

# Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) In Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Barriers in Implementing It in Organizations

Muzakkir Al Nizami

*Department of Compliance and Supply Chain, University of Cumbria*

*Abstract—Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has moved from the traditional focus of economic sense of responsibility (profit maximization) as a major concern towards legal, moral and ethical norms and social accountability to society. The evolution of CSR practices varies across countries, affected by regulatory structures, culture, and the era of CSR adoption depending on the legal landscape adopted. This paper explores CSR approaches in Saudi Arabia through the qualitative research methodology of face-to-face and virtual interviews with official authorities, public firms, and private firms in Saudi Arabia, a combination of a mix of public and state-based organizations as we have previously introduced qualitative studies that investigate CSR in Saudi Arabia with a qualitative study design. The study encompasses definitions provided by academics about CSR, compares the CSR programs in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East to the activities of the world's developing countries and also offers some recommendations for promoting good CSR practices. Results identify several significant obstacles to CSR integration, including lack of knowledge, inadequate accountability, and dependence on CSR maturity at the country level. The research shows that CSR awareness is growing in Saudi Arabia, facilitated by the development of new laws and standards, and that companies move away from being philanthropy-oriented and toward developing formal, strategy-oriented CSR behaviors. The research also comes to the end recommending CSR integration into corporate governance, connecting those CSR efforts so they can align with organizational core values, raising awareness of them in this study, and educating stakeholders are the research results. This contribution to the research is to contribute to a better understanding of how CSR is institutionalized in emerging markets and the strategic development of CSR outside of regulatory compliance.*

*Index Terms: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Qualitative research, CSR awareness, Philanthropy-to-strategy transition, Stakeholder engagement, Policy integration*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Definition of Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR is broadly defined as a business's responsibility to meet economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations (Carroll, 1979; Montiel, 2008). It represents the overall contribution of business to sustainable development (UN DESA, 2007) and involves principles, processes, and outcomes in social relationships (Wood, 1991; Peloza & Zhang, 2011). Despite growing attention, guidance on implementing CSR remains limited (Bhattacharya et al., 2009). Importantly, CSR varies across contexts, cultures, and times (Campbell, 2007).

Globally, CSR extends beyond profit-making to include responsibility toward people and the planet (WBCSD, 1999). At its core, CSR is a pledge by organizations to act ethically and responsibly toward shareholders, employees, communities, stakeholders, and the environment—building reputation, driving success, and contributing to sustainable development.

### 1.2 Corporate Social Responsibility in Global and Saudi Contexts

Corporate social responsibility, or CSR, is already a leading global priority for companies across the globe. Companies are realizing more and more that long-term sustainability requires more than just profits. Modern CSR concepts highlight the need to weave environmental stewardship, employee well-being, and health and safety into corporate strategy. A shift in paradigm reflects more recognition of the connection between corporate success and community well-being. While small and medium businesses (SMEs) work gradually to embed social responsibility into their own operational values, multinational organizations have integrated CSR into their mission statements and strategic visions.

CSR tackles stakeholder expectations and corporate transparency, asking businesses to strike a balance between their societal responsibilities and self-interest (Juholin, 2004). Global issues including climate change, natural disasters, and public health emergencies, like the COVID-19 pandemic, are being addressed by modern CSR techniques. SMEs are increasingly embracing sustainable practices alongside larger firms, despite the fact that CSR programs were first concentrated in richer economies. This tendency has been strengthened by international trade standards like ISO 26000 on social responsibility, which encourage businesses to choose suppliers and vendors who share their commitment to CSR.

With a focus on energy saving, technological innovation, and social resilience, environmental sustainability has emerged as a major subject in CSR discourse. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007), governments around the world support corporate social responsibility (CSR) in order to boost competitiveness and match business operations with public policy agendas. The Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED, 2011) further underlined that the region's sustainable development is dependent on the shift to a green economy. CSR has been incorporated into Saudi Arabia's national development agenda, making it a trailblazing member.

Saudi Arabia prioritizes environmental conservation as a strategic need and an ethical responsibility for generations to come, in line with the 2030 Agenda (Saudi Government, 2014). The kingdom has encouraged the utilization of its own natural resources, decreased dependency on imported goods, and improved environmentally friendly practices. By encouraging business cooperation, interacting with government agencies, and promoting sustained revenue generation, organizations like the Chambers of Commerce and Industry help to promote the adoption of CSR (Riyadh Chamber, 2020).

By giving ministries distinct duties that are broken down into quantifiable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Saudi Arabia has further demonstrated its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Accountability and methodical oversight of CSR-related activities are guaranteed by this organized approach (Unified National Platform, 2015; Ali & Ali, 2018). In order to address

environmental issues and create strong economic foundations, the Kingdom actively promotes cooperation between corporations and NGOs, integrating CSR into corporate and societal frameworks.

