



UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION (UniMAC)

INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**INTERNAL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PRACTICES OF SOME
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS: THE CASE STUDY OF SOME SELECTED PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA.**

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MASPRM 24010

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

NOVEMBER 2025

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BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM,
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MANAGEMENT**

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DECLARATIONS

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Anthony Derrick Akpai, do hereby declare that the work presented is the result of my own efforts, original research and findings and that no part of it has been presented for another degree or diploma in this university or elsewhere. All references to other people's work have been acknowledged. Therefore, I will be held responsible for any errors detected in this project work.

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: **11/12/2025**

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation of this long essay was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of dissertations laid down by UniMAC-IJ.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **DR. NOEL NUTSUGAH**

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: **10/12/2025**

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, whose unwavering love, support, and encouragement have guided me throughout my academic journey.

Thank you for empowering me to explore and understand the wonders of the world and beyond.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am profoundly grateful to God for His strength, love, and grace. My deepest thanks go to my family for their unwavering love and support.

I extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Noel Nutsugah, for his invaluable guidance, insightful feedback, and steadfast encouragement, which were instrumental to this work.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores how internal corporate social responsibility (ICSR) practices are incorporated within select public universities in Ghana, using stakeholder theory as its foundation. Conducted through a qualitative, exploratory design, the study engaged eight staff members from two public universities, selected via convenience sampling. The findings provide a detailed understanding of how ICSR is embedded into university operations, revealing key strategies, challenges, and results. The study emphasises the transformative potential of ICSR in aligning public institutional responsibilities with broader social welfare goals. It moves beyond traditional motivational tools, highlighting the significance of employee training, improved working environments, and a supportive organisational culture. These aspects reinforce stakeholder theory's focus on inclusive decision-making and addressing varied employee interests. However, the research also identified barriers to effective ICSR implementation, such as limited financial resources, vague strategies for integration, and difficulties in defining ICSR-related activities. In response, the study recommends clearer implementation frameworks, better funding, and a shift toward initiatives centred on employee well-being. These measures aim to create a supportive work culture while enhancing the societal impact of ICSR in public institutions.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides the introduction to the research and deals with the background of the research, the problem statement, the aim and objective of the study, research questions, scope of the research, and the significance of the research. It establishes the context for examining how Internal Corporate Social Responsibility affects staff performance in selected public universities in Ghana.

1.1 Background of the Study

The rise of the socially conscious business world has elevated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) from a moral obligation to a strategic imperative for improving organisational performance and employee commitment (Sarfraz et al., 2018). A key trend within this shift is the growing focus on Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) practices directed at employees' well-being, such as positive work environments, work-life balance, talent development, and participatory engagement (Sarvaiya & Arrowsmith, 2003).

ICSR is crucial because dedicated employees are the backbone of organisational success (Bakotić, 2016). These programs shape the psychological and physical workplace, influencing motivation, satisfaction, and retention (Liu et al., 2023; El Akremi et al., 2018). This is particularly relevant for public sector institutions, which often face challenges like bureaucratic rigidity, lower compensation, and high turnover that erodes institutional memory and service quality (Bardhan, 2016). Implementing ICSR initiatives, such as flexible schedules, training, and recognition, can

mitigate these issues by enhancing the employee experience and fostering commitment (AbdelAzim et al., 2022).

However, a significant research gap persists, especially in the Ghanaian context. While CSR in Ghana is prominent in sectors like mining and education, discussions predominantly focus on external community projects by private corporations (Osei-Kojo et al., 2020; More et al., 2015). There is scant attention on ICSR within public institutions, leaving the internal welfare of public sector employees underexplored. Consequently, the specific link between ICSR practices and employee performance in Ghana's public sector remains largely unexamined.

This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by investigating the impact of Internal Corporate Social Responsibility on employee performance within selected public institutions in Ghana, moving the discourse beyond external CSR to the internal practices that sustain a vital workforce.

1.2 Statement of Problem

While Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has gained prominence globally and in Ghana, the focus has overwhelmingly been on *external* initiatives targeting communities and the environment. This has led to the relative neglect of Internal CSR (ICSR), practices focused on employee welfare and the internal work environment, particularly within Ghana's public institutions.

The extant literature underscores the importance of ICSR. Studies indicate that effective ICSR strategies are critical for managing organisational activities and evaluating employee performance (Brieger et al., 2019). Research has linked positive perceptions of ICSR to greater policy compliance, task completion (Hur, Moon, & Choi, 2019), improved productivity (Obeidat et al., 2018), and reduced staff turnover (Esmaelibezhad et al., 2015). These outcomes are vital for

public sector institutions, such as universities, which face challenges like high turnover, inefficiency, and service quality issues due to the loss of skilled personnel.

However, a significant research gap persists. Comprehensive reviews confirm that most CSR scholarship prioritises external societal stakeholders, paying scant attention to internal social concerns and employee welfare (Tina et al., 2019). Consequently, there is a lack of empirical investigation into how ICSR specifically impacts employee performance within Ghana's public sector. This oversight is critical, as these institutions rely on committed staff to achieve their mandates, and their performance is a central concern for national development.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by exploring the ICSR initiatives within selected Ghanaian public institutions and examining how these practices affect employee performance.

1.3 Research Aim

This study aims to investigate the impact of Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) on staff performance within some selected public universities in Ghana.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To identify the Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) practices implemented by selected public universities in Ghana
2. To assess the impact of these internal CSR practices on employees' job satisfaction and organisational commitment.
3. To evaluate the challenges faced by public universities in implementing internal CSR practices.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the key internal CSR practices implemented by selected public universities in Ghana to enhance employee well-being and job satisfaction?
2. How do these internal CSR practices affect employees' job satisfaction and organisational commitment?
3. What challenges do public universities face in implementing internal CSR practices?

1.6 Scope of the Study

This paper aims to highlight the perspective of Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) practices within the selected public universities of the Republic of Ghana. The study aims to understand the benefits of ICSR practices, such as the welfare of employees, training and development programs, work-life balance practices, the promotion of diversity, and award programs, to the enhancement of the performance of the staff of the selected public universities of the Republic of Ghana. The paper would be limited to the academic and administrative staff of the selected public universities of the Republic of Ghana since the two groups of staff are important for the achievement of the institutions' goals and objectives. The research would not be focused on the CSR practices of the selected global organisations since the paper aims to highlight the importance of ICSR practices towards the performance of the staff of the selected public universities of the Republic of Ghana. The geographical scope of the research would be limited to the selected few public universities of the Republic of Ghana, since the paper aims to highlight the importance of ICSR practices towards the performance of the staff of the selected public universities of the Republic of Ghana.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several key reasons.

First, it contributes to academic knowledge by addressing a notable gap in the existing literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). While CSR in the public sector has been widely studied, there is limited specific research on Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) within public institutions, particularly regarding its direct relationship with employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This research will provide empirical data to clarify this relationship, potentially refining and expanding current theories on ICSR and performance.

Second, the findings offer practical value for policymakers and administrators within public universities. The insights generated can guide the development and implementation of effective ICSR strategies tailored to employee needs. Understanding the link between ICSR practices and staff outcomes can help institutions foster a more positive work environment, enhance job satisfaction, and strengthen employee commitment.

Finally, the study has broader organisational and societal implications. By informing policies that promote ICSR adoption, this research can help public universities reduce staff turnover, retain qualified personnel, and improve overall service delivery. Consequently, the study supports the improved functioning of vital public institutions, contributing to their stability and effectiveness.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The research work consists of five chapters. The first chapter introduces the research work's background information, statements of the problems, aims and objectives, significance, and scope that form the basis of understanding the ways through which Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) shapes the job satisfaction level within the public universities. The second

chapter constitutes a literature review that captures the various concepts, theoretical frameworks, and shows the research gaps through previously related studies. The third chapter outlines the research work's methodology, which includes the strategies used during the collection and analysis of data. Finally, the fourth and fifth chapters highlight the findings and conclusions of the research work that describe the influence of ICSR on job satisfaction and provide suggestions that can improve the practices of ICSR within the public sector.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter focuses on reviewing previous studies that have been conducted around Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR), stakeholder engagement in public institutions, and other relevant organisational performance elements present in the management of employee relations in public universities.

The review becomes important for understanding the scope within which previous studies have been conducted, to tease out existing gaps that will form the basis for this study. This position is corroborated by Leedy (1985, p. 32), as he opines that "literature review can show a researcher how the collateral researcher handled various situations and it assists the researcher in evaluating his or her efforts by comparing them with related efforts made by others." The chapter also discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the study.

2.1 Definition of Key Terms

2.1.1 Defining Corporate Social Responsibility

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has undergone significant evolution, reflecting a shift in societal expectations that organisations must serve a broader purpose beyond profit maximisation. It is a broad notion that encompasses diverse social activities, such as job creation, charitable giving, and the promotion of human rights (Kim & Kim, 2021). Its historical development illustrates a progression from philosophical debate to a strategic organisational imperative.

Early foundational work established the core principle of societal obligation. Bowen (1953), often considered the father of modern CSR, defined it as a corporate duty to pursue policies aligned with societal values. This stood in contrast to Friedman's (1962) view, which argued that a firm's primary responsibility is to increase profits within legal and ethical boundaries. Subsequent thinkers expanded this scope. Davis (1967) introduced the idea that corporate social power necessitates responsible exercise, while the Committee for Economic Development (1971) framed CSR as contributing to social progress.

The conceptualisation of CSR became more structured in the late 20th century. Carroll (1979) proposed an influential model, suggesting CSR encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations society has of an organisation at a given time. This period also saw a shift towards viewing CSR as integral to business strategy. Drucker (1984) advocated for turning social challenges into economic opportunities, highlighting the potential for mutual benefit for business and society. Thus, CSR has evolved from discretionary philanthropy to a multifaceted framework for responsible and strategic business conduct.

