee advocacy, with either a high or low level of PO fit moderating the effect.

Nevertheless, this research did find that for employees with a high PO fit, there is a strengthened positive relationship between perceived CSA and employee advocacy. This finding suggests that a high PO fit can positively influence employee advocacy. Thus, employees were more likely to act as brand ambassadors by promoting and defending the organization to external stakeholders if they perceived the CSA practices as positive and in line with their pro-social values. The accepted hypothesis showed that a high PO fit enhances employees' willingness to advocate for the organization and communicate positive messages, bolstering the organization's public relations outcomes. A possible explanation for why the moderation of PO fit on perceived CSA and employee advocacy was found significant and was not found significant for the other moderation effects could be that employees experience the CSA involvement of their employing organization as self-enhancement.

More specifically, as stated by Shahzadi et al. (2019) who conducted research on the CSR practices of organizations and identification, employees are inclined to perceive the CSR activities of an organization as contributing to improving the reputation of the organization and will evaluate the organization as high status and something to be proud of. In turn, employees will identify more with the organization and feel like there is a fit between the initiatives and practices of the organization and, therefore, will advocate positively about the organization to the outside world as this also improves their own

image and their self-worth. A similar effect is assumed for organizations that are involved in CSA practices that are considered high-status and that will improve the reputation of the organization according to the employees' perception. For this research, this would imply that, in line with the social identity theory (Mael & Ashfort, 1992; Tajfel, 1982), employees tend to identify with organizations that they perceive as respectable and reputable to external stakeholders, and consequently choose to advocate for organizations involved in CSA initiatives and practices that fit with their identities.

A final interesting finding was the direct and significant effect of the moderator variable on all three dependent variables. As mentioned earlier, the relationship between perceived CSA and the dependent variables of organizational identification and OCB did not strengthen when the PO fit moderator was added. Considering the direct and significant effect of PO fit on organizational identification as well as on OCB, it shows that the effect of PO fit on the dependent variables is stronger than the effect of the independent variable. This finding is in line with the previously mentioned research by Cha et al. (2013) who proved that the fit or misfit between an employee's and an organization's prosocial identity significantly impacts the organizational identification and OCB of the employee. This indicates that, even though no significant moderation effect was found, a value congruence between organization and employee remains crucial for an organization that wants to foster a working environment where employees feel a sense of belonging and voluntarily want to contribute to the organization that the employee perceives as congruent with their personal values.

5.2 Managerial implications

Next to theoretical implications, this study also aims to provide practical or managerial implications for organizations who wish to engage in CSA practices but want to anticipate what the positive and negative aspects are of engaging in CSA. First of all, if an organization wants to engage in CSA practices, it should prioritize and actively demonstrate its commitment to CSA practices. This includes engaging in sociopolitical practices and initiatives that promote positive social change. By doing so, organizations can strengthen their employees' organizational identification, leading to a greater sense of belonging, loyalty, and attachment.

Second, if the organization decides to demonstrate its commitment to CSA,

effective communication with employees of the CSA practices is crucial. Organizations should ensure that employees have a clear understanding of the organization's CSA initiatives and their significance. Transparent communication can help mitigate potential misunderstandings or negative perceptions, fostering a supportive work environment.

Third, organizations should focus on aligning employees' personal values with the organization's values. In order to do so, organizations need to be very aware of the current organizational culture and what is perceived as desirable behavior within the organization. By creating a strong organizational culture, value congruence can be achieved which promotes and embodies certain sociopolitical values that the organization stands for. In addition, as CSA initiatives can sometimes be controversial, organizations should actively identify and address any potential concerns or negative perceptions among employees. Transparent communication can help provide context, clarify intentions, and ensure that employees understand the organization's motivations behind its CSA efforts and minimize the change for value incongruence between employees and the organization. Regular feedback from employees can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that the organization's CSA practices align with employees' expectations and values. Also, providing training and development programs to enhance employees' understanding of CSA practices and their importance. This can include workshops, seminars, or educational resources that promote awareness and knowledge about sociopolitical issues and the organization's role in addressing them.

Finally, organizations could establish, together with academia, metrics to measure the impact of CSA initiatives on organizational identification, OCB, and employee advocacy. By tracking and recognizing the positive outcomes resulting from employees' engagement with CSA practices, organizations can reinforce the importance of these behaviors and encourage continued participation.

Overall, organizations should strive to create a supportive work environment where employees perceive CSA practices positively, align their personal values with the organization's values, and actively contribute to the organization's broader objectives. By doing so, organizations can strengthen their employees' organizational identification, promote OCB, and encourage employee advocacy, ultimately leading to improved performance of the organization.

