

EMPLOYEE CSR (DIS)ENGAGEMENT: A YOUNG BLUE-COLLAR PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract <p>As the knowledge of CSR and its benefits keeps increasing, organizations are increasingly involved in CSR initiatives. This affects employees as they often play a significant role in implementing these initiatives at various levels, making their engagement crucial for the success of CSR efforts. While employee engagement in CSR has been studied extensively, blue-collar workers as an employee group have received less attention. Blue-collar work inherently differs from white-collar work, which may impact how blue-collar workers perceive and engage with CSR. Organizations need to understand the perceptions and engagement to implement CSR initiatives in a way that engages all employees in an organization.</p> <p>This thesis explores the CSR (dis)engagement of young blue-collar workers. The aim is to increase understanding of how the (dis)engagement manifests, what drives it, and how agency is perceived in the context of CSR engagement. The research was completed as qualitative research by interviewing 9 young blue-collar workers, and the results were analyzed by using thematic analysis. 9 themes related to the research questions emerged from the data, each with their own set of codes.</p> <p>The findings of this thesis indicate that, although workers did not resist participating in CSR, their engagement is often unconscious and revolves around the mandatory aspects of their job roles, with limited interest in going beyond what is expected of them. Peers and supervisors were identified as significant factors influencing CSR engagement, while a perceived lack of knowledge seemed to reduce motivation to participate. Opportunities for exercising individual agency are often restricted, while proxy- and collective agency were used to overcome some of the structural constraints of the blue-collar role.</p>	
Key words CSR, Employee Engagement, Disengagement, Agency, Blue-Collar Workers	
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TIIVISTELMÄ

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<p>Yritysten yhteiskuntavastuun (CSR) ja sen hyötyjen tuntemuksen kasvaessa organisaatiot osallistuvat yhteiskuntavastuuseen yhä enemmän. Tämä vaikuttaa työntekijöihin, sillä heillä on usein merkittävä rooli näiden toimenpiteiden toteuttamisessa eri tasoilla, mikä tekee heidän sitoutumisestaan ratkaisevaa yhteiskuntavastuun onnistumiselle. Aiemmat tutkimukset ovat keskittyneet paljon työntekijöiden sitoutumiseen, mutta työläiset ovat jääneet vähemmälle huomiolle. Sinikaulustyö eroaa valkokaulustyöstä, mikä voi vaikuttaa siihen, miten työläiset kokevat yritysvastuun ja osallistuvat siihen. Heidän näkökulmiensa ymmärtäminen on olennaista tehokkaiden yritysvastuustrategioiden luomiseksi koko henkilöstön sitouttamiseen.</p> <p>Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma pyrkii tarkastelemaan nuorten työläisten sitoutumattomuutta/sitoutumista yritysten yhteiskuntavastuuseen. Tavoitteena on lisätä ymmärrystä siitä, miten sitoutumattomuus/sitoutuminen ilmenee, mikä siihen vaikuttaa ja miten toimijuus koetaan liittyen yhteiskuntavastuuseen. Tutkimus toteutettiin laadullisena tutkimuksena haastattelemalla yhdeksää nuorta työläistä, ja tulokset analysoitiin käyttäen temaattista analyysiä. Tutkimuksessa ilmeni yhdeksän tutkimuskysymyksiin liittyvää teemaa, joista jokaisella omat koodinsa.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että vaikka työläiset eivät vastustaneet yhteiskuntavastuuseen osallistumista, heidän sitoutumisensa on usein tiedostamatonta ja keskittyy työnkuvan pakollisiin osa-alueisiin, eikä heillä ole suurta kiinnostusta mennä pidemmälle kuin mitä heiltä odotetaan. Työkaverit ja esimiehet todettiin merkittäviksi tekijöiksi, jotka vaikuttavat sitoutumiseen, kun taas koettu tiedon puute näytti vähentävän motivaatiota osallistua. Mahdollisuudet hyödyntää yksilöllistä toimijuutta olivat usein rajalliset, kun taas sijais- ja kollektiivisen toimijuuden avulla voitiin ylittää joitakin työläisroolin rakenteellisia rajoitteita.</p>	
Asiasanat CSR, Sitoutuminen, Sitoutumattomuus, Toimijuus, Työläiset	
Säilytyspaikka Jyväskylän yliopiston kirjasto	

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ABSTRACT

TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the topic of this thesis. The title of the thesis is *Employee CSR (Dis)engagement: A Young Blue-Collar Perspective*. This chapter starts with introducing the background of the study, including the motivation for the research. This chapter also introduces the research task and questions, and briefly introduces the relevant theoretical concepts for the thesis. In this chapter, the structure of the study will also be described.

1.1 Background of the Study

The purpose of companies has changed drastically in the past decades. The first definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was made by Howard R. Bowen in 1953 as the “obligation of an enterprise to respect peoples’ rights and promote human welfare in its operations,” and many more definitions have since been made (Chatzoglou et al., 2017). Today, increasing legal obligations and knowledge of the various benefits of CSR have increased the importance and involvement of CSR, and the social rights of organizations are comparable to those of individuals (Chatzoglou et al., 2017; Nejati et al., 2019). While in 2011, only 20% of S&P 500 companies published a sustainability report, in 2022, the amount had increased to 98%, further proving the increased interest and pressure of organizations to do their fair share of CSR (Governance & Accountability Institute, 2023).

Employees are important for organizations as ambassadors and enactors of CSR activities, and engaging employees in CSR allows CSR to become part of the organizational culture (Nejati et al., 2019). With organizations focusing on the sustainability of their operations, employees are increasingly affected and involved in sustainability-related actions. Employees’ perspective regarding CSR can be more important and objective than the perspective of their leaders since the leaders are practically evaluating themselves when evaluating the company’s

culture, practices, and performance (Kucharska & Kowalczyk, 2019). Hahn et al. (2023) note that CSR implementation often results in employees disagreeing with the goals or means of the CSR initiatives of the organization because of the value-laden nature of CSR and the magnitude of changes it causes to operations. While employees are a stakeholder group whose relationship with organizational sustainability has been studied a lot in the past, especially in the 2010s, less focus has been given to blue-collar workers and their perspectives (Onkila & Sarna, 2022). According to the literature review on employee-CSR relations by Onkila & Sarna (2022), the past research on the topic has been dominated by top-down management approaches, and there is a need for future research on the more active role of employees in CSR relations. The hands-on expertise and experience of blue-collar workers could provide valuable insight for organizations on how to improve their sustainability work. Another factor that plays a part in an organization's successful sustainability work is employee acceptance of the sustainability work. Since blue-collar workers are on the frontlines of many operations, especially in industrial organizations, their acceptance and engagement play a big role in how sustainability is addressed in practice. Employees also should not be looked at as a homogenous stakeholder group, and not every employee will engage with CSR in the same way (Slack et al., 2015).

Understanding employee engagement and CSR engagement is important because of its benefits to both organizations and employees. The benefits of employee engagement include higher job satisfaction, organizational performance and employee performance, and customer satisfaction (Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Saks, 2019; Sugandha, 2022). The benefits of participating in CSR include fulfillment of job needs, enhanced job-satisfaction, enhanced self-image of both the organization and its employees, safer work environment, and reduced costs (Allen, 2023; Cao & Lee, 2023; Du et al., 2015; Murshed et al., 2021). Disengaged employees in turn resist CSR activities and avoid taking part in them, expressing their frustration with CSR (Hahn et al., 2023; Hemingway, 2005; Rodrigo & Arenas, 2008). Understanding how (dis)engagement is created and how it manifests in blue-collar workers is important if organizations want to leverage the advantages of engagement and mitigate the challenges of disengagement. Because the past research on the topic has been mainly focused on the management perspective and very little research exists about the blue-collar perspective, this thesis focuses on how blue-collar workers perceive CSR in their organizations and how they are engaged in CSR. There could be a lot of hidden potential in involving blue-collar workers as initiators and drivers of CSR actions because of their hands-on experience of organizations' operations. Understanding the perceptions and motivations of blue-collar workers could help organizations successfully implement CSR and sustainability strategies that are not only top-down but inclusive and consider people's viewpoints at different levels of the organization.

The personal motivation for this research stems from my background and the desire to understand blue-collar workers better in a world where organizational CSR is becoming mainstream and a "rule" rather than an

exception. I grew up in a rural, blue-collar town born and developed around a paper mill, which has been “the heart” of the town and its largest employer since its founding. The idea to research this topic originates from a video made by a Finnish forest industry company, which shows a blue-collar worker conducting their usual work duties, of which one is recycling some leftover materials from the processes. There also might be many cases where introducing new CSR policies and initiatives causes blue-collar workers to have new and more complicated work tasks than before, which might affect their attitudes and engagement in CSR. This is especially interesting because of the lack of decision-making power and influence the blue-collar workers usually have in organizations (Huang, 2011).

This thesis utilizes employee engagement and human agency theory in its theoretical framework to create a comprehensive understanding of young blue-collar workers’ CSR engagement. The theoretical framework of this thesis also dedicates one chapter to blue-collar workers as an employee group, since understanding the unique characteristics of blue-collar work helps explore and understand the engagement of the workers. The literature on employee engagement helps explore the motivations, barriers, and influences that either increase or decrease the levels of engagement in CSR activities, focusing also on disengagement. Employee engagement is defined as an employee’s involvement, commitment, satisfaction, and enthusiasm toward work and the organization (Anitha, 2014; Sugandha, 2022). In employee CSR engagement, this engagement is toward the organization’s CSR-related activities. Disengagement is defined as employees distancing themselves from work either emotionally, cognitively, or physically (Afrahi et al., 2022). In the context of this thesis, disengagement is also an important concept, as employee CSR engagement can be seen as a spectrum, with disengagement in the other end, and engagement in the other. While disengaged employees are less motivated and committed, disengagement is not inherently a negative thing, as it can be a form of coping for the employees (Afrahi et al., 2022; Peterson et al., 2008). Human agency theory focuses on the level of control and autonomy blue-collar workers perceive within CSR initiatives. Bandura’s (2006) theory of human agency highlights people’s roles as active agents intentionally influencing their environments, emphasizing the four core properties of intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. Exploring blue-collar CSR engagement through human agency theory is particularly relevant because of the low level of autonomy that characterizes blue-collar work (Huang, 2011). Exploring how agency influences their engagement could provide insights into empowering blue-collar workers to participate more actively in CSR. Together, these theories form the theoretical framework of the thesis, giving insight into what is already known about blue-collar workers and their CSR engagement, providing a foundation for interpreting the findings, and guiding the exploration of factors that influence blue-collar workers’ roles in CSR.

1.2 Research Design, Research Questions, and Structure

This thesis aims to gain insights into the experiences and perceptions of blue-collar workers regarding their ability and willingness to actively participate and engage in CSR practices. Since this thesis is an exploratory study, the focus is not on creating broad generalizations or establishing definitive models on blue-collar CSR engagement, but rather on uncovering patterns, motivations, and barriers that influence CSR engagement in blue-collar work. Based on the aim of the thesis, the main research question for this empirical study was identified:

- How are blue-collar workers (dis)engaged in organizations' CSR actions?

In addition to this research question, I aim to better understand the experiences and perceptions that influence young blue-collar workers' level of (dis)engagement and involvement. I will approach the topic through the concepts of employee engagement and human agency, which will provide the theoretical framework for the thesis. The following two additional research questions complement the main research question:

- How do blue-collar workers perceive CSR?
- How do blue-collar workers perceive their agency related to CSR?

To answer the research question, the research is conducted as qualitative research. The data is collected by interviewing young blue-collar workers in the spring and summer of 2024. The interviews are analyzed using thematic analysis, with the aim of finding common themes from the interview data to answer the research questions and explore the workers' CSR (dis)engagement.

This thesis is structured as six chapters. This chapter introduces the overall theme and topic of the thesis, its background, aim, and research question. The second chapter provides the theoretical framework of the thesis, consisting of blue-collar workers as an employee group, employee engagement, and human agency theory. The third chapter introduces the research methodology, which contains the research design, data collection, and analysis methods. The fourth chapter presents the findings based on the aim of the thesis and the research question. The fifth chapter is the discussion of the study and its limitations, with recommendations for future research. In the sixth and final chapter, the conclusions of this thesis are presented.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this thesis will consist of two concepts that complement each other in the context of this research: Employee engagement and human agency theory. Employee Engagement, as the central theme, delves into the emotional and psychological commitment of workers to the organization's goals, including CSR initiatives. Human Agency Theory plays an important role in supporting the understanding of Employee Engagement and the role of blue-collar workers within the context of this thesis. It helps understand the capabilities and competencies blue-collar workers have and use when they engage with CSR initiatives. The characteristics of blue-collar work and the workers are also examined in this chapter to create a comprehensive understanding of them as a group of stakeholders. Employee engagement and human agency theory are viewed through the perspective of blue-collar employees, and together, they aim to contribute to a holistic framework to understand how blue-collar workers engage with and respond to organizations' CSR objectives.

2.1 Blue-Collar Workers as an Employee Group

Existing literature on stakeholder theory tends to homogenize individual stakeholder groups, such as employees, and their needs and priorities. This can lead to a lack of understanding of the characteristics of the different types of employee groups and how they affect engagement. This chapter focuses on the characteristics of blue-collar workers and their work to create a more nuanced theoretical framework, taking into account the differences in work and personal life that blue-collar workers might have. Compared to white-collar work, blue-collar work is characterized by its physical labor, levels of education and autonomy, and management by supervisors or mechanical controls (Huang, 2011; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004; Saraç et al., 2017). While blue-collar work is often thought of as just manual labor, which does not require high levels of complex

cognitive work (e.g., production line of a factory), it requires extensive know-how and competencies (Saari et al., 2021). Thomas (1989) states that another factor that is typical to blue-collar work is stationary hierarchical levels, as blue-collar workers are often considered to have jobs instead of careers. However, he argues that blue-collar careers are real, but they are characterized by the constraints in the vertical mobility of the careers (Thomas, 1989). The level of pay and income is another difference between white-collar and blue-collar workers. While white-collar workers in offices usually earn a salary, blue-collar workers usually get paid by the hour (Saraç et al., 2017).

Because blue-collar work is so different from white-collar (and pink-collar) work, it is expected that the workers are also different and experience their work and environment differently, which is why the differences between blue-collar and white-collar employees are relevant in the context of this thesis. However, it is important to note that because employees should not be looked at as a homogenous group, blue-collar workers themselves cannot be looked at as a homogenous group (Slack et al., 2015). Especially when talking about values and attitudes, some blue-collar workers might find more in common with white-collar workers than other blue-collar workers and vice-versa. According to Lips-Wiersma et al. (2016), blue-collar workers experience less expressing their full potential compared to white-collar workers, but they also place less importance on expressing their full potential and serving others compared to white-collar workers. Blue-collar workers also experience less unity with others compared to white-collar workers. This could be explained by higher levels of autonomy in white-collar work, which gives opportunities for more spontaneous and voluntary connections at work. For blue-collar workers, physical and hierarchical constraints are limiting the opportunities that white-collar workers have. (Lips-Wiersma et al., 2016.)

Another topic that is relevant to this thesis is the introduction of new technologies and processes in the work since the introduction of new CSR actions causes changes to work activities and processes. According to Hampel et al. (2022), blue-collar workers are prone to refusing to work with new technologies despite the possibility of expanding their work activities and enriching their jobs. Individual-level factors play an important role in the introduction of new technologies. Identifying employees who have either a positive or negative stance toward new technologies and selecting those who are open to accepting increased work demands is essential for forming a pilot group or appointing ambassadors to spearhead the implementation of new processes. (Hampel et al., 2022.)

Since the research in this thesis is located in Finland, the existing research about blue-collar workers should be approached critically. Most of the existing research is set in the context of other countries, e.g., the United States and Germany (see Thomas, 1989; Hampel et al., 2022). Although the cultural and economic similarities of these countries would suggest the applicability of the results in the Finnish context as well, smaller differences in social support systems and social structures may still significantly impact the transferability of

findings from the USA and Germany. For example, in the Nordic context, a clear class structure exists in non-financial work orientation (Saloniemi et al., 2014). This is why knowledge from the Finnish context is also needed to better understand Finnish blue-collar workers. The number of blue-collar industrial workers in Finland has been declining for some time now, and the country is now a post-industrialist society with services employing more people. However, there are still many people working in blue-collar work (Koivunen et al., 2023; Statistics Finland, 2007).