2.1.2 Economic Responsibility

Economic responsibility serves as the foundational layer of Corporate Social Responsibility. According to Carroll's (1991) pyramid model, an organisation must be profitable and sustainable before it can fulfil its legal, ethical, and philanthropic obligations. In essence, financial viability enables a firm to support its employees, customers, and shareholders, and to pursue broader social or environmental goals (Yasin, 2021).

Traditionally viewed as entities that supply goods and services for profit, businesses today are expected to meet this responsibility through fair pricing, operational efficiency, and long-term

value creation for all stakeholders. This involves offering quality products, maintaining transparent operations, and adopting business models that contribute to sustained economic growth (Hangst et al., 2020).

Furthermore, economic responsibility entails prudent resource management, investment in innovation, and the capacity to adapt to market shifts. In doing so, organisations do not merely ensure their own competitiveness; they also drive wider economic development through job creation, tax contributions, and stimulation of related industries.

Ultimately, this dimension recognises that businesses function within a larger socio-economic system. Firms that practice sustainable economics help secure their own future while reinforcing community well-being. Thus, economic responsibility aligns profitability with social value, ensuring that commercial success supports collective progress.

2.1.3 Legal Responsibility

Legal responsibility forms the second tier of Carroll's CSR framework and reflects society's formal expectations of business conduct (Saleh, 2022). It recognises that organisations are expected to pursue profit but must do so within the boundaries of established laws. Statutes such as the Anti-Corruption Act, the Environmental Act, and the Labour Act aim to ensure fair operations and protect both people and the environment (Halkos and Nomikos, 2021). Compliance signals an organisation's commitment to responsible practice and good corporate citizenship.

There is also growing recognition of the need for broader legal standards that safeguard the environment, protect workers' rights, and ensure accountability across borders. Halkos and Nomikos (2021) argue that universal frameworks are increasingly important as globalisation

expands business activities beyond national jurisdictions. Operating responsibly now requires adherence to both domestic and international regulations.

In public sector settings, legal responsibility carries even greater weight. Public institutions must comply not only with legal statutes but also with governance guidelines, civil service regulations and accountability measures that promote transparency in resource use. These principles strengthen public trust and ensure that institutions serve the wider public interest. Legal responsibility, therefore, provides a foundation for ethical and sustainable governance, reminding organisations that economic goals must be pursued in line with the law and societal expectations.

2.1.4 Ethical Responsibility

Ethical responsibility is the third layer of Carroll's (1991) CSR pyramid and reflects the moral expectations that go beyond legal requirements. Laws set minimum standards, but ethical responsibility asks organisations to act with fairness, integrity, and respect for human dignity. Halkos and Nomikos (2021) describe this as follows: socially grounded norms that promote justice and equity. The aim is not only to avoid harm but also to support the well-being of stakeholders even when the law is silent.

In practice, ethical responsibility involves values-driven decisions marked by honesty, transparency, and respect in dealings with employees, customers, and communities. Carroll and Buchholtz (2015) note that ethical behaviour is a voluntary commitment to doing what is right rather than what is legally enforced. It includes fair labour practices, truthful communication, respect for diversity, and care for the environment. Organisations that embed ethical values often

benefit from stronger reputations, committed staff, and deeper stakeholder trust, which support long-term sustainability (Crane et al., 2019).

This responsibility is especially important in public institutions such as universities, where decisions can carry broad social consequences. Ethical leadership in these settings involves fair recruitment and promotion, protection of academic integrity, and inclusive cultures that respect differences in gender, ethnicity, and opinion (Freeman et al., 2007). It also requires transparency in resource allocation and a commitment to staff and student wellbeing. Upholding these values strengthens institutional credibility and public confidence.

Ethical responsibility highlights that genuine organisational success involves more than financial results or legal compliance. It signals an organisation's moral direction and its readiness to act for the common good. Moon and Vogel (2008) argue that ethical responsibility is essential for institutional sustainability because it aligns organisational aims with wider societal values. In public universities, embedding ethical responsibility in governance and daily practice supports academic excellence while advancing social justice, equality, and human development.

2.1.5 Social Responsibility

Social responsibility represents the most voluntary tier of Carroll's (1991) CSR pyramid, reflecting a genuine desire to advance human welfare. This dimension is characterised by discretionary initiatives that go beyond obligatory duties, motivated by compassion and a moral duty toward society (Chia, 2021).

Often termed philanthropic responsibility, it includes activities such as charitable donations, community investments, and support for education, health, and the environment (Albitar et al.,

2021). Although these actions may not provide immediate financial returns, they strengthen community bonds and build public trust.

For public universities, this responsibility takes on particular significance. As agents of social change, they are expected to extend their knowledge and resources to address societal challenges through community outreach, research aimed at solving local issues, and partnerships with marginalised groups. This underscores a dual commitment: advancing academic excellence while ensuring knowledge translates into tangible benefits for the wider community.

2.2 Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR)

Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) focuses on employees' physical and psychological conditions at work (Macassa et al., 2021). It reflects a company's responsible conduct toward its workforce (Liu et al., 2023) and shifts attention inward, contrasting with external CSR, which targets customers, communities, and the environment. ICSR covers efforts to build a supportive workplace that promotes health, training, fair promotion, work-life balance, and equality (Shirmohammadi et al., 2022). These initiatives emphasise that employees, as the organisation's internal customers, must be prioritised before external audiences are addressed (Avila Tamayo and Bayona, 2022).

Duthler and Dhanesh (2018) note that employees are a central audience for CSR communication, since ICSR strengthens perceptions of fairness, trust, and commitment. Although ICSR can attract and retain talent, its impact weakens when initiatives appear superficial or disconnected from employees' real needs. Genuine, employee-centred practices are therefore essential.

Internal CSR strengthens relationships between organisations and their staff (Adu Gyamfi et al., 2021). Policies that support safety, well-being, and professional development help create a motivating environment, reduce costs, and raise productivity. Employees who feel valued tend to show greater satisfaction, lower absenteeism, and stronger performance (Ahmed et al., 2020). A positive cycle emerges when organisations invest in employee welfare, and employees, in turn, contribute more effectively to organisational goals.

From a human resources standpoint, ICSR helps retain skilled staff and build a capable, diverse workforce (Kurdi and Alsshurideh, 2020). It nurtures trust, collaboration, and high performance (Eldor, 2020). Going beyond basic legal requirements offers substantial advantages (Chaudhary, 2020), creating shared value for employees and organisations alike (Meghwar and David, 2021).

Evolving workforce expectations have also shaped ICSR. In Europe, the Green Paper discussed by Contrafatto et al. (2020) promotes CSR through the triple bottom line, combining financial, societal, and environmental aims and emphasising transparency, responsible behaviour, and ongoing staff development (Tzorti, 2023). Scholars further advocate ISO 26000 as an international standard that guides organisations in stakeholder engagement, credible reporting, and social responsibility (Ditlev Simonsen, 2019). ISO 26000 offers frameworks for human rights, equal working conditions, labour protection, and staff development (Del Baldo and Aureli, 2019; González Díaz et al., 2021).

2.3 CSR and Employee Performance in Organisations

Employee performance and the organisation's value are positively impacted by businesses' commitment to CSR principles (Simpson et al., 2020; Titko et al., 2021). This relationship has

been the subject of increasing scholarly attention as organisations seek to understand the mechanisms through which CSR initiatives translate into tangible organisational outcomes. Aguinis and Glavas (2017) state that the majority of scholars view corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a multiplex perception connected to several firm stakeholders, such as employees (internal stakeholders) and customers, suppliers, and stakeholders (external stakeholders). This multidimensional nature of CSR means that its effects on employee performance can manifest through various pathways, including enhanced organisational identification, improved motivation, and increased commitment.

According to Khaskheli et al. (2020), employees are important participants in CSR initiatives as internal stakeholders. There is a high correlation between job happiness, employee involvement, corporate citizenship behaviour and how employees perceive CSR. The way employees interpret and respond to their organisation's CSR activities significantly influences their work attitudes and behaviours. Thus far, experimental studies on corporate social responsibility (CSR) have shown that CSR can boost workers' accomplishments at work, including engagement and loyalty to the company. The perceived management of CSR positively influences workplace dedication, organisational commitment, and job efficiency (Wang et al., 2021). These findings suggest that CSR is not merely an external positioning strategy but has profound internal implications for workforce management and organisational performance.

According to Jones et al. (2019), internal corporate social responsibility is focused on employees and aids in creating enduring bonds between businesses and their staff. Initiatives like health and safety protocols, staff training, and creating a happy work atmosphere help to lower operating costs while increasing production (Gangi et al., 2021). Employee motivation and job satisfaction

increase when they perceive that their employer actually cares about their well-being (Salas-Valina et al., 2021). In the fast-paced corporate world of today, these intangible results, such as greater motivation and pleasure, provide a competitive advantage (Arun, 2022). Organisations that successfully leverage ICSR to enhance employee performance often find themselves better positioned to attract top talent, reduce turnover costs, and maintain productivity even in challenging economic conditions.

Organisations can develop a varied and flexible human resource base by successfully attracting and retaining talented workers through internal corporate social responsibility. This benefit promotes a culture of trust, mutual support, and collaboration among staff, creating a strong and efficient workforce capable of sustaining organisational success and competitiveness (Butt, 2020). When companies engage in internal CSR practices that go beyond basic legal and professional obligations, they gain a variety of strategic advantages (Olorunsola et al., 2022). These advantages extend beyond immediate performance improvements to include enhanced employer branding, improved organisational reputation, and stronger organisational resilience in the face of external challenges.