6. Conclusion

The primary objective of this research was to gain deeper insights into employees' attitudinal and behavioral responses to CSA involvement in organizations. Engaging in CSA practices as an organization can be complex, and having a better understanding of how to get employees on board with the CSA intentions of the organization can help managers to better navigate CSA practices. The concept of CSA is a relatively new concept and has mainly been studied within the U.S. context. Therefore, the focus of this research was on the European work environment and aimed to find out how employees' CSA perception influences their organizational identification, OCB, and employee advocacy, and how PO fit moderates these relationships. Based on previous studies and literature a total of six hypotheses were formulated in order to answer the research question. Accordingly, the following research question was formulated: *How does the perceived corporate sociopolitical activism of organizations affect employees' organizational identification, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee advocacy? And to what extent does employees' person-organization fit (PO fit) moderate this relationship?*

As the research question indicates the relationship between the independent variable perceived CSA and the dependent variables organizational identification, OCB, and employee advocacy were tested as well as the moderating effect of PO fit. In order to test these relationships between variables, a survey was conducted which resulted in a total of 325 respondents gathered through the crowdsourcing platform Prolific. The results of the survey indicated that the hypothesized positive effect of perceived CSA on the outcome variables organizational identification, OCB, and employee advocacy was found. Thus, the respondents indicated a positive CSA perception of the employing organization increased their organizational identification, OCB, and employee advocacy. Also, it was expected that PO fit would have a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived CSA and the three dependent variables. However, no significant moderation effect of PO fit was found on the relationship between perceived CSA and organizational identification and OCB. The expected moderation effect of PO fit on perceived CSA and employee advocacy was found to be significant and, therefore, the hypothesis was accepted. Meaning that when the respondents experienced a higher

level of PO fit with the organization the effect between perceived CSA and employee advocacy would positively increase.

In sum, after confirming four out of six hypotheses, this research further expanded on the existing CSA literature and theories such as; social identity theory, organizational identity theory, and social exchange theory. This research showed that even though CSA can be difficult to navigate, it can have a positive effect on employees' attitudes and behaviors which leads to positive work outcomes and enhances organizational performance.

6.1 Limitations

There are certain limitations to be found in this research. First of all, the quantitative research method that was chosen, an online survey, has several advantages but limits the research at the same time. An online survey does not allow the research to go into depth when it comes to finding the reason why respondents answered items of the survey in a certain way. This research method, thus, limits making detailed interpretations of the motives behind answers and limits gaining knowledge on the true meaning of the answers that were given by the respondents. For future research, a different research method such as interviews could be considered to gain a deeper knowledge of employees' motives on identifying with or showing extra-role behavior toward an organization that is involved in CSA practices. Furthermore, another limitation of choosing a survey design is that the evaluation of the respondents' perception of CSA could perhaps be better assessed using an experiment design since this could provide a better groundwork to fully comprehend the new or unknown concept of CSA. Especially since the majority of the respondents indicated that their employing organization is not currently involved in CSA or has not been involved in CSA in the past either. This could indicate that the respondents' knowledge of CSA is low. Therefore, an experimental approach would have provided a controlled environment where respondents could be exposed to simulated scenarios or interventions related to CSA. This would not only facilitate a better understanding of the concept but also enables the researcher to gauge the participants' reactions and perceptions more effectively. Also, the more immersive approach of experimental design can enhance respondents' understanding, potentially leading to more accurate and informed responses.

In addition to the aforementioned limitation, another important limitation of this research can be identified in the chosen sampling method. The researcher employed a non-probability sampling approach, which means that not every individual within the target population had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the survey. As a result, the survey findings may be less generalizable for the entire population. The use of a non-probability sampling method also raises concerns about the representativeness of the sample. It is likely that the sample may not accurately reflect the characteristics and diversity of the broader population. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the composition of the sample was predominantly composed of highly educated and young individuals. This distribution may introduce bias into the research findings, as the perspectives and experiences of older individuals and those with lower levels of education may be underrepresented. It is important to acknowledge that the results could differ if the sample had a more balanced representation across age groups and educational backgrounds. Considering these limitations, caution should be taken when interpreting and generalizing the findings of this research. Future studies could benefit from employing probability sampling methods and ensuring a more diverse and representative sample to enhance the validity and applicability of the findings.