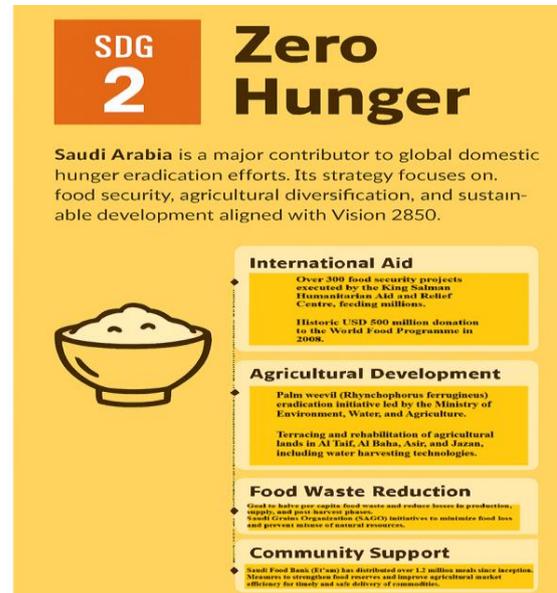


Figure 1: Saudi Arabia's Zero Hunger initiatives

### 1.2 Problem Statement

- The application of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Saudi Arabia is still mostly limited to customary charitable activities based on religious duties, especially Zakat, despite international frameworks like the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's six work programs and the United Nations' emphasis on context-specific CSR approaches. Strong cultural and religious beliefs are reflected in these behaviors, but they are sometimes divorced from systematic CSR frameworks and larger business plans that seek to fully address social, environmental, and economic issues.
- Adopting contemporary CSR strategies that support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and global sustainability standards presents challenges for Saudi Arabian organizations. These obstacles include a lack of employee understanding, legal gaps, a preference for philanthropy rather integrated CSR strategy, and a lack of synergy between company goals and CSR initiatives. Because of this, CSR in Saudi Arabia runs the risk of being viewed as charity or compliance rather than as

a force for corporate responsibility and sustainable development.

- The goal of this study is to critically examine the obstacles preventing Saudi companies from transforming corporate social responsibility (CSR) from a conventional charity model to a strategic, policy-driven framework that significantly improves societal well-being and fits in with international sustainability goals.

### 1.3 Research Questions

This study's primary goal is to identify the obstacles that a business faces when putting CSR efforts into practice. The following inquiries are the main focus of the study.

RQ1: How is CSR now viewed in Saudi Arabia?

RQ2: How is corporate social responsibility (CSR) understood, implemented, and perceived in KSA organizations?

RQ3: What obstacles exist for an organization looking to implement CSR?

RQ4: How many companies gain from prioritizing corporate social responsibility?

### 1.4 Objectives

- To investigate and elucidate the meanings and fundamental ideas of corporate social responsibility (CSR).
- To investigate CSR practices in Saudi Arabian public and private enterprises, while determining the obstacles to successful implementation.
- To make suggestions and tactics for bolstering and encouraging the implementation of CSR in Saudi businesses.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

[1] This research examines the understanding of corporate social responsibility (CSR) disclosure and implementation in Saudi Arabia. It focuses on how various stakeholders perceive CSR and evaluates the level of CSR reporting practices among publicly traded companies in the country. The study particularly delves into how both internal and external stakeholders comprehend CSR and its associated disclosures. Additionally, it investigates the incorporation of CSR into the corporate policies and strategies of Saudi listed companies, taking into account factors such as local culture, religion,

regulatory frameworks, and governance characteristics. To gain insights into stakeholder perspectives regarding various dimensions of CSR, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Moreover, a content analysis approach was employed to evaluate annual reports related to the extent of CSR disclosures. The exploration of corporate policies and strategies relied on both semi-structured interviews and content analysis methods. The findings indicate that the concept of CSR is becoming increasingly clear within Saudi Arabia, reflecting an evolving perspective on CSR practices. This study also reveals that the disclosure of CSR by Saudi listed companies is largely influenced by legitimacy theory. Recent trends show a rise in the level of CSR disclosure among these companies over the past six years, with a notable increase in its integration into corporate policies and strategies. Moreover, 'culture' emerged as the most significant factor influencing CSR initiatives in Saudi Arabia.