The literature also reveals important nuances in the CSR-performance relationship. For instance, the authenticity of CSR initiatives matters significantly. Employees can distinguish between genuine organisational commitment to their welfare and superficial CSR activities designed primarily for external audiences. McWilliams and Siegel (2001) found a significant correlation between CSR and innovation, concluding that CSR strategies encourage research investments that result in new operations, products, and processes. Similarly, Husted and Allen (2007) discussed whether CSR enforcement could impact innovation, value creation, and competitive advantage.

2.4 ICSR in Public Institutions

The public sector presents unique contexts and challenges for the implementation of ICSR practices. The public sector belongs to, is run by, and is governed by governments. They provide vital public services that benefit society, such as schools, hospitals, transportation, policing, and national defence (Evans et al., 2019). The public sector, which includes services rendered by elected officials, is also crucial to the implementation of public policies at all levels of governance (Cheng, 2019). Unlike private sector organisations that primarily answer to shareholders and market forces, public institutions operate within complex accountability frameworks that involve multiple stakeholders, including taxpayers, service users, political authorities, and regulatory bodies.

The portion of the economy composed of state-owned businesses and public services is known as the public institutions, or state sector (Andrews et al., 2020). This covers both the people who work for the government, including elected officials, and the products and services that the government offers, such as infrastructure, public transportation, healthcare, education, law enforcement, and the military (Kim et al., 2019). Government-run organisations providing services including health, education, and security, as well as general government entities at all administrative levels and regulatory agencies, make up the public sector (Kuziemski & Misuraca, 2020). The breadth and diversity of public sector activities mean that ICSR practices must be adapted to different institutional contexts while maintaining consistency with broader public service values.

Each member's functions, responsibilities, and authority are defined by the structure of government agencies and public sector organisations. It also shapes how individuals interact, whether they are service providers, managers, or directors, thus influencing the overall approach to achieving

institutional objectives and carrying out tasks (Leixnering et al., 2021). Three tiers of government, national (federal), regional, and local, are normally used to provide public services (Stiel, 2022). This hierarchical structure can both facilitate and complicate ICSR implementation, as policies developed at higher levels must be adapted and implemented across diverse organisational contexts.

Public institutions face distinct challenges in implementing ICSR practices compared to their private sector counterparts. These challenges include bureaucratic rigidity, resource constraints, political interference, and complex regulatory environments. However, public institutions also have unique responsibilities to model exemplary employment practices, as they are funded by public resources and are expected to uphold higher standards of fairness, equity, and social responsibility. The implementation of ICSR in public institutions is therefore not merely a matter of organisational strategy but also a question of democratic governance and public accountability.

Although these discoveries form the foundation of the relevance of CSR to workplace participation, relatively few studies have been undertaken within organisations and on the effect of ICSR within public universities. This represents a considerable research gap that should be considered within the backdrop of performance challenges within public organisations that have been attributed to the scarcity of resources and a bureaucratic framework. The existing body of knowledge within ICSR has largely focused on private organisations within a developed country's framework.

2.5 ICSR Practices in Public Universities

State policies influence the functioning of public universities, which are government-owned and financed institutions of higher learning (Huq & Huque, 2014). As more students finish secondary

or similar levels, there is a growing need for university education (Mange, Onyango, & Waweru, 2019). The limited university space and resources are under more strain as a result of the increased demand for advanced knowledge and skills. In order to improve higher education in both wealthy and developing nations, funding public universities has become essential (Mange, Onyango, & Waweru, 2019). However, this increased demand creates significant pressure on institutional resources, including the capacity to adequately support staff welfare and development initiatives.

According to Tang and Zairi (1998), academic scholarship, research, and teaching are the main duties of public institutions. Similarly, Johnes and Taylor (1990) emphasised universities' roles in providing deep knowledge, fostering learning, enhancing academic progress, and supporting national development. According to Sijde et al. (2012), the main goals of higher learning institutions include teaching, research, consultancy, and serving society. To achieve these goals, universities must address various challenges related to infrastructure, staffing, student needs, funding, academic programs, and community engagement (Campbell, 1974). The multifaceted mission of universities means that staff performance across different functional areas, academic, administrative, and support services, is critical to institutional success.

Effective resource management and high-quality instruction are hallmarks of public colleges (Chacha, 2002). However, a spike in student enrolment in developing nations has put pressure on university funds, resulting in a deterioration in facilities and the general standard of teaching (Chacha, 2005). This makes the study of ICSR practices in public universities particularly important, as these institutions must balance limited resources while maintaining staff performance and institutional effectiveness. The resource constraints facing public universities in developing countries like Ghana create unique challenges for implementing comprehensive ICSR practices.

Universities must find ways to support their staff adequately, even when budgets are tight and competing demands are numerous.

The specific context of public universities presents both opportunities and challenges for ICSR implementation. On the one hand, universities as knowledge institutions are expected to model best practices in human resource management and social responsibility. Their role as educators and researchers positions them as thought leaders who should demonstrate exemplary treatment of employees. On the other hand, public universities often face constraints, including limited autonomy in personnel decisions, rigid civil service regulations, political interference, and insufficient funding. These constraints can limit the flexibility needed to design and implement innovative ICSR practices tailored to institutional needs.

When Horsen et al. (2020) looked into how internal CSR affected employee engagement, they discovered a significant positive correlation. According to their findings, internal corporate social responsibility (CSR) is crucial for raising employee engagement, which in turn raises job performance and organisational productivity. In order to improve employee loyalty and overall organisational outcomes, many managers and executives are now giving internal CSR strategy development and implementation more importance. However, these findings have predominantly emerged from studies in corporate settings, raising questions about their applicability to public universities where organisational cultures, governance structures, and resource contexts differ significantly.

2.6 ICSR and Staff Performance in the Ghanaian Context

Research around ICSR and staff performance keeps springing up, especially within the academic sphere and, more recently, within the Ghanaian context. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how ICSR practices specifically impact staff performance in Ghanaian public universities. The Ghanaian context presents unique socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors that may influence the relationship between ICSR and staff performance. Understanding these contextual factors is crucial for developing ICSR practices that are not only theoretically sound but also practically relevant and effective in the local setting.

Ghana's public universities operate within a broader public sector reform agenda that has emphasised efficiency, accountability, and service delivery improvements. However, these reforms have often focused on structural and procedural changes while paying less attention to the human dimension of organisational performance. The question of how organisations treat their employees and how this treatment affects performance has received comparatively less attention in policy discussions and academic research within the Ghanaian context.

Internal CSR is therefore becoming more and more recognised as a potent internal marketing strategy for drawing in and keeping top talent (Lee et al., 2018). This is mostly due to the fact that businesses that cater to the requirements of their workers by offering them fair compensation, benefits, and fulfilling work responsibilities typically have higher performance levels (Sawaneh & Kamara, 2019). In Ghana's competitive labour market, public universities face challenges in attracting and retaining qualified staff, particularly when private sector opportunities and international migration offer attractive alternatives. ICSR practices that genuinely address employee welfare could serve as important tools for talent retention and motivation.

Furthermore, Ghana's economic challenges, including budgetary constraints and competing national priorities, create a complex environment for public university management. Administrators must balance the imperative to support staff welfare with limited financial resources and numerous other institutional needs. This raises important questions about the feasibility and sustainability of comprehensive ICSR programs in resource-constrained settings. It also highlights the need for creative approaches to ICSR that may not always require significant financial investments but can still meaningfully improve staff welfare and performance.

2.7 Employee Engagement and ICSR

Stakeholder theory provides insight into how employees influence CSR and how CSR, in turn, influences employees. Firstly, employees can act as catalysts for social change by encouraging firms to adopt responsible practices (Shafiq et al., 2020). Employees, through their demands, expectations, and activism, can pressure organisations to improve their social and environmental performance. Secondly, the success of CSR policies often hinges on employee support and engagement (Graafland & Smid, 2019). Without employee buy-in and active participation, even well-designed CSR initiatives may fail to achieve their intended outcomes. Thirdly, employees interpret and respond to CSR efforts in diverse ways (De Rock & Maon, 2018). The same ICSR practice may be perceived differently by different employees depending on their values, needs, and expectations.

From a theoretical standpoint, employees can be seen as both outcomes of CSR initiatives (Zhao et al., 2022) and as influencers who shape CSR development (Fahad & Busru, 2021). This dual role highlights the dynamic and reciprocal nature of the relationship between ICSR and employee behaviour. Some models of corporate social performance have specifically included employees in

their analytical frameworks (Rupp et al., 2018). Furthermore, studies applying social identity theory have explored how CSR shapes the perceptions of prospective employees, highlighting the importance of an organisation's socially responsible image in attracting talent (Sarfraz et al., 2018; Özcan & Elçy, 2020). Employees who identify with an organisation that demonstrates strong CSR values are more likely to feel pride in their organisational membership and to act as ambassadors for the organisation.

In recent years, however, these disciplines have increasingly focused on internal stakeholders, especially employees (Reina & Scaroza, 2021). This shift reflects growing recognition that the internal dimension of CSR is as important as external CSR for organisational sustainability and success. While some CSR research has been framed within organisational behaviour, much of it has examined how CSR influences the perceptions of potential employees and enhances a company's attractiveness (Sendlhofer, 2020). These studies, often based on limited empirical evidence, tend to emphasise specific aspects like organisational commitment (Chatzopoulou et al., 2022).

Given CSR's multifaceted nature, it can influence a broad range of employee attitudes and behaviours beyond just commitment (Brachle & Waples, 2022). These include job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour, work engagement, innovation behaviour, turnover intentions, and overall performance. However, the theoretical understanding of how CSR shapes employee behaviour and attitudes, factors that contribute to organisational sustainability, remains underdeveloped (Farooq et al., 2019). There is a need for more comprehensive theoretical frameworks that explain the psychological mechanisms through which ICSR practices influence various dimensions of employee behaviour and performance. Such frameworks would need to

account for individual differences, contextual factors, and the authenticity and consistency of ICSR implementation.