2.1.1 Instrumentalism and Meaningfulness in Blue-Collar Work

Even though there are opportunities for career advancement for blue-collar workers, they often come with a cost, such as loss of workplace social network, higher levels of stress in return for low levels of advancement, and the loss of opportunity to practice one's craft (Thomas, 1989). Because of the limited opportunities for advancement and self-expression through work, Thomas (1989) argues that blue-collar workers are required to make sense of their jobs in ways that are different from the ways their organizations see the jobs. Incompleteness in work activities, limited visions of how their work contributes to the organization, and limited returns on investment in one's job can create feelings of indifference and alienation as a response among blue-collar workers. However, it is more common for blue-collar workers to cope with their situations by focusing on status hierarchies inside the workplace vis-à-vis other blue-collar workers or on goals that can be achieved through work rather than in work. (Thomas, 1989; Saari et al., 2021.) Compared to white-collar workers, blue-collar workers have considerably lower levels of non-financial commitment to employment (Saloniemi et al., 2014).

When the focus is not on goals that are achievable in work but through work, the work becomes a means to other ends. This also means that the personal responsibilities of the workers are often external and not related to the responsibilities of the organization. Involvement in the processes at work and organizational goals is lower when realizing that advancement opportunities are low and costs of shifting workplace are high. (Thomas, 1989.)

Saari et al. (2021) argue that meaningfulness in work for the Finnish blue-collar worker in the 2020s comes from satisfying the four basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, relatedness, and beneficence. Contrary to Thomas' (1989) suggestion that the nature of blue-collar work creates lower involvement in organizational processes and goals, Saari et al. (2021) emphasize the role of taking responsibility and influencing the work organization autonomously as a source for meaningful work. For blue-collar workers, independence and freedom at work are restricted, context-bound, and relative, often compared to the work of peers (Saari et al., 2021). Competence is a concept that is closely related to human agency theory (Chapter 2.3), another important part of the theoretical framework of this thesis. According to Saari et al. (2021), meaningfulness from competence comes from realizing own competencies, getting recognition for the competencies, and adapting to work demands. Continuous use of competencies,

opportunities to develop competencies, and understanding how own work is related to the bigger picture of the organization are instances where meaningfulness emerges for blue-collar workers (Saari et al., 2021). Thomas (1989) mentioned the loss of workplace social networks as a barrier to career advancement, and Saari et al. (2021) also talked about the importance of relatedness and social networks for meaningfulness. While blue-collar work creates less spontaneous connections at the workplace compared to white-collar work, unity, care, and togetherness are still common amongst blue-collar workers and an important source of meaningfulness, as good work community can make uninteresting work more meaningful (Lips-Wiersma et al., 2016; Saari et al., 2021). Finally, beneficence as the last of the four basic psychological needs that increase meaningfulness is highly related to relatedness, since helping peers is an easy way to experience meaningfulness in work. Beneficence is also closely connected with competency since particularly satisfied clients and customers create meaningfulness through beneficence. Again, understanding the bigger picture of the work and the organization is important for beneficence, as the meaningfulness of the work can come from its meaning for society. (Saari et al., 2021.)

2.2 Employee Engagement

The concept of employee engagement is the core concept in this thesis, through which the attitudes and behaviors of blue-collar workers towards organizational CSR efforts are studied. Employee engagement is a widely researched concept that has many definitions and dimensions. Employee engagement originates from two concepts that have seen a lot of focus in past research: Commitment and Organizational Citizen Behavior (OCB), both of which share some similarities with employee engagement (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). According to Anitha (2014), employee engagement is the level of commitment and involvement of the employee towards the organization. Sugandha (2022), defines employee engagement as the employee's involvement with, satisfaction from, and enthusiasm about the work. Engaged employees are also defined by their state of high internal motivation. Markos & Sridevi (2010) use a two-way approach in their definition, taking into account the actions of both employee and employer within this relationship. They state that engagement goes beyond satisfaction and loyalty to the employer, being about the willingness to commit one's efforts to enable the employer to succeed (Markos & Sridevi, 2010).

Employee engagement is linked with organizational performance, as well as employee performance, with high levels of employee engagement predicting higher customer satisfaction, organizational performance, and employee performance (Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Sugandha, 2022). Engaged employees are important to employers since they go beyond what is expected from them and perform their tasks with excellence (Anitha, 2014). Engaged employees have been found to advocate for the organization to co-workers, recommend it to potential

employees and customers, have a desire to stay with the organization even when other job opportunities are available, and put extra time, effort, and initiative to help the company succeed (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). According to Saks (2019), employee engagement has also been found to influence job satisfaction, intentions to quit, organizational commitment, and OCB, the latter two being the concepts from which the concept of employee engagement originates.

Past research has given considerable attention to the factors that influence employee engagement, especially the drivers that increase engagement. Robinson et al. (2004) identified the employees' sense of feeling valued and involved as the strongest driver of engagement. Bedarkar & Pandita (2014) name work-life balance, communication, and leadership as the three crucial drivers of employee engagement. Companies should provide their employees the freedom to make their environment enjoyable, allowing them to mix work and fun at the workplace. It is not a one-time initiative but an ongoing process of learning, improvement, and action integrated into the company's culture. (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014.) The effect of job characteristics on employee engagement has also been subject to research, as Saks (2019) found that out of autonomy, task identity, skill variety, task significance, feedback from others, and feedback from job, skill variety was the only significant job characteristic that would predict employee engagement. However, Christian et al. (2011) found that engagement is more strongly related to job characteristics that are connected to the perception of meaningfulness of the work, such as task variety and significance. One good way to examine employee engagement is through Anitha's (2014) determinants of employee engagement, which are presented in Figure 1. Out of these seven determinants, working environment and team and co-worker relationships were identified as having the biggest impact (Anitha, 2014). Working environment and co-workers were also discussed substantially in the literature about blue-collar workers, especially concerning the meaningfulness of the work (See Saari et al., 2021). Anitha (2014) suggests that organizations should focus more on working environments and co-worker relationships of employees and promote peer-relationship-enhancing programs, as they have the highest impact on engagement. From a bottom-up point of view, employees could also aim to manage good relationships with their peers and have a positive influence on the working environment to increase their engagement, and thus their performance as well.

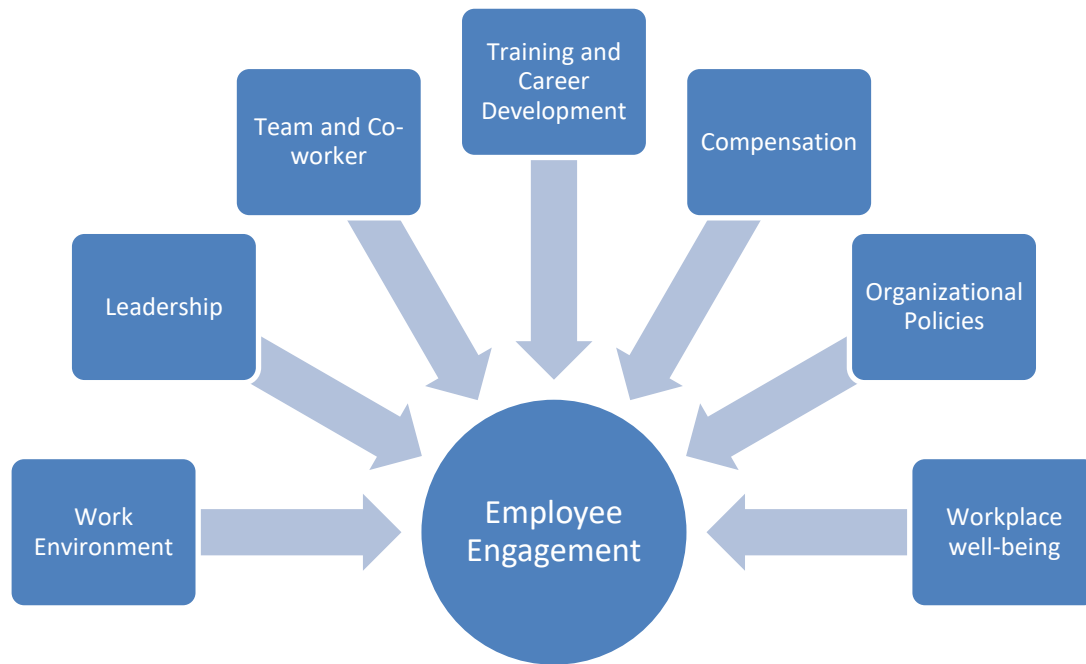


Figure 1: Determinants of employee engagement (Anitha, 2014).

But how well do Anitha's (2014) determinants of employee engagement apply to blue-collar workers? The determinants were tested with a causal study, and the data was collected with a survey study, but the sample of the study consisted of employees from middle and lower managerial levels, not blue-collar workers (Anitha, 2014). The conceptualization of different work aspects differs between white-collar and blue-collar workers, and blue-collar workers' conceptualization of work characteristics is less multidimensional and differentiated compared to white-collar workers (Hampel et al., 2022). Hampel et al. (2022) suggest that instead of focusing on just the actual work characteristics of blue-collar workers, the desired work characteristics should also be considered to better understand their attitudes and work environment. In this case, to make the determinants of employee engagement a better fit for blue-collar work, all the work characteristics could be approached with the addition of desired work characteristics as well. The balance of actual and desired work characteristics has an impact on positive work attitude and performance and is considered a precondition for intrinsic motivation.

2.2.1 Disengagement

Employee engagement has attracted significant attention in the past literature, but at the same time, employee disengagement has been left without the same attention. Disengagement has often been assumed to mean the absence of engagement. The meaning of disengagement is still argued between scholars and practitioners, despite them meaning the same thing when talking about engagement. (Afrahi et al., 2022.) While different types of engagement can also

mean disengagement, Hejjas et al. (2018) remind that it is not evidently clear that disengagement would mean the opposite of engagement, and that same employees can even be engaged and disengaged at times. According to Afrahi et al. (2022), disengagement can be explained using many different theories, such as burnout, job demands-resources, psychological theory, and coping processes. All of these theories share the idea of disengagement as distancing from work emotionally, cognitively, or physically (Afrahi et al., 2022). While a lot of existing research has focused on the drivers of engagement, it cannot be said that the mere lack of these drivers will cause disengagement (Hejjas et al., 2019). Because employee engagement has multiple positive effects on employees and organizations, and disengagement has been approached with the assumption that it is the absence of engagement, it makes sense that disengagement has been treated as something negative.

Like engagement, disengagement also has multiple factors influencing it, and the causes have seen interest in the past research. Rastogi et al. (2018) identified job resources as the cause of disengagement at work. They define job resources as the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that help employees achieve their work goals. Job control, job security, job complexity, and organizational support are all job resources that are likely to cause disengagement if denied or lost. (Rastogi et al., 2018.) Bakker et al. (2004) also found that low job resources cause employees to show high levels of disengagement, while Peterson et al. (2008) found that low job resources combined with low job demands could cause withdrawal from work, reduced motivation and commitment. Bakker et al. (2004) argue that low job resources combined with high job demands cause exhaustion and disengagement, resulting in burnout. Karatepe et al. (2021) suggest that employers not being able to fulfill their promised obligations or expectations within the psychological contract between the employer and employee erodes employees' engagement, lowering their willingness to take part in pro-environmental behaviors and their intention to stay in the organization. If the organization is not able to fulfill the promises made to employees, they should explain the reasons for the broken promises (Karatepe et al., 2021).

It is widely assumed that that employee engagement is naturally beneficial to organizations while disengagement is a problem that needs solving (Afrahi et al., 2022). Markos & Sridevi (2010) argue that disengaged employees cause companies reduced commitment, customer orientation, productivity, operating margins, and net profit margins. However, disengagement can also be thought of as a functional coping response for the employees. For example, workers whose skills and competencies at work are not fully utilized might distance themselves from work as a form of coping (Peterson et al., 2008). While distancing is an essential part of disengagement, it should necessarily not be thought of as something negative. (Afrahi et al., 2022.) Peterson et al. (2008) found that while disengagement causes failure and frustration, it is not related to increased sickness absences, unlike exhausted and burned-out employees. Now that working remotely, which is essentially physical distancing from work, has

become more popular after the COVID-19 pandemic, we are better seeing its effects on different aspects of work. For example, Galanti et al. (2021) found that while the physical distancing caused by remote work can negatively affect productivity and increase stress levels because of family-work conflict and social isolation, the self-leadership and job autonomy from remote work can have a positive effect on productivity. While remote working is not closely related to disengagement, it shows that the nuanced effects cannot be classified as completely positive or negative, but more complex and influenced by various factors, such as individual circumstances and job characteristics. It is also important to acknowledge that remote work is not a very good comparison to blue-collar work, which has nonexistent opportunities for remote work.

2.3 Employee CSR Engagement

In this study, the definition of employee CSR engagement is derived from definitions of employee engagement by Anitha (2014) and Sugandha (2022). It is the employee's state of high internal motivation, level of commitment, satisfaction, and enthusiasm toward the activities in their organization related to CSR.

Similar to employee engagement, employee CSR engagement also brings a number of benefits and positive impacts for both companies and employees. For companies, employees taking part in CSR build positive reputations, reduce costs, and builds pro-environmental values, among other benefits (Allen, 2023). Participating in CSR efforts helps enhance the company's image, thus enhancing the employees' self-image (Cao & Lee, 2023). Commonly perceived benefits of participating in CSR for the employees include a sense of achievement, physical and mental well-being, efficiency, pride and commitment, and a safer work environment (Allen, 2023). Employees who are more involved in CSR are also more likely to feel a greater fulfillment of their job needs, enhancing their job satisfaction (Du et al., 2015; Murshed et al., 2021). In particular, employees who perceive CSR as important are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (Murshed et al., 2021). Koch et al. (2019) divide the employees' benefits from participating in CSR into three benefit clusters: Functional benefits, emotional benefits, and meaning and morality benefits. Functional benefits are related to skill development, career opportunities, and work-life balance, emotional benefits to feelings of pride, enjoyment, and team spirit, and meaning and morality benefits to the shared values with the company and a sense of contributing to a meaningful cause (Koch et al., 2019). Despite its benefits, CSR engagement can also include costs for the employee. Allen (2023) researched employees' perceived costs of participating in their company's environmental initiatives, which include the job becoming more difficult, adapting to change, and inconvenience and conflict.

As organizations are investing increasing amounts of resources into initiatives that aim to create a positive impact on the environment and people

while also creating value for the business, they cannot rely on policies alone to make the initiatives successful (Cao & Lee, 2023). In the context of corporate social responsibility, employees and organizations are mutually dependent (Hejjas et al., 2019). Most of the attention in the CSR engagement literature has been given to the organizational and general levels (Hejjas et al., 2019). Employees carry the main responsibility for implementing ethical behavior in organizations, and the success of organizations' CSR activities is mostly dependent on employees' willingness to collaborate (Hahn et al., 2023.; Slack et al., 2015). It is necessary for companies to increase the appeal of their CSR programs to employees, as more engagement enhances the overall effectiveness of these programs (Murshed et al., 2021). This is why the factors that contribute to or hinder employee CSR engagement have seen a lot of interest in the employee CSR engagement literature. According to Carlini & Grace (2021), engaging employees with CSR by integrating it into the company's internal culture leads to better employee commitment and OCB. On-the-job training aligning with the company's CSR goals, involvement in decision-making related to CSR, and fair treatment related to recruitment, support, and career growth are all actions that send a stronger message to employees about CSR rather than just offering benefits such as bonuses (Carlini & Grace, 2021). Rodrigo & Arenas (2008) also found that embedding CSR activities can cause employees to feel like their work is important in more than just economic aspects, enhancing the employee attitudes toward the organization and society. According to Koch et al. (2019), it is important that the employees' contributions to CSR get recognized by the company and other employees since it can bring pride and other emotional benefits to the employees. To increase participation in CSR, companies should try to enhance the visibility of the other benefits of CSR to their employees as well since the more benefits of CSR employees perceive, the more they participate in CSR (Koch et al., 2019). Since participation in CSR brings benefits to the employees, this could create a positive feedback loop, where participation increases perceived benefits, which in turn increases participation.