[2] The suggested conceptualization uses sensemaking as a unifying underlying process to explain how people find meaning in their work and, in turn, why and when employees experience corporate social responsibility (CSR) in a specific way, which leads to more or less favourable outcomes for them, their organizations, and external stakeholders. Other individual-level research domains that would benefit from (a) putting people and their quest for meaningfulness front and center and (b) emphasizing the role of same-level and cross-level interactions among intraindividual, intraorganizational, and extra organizational sensemaking factors in the process could also employ our suggested model. [3] This paper aims to investigate how young Saudi consumers view corporate social responsibility (CSR) from an Islamic perspective in light of the paucity of research on the topic. Saudi Arabia, a Muslim nation and the world's biggest petroleum exporter, is the subject of the study. 34 in-depth interviews were conducted in two significant Saudi cities, Tabouk and Riyadh, as part of the current study's qualitative methodology.

[5] Despite extensive discussion, social responsibility (SR) has not been effectively implemented in large-scale construction projects because of a number of obstacles. There is a dearth of study on these obstacles in developing nations like Saudi Arabia. The main barriers to SR adoption in Saudi megaprojects are examined in this paper. A questionnaire survey of 136 respondents from two

projects was used to assess the eleven barriers that were found through expert interviews and a review of the literature. Consistent rankings were obtained from the results, and the top seven obstacles were as follows: higher expenses, a lack of knowledge, a lack of guidelines and a clear plan, inadequate training, a lack of law enforcement, poor stakeholder communication, and confusing project needs. By helping practitioners and policymakers prioritize solutions and create practical plans for better implementation at the project and sector levels, our findings advance knowledge of SR problems.

[6] In the framework of economic globalization, the essay examines the function of multinational firms in the processes of improving market relations. In light of trends in the growth of international trade, methodological and historical elements of the formation of multinational firms and distinct phases of their operations are taken into account. In order to improve production forces and support the globalization of the economy and international competitive relations, the authors identify and examine the key elements and competitive advantages of transnational firms. [7] This work aims to provide a method for determining the optimal goodness-of-fit corporate social responsibility (CSR) model. This study developed a model in which the four fundamental elements of accountability, transparency, competitiveness, and responsibility had the greatest impact on CSR. Using questionnaires, the data used in this study was gathered from Taiwanese businesses in 2009. A total of 185 businesses were examined. The suggested CSR model, which included 13 observation indicators and four latent elements, was evaluated using structural equation modeling. Confirmatory factor analysis results showed that the second-order factor structure fit the observed data well and that there was a substantial association between the four latent variables. The outcome confirmed the suggested model, according to which four constructs were crucial to CSR. As a result, business leaders might approach challenges pertaining to CSR issues with more clarity.

[8] Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) disclosures have grown to be a significant force in the development of all stakeholders over the past few decades, but the most popular intersecting circle representation of CSR assessment has produced contradictory findings regarding the relationship between CSR and its performance. By examining

the framework of CSR evaluation procedures on the identification of five criteria and seventeen indicators covering the strategies of accountability, transparency, and compliance of CSR, this study closes a significant gap. The methodologies have been defined in relation to various literatures and quaternary surveys for criterion selection, where the criteria are expressed in a fuzzy horizon, in order to accomplish the purpose of CSR. A fuzzy analytical networking approach and the balanced scorecard (BSC) method have been used to solve this multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) model and provide a selection strategy. The findings of the article assist corporate sector managers, especially those in developing nations, in efficiently implementing sustainable practices as CSR providers and in gaining a sizable and justifiable advantage. The results revealed the structure of the CSR assessment and the connections between BSC perspectives, criteria, and indicators that managers needed to focus on in order to achieve optimal CSR performance. "Accountability of CSR Project" is the best strategy, according to this study, and "Project team work, incentives, Environmental resources, Communication for motivation, Reporting initiative of stockholders, CSR project with stockholder capital, Strategic governance, Mission sustainability, Political role, Human resources," are the criteria, respectively.

[9] A variety of solutions to handle this issue have arisen as a result of corporate social responsibility (CSR) becoming a component of the sustainability discussion within firms. For instance, ISO 26000 seeks to help businesses use worldwide norms of behavior and support sustainable development. Although this kind of standard is appealing, organizations must overcome several obstacles before using it. In light of these difficulties, this chapter outlines some of ISO 26000's features as well as the primary motivators and obstacles for implementing social standards and CSR programs. In order to present significant discoveries regarding CSR, social standards, and the factors that encourage and hinder CSR, the literature is examined. The chapter provides a detailed overview of the primary forces behind corporate social responsibility (CSR), including stakeholder pressure, globalization, reputation, competitive advantage, a reduction in business risks, government regulations, enhancing employee-organization relationships, enhancing coworker relationships, compatibility with other standards, and company

size. There are obstacles to ISO implementation in addition to motivators. The chapter also discusses some of the obstacles to putting CSR systems and standards into practice, such as a lack of understanding or awareness of CSR, a lack of understanding about how to integrate CSR with the organization's strategy, commercial barriers (both domestic and foreign), a lack of theme sensitivity, and a lack of financial resources. In order to conduct CSR activities, organizations can utilize the instruments provided by the standards and benefit from the drivers, strengthening their beliefs and providing justification for their actions.