2.8 International Standards and ICSR

In Europe, efforts like the Green Paper by Contrafatto et al. (2020) promote CSR by encouraging firms to adopt the "triple bottom line" approach, integrating social and environmental concerns alongside economic objectives. The Green Paper represents a comprehensive policy initiative that seeks to mainstream CSR across European businesses by providing clear guidelines and incentives for responsible business practices. The paper advocates for fair practices, transparency, and continuous employee development (Tzorti, 2023). These European initiatives reflect a broader trend toward recognising that organisational responsibility extends beyond profit maximisation to encompass social and environmental stewardship, with employees being a central component of this expanded vision of corporate responsibility.

Similarly, Ditlev-Simonsen (2019) supported the creation of ISO 26000, an international guideline for social responsibility. This standard helps organisations engage stakeholders, enhance reporting credibility, and implement responsible practices. ISO 26000 differs from many other ISO standards in that it provides guidance rather than requirements, recognising that social responsibility must be adapted to different organisational contexts and cultural settings. Specifically for internal CSR, ISO 26000 offers frameworks for ensuring human rights, fair labour conditions, social protection, workplace safety, and overall employee development (Del Baldo & Aureli, 2019; González-Díaz et al., 2021).

The standard identifies labour practices as one of seven core subjects of social responsibility, emphasising issues such as employment and employment relationships, conditions of work and social protection, social dialogue, health and safety at work, and human development and training in the workplace. These international standards and frameworks provide important benchmarks for evaluating ICSR practices in public institutions, including universities. They offer structured approaches to identifying, implementing, and assessing ICSR initiatives, making them valuable tools for organisations seeking to enhance their social responsibility performance.

However, the extent to which these standards have been adopted and adapted in the Ghanaian public university context remains underexplored. While international standards provide useful frameworks, their application in developing country contexts requires careful adaptation to local realities, resources, and priorities. Questions arise about the feasibility of implementing comprehensive ICSR frameworks modelled on international standards in resource-constrained environments. There is also the question of whether these standards, developed primarily in Western contexts, adequately capture the specific ICSR concerns and priorities relevant to African public institutions.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

Generally, research is underpinned by some theoretical constructs. This helps draw research findings and analysis within certain theoretical frameworks and goes a long way to help us appreciate these theories more. It also helps the researcher to confirm the existence of a theory in a phenomenon, challenge the existence of the said theory or even show some extensions or variations that may exist in the theory.

2.9.1 Theory That Underpins the Work

The theory that underpinned this study is Stakeholder Theory. The relationship between a company and its stakeholders is the focus of stakeholder theory. Evidence reveals that the term "shareholder," which is the foundation of shareholder theory, was used as early as 1947 (Johnson 1947), even though Ansoff (1965) was thought to be the first to adopt the term "Stakeholder Theory" (Roberts 1992).

However, it gained widespread acceptance after the mid-1980s. Most of the fundamental concepts of Stakeholder Theory were covered by Freeman (1984; 1994; 2005), as well as by a few other researchers (e.g. Clackson 1994; 1995; Donaldson and Preston 1995; Harrison and Freeman 1999; Branco and Rodriguez 2007; Carroll and Buchholtz 2009). According to Freeman (1984), a stakeholder is "any group or individual which can affect or is affected by the firm's objectives being achieved."

Freeman's concept is maintained by classifying stakeholders differently. For instance, ethical and strategic stakeholders (Goodpaster 1991); internal and external shareholders (Pearce 1982; Carroll 1989); latent, expectant, and definitive shareholders (Mitchell et al. 1997); subgroups of stakeholders, including customers, employees, and stakeholders (Preston & Sapienza); stakeholders with one issue or multiple issues (Wood 1994); shareholders with mixed blessings (Savage et al. 1991); supportive, marginal, non-supportive, and mixed blessing shareholders (Clackson 1994); and primary and secondary shareholders (Clackson 1995). This classification's primary goal is to highlight the fact that different stakeholder groups have distinct, occasionally contradictory expectations.

According to Guthrie et al. (2006, p. 256), "Shareholder Theory" emphasises organisational accountability beyond simple economic or financial performance, meaning that an organisation must satisfy the expectations of its many stakeholder groups rather than just shareholders as in traditional shareholder theories. According to Stakeholder Theory, an organisation's management is supposed to fulfil its responsibility to its stakeholders by reporting information and carrying out actions that the stakeholders find significant.

Stakeholder theory has given rise to certain presumptions. In a variety of disciplines, including business and society, CSR, strategic management, and business ethics, they were mentioned in the stakeholder literature (Freeman 1984; 1994; Donaldson & Preston 1995; Harrison & Freeman 1999; Freeman 2005; Belal 2008; Smith 2008). These presumptions can be summarised as follows:

1. Stakeholders are identified from the vantage point of one focal organisation.
2. An organisation needs to manage its stakeholders effectively to achieve its goals.
3. Different categories of stakeholders exist, and often such categories have conflicting interests.
4. An organisation must be able to balance the conflicting interests of those stakeholders in its external environment with those stakeholders in its internal environment.
5. Stakeholders pressure the organisation as they expect something or have a stake in something.
6. The ability of stakeholders to pressure an organisation depends on organisational attributes of stakeholders.
7. An organisation has financial, social and environmental responsibilities to its customers.

2.9.2 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory, propounded by sociologist George C. Homans in 1958 and later expanded by scholars such as Peter Blau (1964) and Richard Emerson (1976), provides a foundational framework for understanding the reciprocal nature of social and organisational relationships. The theory posits that human interactions are guided by a cost-benefit analysis in which individuals seek to maximise rewards and minimise costs. In organisational settings, this means that employees evaluate their relationship with the organisation based on the balance between what they contribute and what they receive in return. When the perceived benefits, such as support, recognition, and fair treatment, outweigh the costs, individuals are likely to demonstrate stronger loyalty, trust, and commitment (Blau, 1964).

The core assumptions of Social Exchange Theory include reciprocity, mutual benefit, trust, and interdependence between parties. Reciprocity suggests that when one party provides a valued resource, the other feels obliged to return the favour, creating a cycle of mutual exchange (Emerson, 1976). Mutual benefit implies that both sides gain something meaningful from the relationship, whether tangible (such as pay and benefits) or intangible (such as respect and appreciation). Trust serves as the foundation of these exchanges, ensuring that both parties expect fairness and continued cooperation. Interdependence highlights that the stability of relationships depends on each party's perception of the other's reliability and commitment. These assumptions together explain why employees respond positively when they perceive genuine organisational support.

Within the context of Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR), Social Exchange Theory offers valuable insight into how organisational initiatives influence employee attitudes and

behaviours. When universities invest in their staff through equitable policies, professional development, and supportive work environments, employees perceive these efforts as organisational goodwill. Consequently, they reciprocate with increased motivation, commitment, and performance. This theoretical lens is particularly relevant in public universities, where intrinsic rewards such as recognition and respect often play as significant a role as monetary incentives.

2.9.3 Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The relevance of Stakeholder Theory to this study lies in its emphasis on balancing the interests of multiple groups that affect or are affected by an organisation's activities. Within public universities, employees are among the most critical stakeholders since their performance directly influences teaching, research, and administrative outcomes. Stakeholder Theory provides a lens for understanding how Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) initiatives, such as employee welfare, professional development, and workplace equity, help institutions fulfil their broader responsibility to this vital group.

Social Exchange Theory complements this perspective by explaining the reciprocal nature of organisational-employee relationships. When employees perceive fair treatment and organisational support through ICSR practices, they are likely to reciprocate with higher levels of commitment, motivation, and performance. This theoretical underpinning is particularly significant for public universities in Ghana, where staff morale and institutional effectiveness are often challenged by resource constraints, bureaucratic structures, and external pressures.

Stakeholder Theory ensures that the diverse expectations of employees are acknowledged, while Social Exchange Theory clarifies the mechanism through which ICSR practices translate into improved staff performance.

Thus, these theories are directly relevant to the study's aim of assessing ICSR practices in selected public universities. They provide both a normative justification (why universities should invest in employees) and a practical explanation (how such investments yield tangible performance outcomes).

2.10 Summary

This chapter examined the literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR), outlining their shift from philanthropic activities to strategic responsibilities that include economic, legal, ethical, and social elements. It highlighted a key gap in research on ICSR within public universities in developing settings such as Ghana, where resource limitations, governance arrangements, and cultural factors differ from those in more developed contexts.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used to achieve the research objectives. It discusses the research design, approach, population, and sampling, sources of data, data collection instruments, analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Paradigm

This study employs the interpretivist paradigm, which seeks to understand social phenomena by exploring the meanings and experiences individuals ascribe to them (Creswell, 2014). This paradigm is founded on the belief that reality is socially constructed through interaction and interpretation, shaped by cultural and institutional contexts (Saunders et al., 2019). Unlike positivism, which prioritises objective measurement, interpretivism aims to capture the richness and complexity of human experience within its specific setting.

An interpretivist framework is appropriate for this research because it allows for an in-depth investigation into how staff in Ghanaian public universities perceive, experience, and interpret Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR). Given that ICSR inherently involves human values, relationships, and perceptions of fairness, a qualitative approach is essential to move beyond statistical associations and understand underlying meanings.

This paradigm directly supports the use of qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, enabling the collection of detailed narratives and subjective viewpoints (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through these methods, the study can uncover the themes and patterns that define the social reality of ICSR in these institutions. Ultimately, this approach

provides a nuanced understanding of how ICSR initiatives influence employee engagement and institutional effectiveness.