According to Slack et al. (2015), corporate culture is often mentioned as a factor that influences employee CSR engagement. One of the most considerable differences between employee engagement and employee CSR engagement is the role of value congruence. The alignment of values held by employees and the organization makes the employees more likely to actively participate and promote the CSR initiatives of the organization (Cao & Lee, 2023). According to Murshed et al. (2021), employees' personal connection to CSR and how much they value it plays a crucial role in how they respond to CSR initiatives. If the company's belief in CSR is not in line with the employees' beliefs, it has a negative impact on the quality of work life (Murshed et al., 2021). It is important that employees feel they share the same values and social views as the organization, which is why successful communication is also an important factor that influences employee engagement in CSR (Koch et al., 2019). Especially poor communication is mentioned often as resulting in disengagement from CSR activities. (Slack et al., 2015.) Employees' attitudes toward their company are

shaped by how well the company's CSR efforts are aligned with the personal goals of the employees, with the important factor being the company's support regarding issues that are important to the employees themselves (Murshed et al., 2021). However, different employees hold different values and have different demands for organizational CSR programs (Du et al., 2015).

While understanding the general level of employee CSR engagement is important for successfully implementing CSR initiatives, understanding the individual level can be just as important. According to Hejjas et al. (2019), organizations should not be thought of as just "black boxes" that exist in a vacuum with little inter- and intra-organizational differences. Recognizing the diversity and differences between employees is important to minimize pervasive disengagement (Hejjas et al., 2019). Employees are a heterogeneous group with different needs, perceptions of the benefits of CSR, and different levels of participation and engagement (Du et al., 2015; Koch et al., 2019). Allen (2023) found various different perceived benefits of CSR engagement for the employee, company, and society, further highlighting the differences between individual employees. Understanding that individual differences shape CSR engagement among employees allows us to understand that the concept of CSR engagement is not binary, but rather a spectrum encompassing various types and levels of CSR engagement (Hejjas et al., 2019).

2.3.1 Types of CSR (Dis)engagement

Many typologies have been created in the past to better understand employee attitudes toward CSR. Hemingway (2005) categorizes employees into 4 different categories based on their personal values and organizational culture: Active and frustrated corporate social entrepreneurs, apathetics, and conformists. Active corporate social entrepreneurs hold collectivistic personal values and perceive the culture of the work environment as supportive of CSR. They often champion CSR initiatives within a company. Frustrated corporate social entrepreneurs also hold collectivistic personal values but perceive the culture as unsupportive. They want to engage in CSR but feel limited by the company's lack of support. Conformists hold individualistic personal values and perceive the culture as supportive. They are indifferent to CSR and will engage only if it is mandated by the company. Apathetics also hold individualistic values but perceive the culture as unsupportive. They dismiss or resist CSR initiatives and might actively oppose CSR activities within the company. (Hemingway, 2005.) Rodrigo & Arenas (2008) categorized employees into the committed worker, the indifferent worker, and the dissident worker based on two types of attitudes toward society and the organization, which are created by the implementation of CSR programs. The committed workers are highly motivated by CSR and identify strongly with the company's values, believing that their work is contributing to a broader good. The indifferent workers feel neutral about CSR and focus more on their career development and job tasks rather than the social role of the organization. They are efficient but do not have a strong connection to the company's CSR. The dissident workers feel skeptical of CSR and see it as a waste of resources. They

do not identify with the organization and often express their frustration with CSR, feeling socially marginalized or disadvantaged. (Rodrigo & Arenas, 2008.)

Employee attitudes are not the only typologies created to increase understanding of employee CSR engagement, as the different types of engagement can also be divided into different categories. Hahn et al. (2023) divide the types of (dis)engagement into four different categories based on their response to the tensions between employees and CSR: paralysis, disconnection, negotiation, and proactivity. As Table 1 shows, the type of engagement is affected by different factors: the type of employee-CSR tension, whether the employee sees the opposing elements of the tension as trade-offs of each other or as complementary and interdependent, and whether or not the employees are directly involved in the CSR activities regularly.

Table 1: Drivers of the different types of CSR (dis)engagement (Hahn et al., 2023)

Type of Employee-CSR tension	Cognitive frame			
	Either/or		Both/and	
	Situatdness		Situatdness	
	CSR at work	CSR in work	CSR at work	CSR in work
Tensions around goals	Disconnection	Paralysis	Proactivity	Paralysis
Tensions around means		Negotiation		Proactivity

Similar to the apathetics in Hemingway’s (2005) typology and the dissident worker in Rodrigo’s & Arenas’ (2008) typology, paralysis in the context of CSR engagement can be defined as a state of apathy towards CSR initiatives, fueled by frustration and the perceived absurdity of the organization’s approach to CSR. The employees show minimal or no involvement in CSR-related tasks, as they have conflicting views between the mandated business-oriented CSR initiatives and their personal preferences for socially oriented CSR initiatives. (Hahn et al., 2023.) Whether the CSR efforts are internal or external is a typical cause of tension, as favoring external stakeholders over internal ones in the CSR efforts can lead to employees perceiving their organization as hypocritical (Scheidler et al., 2019).

Disconnection can be defined as the employees’ avoidance or symbolic, superficial compliance with CSR initiatives due to their disagreement with the essence and implementation of CSR activities. Disconnection manifests as deliberate distancing from engaging with CSR activities and is driven by dissatisfaction with both the organization’s CSR goals and CSR methods. Avoiding deep engagement with CSR activities helps these employees preserve their stance against certain aspects of the organization’s CSR agenda. (Hahn et al., 2023.) Disconnection shares similarities with the conformists in Hemingway’s (2005) typology and the indifferent workers in Rodrigo’s & Arenas’ (2008) typology.

Negotiation is defined as engagement where the employees take part in problem-solving discussions to find the optimal balance between the different initiatives and priorities in the CSR. While paralysis stems from tensions around the goals of CSR, negotiation is caused by tensions around the means, which can be perceived as more flexible and negotiable. This allows employees to address the tensions by discussing them with peers or supervisors about the conflicting views. Negotiation aims for compromises and solutions that align with both individual perspectives and organizational requirements. (Hahn et al., 2023.)

Proactivity is employees' strong engagement with CSR activities, which can be characterized by a commitment to organizational CSR while simultaneously working towards organizational transformation, staying true to their personal values and CSR priorities. Proactive engagement includes taking anticipatory action to launch new CSR initiatives to improve or even create new circumstances to challenge the status quo, rather than passively adapting to present conditions. (Hahn et al., 2023.) Proactivity is similar to the active corporate social entrepreneur in Hemingway's (2005) typology and the committed worker in Rodrigo's & Arenas' (2008) typology. A high level of perceived value congruence between the employee and the organization as a result of the CSR actions can motivate the employees to even act as ambassadors of the CSR actions (Cao & Lee, 2023).

Table 2: Typologies of CSR engagement

Hahn et al. (2023)	Hemingway (2005)	Rodrigo & Arenas (2008)	Level of engagement
Proactivity	Active Corporate Social Entrepreneur	Committed worker	High ↑
Negotiation	Frustrated Corporate Social Entrepreneur	Indifferent worker	↓
Disconnection	Conformist		
Paralysis	Apathetic	Dissident worker	Low

2.4 Human Agency Theory

Human Agency Theory completes the theoretical framework because it focuses on the individual capacities of blue-collar workers to act independently and make choices in relation to CSR practices. Agency can be defined as people's capability to intentionally take action and affect events surrounding them (Bandura, 2006). In the context of the thesis, human agency theory is particularly relevant when trying to understand the perceptions of the workers about their ability and willingness to participate in CSR initiatives. Human agency theory, according to Bandura (2006), focuses on how individuals can intentionally influence their environments, act independently, and make choices. It suggests

that individuals are not just passive recipients of outside influences, but rather active agents who can create and influence their circumstances (Bandura, 2006).

According to Bandura (2006), human agency has four core properties: Intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. Intentionality refers to people forming intentions for which plans and strategies are also formed to realize them. Forethought refers to the ability to visualize futures and anticipate outcomes to promote purposeful and foresightful behavior. Self-reactiveness refers to the ability to adjust behavior based on feedback and regulate the execution. Finally, self-reflectiveness refers to the ability to reflect and evaluate one's own thoughts, actions, and efficacy and understand personal motivations. (Bandura, 2006.) These self-processes, along with personal, behavioral, and social-environmental factors, interact together to form the agency, or "the power to originate action" (Code, 2020). Bandura's (2006) theory of human agency also recognizes three different modes of agency: individual, proxy, and collective. Individual agency is when people use their influence on their functioning and environment (Bandura, 2006). According to Yoon (2019), continuously formulating personal identity is critical in effectively exercising individual agency. The agency is not exercised in a vacuum but within a social and cultural context, and the choices that are made are continuously influenced by the immediate work environment and broader societal structures. (Lister, 2004; Yoon, 2019). How a person exercises their individual agency is influenced by internal determinants, most importantly self-knowledge but also skills, attitudes, values, personality traits, interests, and beliefs (Code, 2020; Yoon, 2019). Proxy agency is when people influence their functioning and environment that they do not have direct control over by influencing others who are able to achieve the desired outcomes, and collective agency is when people work collectively to shape their future (Bandura, 2006). According to Yoon (2019), the group operates as part of an open system of collective agency, interacting with and being influenced by its environment. In a collective open system, the internal determinants include people, structure, technology, task, culture, and strategy (Yoon, 2019). Personal, behavioral, and environmental factors are constantly interacting with and influencing each other in a reciprocal determinist relationship (Yoon, 2019). This means that attitudes affect the workplace environment and CSR engagement, but the workplace environment and CSR engagement also impact employee attitudes.

Over time, the theory of human agency has undergone significant evolution and expansion, moving beyond the original framework outlined by Bandura (1989). While Bandura (2006) talks about the three modes of agency, Lister (2004) expands it by adding the dimension of strategic significance, which can range from everyday agency to strategic agency. Otto et al. (2020) combine both previous theories to create a conceptual model that accounts for the way human agency operates at different scales, from individual actions to collective societal transformations. They differentiate everyday agency, characterized by routine decisions in everyday life around how to make ends meet, and strategic and political agency, which involves deliberate, long-term planning and actions

aimed at influencing broader societal or environmental issues (Otto et al., 2020). These dimensions of agency and possible examples of how they could be used by young blue-collar workers are presented in Figure 2.

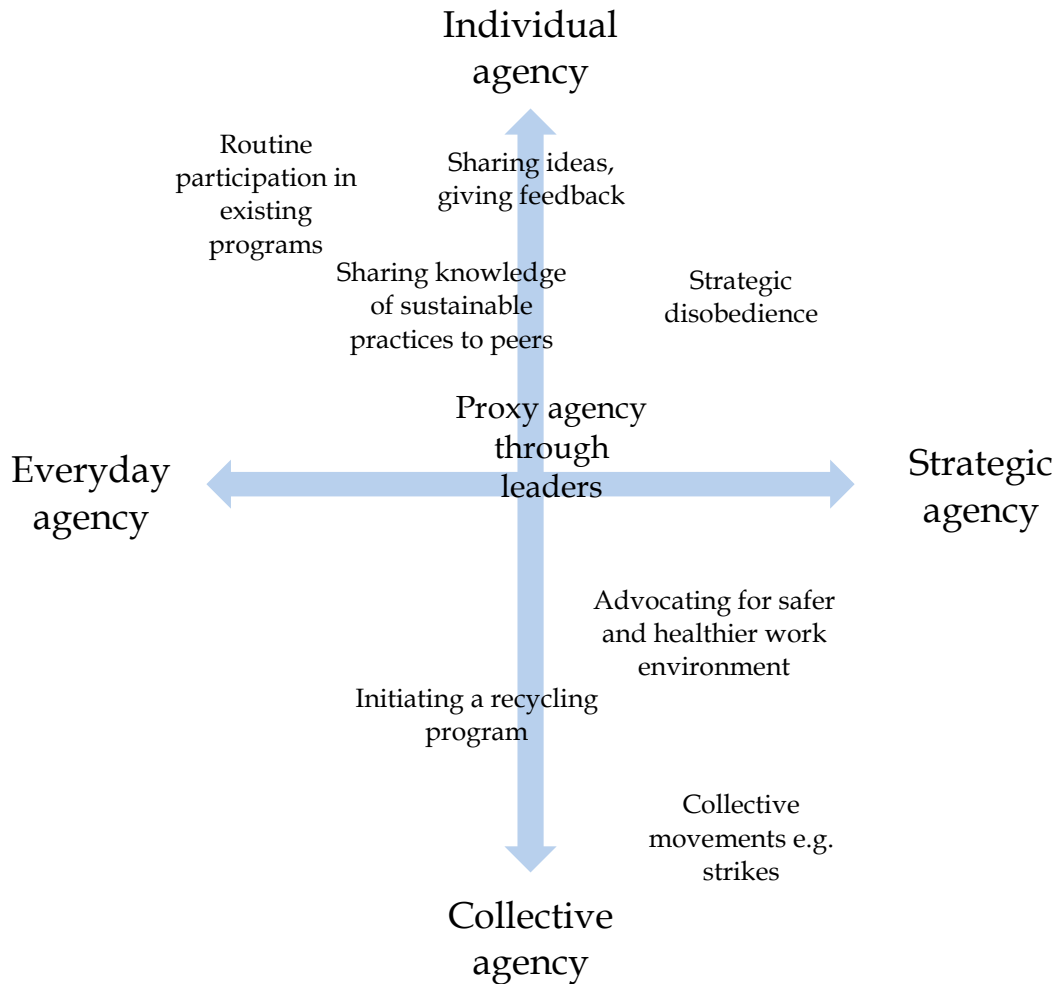


Figure 2: Dimensions of agency with examples. Adopted from Lister (2004) and Otto et al. (2020).

The four core properties and the three modes of agency are all relevant when trying to achieve sustainability and change (Yoon, 2019; Koskela & Paloniemi, 2023). In the context of this thesis, it is particularly interesting, if the blue-collar workers use their agency in relation to the organization's CSR, and how they use it. For example, a blue-collar worker might use their individual agency by noticing possibilities for recycling more waste and then recycling the waste. The worker could also use a proxy agency by informing someone in the organization with more power that improvements in waste recycling are needed. The worker can also discuss and brainstorm with other workers on how the waste recycling

system could be improved, and then collectively try to achieve the changes, using collective agency.

According to Otto et al. (2020), the level of individual agency between different individuals varies and is influenced by multiple factors. These factors include gender, age, level of education, religion, social, economic, and political capital (Otto et al., 2020). However, agentic capabilities can be cultivated by developing people's competencies, self-regulatory skills, and beliefs in their efficacy, which creates a wider array of options that expand freedom of action (Bandura, 2006). The traditional view of a blue-collar worker as an employee is a person of a low level of agency, and the empirical part of this thesis will explore the agency and efficacy perceptions of blue-collar workers (Huang, 2011). Even though personal agency varies significantly between individuals, there are many examples proving that people with low levels of agency can act collectively and increase their collective level of agency (Otto et al., 2020). A good example of this in the context of the thesis is worker's unions, which use the collective agency of unionized workers to improve the working conditions and the wages of blue-collar workers. While a single blue-collar worker would not have the agency to influence the work environment and conditions, multiple workers can go on a strike collectively, effectively putting a stop to the production lines. Figure 2 shows how most of the time examples of acting individual agency means acting everyday agency rather than strategic agency. As the everyday agency is usually not aiming to effect large-scale changes, it might be easier for individuals with lower levels of the agency to practice it instead of aiming for the strategic agency, which is typically practiced with the collective agency (Otto et al., 2020). Collective agency requires people to act together, requiring coordination, planning, and a shared vision. When people come together to form movements, organizations, or unions, they typically engage in more deliberate and goal-oriented actions that aim for larger-scale changes and impacts, unlike everyday agency, which typically aims for smaller-scale changes and impacts in the everyday life of an individual person.