Figure 2: Carroll's CSR Framework

[10] This study evaluates whether shareholders influence a company's environmental and social (E&S) performance globally. Institutional ownership has a positive correlation with E&S performance in 41 countries, and further testing indicate that this relationship is causative. Institutions are driven by social as well as financial gains. After shocks that demonstrate the financial benefits of E&S improvements, investors boost a company's E&S performance. Investors from nations where the public strongly believes in the relevance of E&S concerns outperform those from other countries in terms of E&S performance. Consequently, these institutional investors spread their social norms on E&S issues globally.

### III. CSR IN SAUDI ARABIA

#### 3.1 CSR Theories and Views

Carroll identified four dimensions of corporate social responsibility:

- Economic – ensuring profitability to sustain operations and meet obligations.
- Legal – complying with laws and regulations such as employment and tax requirements.
- Ethical – acting according to moral standards and fairness, beyond legal mandates.
- Philanthropic – contributing voluntarily to society through charitable and community initiatives.

As Zhang (2019) illustrates, economic responsibility forms the foundation of the CSR pyramid, since without financial viability, higher responsibilities cannot be fulfilled. Legal compliance safeguards reputation and legitimacy, ethical conduct reflects societal values, and philanthropy demonstrates corporate citizenship through voluntary support for social causes.

The Persian Gulf to the east and the Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba to the west enclose the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the biggest nation on the Arabian Peninsula. It is connected to Bahrain by a causeway and borders Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Yemen by land. The capital, Riyadh, is home to 28.29 million people as of 2012. Over 90% of export earnings come from oil, making Saudi Arabia the world's largest producer and exporter of crude oil. The country's economy is mostly built on petroleum (UNDP, 2012). The Saudi Riyal (SAR) is the currency, and Arabic is the official language, while English is commonly used. The declaration of national unification on September 23, 1932, established Islam as the official religion. The government introduced Vision 2030, a strategic framework aimed at diversifying the economy and lowering reliance on oil, in 2016. Work permits and corporate compliance are governed by sector-specific rules, and implementation is organized at the ministerial level. Businesses are establishing CSR and sustainability programs to assist national development goals, and they are increasingly coordinating their efforts with the aims of Vision 2030.

Table 1: Population of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by Sex and Nationality (Saudi vs. Non-Saudi)

Population in Saudi Arabia by Gender, Age, Nationality (Saudi/Non-Saudi) - Mid 2016										السكان في المملكة حسب الجنس وفئات العمر والجنسية (سعودي/ غير سعودي) في منتصف 2016 م									
Table 2-1										جدول 2-1									
Total			Non - Saudi			Saudi			Total			Non - Saudi			Saudi			فئات العمر	
جملة	ذكور	إناث	جملة	ذكور	إناث	جملة	ذكور	إناث	جملة	ذكور	إناث	جملة	ذكور	إناث	جملة	ذكور	إناث	Age Groups	
2,674,932	1,310,397	1,364,535	537,747	261,520	276,227	2,137,185	1,048,877	1,088,308	0-4										
2,771,032	1,358,422	1,412,610	682,113	332,676	349,437	2,088,919	1,025,746	1,063,173	5 - 9										
2,428,319	1,192,305	1,236,014	558,994	271,257	287,737	1,869,325	921,048	948,277	10 - 14										
2,216,050	1,084,041	1,132,009	455,023	219,171	235,852	1,761,027	864,870	896,157	15 - 19										
2,471,757	1,155,922	1,315,835	485,104	206,601	278,503	1,986,653	949,321	1,037,332	20 - 24										
3,032,408	1,360,343	1,672,065	1,127,425	418,649	708,776	1,904,983	941,694	963,289	25 - 29										
3,063,233	1,268,056	1,795,177	1,343,884	416,233	927,661	1,719,339	851,823	867,516	30 - 34										
3,399,988	1,276,827	2,123,161	1,897,557	535,049	1,362,508	1,502,431	741,778	760,653	35 - 39										
3,038,184	1,107,577	1,930,607	1,774,587	487,949	1,286,648	1,263,587	619,628	643,959	40 - 44										
2,261,119	773,673	1,487,446	1,208,309	261,977	946,332	1,052,810	511,696	541,114	45 - 49										
1,582,175	506,199	1,075,976	742,888	98,491	644,397	839,287	407,708	431,579	50 - 54										
1,095,434	373,285	722,149	450,203	64,380	385,823	645,231	308,905	336,326	55 - 59										
724,256	274,019	450,237	252,600	46,059	206,541	471,656	227,960	243,696	60 - 64										
405,199	185,218	219,981	100,079	28,410	71,669	305,120	156,808	148,312	65 - 69										
270,221	129,209	141,012	51,149	18,347	32,802	219,072	110,862	108,210	70 - 74										
161,004	76,090	84,914	19,835	4,515	15,320	141,169	71,575	69,594	75 - 79										
192,269	96,278	95,991	18,481	6,359	12,122	173,788	89,919	83,869	80 فأكثر										
31,787,580	13,527,861	18,259,719	11,705,998	3,677,643	8,028,355	20,081,582	9,850,218	10,231,364	جملة										
Preliminary estimates in mid-year based on results of demographic survey 2016 A.D.										التقديرات الأولية في منتصف العام مبنية من نتائج مسح السجس السكاني 2016 م									
Source : The General Authority for Statistics (GAStat)										المصدر: الهيئة العامة للإحصاء									