3.2 Philosophical Assumptions

This study is guided by key philosophical assumptions within the interpretivist paradigm. Ontologically, it assumes that reality is socially constructed, meaning perceptions of ICSR and staff performance are not fixed but vary across individuals and institutional contexts (Creswell, 2014). This allows for a nuanced exploration of the multiple realities within university settings.

Epistemologically, knowledge is seen as co-created through interaction between the researcher and participants. Insights are drawn from staff narratives and reflections, emphasising dialogue and the uncovering of tacit, context-specific meanings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Axiologically, the study acknowledges that values are inherent to the research process. The researcher's interest in effective ICSR shapes the inquiry, requiring transparency and reflexivity to maintain integrity (Saunders et al., 2019).

Methodologically, a qualitative approach is used, centred on semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to explore lived experiences in depth (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These combined assumptions provide a coherent framework for examining ICSR within Ghana's public universities.

3.4 Research Approach

Ogua (2005) emphasised that the choice of research approach is a critical mechanism for bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application. In line with this perspective, the study adopted a qualitative research approach, as articulated by Wimmer and Dominick (2011), which is particularly suitable for exploring complex social phenomena and understanding human behaviour in depth. Qualitative research enables the researcher to go beyond surface-level observations and capture the meanings, interpretations, and experiences that individuals

attach to specific organisational practices, such as Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR).

This approach allowed for the use of methods such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observations, providing rich, detailed data on staff perceptions and experiences regarding ICSR initiatives. Given that public universities operate within unique institutional and socio-cultural environments, qualitative research was particularly well-suited to capture the nuances, contextual influences, and organisational dynamics that shape the implementation and reception of ICSR programs.

Furthermore, the qualitative approach facilitated the inclusion of diverse perspectives from multiple stakeholders, including employees, administrators, and institutional leaders. This inclusivity ensured a holistic understanding of ICSR practices and their impact on staff welfare, motivation, and performance.

3.5 Research Design

Zikmund (2003) defines research design as a structured plan that guides the processes of data collection, measurement, and analysis, ensuring that the study effectively addresses its research questions. For this study, an exploratory research design was employed, which is particularly appropriate in contexts where prior research is limited or where the phenomenon under investigation has not been extensively studied (Stebbins, 2001; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). In the case of Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) within Ghanaian public universities, the scarcity of existing studies necessitated an approach that could uncover new insights, generate understanding, and identify patterns that might inform future research and practice (Babbie, 2015).

The exploratory design allowed the researcher to investigate the nature, scope, and nuances of ICSR practices as they are experienced and implemented in selected public universities. This design is flexible, permitting the researcher to adapt data collection methods based on emerging insights and the context-specific realities of the institutions under study (Yin, 2018). It enabled a deep dive into both formal and informal ICSR initiatives, capturing the perspectives of staff, administrators, and other key stakeholders regarding their experiences, expectations, and perceived outcomes of these practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Additionally, the exploratory approach supports the identification of challenges, opportunities, and contextual factors that shape ICSR implementation, such as resource constraints, institutional culture, governance structures, and socio-economic conditions (Stebbins, 2001; Saunders et al., 2019).

3.6 Sampling Strategy

Moffat (2015) defined a population as the total group of individuals relevant to a study, representing all potential participants who can provide insights into the phenomenon under investigation. Consistent with the qualitative, this study employed a sampling strategy prioritising data depth over statistical breadth. The population comprised eight staff members, four from each of two public universities (UniMAC-IJ and the University of Ghana, Legon). Participants were purposively selected to include Heads of Public Relations Units, staff involved in implementing ICSR initiatives, and beneficiaries of these programs. This selection enabled the capture of both managerial and employee perspectives, ensuring a holistic exploration of how ICSR is designed, implemented, and experienced. The strategy facilitated an in-depth understanding of the nuanced mechanisms through which ICSR influences staff performance within the specific institutional and cultural contexts of the universities studied.

3.7 Data Collection Technique

This study will utilise semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method, aligned with its interpretivist paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach balances structured thematic inquiry with the flexibility to probe deeper into participants' experiences.

An interview guide, informed by the theoretical framework, will feature open-ended questions on key themes such as existing ICSR practices, perceived organisational support, implementation challenges, and impacts on staff performance. Interviews will be conducted with selected university staff and administrators to gather in-depth insights. Each session, expected to last approximately 45 minutes, will be audio-recorded with participant consent, supplemented by field notes.

The process will begin with rapport-building, with assurances of confidentiality to encourage candid responses. Data collection will continue until theoretical saturation is reached, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the topic (Saunders et al., 2018).

3.7 Sources of Data

The study relied on two main categories of data to ensure a comprehensive and robust analysis. These were primary data and secondary data, which were integrated to provide both original empirical insights and a solid theoretical foundation.

3.7.1 Primary Data

Primary data for this study consisted of information collected firsthand directly from the source for the specific purpose of this research (Zikmund, 2003). This data was gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted with academic staff, administrative personnel, and university management in selected Ghanaian public universities. This method was chosen to capture the

current realities, lived experiences, and unique contextual nuances of ICSR implementation directly from the individuals involved.

3.7.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data comprised pre-existing information that was systematically collected and reviewed from a variety of credible sources. These sources included peer-reviewed academic journals, books, institutional reports, official policy documents, and government publications. The use of secondary data was essential for establishing the theoretical framework for the study, understanding the global and local context of ICSR in higher education, and identifying gaps in the existing literature that this research aimed to address.

3.8 Data Collection Process

The data collection process was designed to integrate both primary and secondary data, enhancing the study's credibility and depth. The process began with a systematic review of secondary data, which established the theoretical framework and informed the development of the semi-structured interview guide. Subsequently, primary data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the selected participants from the two public universities.

Each interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes, was conducted in a location convenient for the participant to ensure comfort and encourage candid responses. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in data capture and to allow the researcher to fully engage in the conversation. The semi-structured format provided the flexibility to probe deeper into interesting responses and follow unexpected but relevant lines of inquiry, capturing rich, context-specific insights directly from those experiencing or implementing ICSR practices. The integration of both data types allowed for robust analysis

where fresh empirical evidence from the field was continuously contextualised within established theoretical understandings.

3.9 Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed thematic analysis to interpret the qualitative data gathered from the interviews. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data, providing a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach was selected for its theoretical flexibility, which aligns well with the study's interpretivist paradigm, and its utility in uncovering the subjective experiences and perceptions of participants regarding Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) practices. The process is not merely a passive categorisation of data but an active process of interpretation, where the researcher identifies recurring patterns of meaning that capture something important about the data in relation to the research question (Nowell et al., 2017).

The analysis followed the systematic phased framework outlined by Braun and Clarke. The process began with the thorough transcription of all interviews and an intensive familiarisation with the data through repeated reading. This initial immersion was crucial for gaining a deep understanding of the content and noting down initial ideas. Subsequently, significant features of the data were systematically coded across the entire dataset, generating concise labels that identified key concepts. These initial codes were then collated and grouped into potential overarching themes, which represented patterned responses central to understanding participants' experiences with ICSR.

The candidate themes were rigorously reviewed and refined at two levels to ensure their accuracy and coherence. This involved checking if the themes worked in relation to the coded extracts and then against the entire dataset, a process that often led to the merging, splitting, or

discarding of themes. Once a coherent thematic map was established, each theme was clearly defined and named to capture its essence. The final step involved weaving the thematic analysis into a compelling narrative for the report. This involved selecting vivid and illustrative extracts from the transcripts, analysing them in depth, and linking them back to the research question and the broader literature on ICSR, thereby ensuring the findings were a robust and credible representation of the participants' collective experiences.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Adhering to rigorous ethical standards is paramount in research involving human participants. This study was guided by the fundamental principles outlined in the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research, 1979) and followed the ethical frameworks advocated by contemporary social science researchers. The following measures were implemented to ensure the rights, welfare, and privacy of all participants were safeguarded throughout the research process.

First, the principle of informed consent was rigorously upheld. Before their participation, each individual was provided with a comprehensive information sheet detailing the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Written consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their agreement was voluntary, explicit, and based on a full understanding of the research involvement (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

Second, anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained. To protect participants' identities, all potentially identifying information (e.g., names, specific department titles) was removed from the transcripts and the final report. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity in the presentation of findings (Kaiser, 2009). Furthermore, confidentiality was upheld by ensuring that the raw data, including audio recordings and

transcripts, were accessible only to the principal researcher and were stored securely (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Finally, robust data protection protocols were followed. All electronic data, including audio files and transcribed interviews, was stored on a password-protected computer, and any physical documents were kept in a locked cabinet. The data will be used solely for the purpose of this academic research and will be securely destroyed five years after the completion of the study, in line with standard university ethical guidelines (British Psychological Society, 2021).

3.11 Authenticity and Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, establishing the rigour of the study is paramount. To this end, this study will adhere to the framework of trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which provides parallel criteria to the conventional notions of validity and reliability in quantitative research. The framework is built upon four key principles: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Employing these strategies ensures that the findings are an authentic, reliable, and credible representation of the participants' experiences regarding ICSR.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, which refers to confidence in the truth of the data and its interpretations, the study will employ member checking. This involves returning transcripts and preliminary interpretations to participants to confirm that their intended meanings have been accurately captured (Birt et al., 2016). Furthermore, transferability, which denotes the extent to which findings can be applied in other contexts, will be addressed by providing rich, thick descriptions of the research context, the participants, and the phenomena under study. This allows readers to assess the potential applicability of the findings to their own settings (Shenton, 2004).