2.4.1 Sustainability Agency

Sustainability agency refers to the desire and competencies to contribute to sustainability transformations, and the intention to continuously motivate learning for sustainability (Koskela & Paloniemi, 2023). The role of agency in the governance of social-ecological systems has been studied relatively much in the political science and institutional theory literature (Otto et al., 2020). However, there has been a lot of debate in the past decades about the emphasis on agency versus social structures. For example, the causes of poverty have been attributed to both social and economic structures, and culture and individual behavior. (Lister, 2004.) Agency and the structural dimensions of socio-technical systems are in a complex interplay, meaning that both the capacities of people to influence change and the systemic constraints surrounding them need to be acknowledged to comprehensively understand sustainability transitions (Fischer & Newig, 2016). The perceived systemic constraints surrounding blue-collar workers are

particularly interesting in the context of this thesis. It is important to look at efficacy from a broader perspective because of the interplay of different factors across larger groups and organizations (Bandura, 2001; Fearon et al., 2013).

Agency plays a crucial role in transitions and changes, as it underlines the active role of people in initiating, driving, or resisting changes in socio-technical systems (Fischer & Newig, 2016). Agency can be thought of as something that perpetuates and modifies current structures (Lister, 2004, pp. 128). While new CSR initiatives organizations introduce and the workers engaging in CSR cannot be considered sustainability transitions, they can act as experiments or niche innovations that are components of such transitions and can introduce major changes to the work environment and activities (Loorbach, 2017). People with high self-efficacy are also more likely to exercise their personal agency (Fearon et al., 2013). This is important to remember if employees are expected to take initiative and engage with CSR efforts.

According to Koskela & Paloniemi (2023), motivation is an important factor in sustainability agency, due to enacting agency being considered as something intentional. They state that in addition to motivation, self-efficacy and collective efficacy perceptions correlate with pro-environmental behavior. Efficacy perceptions are considered as beliefs on whether actions will lead to aspired outcomes. Without efficacy, the desired future may seem unobtainable and utopian. The third factor that contributes to enacting sustainability agency are values and beliefs. Whether or not one believes that it is their duty to take care of their environment or to mitigate their impacts on climate change is very influential to one taking sustainability action. The fourth and final factor in sustainability agency are skills and competencies. There are many key competencies related to advancing sustainability. These vary from behavioral and strategic competencies to ethical and reflective competencies. (Koskela & Paloniemi, 2023.)

Compared to white-collar workers, blue-collar workers have relatively low levels of influence and power in organizations. This makes efficacy perceptions an interesting factor related to sustainability agency. Lister (2004) mentions how those in power choose to act in relation to those without power makes a great difference. This ties into the theory around employee engagement, with leadership being one of the determinants of employee engagement. While self-efficacy refers to the perceived control people hold over themselves and the events surrounding them, it also has an influence on how the social context is perceived in the workplace (Consiglio et al., 2016). Management practices that enhance self-efficacy can be highly important in engaging blue-collar workers in CSR. According to Fearon et al. (2013), both individual and collective efficacy can be developed through social interactions and learning from others, as seeing a co-worker succeed is likely to cause employees to believe they can succeed too. They also mention that self-efficacy can be increased by offering verbal messages of persuasion and support, as it makes people feel more confident and motivated to perform well. Emotions can also influence self-efficacy, and when people feel

emotionally charged or excited about a task, their belief in their ability to succeed can increase (Fearon et al., 2013).

3 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of this master's thesis and its research questions revolve around the CSR engagement of blue-collar workers. The aim is to explore and gain an understanding of how and why the workers are (dis)engaged in organizations' CSR actions and initiatives and look at it with the assistance of human agency theory. To gain a deeper understanding of how blue-collar workers experience these issues in their work, it was chosen to let them describe their thoughts and experiences themselves in their own words. This is why a qualitative approach was chosen to answer the research question. This chapter presents the chosen approach and further describes the methodological choices of this thesis.

3.1 Research Design

The research process started with choosing the research topic, deciding on the objective of the research, and formulating a research question, which, when answered, aims to reach the research objectives set. My personal interests sparked the idea of CSR engagement from the perspective of blue-collar workers. The background and my personal connection to this topic were explained in more detail in the previous chapters. Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008) suggest that the key principle guiding the topic choice is its potential to be effectively researched. Personal interest in the topic is another important factor that guides the topic choice (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Hirsjärvi et al., 2009, p. 77). The potential of the topic to be effectively researched was then tested with a quick review of existing literature about the topic. After the topic had been decided, formulating the objectives and research questions were the next important decisions of the research. According to Saunders et al. (2019), the research question is at the heart of the research project, as it influences many of the choices to be made during the research process, such as the literature to review, research design, and the data collection.

Once the research topic, research question, and aims and objectives of the research are set, the most appropriate research strategy and data collection and analysis techniques can be chosen (Saunders et al., 2019). A qualitative approach is typically used when the purpose is to describe and understand human and social phenomena (Lichtman, 2014). The exploratory nature of the research topic and the research question required a qualitative approach for the research. Because the aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of how blue-collar workers are (dis)engaged with organizational CSR practices, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the data collection method to gain in-depth insights and understanding of the complex relationship between blue-collar workers and CSR. According to Alasuutari (2011, pp. 31–32), quantitative and qualitative research have been seen as “opposites”, which both have their own different methodological rules. While quantitative research can be seen as the one focused on numbers and qualitative research as the one focused on words and visuals, this way of comparing them is at the direct and obvious level (Lichtman, 2014). While this research uses a qualitative approach to explore the relationship between CSR engagement and blue-collar workers, a quantitative approach could also be taken to approach this topic. Despite its complexity, CSR engagement is a variable that could be measured quantitatively with a suitable scale. For example, Rich et al. (2010) have used a scale measuring job engagement to study its relationship with job performance.

In summary, this research is qualitative research aiming at exploring how young blue-collar workers are willing and able to take part in the CSR activities in their organizations to better understand the CSR (dis)engagement of the blue-collar workers. Since the research is exploratory by nature, it uses primarily abductive reasoning rather than purely inductive or deductive reasoning. Abductive reasoning involves seeking the most plausible explanations for the observed patterns in the existing data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). This research uses existing theoretical frameworks to interpret and explain the findings from the qualitative interviews. The primary goal of the research is not to develop new theories or models but rather to increase the understanding of a specific phenomenon. According to Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008), almost all qualitative research uses induction, deduction, and abduction at some points of the same research project, which can be said about this research as well. This means that labeling this research as purely inductive, deductive, or abductive is challenging.

3.2 Data Collection

Qualitative research typically focuses on a relatively small number of cases, which are then analyzed as thoroughly as possible (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998, p. 18). The data for this research was collected by interviewing nine young blue-collar workers with nine one-on-one interviews. The interviewees and their job titles and years in their current organization are summarized in Table 3. As this

study is not focused on any particular company or industry, the roles of the interviewees cover a range of industries, including construction, manufacturing, and forestry. Their daily tasks are inherently different due to different industries, but similar in hands-on approaches and operational duties. The typical job tasks of the interviewees range from operating different machines to mixing concrete at a construction site. The job tasks are presented in more detail in Table 3.

According to Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2018, p. 83), qualitative data can be collected through inquiries, interviews, observation, and from already existing documents. Depending on the research problem and resources, these methods can be used either on their own or by combining different methods (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 83). All these methods of collecting qualitative data could be used to answer the research question of this thesis, but interviews were chosen as the sole data collection method. One big benefit of an interview is its flexibility, as the interviewer is able to repeat questions, correct misunderstandings, add clarification, and engage in conversation with the interviewee (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 85). Observation is more appropriate for research where the objective is to examine the behavior of people, while interviews are better suited for research where the objective is to understand why something happens (Hair Jr. et al., 2015). In the context of this research, observation could provide a better look into the work of blue-collar workers and how organizational CSR is present in day-to-day activities. However, this research is more concerned with answering the question of "why?". Speaking to the blue-collar workers directly can provide more useful data on why the workers are (dis)engaged and acting in the ways they do. Interviews are also particularly helpful data-collection methods when the issues being dealt with are complex (Hair Jr. et al., 2015). The topic of blue-collar workers' CSR (dis)engagement is inherently complex due to the diverse perspectives, different levels of engagement, and interconnected factors, such as personal values and organizational support influencing the levels of engagement.

Another literature review was conducted before the data collection of this research. One of the main objectives of the literature review is to provide a clear understanding of what has been written before, and the concepts and theories related to the topic of the research, thus preventing unintentionally duplicating research that has already been conducted (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The literature review explores what approaches and viewpoints past researchers have adopted, and what their strengths and weaknesses are (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The literature review of this study started with identifying relationships, trends, and research gaps in the existing literature about employee engagement and CSR. This provided a picture of what had been researched before and what should be explored more in future research. Based on this, blue-collar workers and human agency theory were chosen as part of the theoretical framework of the thesis. When the outline of the theoretical framework was formed, more literature was reviewed on blue-collar workers, CSR (dis)engagement, and human agency theory, eventually forming the chapters of the theoretical framework. The complete theoretical framework of the thesis provided the background information on the topic, and current research

relevant to the topic, and helped with formulating the interview questions used in the data collection.

The interviews were decided to be conducted as semi-structured one-on-one interviews. According to Saunders et al. (2019, p. 442), semi-structured interviews are typically used to gather data that is used to not only understand the questions of “what” and “how”, but also emphasize the “why”. Semi-structured interviews are helpful in finding out what is happening and understanding the context in exploratory studies (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 443). They also provide the opportunity for the interviewees to explain and build on their previous answers, which adds depth to the data and can lead to discussions about areas that were not considered previously, but deemed significant during the interview (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 444–445; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 88). In semi-structured interviews, the pre-determined questions are based on what is already known about the topic (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 88). In this research, the interview questions were based on the theoretical framework and the information gathered from reviewing the literature.

The interviewees were selected from individuals who I knew beforehand. This approach was chosen out of convenience, as it ensured easy access to participants who are known to be young blue-collar workers and likely willing to take part in the interviews. While this approach provided a convenient way to find all the interview participants, interviewing people with a pre-existing relationship with the interviewer can have certain limitations, such as the possibility of bias in the responses. The limitations will be discussed in greater detail in the limitations chapter at the end of this thesis. All the participants were contacted in the spring and summer of 2024 via private messages on WhatsApp. The initial message sent to potential participants included a description of the research, practical info about how the interview was conducted, and information on how the interview data would be stored and used. As a result, nine of the ten people contacted were willing to participate in the interviews, and a specific time and date for each interview was scheduled with each participant. Snowballing was also attempted to gather more participants, with the interviewees being asked if they knew any other potential participants. However, this attempt did not provide any new participants.

Eventually, each interview was conducted after agreeing on a suitable time. All the interviews were held in the late spring and early summer of 2024, with the first interview being conducted in April, and the last in June. All the interviews were also conducted with the use of Microsoft Teams -video conferencing tool which made the interviews with people from different geographical locations convenient. For each of the interviews, one hour of time was reserved, which proved to be more than enough, as the interviews ended up taking approximately 20 to 40 minutes each.

Table 3: Description of the interviewees.

No.	Job title	Typical work activities	Years in the current organization
1	Production line operator in a paper mill	Operating machinery to produce paper rolls, turning large raw rolls into smaller sizes for further refinement.	4
2	Elevator installer	Installing elevator systems in buildings, starting from carrying the components in and assembling the elevator from the bottom up.	4
3	Sawmill automation operator	Monitoring processes and operating machines along with user-level maintenance. Troubleshooting issues, resolving disruptions, determining if external support is needed.	<1
4	Electrical maintenance technician	Troubleshooting and fixing issues, along with preventive maintenance on stationary machines.	4
5	Paper machine operator/assistant	Monitoring a running paper machine, ensuring quality, making necessary adjustments, and working with a team to meet all requirements of the paper.	4
6	Operator/electrician	Daily tasks vary but can be anything involving electrical and automation work.	4
7	Machinist	Producing metal pieces and machine parts. Involves creating production programs for the parts.	4
8	Sawmill production worker	Running the machines to process planks and boards into packages.	2
9	Construction worker	Washing and filling buckets with plaster, mixing concrete, transporting materials, making wooden molds, and other general construction duties.	5

This research took a predominantly emotionalist approach to the interview data. According to Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008), interviews with an emotionalist approach are considered a pathway to the authentic experiences of the interviewees. The focus of the interview questions is not on information, but rather on the perceptions, understandings, and emotions of the people interviewed (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). However, calling this interview study purely emotionalist is misleading since elements of positivist and

constructionist approaches can also be seen in the interviews. According to Silverman (2014, p. 185), the answers of the interviewee in the constructionist approach are not viewed as reality, but they are considered for how they construct aspects of reality in collaboration with the interviewer. The researcher is concerned with not only what is said by the interviewee, but also how it is said and how the participants actively create meaning in the interview (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Silverman, 2014, p. 184). In this research, there is a focus on both what is said and how it is said. The role of the interviewer is not as major as in a purely constructionist approach, but the semi-structured format of the interviews gave the possibility for the interviewer to take a more active role in the interviews if it was seen fitting.

3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data in this thesis was analyzed by using a thematic analysis. According to Alasuutari (2011, p. 38), the data in qualitative analysis is seen as a whole. The argumentation is not built on individual differences in specific variables, but rather on the comprehensive understanding of the context, where every element that is deemed reliable and part of the pattern is investigated in such a way that they do not contradict the interpretation (Alasuutari, 2011, p. 38).

According to Clarke & Braun (2017), thematic analysis consists of identifying meaningful patterns, or themes, from the qualitative data. Themes are the larger patterns of meaning supported by a central organizing concept. The themes are built from codes, which are the smaller units of analysis that capture noteworthy features of the data that may be relevant to the research question. (Clarke & Braun, 2017.) Saunders et al. (2019, p. 651) point out that thematic analysis has been described as the “foundational method for qualitative analysis”, and is not tied to any particular research philosophy. One of the benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility and accessibility, as it can be used to analyze both larger and smaller data sets, creating rich descriptions and explanations. It is also a systematic approach, as searching for reoccurring themes and patterns in the data is an orderly and logical way to analyze the data. (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 651.)

The procedure of thematic analysis can be divided into four elements: familiarizing with the data, coding the data, searching for themes and relationships, and refining the themes and testing propositions (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 652). The first step of familiarizing with the collected data was transcribing the interview recordings into text. Microsoft Teams, which was used to host and record the interviews, produces a transcript of the interview. However, it was necessary to review and verify each interview transcript thoroughly, as the automatic transcription software occasionally makes errors and fails to capture every word correctly. This manual verification is laborious and time-consuming, but it ensures the reliability of the transcriptions and helps with familiarizing oneself with the data (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 645). Part of the

process of transcribing is also the construction of the preliminary coding scheme and testing of initial interpretations (Nikander, 2010). The transcription was followed by a careful and detailed reading of the transcripts.

Moving on to the coding of the data, a data analysis software ATLAS.ti was used to assist and organize the analysis process. The codes emerged from the data, but the theoretical background of this thesis guided the coding process and helped identify relevant features from the data. Initially, a large number of codes were generated from the data to capture a wide range of concepts, patterns, and ideas. This approach was used to ensure that no significant aspect was overlooked. The data was then revisited multiple times, and the initial codes were combined with overlapping ones, split into more specific ones, and redundant codes were eliminated. Eventually, patterns and relationships began to emerge, and similar codes were grouped together, which were then organized into broader themes that addressed the research questions of the research. In the end, the initial codes and themes were refined, and the propositions were tested to ensure they represented the data accurately. This resulted in 3 themes related to the CSR (dis)engagement of blue-collar workers, 3 themes related to the perceptions of CSR held by the blue-collar workers, and 3 themes related to the perceived agency of blue-collar workers related to CSR. This final set of themes provided a structural framework to help interpret the findings and answer the research questions.