This study uses a qualitative research design and is based on in-person interviews with people who are in charge of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in organizations as well as others who have relevant experience in government and private enterprises. Participants were approached with informed consent, ensuring they understood the research objectives and their right to withdraw at any stage. Each participant's role and area of expertise informed the interview questions, and follow-up questions were employed to delve further into their viewpoints and experiences. The methodological argument, which is frequently presented as a contrast between positivism and interpretivism, invariably touches on ontology and epistemology. Scholars like Guba and Lincoln (1994) contend that methodological decisions are subordinate to philosophical presumptions, whereas Saunders (2009) emphasizes the pragmatic position, which admits that strict adherence to a single paradigm is unfeasible. By emphasizing the research objective and useful results over rigid philosophical conformity, pragmatics enables researchers to combine aspects of both traditions.

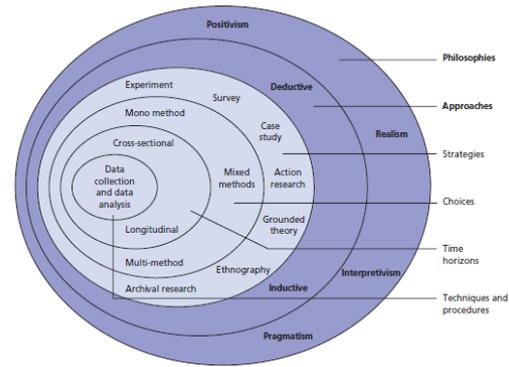


Figure 3: Research "Onion" Framework

Data from government agencies and private businesses was gathered in order to analyze CSR programs in Saudi Arabia. Since CSR is still a relatively new idea in the area, a qualitative technique was chosen, driven by an interpretive paradigm. Instead of evaluating established ideas, the study's inductive methodology focused on examining real-world CSR practices.

First, observations and pattern recognition were used to frame the interviews. Next, hypothetical questions were asked, and last, theoretical insights were connected. This multi-layered strategy is a reflection of Saunders' (2009) "research onion," in which methodological decisions are gradually improved to better suit the goals and environment of the study.

### 3.2 Samples and Data Collection Process

To acquire comprehensive insights about CSR activities in Saudi Arabia, semi-structured interviews were performed virtually using open-ended questions. Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, some people who had previously committed later withdrew. Participants were notified of their ability to withdraw at any time, and consent forms detailing the study's objectives and methods were sent via email. Accessing government agencies was tough since it was hard to find the right people to reply to the survey and several offices refused to participate, either in person or digitally. Since many authorities were working remotely and unavailable for interviews, the epidemic significantly decreased response rates. Interviews were scheduled at times that worked for the participants, and scheduling was done via email conversation. Pandemic-related limitations and organizational worries about adhering to stringent Competition Law requirements were the main reasons for delays, since some

institutions were reluctant to take part. The appendix contains the consent form.