The study will also ensure dependability, which emphasises the consistency and repeatability of the research process. This will be achieved by maintaining a clear and comprehensive audit

trail that documents all methodological decisions, data collection steps, and analytical processes throughout the study (Nowell et al., 2017). Finally, confirmability is established to demonstrate that the findings are shaped by the participants and not by the researcher's bias. This will be pursued through a practice of reflexivity, where the researcher continually reflects on and acknowledges their own assumptions, values, and potential influence on the research, thereby ensuring the findings are grounded in the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology used to investigate Internal Corporate Social Responsibility in Ghanaian public universities. Working within an interpretivist paradigm, the study employed a qualitative, exploratory design to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. Eight participants were purposively selected from two public universities to capture views from both management and staff. Data was gathered mainly through semi-structured interviews supported by a review of secondary materials. Analysis followed the thematic procedures proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), allowing clear identification of recurring themes. The chapter also detailed the ethical measures observed, including informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and secure data handling. Strategies drawn from the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were applied to ensure the trustworthiness of the research, providing a strong foundation for the presentation of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study on how Internal Corporate Social Responsibility influences staff performance in selected public universities in Ghana. It draws on data from eight participants, identified as P1 to P8, who were interviewed for 45 to 60 minutes each to ensure depth and confidentiality. The group included academic staff, administrative workers, and management personnel aged 30 to 54, offering a range of perspectives aligned with Creswell's guidance on qualitative sampling. The data were analysed through thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, enabling the identification of key themes related to ICSR implementation, employee satisfaction, and the challenges that shape ICSR practice in public institutions. The findings are presented thematically and supported with direct quotations to retain the clarity and authenticity of participants' experiences.

4.1 The Implementation of ICSR Practices in Public Universities in Ghana

This section evaluates how Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) is implemented in selected public universities in Ghana, with a critical examination of the strategies employed, the motivations underlying adoption, and the outcomes achieved within governmental structures. The primary aim is to unpack the complex processes involved in integrating ICSR into public university systems and assess its influence on organisational culture, employee involvement, and overall institutional effectiveness. This section offers a detailed examination of the challenges and nuances surrounding the adoption of ICSR practices in public institutions.

4.1.1 Conceptualisation of ICSR in Public Universities

Collectively, the participants expressed a unified belief in the transformative potential of ICSR in public universities. Their reflections emphasised a deep awareness of the crucial role that ethical leadership, transparency, and good governance play in shaping organisational culture and enhancing staff welfare within Ghana's public university system. Participants conceptualised ICSR not merely as a compliance mechanism but as a fundamental component of institutional identity and operational philosophy.

P1 articulated this perspective eloquently:

Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) practices form the ethical foundation of public universities, ensuring that government-led institutions act in the interest of the broader public. These efforts go beyond mere regulatory compliance, aiming to cultivate a culture of accountability and commitment to both societal and environmental well-being. (29th July 2025, Accra)

Building on this foundational understanding, P2 emphasised the strategic nature of ICSR implementation:

Embedding ICSR principles into governmental systems is essential for laying the groundwork for sustainable development. It represents not a standalone initiative but a comprehensive strategy that reflects public universities' dedication to inclusive growth and environmental responsibility. (29th July 2025, Accra)

These approaches indicate that the respondents perceive ICSR not merely within the scope of corporate charity and community outreach. Rather, they see ICSR as a framework concerning the institution itself and prioritising the well-being of its employees. This view corresponds with current scholarly debates that differentiate ICSR into two categories: the first concerning the organisation's employees and the other concerning the community and environment.

4.1.2 Strategic Necessity and Institutional Alignment

The examination of practices of ICSR within public universities brought to the surface diverse opinions and experiences that all shared a common understanding of the central importance of ICSR within the institutions. Regardless of the role, experience, and field of work that individuals undertook, there was a common understanding of the important role that the practices of ICSR within these organisations play. The prevailing theme that emerged during the course of the interviews is that ICSR is much more than funding and compliance.

P3 underscored the transformative influence of ICSR in shaping institutional culture:

Our conversations underscored the transformative influence of ICSR in public universities. It centres on adopting principles of accountability, transparency, and active community involvement to foster meaningful change and effectively respond to societal challenges. (29th July 2025, Accra)

P4 went further to characterise ICSR as a strategic imperative rather than an optional consideration:

Integrating ICSR into public universities is not a matter of choice but a vital requirement. It represents a deliberate strategy aimed at not only ensuring efficiency but also prioritising actions that serve society and benefit future generations. (30th July 2025, Accra)

This characterisation of ICSR as strategically necessary rather than discretionary is particularly significant in the context of public institutions. Unlike private sector organisations, where CSR may be driven by competitive advantage or reputation management, public universities face unique imperatives rooted in their mission to serve the public interest. Participants recognised this distinctive context, viewing ICSR as integral to fulfilling their institutions' broader social mandate while simultaneously supporting the workforce that delivers on this mission.

P5 captured this dual focus on staff welfare and institutional mission by stating that "*ICSR acts as a guiding compass for public universities, embedding staff well-being and ethical practices at the core of institutional governance.*" (30th July 2025, Accra)

The insights gathered reflect a collective consensus: ICSR is not a peripheral concern but a core component of governance and institutional operations. Participants consistently emphasised that ethical conduct and staff well-being must form the foundation of public university practices. This study's findings are grounded in the participants' shared belief that ICSR is not an optional add-on but represents a deliberate pursuit of responsible and impactful institutional behaviour.

4.1.3 Theoretical Alignment and Literature Synthesis

The adoption of Internal Corporate Social Responsibility within the public universities studied reflects a wide range of stakeholder perspectives and underscores the role of ICSR in strengthening governance and improving organisational performance. Participants' views align with scholarly work that frames ICSR not as mere compliance but as a necessary commitment to organisational and societal well-being. Scholars such as Amaeshi, Osuji, and Nnodim (2012) argue that good governance requires social accountability and stakeholder involvement, a position echoed in participants' emphasis on the impact of ICSR on employee welfare. Their narratives also present ICSR as a core component of governance rather than an auxiliary task, consistent with Carroll and Shabana's (2018) argument that social responsibility should be integrated into organisational strategy.

The findings further confirm academic claims that ICSR promotes accountability, responsiveness, and alignment with staff and societal expectations. Prior studies by Macassa et al. (2021), Liu et al. (2023), Avila Tamayo and Bayona (2022), and Shirmohammadi et al.

(2022) highlight how work conditions, development opportunities, work-life balance, and fairness shape employee well-being and performance, which the current study reinforces. The results also support the view that ICSR strengthens trust, fairness, commitment, and satisfaction, functioning as an internal communication tool as proposed by Duthler and Dhanesh (2018) and Adu Gyamfi et al. (2021). Employees who believe their organisation values their welfare tend to respond with positive attitudes and behaviours that advance institutional goals.

4.2 The Relationship Between ICSR and Employee Satisfaction in Public Universities

This section explores the complex relationship between Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) practices and employee satisfaction within public universities in Ghana. Specifically, it examines how ICSR initiatives influence staff retention, motivation, and overall job satisfaction within government settings. The findings highlight the multifaceted impact of ICSR on fostering job satisfaction and employee commitment, emphasising its role as a key strategy for building a loyal and motivated workforce in public universities.

4.2.1 Training and Professional Development

Participants emphasised that access to continuous learning and skill enhancement programs significantly affects their job satisfaction and commitment to their institutions. This finding underscores the importance of human capital development as a core component of ICSR in public universities.

P7 highlighted the importance of training for both operational effectiveness and personal development:

Training is needed to meet our routine reporting and meeting obligations, with an emphasis on enhancing the quality of staff performance. The team appreciates opportunities for personal and professional development that go beyond financial incentives." (30th July 2025, Accra)

This perspective reveals that employees value opportunities for growth and development not merely as instrumental benefits that enhance job performance but as intrinsic goods that contribute to personal fulfilment and career advancement. The distinction between training for immediate operational needs and development for long-term career growth emerged as important, with participants expressing appreciation for both dimensions.

P8 reinforced this theme while also noting areas where improvements could enhance satisfaction:

Staff training and incentives have had a direct positive effect on my performance, as reflected in the quality of my work. Quicker execution of ongoing initiatives and improved working conditions could greatly enhance overall staff satisfaction. (30th July 2025, Accra)

P4 provided a specific example of how training programs contribute to both skill development and job satisfaction:

ICSR provides valuable benefits through regular training programs. The recent corporate communication training, for instance, has been particularly helpful to staff. By enhancing knowledge and future career opportunities, ICSR contributes positively to employee satisfaction. Additionally, introducing daycare services or family-friendly initiatives could strongly impact the decision of parents to remain at the university. (30th July 2025, Accra)

This response is particularly noteworthy as it connects ICSR practices to concrete retention outcomes. The suggestion for daycare services and family-friendly initiatives reveals an understanding that employee satisfaction and retention depend not only on professional development but also on organisational support for work-life balance and family responsibilities.

4.2.2 Beyond Financial Incentives: The Human Dimension of ICSR

The shared voices of diverse participants came together to illustrate the intricate connection between ICSR practices and employee satisfaction and commitment in public universities. Their unique experiences and perspectives provided a well-rounded understanding, highlighting the significant role ICSR initiatives play in promoting employee engagement, satisfaction, and long-term loyalty. A particularly striking finding was the emphasis participants placed on non-financial dimensions of ICSR as critical determinants of satisfaction and retention.

P2 articulated the strategic importance of understanding employee needs comprehensively:

When strategically integrated, ICSR practices can serve as a crucial link between employee satisfaction and retention. It's not just about offering routine incentives, but about truly understanding staff needs and recognising the real impact these initiatives have on retaining talent. (29th July 2025, Accra)

This statement underscores the need for intentional design and implementation of ICSR practices based on a genuine understanding of employee needs rather than assumptions about what employees value. It suggests that effective ICSR requires ongoing dialogue with staff to identify priorities and preferences, thereby ensuring that initiatives are relevant and meaningful.