4 FINDINGS

The results of the data gathering in the form of nine qualitative interviews with young blue-collar workers are presented in this chapter. Forty-eight codes and nine themes were identified in the thematic analysis of the qualitative data. The Codes and themes, along with the research questions, are presented in Figure 3. This chapter also includes relevant quotations from the interviews, translated from Finnish to English. First, this chapter presents findings related to the perception of CSR held by blue-collar workers. The second part focuses on the (dis)engagement and the factors influencing it. The final chapter explores the agency and skills of blue-collar workers, focusing on how workers can influence and develop CSR themselves.

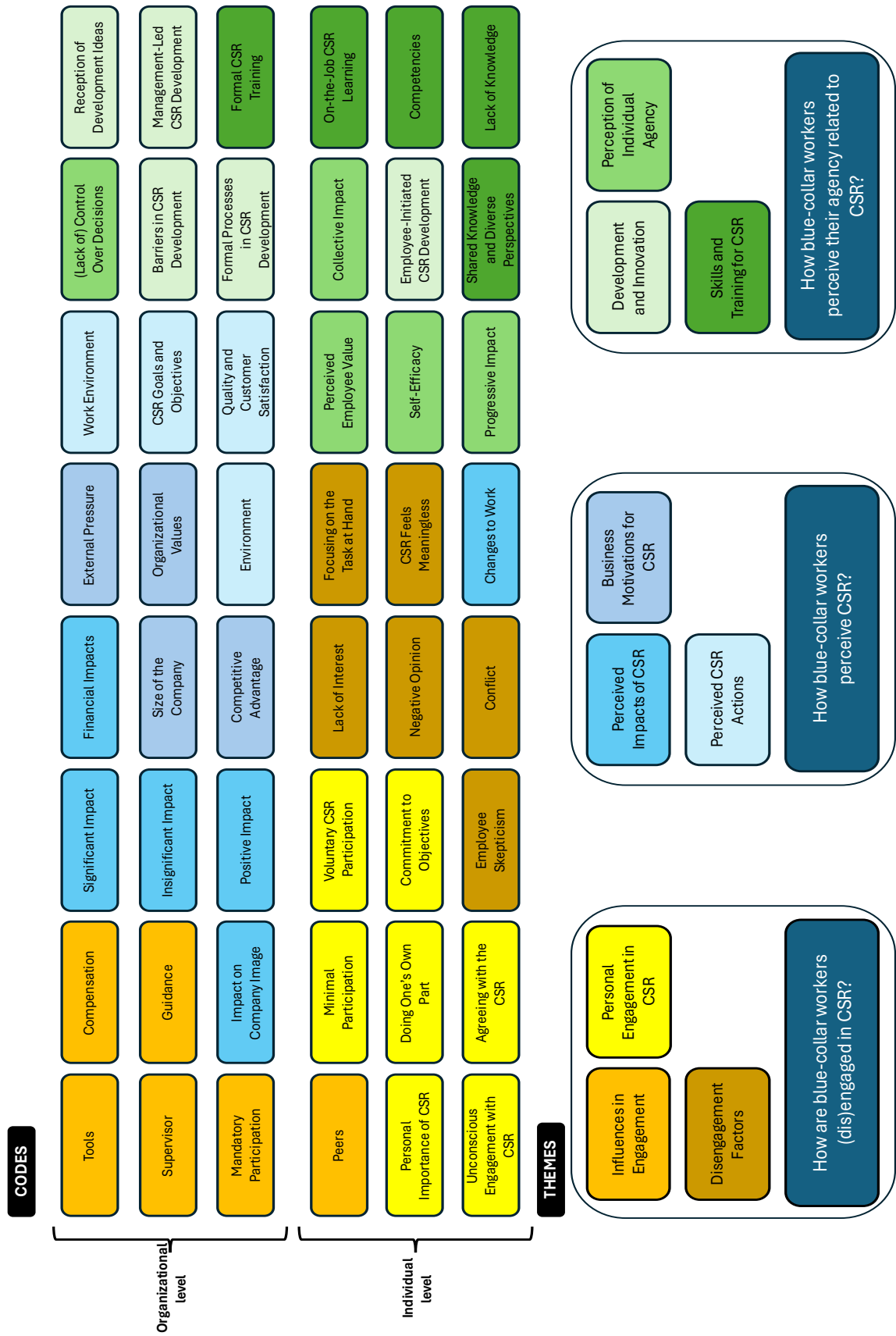


Figure 3: Codes, themes, and research questions.

4.1 CSR Knowledge

4.1.1 Perceived CSR Actions

This chapter explores the level of understanding that blue-collar workers have about CSR within their organizations. It presents how the workers define CSR, the perceived CSR actions they identified in the interviews, and how it is integrated into their roles, even if they do not explicitly label their efforts as CSR.

During the interviews, the interviewees were first asked about relevant background information about their current tenure in their organization and to describe their jobs and daily activities while working. After background information, the interviews moved on to CSR and the interviewees' understanding of it. In the interviews, the interviewees were not given a definition of CSR. Instead, they were asked to define it themselves to better understand their own knowledge and understanding of the topic. Before the interviews, the interviewees were informed of the topic of the interviews, but despite this, the first question about CSR seemed to cause difficulties for the interviewees, with many admitting that their knowledge of CSR is very limited.

"Even the word is such a difficult one, corporate social responsibility, corporate social responsibility... I don't really know, they have some sort of responsibility and that. I haven't really familiarized myself with that kind of thing in detail." -13.

"Corporate social responsibility. Uh-huh. It's hard to say. They advertise a lot about responsibility out there, but I don't really, I never really cared to think about it in depth." -16.

However, despite some interviewees saying in the beginning that their knowledge of the topic is limited, they were able to identify a lot of CSR actions of their employers and how CSR is reflected in the workplace. It seemed like the interviewees were not aware of how much knowledge they have about CSR and how they see it in their daily work. It was common to underestimate own understanding of the topic, for it is not consciously thought of while working.

"I don't really... This was a fairly new topic... I've never really thought about anything like this. I mean... So I haven't really... So I couldn't really answer anything because it kind of came out of nowhere. I haven't thought about it." -17.

Many of the interviewees defined CSR through concrete actions, many of which were related to environmental issues. Recycling was the most commonly mentioned CSR-related action taken by the interviewees and their employers. Some interviewees were also familiar with the different CSR-related goals their employers had set for themselves, such as carbon neutrality by a certain year.

"It's, well, saving materials and energy and things like that. Well, what's the word now... Using energy as efficiently as possible and recycling and things like that. Or basically, nothing

is wasted. Nothing is wasted, no material is wasted, nor is all the energy wasted, so that everything is used efficiently.” -14.

While the main focus of the interviewees was on the environment, a few of the interviewees also defined CSR through the responsibilities of the company towards its employees and society. Creating and maintaining job opportunities and providing a good working environment were the most important ways this reflects on the workers.

Overall, many of the interviewees expressed that their knowledge of CSR was limited. However, the interviews demonstrated that they were aware of various CSR actions in their companies, particularly those related to environmental practices and workplace responsibilities.

4.1.2 Business Motivations for CSR

This section explores the reasons that drive businesses to engage in CSR, as perceived by blue-collar workers. During the interviews, workers were asked to share their views on why their employers take CSR actions, even when they are not mandatory. The responses reveal a mix of skepticism and practical insights into the role that laws, reputation, and societal expectations play in shaping CSR initiatives. While understanding the perceived business motivations behind CSR is not directly linked to the research questions, it helps deepen the understanding of blue-collar workers' perception of CSR in their companies, giving more context to the full results of the interviews.

Most interviewees worked at large companies, which was seen as an important reason for their employers to take CSR actions. Large companies were seen as more important actors in society with bigger impacts on the environment and society, which is why managing those impacts was seen as important by those who worked at large companies. External pressure, whether by laws and regulations or by public opinion, to act more sustainably towards large companies was seen as something that motivates companies to focus on CSR. External pressure was also seen as an important CSR driver by interviewees working in smaller companies. Acting responsibly is seen as a trend that is becoming increasingly important in our society and business environment, with new innovations and advancements forcing more pressure on companies to act more responsibly. External pressure also forces companies to think of their reputation. The reputation of the company was seen as a big reason for acting responsibly, and unethical behavior was seen as something that should be avoided since it could cause major problems for the company.

“I think it's probably for its own reputation that it's a reputable company, so that's it. You don't want to ruin it with something like that. Rather give a little of their own than ruin that reputation.” -13.

Many interviewees felt that the laws and regulations are continuously driving companies and whole industries to take more CSR-related actions. Two of the

interviewees mentioned that without laws and regulations, their employers would not actively take part in CSR actions.

"Well, I think it's just because they have to. I mean, it is. I'm sure they'd look at it a bit, but I think they might not do everything like that if they hadn't been prescribed somewhere else." -17.

"Well, they do... they recycle because they're told to, they get reprimanded for it otherwise. I bet that it's like... that they also think about it a little deep down, where to put the waste." -19.

Competitive advantage in different forms was also seen as an important reason for companies taking CSR actions. Competitive advantage was seen in different forms from creating a positive image for the company to saving money from smaller energy and material usage. Related to the reputation of the company, interviewees saw that taking part in CSR could open doors for new customers and keep current ones satisfied. Many CSR-related activities and goals are actively communicated both internally and externally, which was seen by the interviewees. However, this also created some skepticism at least among one interviewee, who used a sarcastic tone of voice when talking about how companies need to have their images in order when they were asked about what CSR means to their employer company. The same interviewee later mentioned company image as the main reason for the company's CSR actions.

Only a few interviewees believed that their company engaged in CSR because they saw it as the right thing to do and wanted to contribute positively to society rather than just being driven by regulations and financial incentives.

"It looks good in general if a company would commit to something like that. It looks good to everybody. It's good publicity and it brings a good reputation. And of course, it's that you just do your own part and even do a bit more." -11.

Overall, while most interviewees believed that their employer is taking part in CSR because it directly benefits them, some felt that their employer also had genuine intentions and interest towards society and having a positive impact. Despite the overall skepticism towards the reasons behind CSR, none of the interviewees believed that the companies were merely making superficial claims to the public without genuinely taking part in CSR in some way or another. Chapter 4.1.3 presents more findings about how the workers perceived the impacts of CSR and how their actions contribute to society.

4.1.3 Perceived Impacts of CSR

This chapter explores the workers' views on whether the CSR their company is doing and their participation in it leads to meaningful change for the company, local community, or society at large. Similarly to the previous chapter, while understanding how blue-collar workers perceive the impacts of CSR activities does not directly answer the research questions, it helps assess the effectiveness and level of their engagement, giving more context to understanding the full results. If workers feel their contributions are insignificant, it may hinder their

engagement in CSR efforts, while tangible outcomes can reinforce their motivation to participate.

The interviewees were asked if they believed that the CSR actions in which they are taking part had any significant impacts, whether it was for the local communities, the employer, or the society as a whole. Overall, there was a perception that the impacts of participating in CSR are fairly insignificant, especially when talking about just the individual employees participating in CSR activities in a vacuum. Despite the overall skepticism towards the larger scale impacts of CSR, many interviewees believed that the more people there are taking part in CSR and the longer the time frame is, the more the impacts will show. The self-efficacy of the workers is explored more in Chapter 4.3.1.

"The more people, the more impact it has, so, not just mine, no, it's such a small impact. I don't think it has a big impact." -I1.

"I'm just a pretty small ant in that concept. So, as a whole, sure, it probably does matter. But as for what I do during the day, in the big picture, I'm not sure if it really has that terrific of an impact on something." -I2.

There were only a few cases where some interviewees identified a more significant impact from the CSR activities: one interviewee mentioned that their processes at work use a lot of water, so recycling the water they use causes significant savings in water use while minimizing the risk of dirty water running off to the water ecosystems. They also mentioned an instance where the company decided to sort clear plastic waste separately, resulting in significant savings for the company. One interviewee mentioned their company being able to keep the workers employed and providing job opportunities to people as another form of CSR that had a perceivably significant impact on the company and local people. This interviewee also focused a lot on the social aspects of CSR, mainly related to employees. For this interviewee, participating in CSR was in the form of participating in a company interview video with the purpose of presenting their work activities and background, which was not necessarily typical of workers in the sector. While they did not necessarily perceive their impact for participating as significant for the company, they believed that this could have a significant impact on local people by providing different perspectives and presenting different opportunities that exist for people. One other interviewee shared a similar view, stating that their actions might not have a significant impact on the company or society, but rather on individual employees and other people. For this person, participation in CSR included addressing inappropriate comments or behaviors among colleagues. They mentioned that if someone at work spoke "complete idiotism," they felt compelled to intervene and correct the statement.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, company image was perceived as an important driver for CSR actions. Often when talking about impacts that were seen as significant, the impact on company image was mentioned. One interviewee believed that taking part in CSR significantly improved company image, which gives visibility to the company and creates a positive feeling in potential customers, which in turn opens doors for new clients and partnerships.

"Well, I believe that it gives that kind of good visibility to the outside world when it is communicated that we are doing this kind of thing. And I believe that it will directly affect the buyer. At least some of the buyers. Perhaps more so that it affects in a good way. And I believe that no one will decide to not buy the products because of it. That creates... That it is positive visibility and such." -14.

Some interviewees mentioned their company doing marketing and communication of their CSR at some point in the interview. Since participating in CSR improves company image, it was also seen as having an indirect effect on companies having to communicate their CSR actions both internally and externally.

All of the impacts of CSR mentioned were in some way positive, and no instances emerged where CSR would directly cause any harm to anyone. Some minor indirect impacts were mentioned, that could be seen as neutral or moderately negative, such as additional mandatory sustainability or work safety training, or longer time used for the job orientation, when different recycling stations had to be introduced to the workers at the site.

"Sometimes it can be a bit more difficult. That you have to... You can't just take a small piece of cable and go and wire it, you have to take the whole damn coil with you and then it's a bit harder." -16.

Despite many workers mentioning some changes to their daily work activities due to participating in CSR, they perceived the changes as insignificant, invoking no strong feelings either positively or negatively. However, one interviewee felt conflicted about the mandatory pieces of training their company had introduced as mandatory for all the workers.

"Maybe mostly all the kind of nonsense that we have to do, the kind of stuff that everybody who works for the company has to do. The kind of tasks that have to be done on the computer in the intranet. Where there are ethical principles, which would be the principles of the whole company, and things like that, which may go a bit too far. In my opinion, especially as they do not, after all, even necessarily go that way. If you would inform someone about something, then it will either be swept under the carpet or then it might be taken too far as well." -18.

4.2 (Dis)engagement in CSR

4.2.1 Personal Engagement in CSR

"Well, at least in that, you get to be hands-on and do things. You get to express yourself." -15.

Personal engagement in CSR reflects how workers personally connect with and participate in their company's CSR activities. This theme explores the different ways in which the workers involve themselves in CSR and highlights how CSR is integrated into their daily routines. Understanding these aspects can be crucial for assessing the overall effectiveness of CSR initiatives. The influences and drivers for (dis)engagement are discussed in the next chapters, as this chapter focuses only on different levels and types of CSR engagement. For the workers

interviewed, CSR engagement manifests in different forms. Some workers actively seek to participate in CSR, at least in some ways, while some are just trying to participate as little as possible.

Many instances emerged from the interviews, where the engagement was “unconscious”, in a way that the workers might actively take part in CSR without thinking about it or even realizing it. CSR is integrated as part of the daily activities of the workers, and while the interviewees agreed that there could be possibilities of more voluntary participation in CSR and opportunities to develop it further, most of them have not made any extra efforts to participate and develop the company’s CSR. Many interviewees mentioned their companies having a set of CSR objectives, in which the workers are automatically committed to participating. When the workers share common goals and practices and everyone is committed to them, participating in CSR activities is more rewarding. Collective commitment ensures that one’s own efforts do not feel wasted as other workers are also contributing and doing their own part.

“Probably the fact that... everyone else is committing to it, doing it with you. If, for example, if everyone does not sort their waste, then my sorting is not... it is wasted. If others do not do it.” -11.