The third limitation of this research could be appointed to the use of the crowdsourcing platform Prolific. A setback of using crowdsourcing platforms like Prolific is the varying level of attention and engagement among respondents on these platforms. Given that many individuals use platforms like Prolific as a means of earning money by completing as many surveys as possible, they may approach filling out a survey with a mindset focused on quantity rather than quality. Consequently, respondents might not invest sufficient attention or thoughtfulness in their answers, which can influence the accuracy and reliability of the collected data (Prolific, 2023). Another limitation arises from the inherent nature of the "first-come-first-serve" approach employed by Prolific. This approach introduces what Prolific calls a "rapid-responder" bias, as respondents who participate in the survey are dependent on the time of day and the day of the week. This bias can result in a sample with certain demographics or characteristics being overrepresented or underrepresented based on the timing of data collection (Prolific, 2023). As a result, the generalizability of the findings may be limited, as the sample may not accurately represent the broader population of interest. Finally, while Prolific offers

the option to pre-screen participants based on specific criteria, such as employment status and nationality, it is important to note that the majority of respondents are primarily based in the United States or the United Kingdom. Consequently, it becomes challenging to ascertain the true geographic distribution of the respondents, potentially leading to a biased representation of the population and limiting the external validity of the findings.

6.2 Future research

Firstly, it is recommended to develop a comprehensive framework that provides guidance on when organizations should engage in CSA and how to effectively communicate CSA goals to employees. This framework would offer valuable insights into the timing, benefits, and potential drawbacks of engaging in CSA initiatives. By understanding the optimal conditions for implementing CSA practices, organizations can make informed decisions and effectively align their actions with their broader goals. Further research should focus on exploring the dynamics between CSA, organizational values, employee engagement, and the overall organizational strategy.

To develop such a framework, additional research is needed to deepen our understanding of CSA's effects on employees and organizations. This includes investigating the impact of CSA on employee attitudes, behaviors, and job satisfaction, as well as examining its influence on organizational performance and reputation. Longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess the long-term effects of CSA initiatives and their sustainability over time.

Furthermore, it would be valuable to explore the role of CSA within the context of crisis communication. As mentioned earlier, CSA involves addressing controversial topics, and organizations need to be prepared for potential backlash or negative consequences. Research examining the intersection of CSA and crisis communication can provide insights into how organizations can effectively manage and respond to challenges that may arise when engaging in CSA practices. This kind of future research can contribute to the development of crisis management strategies specifically tailored to CSA-related issues.

Also, as far as the researcher knows, the availability of validated scales to measure perceived CSA is limited. According to the researcher's knowledge, there is only one

existing scale, developed by Villagra et al. (2021), that specifically assesses perceived CSA. This suggests that there is still a gap in the literature when it comes to comprehensive and validated measurement tools for capturing the concept of CSA. Also, while Austin et al. (2019) employed a self-assembled scale to measure consumer perceptions of CSA it remains unclear how this scale was assembled. The lack of transparency regarding the development and validation of this scale raises questions about the reliability and validity. Thus, there is a need for more research in developing and validating scales that can effectively measure perceived CSA.

To gain a deeper understanding of the concept of CSA, it is essential to have reliable and valid measurement instruments that capture the multidimensional nature of CSA. Developing scales that capture these dimensions would provide researchers and practitioners with a toolset to assess and compare the perceived CSA efforts of different organizations across industries and contexts. Moreover, validated scales for measuring perceived CSA would enable researchers to conduct more research to examine the relationships between perceived CSA and various outcomes, such as employee attitudes, consumer behavior, organizational performance, and stakeholder perceptions. This would facilitate the advancement in the field of CSA and allow for meaningful comparisons and generalizations across studies.

In addition, the present research uses variables that are quite closely related to one another as both employee advocacy and OCB can be seen as a form of extra-role behavior of employees. Thus, future research could examine a broader range of outcome variables that reflect different aspects of the work environment. For example, one suggestion for future research could be to research the relationship between perceived CSA and employee commitment. Understanding how perceived CSA influences employee commitment can provide insights into how organizations can foster a sense of loyalty and dedication among employees through their CSA initiatives. Additionally, exploring the link between perceived CSA and job satisfaction can shed light on the impact of CSA on employees' overall job experiences. Another outcome variable worth further investigating is job performance as this can provide valuable insights into the potential effects of CSA on employee productivity and effectiveness. By examining how employees' perception of their organization's CSA practices influences their job

performance, organizations can better understand the implications of incorporating CSA into their business strategies.

Finally, besides exploring distinct outcome variables, future research could delve into the consequences of employee misalignment with the CSA goals of an organization. This includes studying the phenomenon of online employee activism, where employees express their disagreement or criticism of their organization's CSA practices through digital platforms or social media. Understanding how employee misalignment with CSA goals affects organizational reputation, employee morale, and external stakeholder perceptions can provide important insights for organizations to effectively manage and address potential conflicts or controversies related to CSA.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Questionnaire

MA Thesis: CSA effect on employees

Start of Block: Welcome Message

Dear respondent,

Thank you for your interest in this research. We are inviting you to fill in a questionnaire. For this questionnaire, the aim is to understand your perspective on the topic of corporate sociopolitical activism in the workplace. Please answer each statement carefully and honestly, we are sincerely interested in your personal opinion and experience. There are no right or wrong answers.