P5 elaborated on the relational and emotional dimensions of ICSR that extend beyond tangible benefits:

ICSR's contribution to staff retention and job satisfaction goes beyond salaries, role clarity, and ongoing training. It lies in the subtle yet powerful human connection, listening to concerns, showing empathy, and cultivating a culture of genuine care. It's this supportive environment that encourages employees to remain committed. (30th July 2025, Accra)

This powerful testimony highlights the importance of organisational climate and interpersonal relationships in shaping employee satisfaction. The emphasis on "human connection," "listening," "empathy," and "genuine care" reveals that employees seek more than transactional relationships with their employers. They desire recognition as whole persons with emotional needs, not merely as human resources to be managed for productivity. This finding aligns with humanistic approaches to management that emphasise the dignity and intrinsic worth of employees.

4.2.3 Theoretical Integration and Literature Alignment

The findings on the connection between Internal Corporate Social Responsibility, job satisfaction, and employee commitment align strongly with stakeholder theory, which holds that organisations must balance the interests of multiple groups to remain sustainable. In public universities, employees emerge as central stakeholders, and the study shows that ICSR initiatives that improve working conditions, development opportunities, and overall staff well-being directly address their needs.

The results further confirm the theory's focus on reciprocity: when institutions invest in employee welfare, staff respond with higher commitment, motivation, and performance, which in turn strengthens institutional effectiveness and societal impact. This reciprocal relationship underscores the strategic value of ICSR in public sector settings. These insights are consistent

with the broader literature. Jones et al. (2019) describe ICSR as essential for nurturing strong organisational–employee relationships, while Gangi et al. (2021) show that improved work environments and staff development reduce costs and raise productivity.

4.3 Challenges and Barriers to Effective Implementation of ICSR in Public Universities

This section presents a critical examination of the challenges and barriers that hinder the effective implementation of Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) in selected public universities in Ghana. Its goal is to uncover and address the factors preventing ICSR initiatives from being fully and seamlessly integrated into these institutions, thereby limiting their potential impact on staff welfare and organisational performance.

4.3.1 Financial Constraints and Resource Limitations

Discussions among participants revealed a range of interrelated challenges, with financial constraints emerging as the most prominent and pervasive barrier to effective ICSR implementation. A key obstacle identified across multiple interviews is financial constraint, which significantly affects various aspects of ICSR implementation. Participants noted difficulties in securing adequate funding for crucial components such as hiring external facilitators, organising comprehensive training programs, and providing adequate staff welfare benefits, all of which hamper the overall delivery of ICSR efforts.

P1 identified funding as a fundamental challenge:

Funding is likely one of the key challenges, as introducing new ICSR initiatives requires a solid foundation and adequate financial support. So, financing should be considered a significant concern." (29th July 2025, Accra)

This financial limitation affects not only program delivery but also internal operations, including staff compensation, which in turn impacts employee motivation and their capacity to

meaningfully engage in ICSR activities. The interconnection between resource constraints and employee welfare creates a vicious cycle where insufficient funding limits ICSR implementation, which then fails to adequately support employee needs, potentially leading to reduced morale and performance.

P4 and P5 provided particularly stark assessments of how financial constraints undermine ICSR implementation:

P4 stated:

I believe the main challenge is the lack of funding. Ideally, ICSR structures should be in place, but when even the workers themselves aren't being paid adequately, how can we expect them to develop meaningful initiatives for the staff? It's just not feasible. (29th July 2025, Accra)

P5 echoed this concern:

I believe the main challenge is the lack of funding. Ideally, ICSR structures should be in place, but when even the workers themselves aren't being paid, how can we expect them to develop meaningful initiatives for the staff? It's just not feasible. (29th July 2025, Accra)

These responses reveal the fundamental tension facing public universities in Ghana: the aspiration to implement comprehensive ICSR practices conflicts with the reality of severe resource constraints. When basic employee compensation is inadequate or delayed, higher-order ICSR initiatives focused on professional development, work-life balance, or enhanced welfare benefits become difficult to justify or implement. This challenge reflects broader issues facing Ghana's public sector, where budgetary limitations often constrain the ability to invest adequately in human capital development and employee welfare.

4.3.2 Lack of Strategic Integration

The operational structure of public universities often lacks well-defined strategies for integrating ICSR into routine institutional processes, which presents a major challenge and

negatively affects employee satisfaction. The absence of clear, coordinated approaches hinders the smooth incorporation of ICSR into routine activities, reducing both its effectiveness and overall influence.

P6 articulated this challenge clearly:

The absence of well-defined integration strategies within the operational structures of some public universities presents a significant obstacle to implementing CSR effectively, which in turn affects employee satisfaction. (30th July 2025, Accra)

This observation highlights that even when resources are available, the lack of strategic frameworks for ICSR implementation limits its effectiveness. Without clear policies, designated responsibilities, and systematic processes for planning, implementing, and evaluating ICSR initiatives, efforts remain ad hoc, fragmented, and unable to achieve their full potential. This structural gap suggests the need for deliberate institutional policy development that clarifies ICSR objectives, assigns responsibilities, allocates resources, and establishes accountability mechanisms.

4.3.3 Definitional Ambiguity and Measurement Challenges

Another key challenge identified relates to the conceptual clarity of ICSR within the university context. Participants noted difficulty in clearly defining what specific activities constitute ICSR and distinguishing them from routine human resource management or general administrative functions.

P8 captured this challenge: "*Identifying specific activities as ICSR within our university is a challenge, limiting our ability to directly link them to employee retention and job satisfaction.*" (30th July 2025, Accra)

This definitional ambiguity has practical implications for ICSR implementation and evaluation. When stakeholders lack clarity about what ICSR encompasses, it becomes difficult to communicate its value, mobilise support for initiatives, allocate resources strategically, or measure effectiveness. The challenge reflects broader conceptual debates in the CSR literature

about boundaries and definitions, particularly in public sector contexts where the line between CSR and core organisational responsibilities may be less clear than in private sector settings.

4.3.4 Political Influences and Leadership Transitions

While not as extensively elaborated as financial and structural challenges, participants also alluded to the influence of political factors and leadership transitions on ICSR implementation. Public universities in Ghana operate within a politically influenced environment where changes in government, party leadership, or institutional administration can affect priorities, resource allocation, and policy continuity. The ever-changing political environment, with shifts in party leadership, produces both benefits and drawbacks, resulting in inconsistent experiences and outcomes across different periods and administrations.

This political dimension introduces uncertainty into ICSR planning and implementation, as initiatives may lack continuity across leadership transitions. Programs begun under one administration may be abandoned or deprioritised when leadership changes, leading to frustration among staff who have invested in these initiatives and contributing to cynicism about institutional commitment to employee welfare.

4.3.5 Theoretical Perspectives and Literature Alignment

The challenges identified by participants reflect broader patterns noted in earlier studies on CSR in public sector organisations. Duthler and Dhanesh (2018) show that limited internal communication and one-way engagement weaken employee support for CSR initiatives, which mirrors participants' concerns about unclear strategies and poor integration of ICSR into university operations. These views highlight the need for transparent communication, stakeholder involvement, and participatory approaches when implementing ICSR. Rasul and Rogger (2018) also demonstrate how management practices and resource constraints influence

public sector performance, aligning with participants' reports that financial limitations restrict staff development, training, and welfare support.

The literature further explains the conceptual challenges noted by participants, including the difficulty of defining CSR and identifying specific internal activities within its broad economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic dimensions. P8's observation reflects this wider academic debate. Existing research also supports participants' concerns about reduced employee engagement when ICSR is underfunded, noting that internal CSR practices linked to welfare, development, and work-life balance strengthen motivation and organisational commitment. Overall, the challenges described here underscore the complexity of implementing ICSR in resource-constrained public institutions and point to the need for clearer policies, stronger financing, and sustained institutional commitment to staff welfare.

4.4 Summary

This chapter discussed the findings on Internal Corporate Social Responsibility and its impact on staff performance in selected Ghanaian public universities. Analysis of interviews with eight participants showed that ICSR is viewed as a core element of ethical governance and institutional identity, extending beyond compliance to strategic commitments to staff welfare, transparency, and accountability. Practices such as training, professional development, work-life balance, and empathetic leadership were found to enhance employee satisfaction, retention, and engagement, affecting both relational and emotional aspects of organisational life. Key challenges included financial constraints, lack of strategic integration, definitional ambiguity, and political influences on policy continuity. The findings support stakeholder theory by highlighting employees as essential stakeholders whose welfare affects institutional effectiveness and offer practical guidance for administrators and policymakers seeking to strengthen ICSR and improve staff performance in public universities.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the entire study and concludes the key findings. The chapter also offers practical recommendations based on the observations and research findings obtained from the data analysis. The conclusions and recommendations focus primarily on addressing the challenges and opportunities related to Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) practices in selected public universities in Ghana. The chapter is organised into four main sections: summary of findings organised by research objectives, overall conclusion, practice recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This section summarises the key findings of the study, organised according to the three main research objectives that guided the investigation.

5.1.1 Implementation of ICSR in Public Universities in Ghana

The first objective focused on the implementation of ICSR standards within the selected public universities of the Republic of Ghana and sought the strategies applied, the motives behind the adoption, and the outcomes achieved. The first objective of the study found that ICSR is a key concept that constitutes a central facet of appropriate governance and a paramount virtue within the framework of public universities. The participants observed that ICSR goes beyond the realms of compliance.