"Well, yeah, you do think about it in your own work as well, that everyone has their own responsibility, and it's important to ensure that not everyone just does whatever they want. Like in some basic tasks, for example, recycling – it's not a big deal to toss things into different bins and stuff like that. But when everyone does it, then maybe everything runs a bit more smoothly." -12.

One interviewee expressed that despite recycling being mandatory at their workplace and everyone committing to it, their reason for participating in it is because it is the right thing to do while also caring about the planet. They also stated that while recycling is mandatory, it is not very strictly monitored, and recycling the waste at work just comes naturally for them. Other similar instances emerged from the data, where the interviewee stated that participation in different CSR activities is mandatory, but not the only reason behind their participation. The interviewees often felt that they were just doing their own part in acting responsibly.

“Yes, I feel that it is a certain kind of duty and it is not an extra job for me. Speaking of recycling, it's actually less work when you don't have to take out the trash every day, and I feel that when society gives me something like this, I have to give a little back to it too, and think about my choices and actions.” -19.

Overall, the attitude towards participating in CSR was fairly positive. However, when asked about the ways the workers participated in the CSR, most of them mentioned they were just doing what was mandatory and did not make extra efforts to participate. Some even mentioned initially that they were not participating at all, but after putting some thought into it, it turned out that they were at least participating through the company’s mandatory guidelines and policies. One interviewee remarked that they are taking CSR into account always in their daily work activities, but the reason behind it is mostly cost-effectiveness.

Reducing material use and optimizing processes not only cuts expenses but also naturally leads to more environmentally sustainable practices.

The alignment of values held by the company and the employee was mentioned by Cao & Lee (2023) as an important factor in CSR participation and engagement. Agreeing over the CSR practices was mentioned a lot in the theoretical background of this thesis, and it was found to increase engagement. The interviewees were asked about their feelings related to the CSR work their company does and how they felt their values aligned with the CSR work of their company. All interviewees stated that their company's CSR was at least partly aligned with their own personal values. Especially the amount of CSR actions their company undertakes was generally agreed upon, and the interviewees were satisfied with it. No interviewee felt that their company was doing too little in terms of CSR. One interviewee mentioned that, while there is always room for improvement, taking it further might risk going overboard with it. Another interviewee stated that they don't fully buy into everything their company does, but the values align to at least some extent, and at the very least they are not doing too little when it comes to CSR efforts. For this interviewee, the environmental actions were not a priority, and they did not strongly align with the environmental initiatives of the company. However, matters related to the employees and their well-being were very important to them.

"If it were to go in such a way that it would not basically... That it would be just that, kind of me and others who are working there, for them some kind of an improvement to it, for example, the working conditions, or something like that. I am in something like that, and I have been. But then again, it is not in any major way related to other [actions]." -I8.

The interviewees participated in CSR in many different ways, such as engaging in recycling efforts, saving energy, or promoting employee well-being. More unconventional ways also emerged from the interviews. As mentioned before in a previous chapter, one interviewee actively addressed inappropriate comments made in the workplace by coworkers, and one interviewee took part in an interview presenting their unconventional educational background.

"Well, no, I don't know, it's kind of nice to be able to tell things yourself. I think it's nice to be able to share how you see things and also talk a bit about your own background, where you've come from, and how we're all different – some take an easier path, and some take a bit of a harder path through school and other things. It's about showing that the educational path doesn't have to be the easiest to land in the best jobs; you can graduate with lower grades, so to speak, and still be a competent worker." -I3.

Participation in this interview was voluntary, and the interviewee stated their interest in participating more in similar activities if opportunities came. They did not comment on whether they would be willing to participate in other types of voluntary CSR activities. It was common for the interviewees to more actively participate in actions that they perceived as important or close to their heart while being indifferent about actions not seen as important.

The levels of engagement varied among the interviewees, but most of them displayed a notable degree of apathy and indifference regarding CSR

engagement. The interviewees seemed to agree with their companies' CSR activities but did not feel particularly passionate about engaging with them or participating in them voluntarily. Nevertheless, two interviewees expressed a strong distaste towards mandatory pieces of training related to CSR.

4.2.2 Influences in Engagement

The theoretical framework of this thesis presents the factors that have an influence on employee (CSR) engagement according to the previous literature on the topic. This chapter explores factors that emerged from the interviews as influencing the engagement of blue-collar workers in CSR activities. This section aims to identify the key drivers of participation, including motivational factors, peer influence, and the role of management.

In the previous chapter, considerable attention was paid to the mandatory nature of participating in CSR activities. Unsurprisingly participating in CSR activities being mandatory is also one of the most important factors influencing engagement in CSR. Only one of the interviewees did not mention participation being mandatory, but all the other interviewees mentioned either CSR being an integrated part of other job activities, or the company having some additional mandatory CSR activities. The interviewees had differing attitudes toward mandatory practices, with some feeling annoyed by the rules and people in the workplace, who were very careful to make sure things were done according to internal policies.

"Good examples are when we have so-called 'police' at work, who will make a big deal out of it if you put something even slightly in the wrong place in the office. You get called out pretty harshly for it, and sometimes it really gets on your nerves. It would help if the instructions clearly listed what exactly is our waste and things like that. It would probably be easier to follow all those rules then." -I2.

Others were not particularly interested in mandatory compliance, saying that they don't really notice or think about it in their day-to-day work. One employee also mentioned that environmentally friendly practices are a bit like an unwritten rule that is followed even when it is not officially required. Some mentioned the existence of mandatory compliance, which was not enforced or monitored, but the workers were still engaging in it. Despite these mixed feelings, mandatory participation appeared to be an effective way for the company to standardize CSR practices across the workers, ensuring that the engagement is consistent at least on the surface, regardless of individual motivations.

While mandatory participation ensures that all workers are involved in CSR activities, clear guidance plays a crucial role in facilitating this engagement. When asked about what would make it easier for the interviewee to participate in CSR, guidance and clear instructions emerged as one of the most important factors that the workers perceived would influence their ability to engage.

"It's probably having clear instructions on how things are done, or how you've been trained for the job so that you know how to handle things like scrap paper and other materials. All those

separate things like waste containers and such are clearly marked, showing what goes where – whether it's metal, energy waste, incineration, or waste meant for further sorting.” -15.

“Maybe it's the fact that everyone is doing it, and it comes from higher up – not orders, but guidelines – so it kind of happens naturally and automatically. You just go along with it, and you don't always have to think, 'What now, what now?' because it's become so well-established over the years in the industry to start considering social, well, maybe not so much social but environmental issues. Maybe even some social issues too at times. As it becomes more ingrained, it's easier when everyone is doing it, and it gets remembered regularly. Something like that.” -19.

While clear guidance and instructions would make engagement easier for the workers, CSR-related pieces of training mainly raised negative feelings among the interviewees. This could suggest that the guidance needs to be in other forms than pieces of training, or the contents and methods of training should be revised to better suit the needs and preferences of the young workers. In addition to guidance, the role of supervisors also emerged from the interview data as a factor influencing engagement. The supervisor also has a significant role in the guidance and instructions of the workers. The supervisor played a role in training, motivating, and informing the workers about CSR, but most importantly in the development of CSR. CSR development is explored more in chapter 4.3.2. The supervisor is also the one responsible for the workers having all the needed tools to best perform their jobs, which was an important factor for one of the interviewees.

Another important factor influencing CSR engagement that emerged from the interviews was the influence of peers. Peers at the workplace seemed to have a significant influence on engagement both positively and negatively. Collective engagement appeared to boost individual motivation and make participation easier and more rewarding. One interviewee highlighted the workers' collective efforts to improve working conditions.

“But basically, we always think and do things together as a group so that if we were to get something like a bonus, everyone would get it, not just one person. That's why we usually put the whole shift's names on it so that if an initiative goes through, everyone benefits. We've tried a few things and suggested small ideas here and there that might make a certain workstation or task more efficient or improve something. These are the kinds of ideas we've quietly thrown around, and there have been a few of those.” -18.

On the contrary, peers not engaging in CSR makes it more difficult for individuals to engage in CSR, as it causes frustration. Some interviewees mentioned that if other people at the workplace are not engaging in the same CSR activities as they are, they feel like their own actions are wasted. CSR participation being often mandatory ensures that everyone is contributing, thus reducing the potential frustration that might arise when some workers are disengaged. Mandatory participation can in this way create a sense of fairness and uniformity in engagement, making it easier for individual workers to stay motivated and engaged.

“If I were to ask them now about this responsibility stuff, I know a few guys who would say, 'I don't give a damn about that,' that they're not interested at all. Pretty much like that. They don't really think about it much.” -12.

Many of the interviewees noted that while their coworkers participated in CSR activities, they often perceived that this participation was driven by obligation rather than a genuine concern for environmental or social issues. One of the interviewees remarked that minor disagreements between themselves and other workers over social issues were fairly common, which they stated was caused by the culture at the workplace. The interviewee had a higher education background and noted that they held similar values with other students working there, but the senior employees had their own culture that had shaped over time. When asked about why they think people with higher education backgrounds tend to see sustainability issues differently compared to older workers, they suggested it was because of the experiences beyond the immediate work environment. They emphasized that education exposes individuals to diverse perspectives and different cultures, allowing them to engage with sustainability from a broader and more informed point of view.

Finally, financial incentives were also mentioned in four of the interviews as a motivator for increased engagement. As mentioned before, one interviewee explained how they are thinking of ways to improve the working environment with the whole shift, so everyone gets a monetary reward for their ideas. However, the comments about money seemed to either be more tongue-in-cheek or the first answer that popped into the interviewees' heads after they were asked what would motivate them to engage more. No one mentioned the lack of or too small amount of compensation as the reason for disengagement.

"I really can't think of anything, I feel like these things have to come from one's own desire. So they are not anything like... Of course also, well, money talks always." -19.

4.2.3 Disengagement Factors

While some blue-collar workers are actively involved in CSR activities in the ways described in the previous chapters, others are less engaged or may even disengage from such initiatives. This chapter focuses on the negative feelings related to CSR and the factors that contribute to disengagement, exploring why some employees are indifferent to CSR. The emerged disengagement factors range from feelings of meaninglessness to a lack of interest and skepticism towards CSR.

Overall, only two interviewees expressed any clearly negative feelings toward the CSR itself. One of them called CSR "environmental nonsense", while the other expressed a negative attitude toward engaging in CSR in general, claiming that CSR has no personal value to them. Other interviewees had no negative feelings toward the idea of CSR, or their negative feelings were towards CSR actions they did not agree on. For example, one interviewee expressed deep frustration toward work safety actions at their workplace.

"They're constantly developing safety measures there, coming up with new systems to avoid accidents, even minor ones, and honestly, it's getting ridiculous. You have to walk down the hallway with gloves on, it's just over the top." -15

This interviewee considered the company's target of zero yearly workplace accidents to be too ambitious. This has caused the company to put effort into safety measures which cause extra efforts for the workers but have no significant effect on the accident rate in reality. They considered zero yearly accidents an impossible target, as accidents can happen despite the safety measures from just a lapse in concentration. Another interviewee had no first-hand experience of CSR measures going overboard but had heard stories of other companies from their acquaintances. They expressed that for them, it would harm their motivation if the CSR measures were very strictly enforced and monitored, leaving no room for the worker to carry out tasks in a way they see fit.

CSR-related conflicts at work among the interviewees were rare, but some had experienced feelings of conflict when doing CSR-related actions at work. One interviewee worked on a site with several subcontractors. They expressed uncertainty as to whether all subcontractors were complying with the common guidelines of the work site. This led to the feeling that their own company follows CSR-related guidelines too strictly, as others may not be adhering to them. Another interviewee felt conflicted about the words and actions of their company. According to them, the company claims to be doing its part to save the world, but they are swimming completely against the current with some aspects of the company's work. Skepticism towards the means and outcomes of CSR was present among some other interviewees as well.

The most prevalent factor contributing to disengagement was the lack of interest in CSR. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the CSR engagement of the interviewees was largely unconscious in the sense that the workers do participate in CSR activities, but in ways that required little to no active thought or conscious effort. Often when asked about the personal relevance of CSR, the interviewees expressed how they had not really thought about the topic at all in the past. The lack of thought given to CSR also contributed to difficulties in answering some of the interview questions for the interviewees. For example, some interviewees found it challenging to identify their motivations for engaging, as they had not given previous thought to the topic.

"Well, I don't know, because I haven't really thought about participating in that, so it's quite difficult to consider at this point what would motivate me to get involved in it." -I3

Many expressed that the interviews were the first time they had considered these kinds of activities at work, despite their engagement in CSR in some ways. While the lack of interest in CSR did not necessarily cause the interviewees to completely disengage from the CSR, it could prohibit them from actively engaging and putting in extra effort to do CSR actions that are not integrated into their work already.

"But I believe that few people think about it in terms of CSR or anything like that. It's honestly just what they've been told to do and what they're used to, and there's kind of a 'whatever' attitude. Maybe then it's just that now we are at work, and it's not our own money at stake, so to speak." -I9

While many interviewees were not interested in CSR, there were instances where interest in CSR might be present, but the worker was just focusing on the tasks at hand, without giving thought to the CSR happening at the organization. For example, when one interviewee was asked about why they had not made efforts to develop CSR further, they mentioned how they are just focusing on the basic tasks, so they do not always have the time to think about CSR-related things at work.

"I probably just haven't thought about it that much, and I'm focused on doing the basic job. There's not always time to think about things like that." -I2

For the same reason, one interviewee felt that they do not really see the CSR work that the company does, as they are just focusing on doing the job that is their own responsibility.

4.3 Agency of Blue-Collar Workers

This section focuses on the agency of blue-collar workers related to the CSR activities of their organizations. It explores how workers perceive their influence in CSR practices and if they feel like their voices are being heard. It also focuses on how the workers perceive the impacts of their own CSR engagement. Focus is also given to the development of CSR inside the organizations from the workers' perspective, and the relevant skills and competencies for CSR, again from the workers' perspective. By analyzing these elements, the chapter explores the workers' agency in contributing to CSR and the limitations they face in exercising their agency.

4.3.1 Perception of Individual Agency

This chapter explores how blue-collar workers perceive their individual capacity to contribute to CSR activities. It focuses on their understanding of the impact they have when participating in the CSR, and how they feel their own contributions are valued within the company.

As mentioned in Chapter 4.1.3, the impacts of the CSR the workers are participating in were perceived as fairly insignificant. Overall, the sense of self-efficacy among the interviewees was mixed, with some interviewees feeling like CSR is not part of their job, so they do not have a lot of say in the topic, while some of the interviewees felt like they could develop the CSR and engage more if they came up with ideas on how. As mentioned earlier in the results, many of the interviewees saw the impacts of their actions as limited. However, all of the interviewees believed that if they came up with a good idea and wanted to develop CSR in their organization, their voices would be heard. Many interviewees stated that their companies have a system in place where any employee can suggest new ideas and improvements, along with rewards for

employees whose ideas make it to implementation. The feeling of own actions having an insignificant impact could affect the self-efficacy and perception of agency of the workers.

Some of the interviewees had feelings of lacking control over decisions. While most of the interviewees agreed that their supervisors would listen to their feedback and take action based on it if the ideas were good enough, some were skeptical of their ideas ever going through, unless the ideas were very groundbreaking. This perception could be caused by the management not responding well to past improvement ideas, workers having a low sense of self-belief in their own skills and knowledge, or the combination of both of these factors.

*"It would have to be something pretty groundbreaking for them to actually do something about it. Many people have made suggestions for improvements and such in the company, and sometimes they go forward, sometimes they don't, and the response is like, 'Great' *gives a sarcastic thumbs up*. But some have actually come up with something that has earned them a reward or something for their idea." -I2*

Two interviewees mentioned that the people who make the decisions on the CSR of the company are based in the headquarters of the company, located in a different city away from their own workplace. One of them thought it would be a good idea if someone who is doing to actual job would have a say in the decisions related to their work and CSR. The other one appeared to know that their company has a designated person for managing the CSR. They speculated that the voice of a usual blue-collar worker might not get heard much where the decisions regarding CSR are made, as the instructions usually come from the headquarters and the mills have to do what is said. However, they mentioned that if the workers have made noise in the direction of the higher-ups, then their opinions have been taken into account.