The questionnaire will take approximately 6 minutes, and we appreciate your participation in this research. To help protect your confidentiality and anonymity, the survey does not ask for information that will personally identify you.

The results of this research will be used for scholarly purposes only and will not be furthered to any third party. If you decide not to participate in this research, this will not affect you in any way. If you decide to cease your cooperation while filling in the questionnaire, this will in no way affect you either. You can cease your cooperation at any moment without giving reasons.

If you have questions about this research, in advance or afterward, you can contact the responsible researcher, by email: 441746eb@eur.nl.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

If you understand the information above and freely consent to participate in this study, click on the “I agree” button below to start the questionnaire.

I agree (1)

I do not agree (2)

End of Block: Welcome

Start of Block: Prolific ID

What is your Prolific ID?

Please note that this response should auto-fill with the correct ID

End of Block: Prolific ID

Start of Block: Filter questions

For this questionnaire, the term corporate sociopolitical activism (CSA) refers to organizations that try to improve society and take part in public debate by actively taking a stand on sociopolitical issues such as LGBTQ+ rights, reproductive rights, immigration, transgender issues, political parties, racism, sexual harassment, etc.

Firstly, we would like to ask if the organization you work for is currently involved in corporate sociopolitical activism?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Has the organization you currently work for been involved in corporate sociopolitical activism in the past?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Questions perceived CSA

- The following statements are about your perspective on companies that participate in corporate sociopolitical activism. For each of the statements below, please choose the response that best expresses how you feel about the statement.
- Companies should defend social positions
- Companies have an ethical obligation to promote social change
- Companies and governments should participate equally in solving social problems
- I believe that companies should position themselves politically
- Companies should get involved in politics
- CEOs of companies have an obligation to publicly express their political preferences
- When the government tries to pass an unfair or little ethical law, a company should try to

stop it

- Companies should take initiatives against bad governments or bad politicians
- When the government does not solve citizens' problems, companies should take the initiative

Questions Organizational Identification

- For each of the statements below, please choose the response that best expresses how you feel about the statement.
- When someone criticizes the organization I work for it feels like a personal insult
- I am very interested in what others think about the organization I work for
- When I talk about the organization I work for, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'
- My organization's successes are my successes
- When someone praises the organization I work for, it feels like a personal compliment
- If a story in the media criticized the organization I work for, I would feel embarrassed

Question OCB

- For each of the statements below, please choose the response that best expresses how you feel about the statement.
- I attend functions that are not required but that help my organization's image
- I keep up with developments in my organization
- I defend my organization when other employees criticize it
- I show pride when representing my organization in public
- I offer ideas to improve the functioning of my organization
- I express loyalty toward my organization
- I take action to protect my organization from potential problems
- I demonstrate concern about the image of my organization

Questions Employee Advocacy

- For each of the statements below, please choose the response that best expresses how you feel about the statement.
- I recommend my organization's brands, products or services to others
- I recommend my organization as a great place to work
- I disprove biased opinions about my organization
- When applicable, I would support my organization in public policy issues that impact the business
- I show pride when representing my organization in public
- I willingly participate in volunteer work or community relation activities in which my organization is involved

Questions PO Fit

- For each of the statements below, please choose the response that best expresses how you feel about the statement.
- There is a match between my own values and the values of the organization I work for
- In my organization, there is a match between my own values and the values of the other employees
- In my organization, there is a match between my own values and the values of the managing directors
- In my organization, there is a match between my own values and the characteristics of the work I perform
- In my organization, there is a match between my personal expectations and provided opportunities

How do you describe yourself?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

How old are you? Please write your answer in numbers

What is the highest level of education you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than high school degree (1)
- High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) (2)
- Some college but no degree (3)
- Associate degree in college (2-year) (4)
- Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) (5)
- Master's degree (6)
- Doctoral degree (7)
- Professional degree (JD, MD) (8)
- Other (9) _____

Page Break

What is your current job position?

- Non-management (1)
- Lower-level management (2)
- Middle-level management (3)
- Top management (4)

How long have you worked for the organization you currently work for?

- <1 year (1)
- 1-3 years (2)
- 4-6 years (3)
- 7-9 years (4)
- 10 years or more (5)

What is the size of your employing organization in terms of employee numbers?

- Small (10-49 employees) (1)
- Medium (50-249 employees) (2)
- Large (250+ employees) (3)