Table 2: A List of the Number of Organizations Interviewed

Company	Year of establishment	Activity	Industry	Positions
1.Organi zation	1945	Retail distribu tor	Autom otive	Head of environ ment, safety security, and risk.
2.Organi zation	1976	Retail Distribu tor	Financi al services , Autom otive	Financi al advisor
3.Organi zation	1970	Retail distribu tor	Autom otive	Senior manage ment
4.Organi zation	1999	Audit firm	Assura nce	Senior executiv e
5.Organi zation	1961	Service deliver y and stress manage ment	Guidan ce and counsel ing	Chief Environ ment, Health Safety, and security
6.Organi zation	1964	Charity service s	Non-Profit Organiz ation	Chief executiv e officer

### 3.3 Research Limitations

- Although the COVID-19 epidemic created major challenges, the study offered new insights into CSR actions for a number of participants.
- Governmental organizations created stringent regulatory obstacles within a bureaucratic environment, and many respondents refused to give information because of business rules and procedural restrictions.
- Furthermore, a number of firms lacked formal CSR initiatives, which diminished the significance of their efforts.
- Restrictions imposed by competition law further restricted disclosure, as participants frequently only offered broad viewpoints on CSR rather than specifics about their organizations.

- Finding qualified responders took a lot of time and work, and convincing them to participate in online or in-person interviews was challenging.
- These difficulties were made worse by the six-month lockout, during which participants prioritized necessary office tasks and shied away from pursuits they believed would not directly benefit their companies or themselves.

## IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Table 3: Key Themes and Guiding Questions for CSR Interviews in KSA

Theme	Guiding Question(s)
Definition of CSR	How do you define CSR? How does your organization define CSR and its main components?
Strategic Alignment	How does CSR fit into your company’s overall strategy?
Industry Practices	How are CSR activities practiced in your industry?
Community Engagement	How do you describe the community in which your company operates? How do you serve it?
Stakeholders	Who are your key stakeholders, and how do you communicate with them?
Organizational Strategies	What CSR strategies support CSR in your organization? What is leadership’s vision?
Barriers	What challenges exist in implementing CSR in your organization?
Policies	What policies support CSR in your organization?
Measurement	How are CSR activities evaluated or measured?
Industry Comparison	How do CSR practices in your industry compare with other companies?
Future Development	What potential changes or gaps exist in CSR development within your organization?

The majority of participants defined CSR similarly. According to Participants 1, 4, and 6, it adds value to the community while preventing harm. Participant 6 also mentioned that government policies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have a significant impact on the impact of CSR. While participants 2, 3, and 5 stressed a comprehensive approach, connecting corporate social responsibility (CSR) to stakeholders, company goals, and environmental obligations, they also pointed out that CSR is still not well defined in Saudi Arabia and needs more public awareness.

A number of participants, reflecting cultural and religious traditions, linked corporate social responsibility (CSR) with philanthropy or ad hoc volunteering. While Participants 5 and 2 pointed out that family-owned businesses in the Middle East frequently engage in CSR covertly because of religious beliefs, Participant 2 stated that CSR should be incorporated into the organizational value chain.

When asked about their organizational definitions, Participants 1 and 4 primarily thought of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as giving back to society, which was frequently unrelated to business objectives. Components like avoiding environmental impact and promoting customer welfare were identified by participants 1, 4, and 5. Bab Rizq Jameel was mentioned by Participant 1 as an illustration of a community-focused project that promotes local growth.

Participants discussed how CSR in Saudi Arabia is changing as a result of corporate generosity.

- The change, according to Participant 1, improved their brand locally, garnered support from shareholders, and connected CSR to more general community development.
- CSR was described by participants 2 and 4 as ethical and comprehensive, going outside their sectors to causes such as breast cancer awareness while being in line with core strengths. Their answers emphasized CSR as a responsible investment that is driven by the community.
- After first remaining silent, participant 6 talked about benchmarking with publicly traded corporations.
- Every participant agreed that CSR should be incorporated into Vision 2030, that regulations should be followed, and that the government should be involved. Participant 2 mentioned using reporting frameworks like GRI and interacting with ministries.
- Participants 1, 3, and 5 emphasized environmental responsibility, pointing to worldwide examples such as hydrogen programs and electric vehicles.

In general, CSR strategies differed throughout firms, but they always represented ethical responsibility, community investment, and government regulation under Vision 2030.

Regulation & Vision 2030: The majority of participants, including Participant 1, agreed that CSR operations are governed by laws and regulations. They connected technology development and CSR to Vision 2030.

- Technology & Awareness: While stressing the use of technology to promote corporate social responsibility, Participant 5 cautioned against damaging company reputations. Participant 4 acknowledged that they lacked CSR awareness and had poor technological proficiency.
- Youth Influence: According to participants 1 and 3, young Saudis who had returned from outside promoted CSR initiatives that were comparable to those in Western nations.
- Environmental Strategies: Although Participant 1 admitted that their products were bad for the environment, they intended to switch to combustion-free and renewable energy items in the next ten years. While participants 2 and 5 did not answer, participant 3 agreed.
- Engagement with the Community: Participants emphasized CSR as helping the entire community, not just clients. Initiatives included working with hospitals, encouraging eco-friendly behaviors, and supporting COVID-19 initiatives.
- Charity & Support: Participants 3, 5, and 6 talked about initiatives to safeguard workers, help the underprivileged, and gather donations.
- Stakeholders and Communication: Shareholders and management were at the center of the hierarchical definition of stakeholders. During COVID, memos, bulletins, films, and online meetings were used as communication tools. Social media and AI were being used more and more.