The mandatory nature of the CSR practices and goals could be seen as a limiting factor for the agency of the workers, as the goals and actions have already been decided by other employees of the company, and the workers are mainly just passive participants in this equation, focusing on their job and not giving much thought to CSR. The scale of CSR initiatives might also feel disconnected from the day-to-day activities of the workers. For example, the sawmill worker explained how their company does a lot of logging and communicates a lot about the regeneration and biodiversity of forests. However, for this worker, these CSR actions are practically invisible, since the wood goes through the sawmill the same way every day regardless of how it is logged. However, mandatory CSR actions do not mean the workers would not have any opportunities to take voluntary action or find ways to improve the CSR work of the company.

While individual actions might have been seen as insignificant, combining them with the collective actions of peers can strengthen the significance. As many interviewees mentioned, their personal actions might not be much, but if others participate in the same way, the impacts are more significant. The significant impact of peers on CSR engagement was also strongly connected to the

perception of the impacts of CSR and, thus, with the perception of agency. As mentioned before, one of the interviewees mentioned how they collectively try to improve the working conditions and give ideas to the management with the whole shift, using their collective agency. Working together toward CSR goals and improving CSR could give workers a stronger sense of influence and control over the outcomes, while also bringing together the skills and competencies of multiple workers. In the case of this interviewee, it also increased the motivation to engage, as it was something that was important for them personally. Some interviewees were also able to recognize that the impacts of their work might not be visible immediately, but rather growing progressively over time, as the CSR actions are done repeatedly.

"Well, you can probably get pretty far just with common sense, I don't really think you need any special skills or anything like that. You start small, and maybe at some point those things can grow into something bigger." -I2

Finally, another limiting factor in the interviewees' perception of their agency was their perception of their skills and competencies, which are talked about more in Chapter 4.3.3. Overall, the interviewees were not able to identify too many skills and competencies they feel are generally relevant to engaging in CSR, and even less so when talking about the skills and competencies they possess themselves. However, as said in the previous quotation, there was also the view that no specific skills or competencies are necessary to engage in CSR.

4.3.2 Development and Innovation

This chapter focuses on the role that blue-collar workers play in the development and innovation of CSR activities. It explores the ways blue-collar workers can initiate CSR development actions, and what kinds of processes their companies have in place for it. *Focus is also given to the barriers that make the development of CSR more difficult for workers and how their ideas are received within the companies.*

CSR development in companies could be divided into employee-initiated and management-led development. The interviews focused primarily on employee-initiated development, but management-led development was also discussed with the interviewees if they had noticed some developments in their companies' CSR during their time working there. Overall, only a few interviewees mentioned any management-led developments in CSR. The interviewee working in elevator installations mentioned how their company is replacing old company cars with electric vehicles. According to the interviewee, this has received mixed responses from the workers in the company, as the new vehicles have had some issues, but the interviewee themselves was optimistic that the company will find a proper solution for the issues. A paper machine operator was frustrated with the management-led development of work safety, and two other interviewees noted that the CSR-related decisions are made far away from the blue-collar workers, as previously mentioned in the findings.

When the interviewees were asked about how they would proceed if they had potential ideas on how to improve their companies' CSR, all of them would

either talk about it with their direct supervisor or send the idea through the company's official feedback channels.

"Those things are probably first reported to the supervisor, and the supervisor takes it further, and then it's discussed whether it really has an impact and if it's worth doing, or if it should be done in a different way... Usually, those things are reported to the supervisor, and after that, it moves forward." -11

The workers who would first talk with their supervisor about the idea would either ask their supervisor about where they should go with the idea or with whom to talk about it, or just give their idea straight to the supervisor and let them handle it. Interestingly, there were no mentions of implementing the development ideas by themselves without first presenting the idea to other people. One interviewee acknowledged that their supervisor would not be the person who would take their idea further, but they would still ask them who they should talk to, as they do not have that knowledge themselves. The sawmill automation operator highlighted that if they were to give ideas related to CSR matters, it would not be through conventional suggestion channels, unlike other suggestions. They would first contact some management-level employee, occupational health and safety representatives, or some other people who have knowledge of those matters, and then start driving the idea forward through open dialogue. The construction worker also favored using dialogue to drive new development ideas forward. They have regular morning meetings with everyone at work, so they suggested that they would bring up their idea there, as everyone is gathered, so everyone would have a say in it and it would stick in people's minds best.

In general, the interviewees seemed to have more confidence in getting the idea through if they talked with the supervisor rather than using the official feedback channels, if their company had one.

"We have those idea suggestion forms there. But then, I don't really trust that they always reach the right people, so I'd probably go straight to my boss. I'd pull them aside and ask if it could be done this way or that way. I don't know, probably something like that." -17

The issue with the official feedback channels seemed to be their transparency, as the workers did not know who would be reading their ideas and how the ideas were handled. These issues did not appear when going straight to the supervisor and giving the ideas to them, again highlighting the role of the supervisor. However, the interviewees were confident overall that their ideas would get listened to, if they were to present them. One interviewee also expressed how they think that the supervisors would receive their ideas well, but peers might not receive them so well at first. However, they reckoned that their peers would get used to the development ideas and eventually accept them.

Despite all the interviewees knowing how to act if they came up with ideas on how to develop their company's CSR, only one of them had actually shared their ideas and taken part in developing CSR further. When asked why they had not done it, most of the interviewees explained how they just had not thought about it or had not had any ideas. Overall, the workers were not particularly

willing to take the initiative themselves but would still appreciate their voice being heard in some ways when CSR is developed.

“I don’t personally feel that I’m directly one of those who influence things. But I do feel that I could offer help and share my own perspective on things, though I wouldn’t see myself as being in a position to actually do that particular job.” -I3

4.3.3 Skills and Training for CSR

This chapter examines the skills and competencies that blue-collar workers possess themselves and deem important for engaging in CSR activities. This chapter also explores how the CSR-related skills of blue-collar workers are developed at work, either through formal training or learning from practical experience.

The interviewees were asked if they thought they possessed any skills, competencies, or experience that would help them participate in and develop CSR at their workplace. Five of the nine interviewees answered that they do not believe that they have any specific skills or competencies that are relevant to CSR. The relevant skills and competencies the interviewees identified with themselves and skills they perceived as overall important when engaging with CSR are presented in Table 4. The important skills in the third column are different from the skills of the workers in the second column, as the interviewees were asked to think about skills and competencies, they did not possess themselves.

Table 4: Skills related to CSR

Interviewee	Own identified CSR-related skills	Perceived important CSR skills
1	None Identified	Job experience, general interest in CSR
2	None Identified	Ability to think broadly, common sense
3	Social skills, confidence to express ideas	Broad worldview, a wide range of different views on issues
4	None Identified	None Identified
5	Job experience, understanding the processes at work	None Identified
6	None Identified	Job experience, understanding the processes at work
7	None Identified	No particular skills are needed, understanding what is being developed
8	Job experience	Relevant education
9	Understanding of CSR through education, broad-mindedness	None Identified

As the table presents, the skills and competencies mentioned were not specific to any particular processes, but rather related to understanding how the company operates and the ability to see things from different perspectives. These were not seen as mandatory for engagement, but rather something that makes engaging in CSR easier for the workers. Interviewee 7, the machinist, specifically stated that you do not need any specific skills to develop CSR in a company, as anyone is capable of doing it, no matter their skills and competencies if you are familiar with the processes you are developing. Interviewee 9, the construction worker, held similar views, as they thought CSR is not really that complicated, and the parts of it that are relevant to the blue-collar workers are very simple. Only one interviewee mentioned education as something that is important for CSR participation, while one interviewee also mentioned their own education as something that has helped them in participating in CSR.

Related to the skills and competencies, training related to CSR also emerged in the interviews as a discussion topic. CSR-related training received overall mixed feelings among the interviewees. As previously mentioned, some interviewees had a very negative feeling toward the pieces of training.

"They cover such a broad range of things, but I usually just go through them as quickly as possible, clicking through, so I don't really remember anything from them." -18

However, when asked if the workers had any specific CSR-related actions that felt motivating to them, one interviewee mentioned how the employer company trains and educates its workers about the CSR the company is involved in. Some of the interviewees also mentioned pieces of training and onboarding as instances where their CSR-related skills have been developed. The contents and methods of the training were not explored more with all the interviewees, but some mentioned how their pieces of training are in the form of e-learning courses, which are mandatory. Some other training topics mentioned were ethical principles of the company, work safety, recycling guidelines, and presentations of the company's CSR activities.

In addition to formal company-organized pieces of training, another way to develop the skills and competencies of the workers was by learning while working. As shown in Table 4, job experience was mentioned multiple times when talking about relevant skills. Many interviewees mentioned how they had not had any instances where they could have developed their CSR-related skills while working. However, many agreed that just the general knowledge of the job they are doing is making participation in CSR easier. None of the interviewees could mention any specific instances while doing their job that would have developed their skills, but rather the skills develop continuously without even noticing while working.

"Well, it probably develops for everyone in some way as you learn new things, see new things, and get to meet new employees and see what they're like. And when you get to teach new employees or something like that, you get to see different points of view." -13

Sharing knowledge and hearing different perspectives on things emerged in the interviews as a way to increase knowledge and develop CSR skills at work. As Table 4 shows, different perspectives were also mentioned as a competency that helps with CSR engagement. Some interviewees mentioned how they are sharing knowledge with their peers and gaining it from them. Because all the interviewees were still young, their own experience was not seen as important as it could be. However, some still felt they already had a fair amount of experience and had an understanding of their companies' operations and activities to engage in CSR better than someone who has just graduated, highlighting the importance of experience.

Overall, the existing CSR knowledge of the interviewees was fairly low, and there were many instances where the interviewee was unable to answer the question because of a lack of knowledge. This was seen throughout the interview processes but was the most prominent when asked about the skills and competencies of the workers. The young age and short job experience, combined with focusing only on the mandatory processes at work could contribute to this lack of knowledge. However, the understanding of CSR can increase in the future, as the interviewees were young, and generally did not hold negative opinions of CSR.

The full results of this study reveal that the focus of young blue-collar workers is on their mandatory tasks that are included in their job. While they might have some individual agency that could be exercised in their everyday activities to take part in CSR, their level of engagement is too low for them to actively participate and improve their organizations CSR activities. Figure 4 summarizes the main influences for each form of agency (individual, proxy, and collective) as experienced by young blue-collar workers in their engagement with CSR. The top row of Figure 4 identifies key influences such as leadership, guidance, and peer influence. The lower part of the figure outlines specific and more general actions taken by workers through each form of agency. Individual agency involves more personal, smaller-scale actions such as recycling. Proxy agency reflects actions that involve communication through intermediaries such as workplace supervisors. Collective agency is characterized by group-driven efforts and focuses on broader impacts like improving work conditions and minimizing the organizations environmental impacts. The figure also highlights the scale of perceived impact, suggesting that actions arising through collective agency are generally viewed as more significant and impactful than those arising through individual agency. The actions that happen when collective agency is exercised are perceived as more impactful than the actions exercised with individual agency.

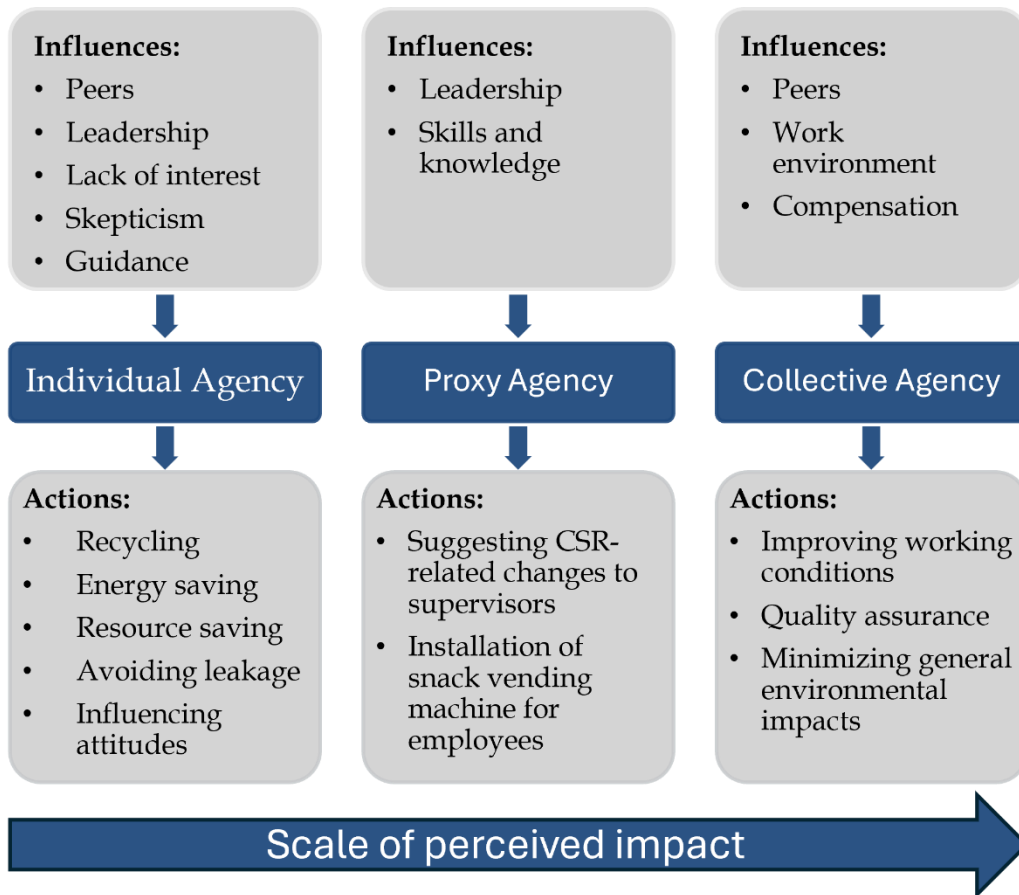


Figure 4: Forms of agency for young blue-collar workers

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 CSR (Dis)engagement in Blue-Collar Work

The findings of this study exhibit varying levels of understanding about CSR among young blue-collar workers. While the interviewed workers possessed a limited understanding of CSR, they recognized many specific initiatives, particularly those related to environmental practices. Koch et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of making the benefits of CSR more visible to employees to increase participation in CSR. While some of the workers interviewed mentioned environmental and societal benefits, such as saving water and other resources, many workers believed that CSR initiatives mainly benefited the company's image and were skeptical of the larger-scale impacts of their individual efforts. Allen (2023) mentioned a sense of achievement, physical and mental well-being, efficiency, pride and commitment, and a safer work environment as commonly perceived personal benefits of CSR. Some of these benefits were also mentioned by the interviewees, such as efficiency and a sense of achievement, but overall, these benefits were rarely mentioned.

The findings show how the workers' engagement with CSR seems more pragmatic and routine-driven rather than passion-driven. The workers described how their participation in CSR-related activities is unconscious, as the practices are embedded in their daily tasks. Carlini & Grace (2021) emphasize integrating CSR into the company's internal culture to increase CSR engagement. However, this is referring to making CSR values and practices a core part of the company's identity and values, aiming to shape employees' beliefs and attitudes, resulting in intrinsic motivation for CSR engagement. In the findings, the CSR practices are embedded at a practical level, where the workers perform CSR-related tasks routinely because they are built into their daily work activities. The workers were not particularly interested in putting extra effort into CSR, as most of them felt that they were only focusing on their mandatory tasks. Out of the different CSR

engagement typologies presented in the theoretical framework, most of the interviewed workers could fit in the “conformist” role of Hemingway (2005), perceiving the culture as supportive but being indifferent to CSR and only engaging if it is mandated by the company.