The lessons derived from the interview data revealed the transformative nature of ICSR and the way it could be applied to ensure the responsibility of government institutions is linked with the well-being and good behaviour of staff. It emerged that the ICSR cannot be treated as a matter of choice but has become a prerequisite and a necessity that every public university, if it is to survive and succeed, has to ensure that it integrates into its strategies. This aligns with the opinions of Amaeshi et al. (2012) and the perspective of other scholars, such as Carroll and Shabana (2018), that the responsibility towards society ought not to be treated as a matter of concern but should be incorporated into the strategies of the way organisations operate.

The findings demonstrate that participants view ICSR as a "guiding compass" that embeds staff well-being and ethical practices at the core of institutional governance. This conceptualisation underscores the belief that public universities have distinctive social mandates requiring them to model exemplary employment practices and demonstrate commitment to their workforce as key stakeholders.

5.1.2 Relationship Between ICSR Practices and Employee Satisfaction

The second objective examined the relationship between ICSR initiatives and the level of satisfaction, retention, and commitment of employees within public universities. The data showed that ICSR practices are important factors that influence the satisfaction of employees through various mechanisms. The respondents also explained that the influence of ICSR goes beyond the normal reward benefits and includes training and development, working conditions, work-life balance, and a positive and supportive work environment that is led by empathy, care, and concern.

One of the most significant discoveries that emerged through the research of ICSR is the importance of the relationship and emotional aspects that are valued by the employees. The

employees not only appreciated the direct gains that the organisation could provide, such as training programs and upgraded facilities, but also the intangible aspects of ICSR, such as being heard, valued, and having the emotional well-being of the employees considered.

The findings are consistent with the Stakeholder Theory because they show that if organisations are able to meet the needs of employees, who are key stakeholders of organisations, through integrated CSR practices, the result would be enhanced commitment and performance. The importance of an integrated approach to the decision to work beyond financial reward to the diverse needs of employees has been affirmed.

5.1.3 Challenges to Effective Implementation of ICSR in Public Universities

The third objective of the study focused on the factors inhibiting the effective implementation of ICSR within the public universities. The study discovered various important inhibiting factors. Lack of funds was found to be the most important factor that prevents institutions from offering ICSR programs and also meets basic running costs, such as paying the staff's basic salaries. As the respondents explained, issues related to the basic salaries of the staff make it difficult to cope with the issue of ICSR.

Beyond financial limitations, the study identified structural and strategic challenges, including the absence of well-defined integration strategies for embedding ICSR into routine university operations. This lack of clear frameworks, policies, and systematic processes results in ad hoc and fragmented ICSR efforts that fail to achieve their full potential impact.

Additionally, participants noted definitional ambiguity regarding what specific activities constitute ICSR within the university context. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to distinguish ICSR from routine human resource management, communicate its value

effectively, mobilise support, allocate resources strategically, and measure outcomes related to employee retention and satisfaction.

These obstacles are consistent with previous research on internal CSR communication, bureaucratic systems in public institutions, and the complex, multifaceted nature of CSR. The challenges underscore the complex realities facing public universities in Ghana as they seek to balance aspirations for exemplary ICSR practices with the constraints of resource-limited public sector environments.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has shown the importance of ICSR to the culture and satisfaction of employees of the selected public universities of Ghana. The paper confirms the previously presented literature and expands it to show that ICSR is not a marginal but a key aspect of governance that impacts the employees' satisfaction and performance greatly.

The findings confirm that employees within public universities perceive ICSR as the backbone of good governance and that the commitment of their institutions to staff welfare is a sign of the organisation's key priorities and values. With sound ICSR practices, positive work environments are engendered that have the effect of boosting the employees' level of motivation and commitment. The effect of ICSR does not merely translate to positive gains, but also to the nature of relationships and the work environment.

However, the study also reveals that significant barriers hinder the full realisation of ICSR's potential in public universities. Financial constraints, lack of strategic integration frameworks, definitional ambiguity, and political influences create complex challenges that must be addressed for ICSR to achieve its intended outcomes. These challenges reflect broader systemic

issues within Ghana's public sector, including resource limitations, bureaucratic structures, and competing institutional priorities.

It is important to work towards the mitigation of these challenges through appropriate strategies that ensure the enhancement of ICSR implementation within the public universities. This should be achieved through the formulation of strategies related to the funding of the program and the formation of a well-rounded approach that captures both the intangible and tangible aspects of employees' welfare. This will go a long way in ensuring the development of sustainable and well-responsible organisations within the public universities.

This study contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical application of ICSR in public sector contexts. It reinforces stakeholder theory by demonstrating that employees are critical stakeholders whose welfare directly influences institutional effectiveness. It also provides evidence that ICSR, when properly conceptualised and implemented, serves as a strategic tool for enhancing organisational performance through improved employee satisfaction, retention, and commitment in resource-constrained public sector environments.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and the challenges identified, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) implementation in public universities in Ghana:

5.3.1 Develop Clear ICSR Integration Strategies

There is a need for public universities to build frameworks that enable the incorporation of ICSR into the operations of the institutions. This involves the definition of ICSR activities and distinguishing these from the general functions of managing the staff of the institution. The

universities also need to develop ICSR policies that contain the aims and the responsibility of implementing the ICSR strategies. This also includes the development of performance indicators that ensure that the ICSR efforts are aligned with the mission of the institution.

5.3.2 Secure Adequate Funding for ICSR Initiatives

University administrators and policymakers should prioritise adequate resource allocation for ICSR programs. Strategic financial planning should dedicate specific budgets to employee welfare, professional development, and initiatives that enhance both staff satisfaction and institutional effectiveness. This may require advocacy at policy levels to increase public university funding, creative resource mobilisation strategies, and prioritisation of ICSR within existing budgets. Ensuring adequate and timely staff compensation should be foundational, as basic financial security enables employees to engage meaningfully with higher-order ICSR initiatives.

5.3.3 Adopt Holistic, Employee-Centred Approaches

Universities should move beyond narrow conceptions of employee welfare focused solely on financial compensation to adopt comprehensive approaches addressing diverse employee needs. This includes providing ongoing professional training and development opportunities, improving physical work environments and facilities, implementing work-life balance policies, offering family-friendly benefits such as childcare services, and ensuring access to healthcare services. Importantly, universities should cultivate organisational cultures characterised by empathy, genuine care, respectful communication, and meaningful engagement with employee concerns. This human dimension of ICSR is as critical as tangible benefits in fostering employee satisfaction and commitment.

5.3.4 Promote Employee Participation in ICSR Design

Universities should actively involve employees in shaping ICSR policies and initiatives rather than implementing top-down approaches. Regular consultation with staff through surveys, focus groups, and participatory planning processes can ensure that ICSR initiatives reflect actual employee priorities and needs. This participatory approach not only increases the relevance and effectiveness of ICSR programs but also demonstrates genuine organisational commitment to employee welfare, thereby strengthening the psychological contract between employees and institutions.

5.3.5 Establish Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Public universities should implement systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess ICSR effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This includes regular collection of data on employee satisfaction, retention rates, engagement levels, and perceptions of organisational support. Evaluation findings should inform continuous improvement of ICSR strategies, ensuring that initiatives remain responsive to evolving employee needs and institutional contexts.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

While this study has provided valuable insights into ICSR practices and their influence on staff performance in Ghanaian public universities, several areas warrant further investigation:

First, future research could employ quantitative approaches to examine the relationships between specific ICSR practices and measurable performance outcomes across larger samples of universities and employees. This would enable statistical generalisation and identification of which ICSR practices have the strongest effects on different performance dimensions.

Second, comparative studies examining ICSR practices across different types of institutions, public versus private universities, or universities in different African countries, could illuminate how institutional and national contexts shape ICSR implementation and effectiveness.

Third, longitudinal research tracking ICSR initiatives and their impacts over time would provide insights into sustainability, long-term effectiveness, and how ICSR-employee relationships evolve as institutional and contextual factors change.

Fourth, future research could explore the perspectives of different employee categories, academic staff, administrative staff, and support staff, to understand how ICSR needs and impacts vary across different organisational roles and hierarchies.

Finally, research examining successful strategies for overcoming the barriers identified in this study, particularly financial constraints and lack of integration frameworks, would provide practical guidance for universities seeking to strengthen their ICSR practices despite resource limitations.

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Appendices

INTERVIEW GUIDE

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Purpose: To establish rapport and gather contextual information.

Can you please tell me your name, role, and how long you have worked at this university?

What department/unit are you part of, and what are your main responsibilities?

SECTION B: IDENTIFICATION OF INTERNAL CSR PRACTICES (Objective 1)

1. What internal CSR initiatives or policies does your university currently implement for staff welfare and development?
2. Are there specific programs related to staff health, work-life balance, training, or employee development?
3. How are employees informed or involved in these CSR initiatives?
4. In your view, how consistent and inclusive are these practices across different departments or employee categories?

SECTION C: IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION & COMMITMENT (Objective 2)

5. How do you think these CSR practices affect your job satisfaction?
6. Have the university's CSR practices influenced your loyalty or commitment to the institution?
7. Are there any examples where CSR efforts led to improved morale, productivity, or teamwork among staff?
8. Do you feel valued or recognized as an employee through these initiatives?

SECTION D: CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING INTERNAL CSR (Objective 3)

9. What challenges does the university face in implementing or sustaining internal CSR programs?

10. Are there any resource, policy, or leadership constraints that hinder effective CSR implementation?

11. How is feedback from staff regarding CSR initiatives collected and addressed?

SECTION E: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCEMENT (Objective 4)

12. What improvements would you suggest to strengthen internal CSR practices in this university?

13. Are there best practices from other institutions (local or international) you think your university should adopt?

14. How can university leadership better support or institutionalize CSR to improve employee well-being?