#### Regulations Endorsing CSR

- Participant 1: Environmental policy, business continuity, health and safety, and Jameel standards.
- Participant 2: Reporting on environmental awareness, employee welfare, health, and safety.
- Participant 3: Supports a unified approach to corporate social responsibility among subsidiaries.
- Those who did not reply were participants 4, 5, and 6.

#### Assessing CSR Initiatives

- Jameel standards, questionnaires, and compliance checks are the first participant.
- Participant 2: "Riyali" financial awareness program, social investment systems, and volunteering measurement systems.
- Third party: ongoing updates on both qualitative and quantitative measurements.
- Participant 4: Agency-based social rating methods.
- Participant 5: CSR reporting and content analysis.
- Participant 6: Disseminating CSR information by mail, media, and online.

#### Tracking CSR and Upcoming Developments

- Participant 1: In two to three years, AI and technology will change CSR.
- Participant 2: The government ought to support publishing and strategy development.
- Participant 3: Rapid adaptability and environmental monitoring. Digital media for CSR monitoring is the fourth participant.
- Participant 5: Ethical labor practices and philanthropy.
- Participant 6: Tracking shifts in technology and public opinion to modify CSR initiatives.

### V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

According to this survey, a large number of businesses in Saudi Arabia have a long history of implementing socially conscious practices. However, because participants frequently saw CSR as an expense rather than an investment, few people truly understand its significance and strategic relevance. The Saudi government should address this by implementing financial incentives that would increase the attractiveness of corporate social responsibility to companies. Newer groups and practitioners should also receive direction and assistance from established companies with effective CSR initiatives. Platforms for assessing CSR activities are available, but in order to institutionalize CSR and increase its impact, stakeholders must work together more closely. This calls for providing CSR managers with training, education, and other resources in addition to discussing successful adoption strategies. Businesses that have successfully incorporated corporate social responsibility (CSR) have matched

their programs with community values, emphasizing the value of establishing social infrastructure and keeping lines of communication open with local networks. Strengthening CSR frameworks also requires better workplace relations and ethical employment practices. Saudi businesses need to be aware of new concerns brought about by technology, such as natural disasters, global warming, and public health emergencies like COVID-19. Globally, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has caused businesses to prioritize community welfare over profit alone. While SMEs are increasingly incorporating sustainability into their beliefs, multinational firms have included corporate social responsibility (CSR) into their objectives. Implementing eco-friendly policies and making sure that new rules and regulations are applied smoothly without interfering with business operations are crucial tasks for both the government and enterprises. The development of CSR is further aided by Saudi Arabia's resource availability. In order to institutionalize corporate social responsibility (CSR) across enterprises, universities, and other educational institutions are urged to incorporate it into training programs and curricula. Saudi businesses can improve their worldwide market presence and support a just and equitable society by implementing such tactics.

### REFERENCES

- [1] A. M. Aldosari, Investigating the Awareness of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Disclosure and Practice in Saudi Arabia, Doctoral dissertation, Univ. of Reading, 2017.
- [2] H. Aguinis, "On corporate social responsibility, sensemaking, and the search for meaningfulness through work," *J. Manage.*, Feb. 2017.
- [3] Y. Alfakhri, M. Nurunnabi, and D. Alfakhri, "Young Saudi consumers and corporate social responsibility: an Islamic 'CSR tree' model," *Int. J. Soc. Econ.*, vol. 45, no. 11, pp. 1692–1708, 2018.
- [4] Y. Alfakhri, M. Nurunnabi, D. H. Alfakhri, and S. F. A. Hossain, "Corporate social responsibility in Saudi Arabia: application of Carroll's model," *J. Xi'an Univ. Archit. Technol.*, vol. 12, no. 6, pp. 1059–1072, 2020.
- [5] A. Alotaibi, F. Edum-Fotwe, and A. D. Price, "Critical barriers to social responsibility