Anitha’s (2014) determinants of employee engagement could provide a useful framework for analyzing the CSR engagement of blue-collar workers further, as most of the determinants were mentioned by the blue-collar workers in the interviews. Anitha (2014) identified work environment and team and co-worker relationships as the most impactful determinants. While the work environment did not emerge as an important factor for the interviewees, co-worker influence was perceived as a strong factor affecting engagement, and collective engagement emerged as a notable characteristic of blue-collar CSR engagement. The workers mentioned how collective efforts boost individual motivation and make participation more rewarding. At the same time, if peers are indifferent or disengaged, individual engagement becomes more difficult and leads to frustration, as the workers feel their CSR engagement is wasted. This suggests that co-worker relationships can either enhance or hinder CSR engagement of blue-collar workers, depending on the collective attitude toward CSR. According to Murshed et al. (2021), social information processing theory suggests that employees pay attention to signals from their social environment instead of relying on personal preferences. This means that people’s behavior is mainly shaped by what’s happening around them, which could explain the importance of peers in CSR engagement for blue-collar workers. The roles of mandatory participation, supervisor, and guidance related to CSR also emerged as relevant topics, similar to organizational policies, leadership, and training and career development of Anitha’s (2014) determinants of employee engagement.

The findings also uncover many elements of disengagement among young blue-collar workers, often related to a perceived disconnection between the CSR goals of the organization and the workers’ ability to influence those goals. This disengagement can be understood through the different types of CSR (dis)engagement by Hahn et al. (2023), specifically “disconnection” and “paralysis.” The findings show skepticism of the genuine impact of individual contributions, while the organizational goals were broad and abstract. This could suggest that the disengagement may not originate from a lack of interest but rather from a perceived lack of agency. While Rastogi et al. (2018) emphasized the role of job resources as a cause of disengagement, low job resources did not emerge in the interviews as a defining cause of disengagement for the interviewed blue-collar workers. However, blue-collar workers often experience less job control in their work compared to white-collar roles (Saraç et al., 2017).

5.2 The Role of Human Agency

The findings of this thesis suggest that young blue-collar workers often perceive their individual agency in CSR as limited, both by the structural constraints of

their roles and their perceived lack of understanding of CSR. This aligns with Bandura's (2006) concept of self-efficacy, where individuals assess their capabilities of influencing outcomes in their environment. While the workers in this thesis expressed that they recognized the value of CSR, their ability to impact CSR outcomes in a way to see the results themselves was constrained by their limited involvement in decision-making processes and lack of both interest and knowledge of CSR. While the individual agency of the interviewed workers was restricted, the blue-collar workers exercised agency through smaller actions aligned with their values and perceived responsibilities toward sustainability. There were also examples of blue-collar workers exercising their individual agency, using all four core properties of Bandura's (2006) human agency theory. A good example of this is the voluntary actions the blue-collar workers had taken to participate in CSR, proving that voluntary participation is possible in blue-collar work despite the lack of decision-making power. As Figure 2 suggests in the theoretical framework, individual agency is exercised with the everyday agency more often than not. The lack of decision-making power restricts the young blue-collar workers to use their individual agency on the smaller, everyday tasks and routines within their roles, rather than on broader, strategic decisions.

Otto et al. (2020) mentioned how people with low levels of individual agency can often increase their level of agency by acting collectively. The findings of this study also suggest that while young blue-collar workers' strategic agency is fairly constrained, proxy agency and collective agency were identified as potential means of overcoming these constraints. The interviewed workers expressed that in case they would come up with ideas on how to improve the CSR inside the organization, they would voice their suggestions to supervisor rather than directly implementing changes themselves, using proxy agency to counteract their lack of individual agency. There were also examples in the findings where the interviewees acknowledged their collective impacts as significant, while individual actions were seen often as insignificant. This suggests that the roles of the supervisor, peers, work environment, and organizational structures are crucial in creating proxy- and collective agency.

Based on the findings of this study, there is a need for increased perceptions of agency and efficacy among young blue-collar workers. Organizational support plays a pivotal role in shaping the agency perceptions of young blue-collar workers and their CSR engagement. Self-efficacy can be increased through social interactions and verbal encouragement and support (Fearon et al., 2013). Blue-collar workers could also be more integrated in the CSR planning and decision-making processes to provide a more inclusive approach to CSR. This would make the workers more active participants rather than passive contributors. Fischer & Newig (2016) emphasized agency and the active role of people initiating, driving, or resisting changes in transitions. Recognizing and enforcing the agency of blue-collar workers – whether through individual, proxy, or collective means – could enable organizations to make most of their different perspectives and contributions to achieve more employee-driven CSR outcomes.

5.3 Limitations & Recommendations for Future Research

This study has a few different limitations that may influence the interpretation of its findings. These limitations must be acknowledged to understand the findings and to guide future research efforts on the topic. The limitations of this thesis concern both the theoretical framework and research methodology. Regarding the theoretical framework, employee engagement is a field that has seen a lot of research, making it impossible to perform a systematic review of all significant literature in the constraints of a master's thesis. Because of this, the focus of the theoretical framework was on more cited and recent research.

The qualitative approach of this thesis inherently causes some limitations. While this qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of individual experiences, the findings cannot be generalized. Given the diversity within blue-collar jobs across different industries, future research would benefit from quantitative approach and larger samples including workers from various regions, industries, and age groups to increase the generalizability and capture a broader spectrum of blue-collar perspectives on CSR engagement. This study relied solely on semi-structured interviews as the data collection method, which provided insights into the personal perceptions and experiences of the interviewees. However, interviews are not able to capture behavioral engagement with CSR in real-time as well as observational methods or mixed-methods approaches, which could provide more insights into the actual engagement behaviors and interactions with CSR initiatives.

Since this research is a master's thesis, the interviewees inexperience in interviewing people can potentially influence the quality and depth of the data collected in semi-structured interviews. The limited experience might make it challenging to navigate follow-up questions effectively and affect the ability to probe more deeply into certain responses, possibly leading to missed insights or underexplored topics, even with carefully prepared interview guide. The pre-existing relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees also needs to be acknowledged as a limitation in this study, as it introduces a potential for response bias. The pre-existing relationship along with the nature of the interview topic might have inclined the participants to provide socially desirable responses or align with perceived expectations of the researcher. On the other hand, this pre-existing relationship could also make interviewees feel more comfortable, allowing them to give more honest and direct answers without sugar-coating their response.

Given that most CSR research has historically focused on white-collar employees, future research on blue-collar workers is still needed. Possibilities for cross-comparative studies exist, exploring the differences in CSR engagement between blue- and white-collar employees. Such studies could examine whether factors like agency, organizational culture, and perceptions of CSR impact blue- and white-collar workers differently. This could provide more tailored strategies for improving CSR engagement across different employee groups. The

differences in different industries could also be addressed in future research, as blue-collar work can be very different between industries, such as construction work and forestry. These nuances in job tasks, regulatory requirements, and environmental impacts in different industries could be explored more in relation to their influence in CSR engagement. For blue-collar workers, examining what benefits the workers perceive from engaging in CSR, and the impact of collective agency in CSR could also be topics of future research. Koch et al. (2019) emphasized how important the perceived benefits of CSR are in increasing engagement. While this study also touched on that subject a little, it was not given a lot of focus. The findings of this study also emphasized the impacts of collective actions, and future research could investigate how collective agency can be effectively promoted within the blue-collar workforce, exploring different strategies such as team-building and peer-driven CSR initiatives. Finally, longitudinal studies focusing on changes in CSR engagement over time could provide valuable insights into the relationship between blue-collar workers and CSR. Research could track shifts in engagement as organizations introduce new CSR policies, technologies, or training programs.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This thesis aimed to gain insights into the experiences and perceptions of young blue-collar workers related to their CSR engagement. The study was conducted as qualitative research, and the data was collected with semi-structured interviews with 9 young blue-collar workers. The interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis, from which 9 themes related to the research questions emerged.

Based on the findings of this thesis, young blue-collar workers' CSR engagement appears to be mainly shaped by a mix of routine-based participation, external motivations, and collective influence rather than personal alignment with CSR values or intrinsic motivation. The interviewed blue-collar workers seemed to be passive participants, engaging mostly in mandatory aspects without taking on additional CSR responsibilities in their workplace. Only a few interviewees mentioned that companies are taking part in CSR just to "do the right thing" and to take care of their environment. Overall, the view on why companies are taking part in CSR was quite skeptical and seen as something that the companies are forced to do rather than something they are voluntarily taking part in. While blue-collar workers may initially perceive their knowledge of CSR as limited, they nonetheless recognize and participate in CSR practices, particularly those centered on environmental sustainability and the well-being of the workers, where the results and benefits are more visible for the workers. Overall, the individual agency in CSR engagement was often limited due to the structured nature of blue-collar roles. The workers primarily follow set guidelines without the flexibility to make independent CSR-related changes in their work. The lack of decision-making power limits their engagement to routine tasks rather than more meaningful participation. However, proxy agency emerges as significant, with supervisors often acting as intermediaries, providing indirect support for engagement. Additionally, collective agency plays a crucial role, as peer relationships and shared attitudes within work groups influence workers' willingness to participate and engage in CSR.

It should be noted that the sample of this research was small, and the qualitative approach limits the generalizability of the results. However, this

research was exploratory by its nature, not aiming to create any new generalizations nor theories based on the results. The interviewed workers were also young and at the start of their careers, lacking wider understanding of CSR. The pre-existing relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees could also have influenced the results. Interviewing older workers with no existing relationship with the interviewer could yield different results.

This thesis contributes to the existing theory by expanding the existing employee CSR engagement literature, addressing a significant gap by focusing on young blue-collar workers. This research also explores the role of agency in CSR engagement, contributing to the broader discourse on individual, proxy, and collective agency in organizational behavior. This opens possibilities for future theoretical models of employee participation in CSR initiatives, especially considering blue-collar workers. As blue-collar workers are somewhat forgotten group of employees, more research is still needed to understand their CSR engagement compared to that of white-collar workers.

For organizations, this thesis gives insight into the (dis)engagement of blue-collar workers, helping organizations design more inclusive CSR strategies which effectively engage blue-collar workers. The findings also identified a need for targeted training programs for blue-collar workers that increase awareness and knowledge about CSR. However, as the findings suggest, the training programs should be well thought out, as some workers showed little to no interest towards these pieces of training. Because the role of peers emerged as significant, it could be leveraged by encouraging peer-led CSR initiatives to build a collective engagement culture in the workplace. For blue-collar workers interested in improving their organization's CSR, this thesis offers valuable insight into the role of peers and collective agency. Peer-relationships play a crucial role in enacting agency and improving CSR, suggesting that blue-collar workers should aim to utilize those relationships to push their organizations towards more sustainable activities. The research also offers valuable insights for organizational leaders into how structural constraints can limit individual agency for blue-collar workers.

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APPENDIX: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW: BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS AND CSR (IN FINNISH)

TUTKIMUKSEN JA HAASTATTELUN ESITTELY

- Tutkimuksen tarkoitus
 - o Tutkimuksen tarkoitus on tutkia ja tutustua ”duunareiden” sitoutuneisuuteen työnantajayrityksensä yritys vastuuseen. Tutkimus toteutetaan haastattelemalla ”duunareita” heidän omista kokemuksistaan, näkemyksistään ja mielipiteistään. Tutkimuksella pyritään ymmärtämään erityisesti työläisten halukkuutta ja innostuneisuutta osallistua jo olemassa oleviin yritys vastuutavoitteisiin ja -ohjelmiin, sekä heidän kokemuksiansa omista vaikutusmahdollisuuksistaan. Tutkimus kirjoitetaan englanniksi, mutta haastattelut toteutetaan suomeksi käytännöllisistä syistä.

- Haastattelijan rooli
 - o Haastattelija toimii haastattelutilanteessa puolueettomana tutkijana. Kysymyksiin ei ole oikeita tai vääriä vastauksia, ja kysymyksiin on toivottavaa vastata täysin rehellisesti ja omien kokemusten ja mielipiteiden mukaan.

- Tulosten käyttäminen
 - o Haastattelu on luottamuksellinen ja pidetään salassa. Tutkimuksen tulokset julkaistaan Pro Gradussani, ja haastattelusta voidaan käyttää katkelmia. Haastateltavat pysyvät täysin anonyymeinä, eikä tutkielmaan sisällytetä missään tapauksessa nimeäsi tai muita tunnistettavia piirteitäsi. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan tulosten analysoinnin helpottamiseksi. Haastattelujen nauhoituksia ei näe haastattelijan (itseni) lisäksi kukaan muu.

1 TAUSTATIEDOT

- Syntymävuosi?
- Kuinka pitkään olet työskennellyt nykyisessä organisaatiossasi?
- Mikä on roolisi nykyisessä organisaatiossasi? Kerro päivittäisistä työtehtävistäsi.

2 YHTEISKUNTAVASTUUN MERKITYS

- Mitä itse koet yrityksen yhteiskuntavastuun olevan? Anna tarvittaessa esimerkkejä yhteiskuntavastuutoiminnasta.
- Mikä on yhteiskuntavastuun merkitys sinulle henkilökohtaisesti? Entä työntekijänä peilaten omaan työskentelyysi?

- Miten yhteiskuntavastuun harjoittaminen on vaikuttanut omaan työhösi ja työtyytyväisyytesi?
- Mitä arvelet yhteiskuntavastuun merkityksen olevan omalla työnantajayrityksellesi?
- Miten omat, henkilökohtaiset arvosi ja näkemyksesi sopivat yrityksesi yhteiskuntavastuutoimintaan?
- Onko työssäsi sellaista yhteiskuntavastuutoimintaa (tai muuta toimintaa), joka ei sovi omiin arvoihisi ja näkemyksiisi?

3 YHTEISKUNTAVASTUUN TOTEUTUS

- Millaista yhteiskuntavastuutoimintaa yrityksesi tekee?
- Miksi koet yrityksesi harjoittavan yhteiskuntavastuuta?
- Koetko, että yhteiskuntavastuu johon osallistut töissä on merkittävää vaikutusta yritykselle, yhteisölle, tai yhteiskunnalle? Miksi?/Miksi et?
- Onko työssäsi tilanteita, jossa koet oman osallistumisesi yhteiskuntavastuuseen erityisen tehokkaaksi tai tehottomaksi? Kuvaile tällaisia tilanteita.

4 OMA OSALLISTUMINEN JA MOTIVAATIO

- Osallistutko itse yrityksesi yhteiskuntavastuutoimintaan?
 - o Millä tavoin?
- Miksi/Miksi et osallistu yrityksesi yhteiskuntavastuutoimintaan?
- Mikä motivoi/motivoisi sinua osallistumaan?
- Kuvaile jotain yhteiskuntavastuutekoa/toimintaa, jonka koet erityisen motivoivaksi? (Jos mieleesi ei tule mitään tiettyä tekoa, voit itse kuvitella tällaisen.) Miksi koit sen motivoivaksi?
- Millaiset tekijät yrityksen päivittäisessä toiminnassa helpottavat omaa osallistumistasi yrityksen yhteiskuntavastuuseen?
- Millaiset tekijät vaikeuttavat?

5 OSALLISTUMISMAHDOLLISUUDET

- Kuvittele tilanne, jossa havaitset yritykselläsi mahdollisuuden tehdä yhteiskuntavastuuta. Miten lähtisit edistämään asiaa?
- Oletko koskaan kehittänyt itse yrityksesi yhteiskuntavastuutoimintaa? Esimerkiksi ehdottamalla uusia toimia/prosesseja, tai kehittänyt jo olemassa olevia.
- Koetko omaavasi taitoja/kokemusta, joka auttaa sinua osallistumaan, tai mahdollisesti kehittämään yhteiskuntavastuutoimintaa jollain tapaa?
 - o Millaiset taidot ovat mielestäsi tärkeitä tässä?
 - o Onko työssäsi tullut tilanteita, jossa omasta osaamisestasi on ollut erityistä hyötyä yhteiskuntavastuuseen osallistumisessa?
 - Entä tilanteita, joissa osaamisesi on kehittynyt?

6 LOPETUS

- Herääkö mieleesi mitään muuta mitä haluaisit lisätä tai kommentoida?