- implementation within mega-construction projects: the case of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,” *Sustainability*, vol. 11, no. 6, p. 1755, 2019.
- [6] E. Astrakhantseva, O. Shipsova, and M. Antonova, “The role of transnational corporations in the globalization of the economy,” in *Proc. Int. Conf. Sustainable Development of Cross-Border Regions: Economic, Social and Security Challenges (ICSDCBR)*, Atlantis Press, Nov. 2019.
- [7] C. H. Chen, “The major components of corporate social responsibility,” *J. Global Responsib.*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 1–19, 2017.
- [8] A. Debnath, J. Roy, K. Chatterjee, and S. Kar, “Measuring corporate social responsibility based on fuzzy analytic networking process-based balanced scorecard model,” *Int. J. Inf. Technol. Decis. Mak.*, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 1203–1235, 2018.
- [9] R. M. Deus, B. M. R. P. Seles, K. R. O. Vieira, and R. A. G. Battistelli, “Organizational challenges to corporate social responsibility,” in *ISO 26000—A Standardized View on Corporate Social Responsibility*, Cham: Springer, 2019, pp. 207–219.
- [10] A. Dyck, K. V. Lins, L. Roth, and H. F. Wagner, “Do institutional investors drive corporate social responsibility? International evidence,” *J. Financ. Econ.*, vol. 131, no. 3, pp. 693–714, 2019.
- [11] G. Fornes, B. Lopez, M. B. de Haan, and J. Blanch, “Best practice example of CSR and S&E engagement in emerging economies: analysing a case study based in China,” *J. Asia Bus. Stud.*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 475–492, 2019.
- [12] G. García-Martínez, F. Guijarro, and J. A. Poyatos, “Measuring the social responsibility of European companies: a goal programming approach,” *Int. Trans. Oper. Res.*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 1074–1095, 2019.
- [13] O. M. B. Grave, *Corporate Social Responsibility in Saudi Arabia*, Master’s thesis, 2016.
- [14] M. Hafez, “Measuring the impact of corporate social responsibility practices on brand equity in the banking industry in Bangladesh,” *Int. J. Bank Mark.*, vol. 36, no. 5, pp. 806–822, 2018.
- [15] V. Hallböck, *Drivers and Barriers for Corporate Social Responsibility in Multinational Corporations: A Case Study of Wärtsilä, Finland*, 2018.
- [16] P. S. Hofman, J. Moon, and B. Wu, “Corporate social responsibility under authoritarian capitalism: dynamics and prospects of state-led and society-driven CSR,” *Bus. Soc.*, vol. 56, no. 5, pp. 651–671, 2017.
- [17] A. Kechiche and R. Soparnot, “CSR within SMEs: literature review,” *Int. Bus. Res.*, vol. 5, no. 7, pp. 97–104, 2012.
- [18] W. Kucharska and R. Kowalczyk, “How to achieve sustainability? Employee’s point of view on the company’s culture and CSR practice,” *Corp. Soc. Responsib. Environ. Manag.*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 453–467, 2019.
- [19] J. S. Lim and C. A. Greenwood, “Communicating corporate social responsibility (CSR): stakeholder responsiveness and engagement strategy to achieve CSR goals,” *Public Relat. Rev.*, vol. 43, no. 4, pp. 768–776, 2017.
- [20] M. J. Murphy, J. B. MacDonald, G. E. Antoine, and J. M. Smolarski, “Exploring Muslim attitudes towards corporate social responsibility: are Saudi business students different?” *J. Bus. Ethics*, vol. 154, no. 4, pp. 1103–1118, 2019.
- [21] E. R. Osagie, R. Wesselink, V. Blok, T. Lans, and M. Mulder, “Individual competencies for corporate social responsibility: a literature and practice perspective,” *J. Bus. Ethics*, vol. 135, no. 2, pp. 233–252, 2016.
- [22] L. Pinto and A. Allui, “Critical drivers and barriers of corporate social responsibility in Saudi Arabia organizations,” *J. Asian Finance Econ. Bus.*, vol. 7, no. 11, pp. 259–268, 2020.
- [23] P. Rodrigo, C. Aqueveque, and I. J. Duran, “Do employees value strategic CSR? A tale of affective organizational commitment and its underlying mechanisms,” *Bus. Ethics Eur. Rev.*, vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 459–475, 2019.
- [24] A. E. Saeidi, *The Study of Endogenous Corporate Social Responsibility in Saudi Arabia*, 2019.
- [25] R. Steurer, “The role of governments in corporate social responsibility: characterizing public policies on CSR in Europe,” *Policy Sci.*, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 49–72, 2010.
- [26] K. F. Yuen and J. M. Lim, “Barriers to the implementation of strategic corporate social responsibility in shipping,” *Asian J. Shipp. Logist.*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 49–57, 2016.

- [27] United Nations, “CSR and developing countries: what scope for government action?” Innovation Briefs, 2007.
- [28] Saudi Government, Vision 2030, 2014.
- [29] World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Our Approach, 1999.