
A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to synthesise and critically assess the existing literature on the role of the board of directors in corporate social responsibility (CSR) performance. A sample of 35 studies from 18 highly recognized scientific journals published between 2013 and 2021 were reviewed using a systematic review approach. The research identifies similarities and discrepancies in the effects of diverse board characteristics and board structures on CSR performance by distinguishing between two board attributes: director qualities and board structures. First, the research shows that these characteristics do not operate in isolation, but rather interact with one another and the context in which they are embedded to shape CSR success. Furthermore, the analysis uncovers significant heterogeneity in conceptualizations, theoretical frameworks, measuring methods, and contexts across research, laying the groundwork for a full synthesis of major scholarly discourses and an organizing framework.

Keywords: Corporate Governance, Corporate Social Responsibility and Board Level

1. Introduction

The critical importance of the relationship between corporate governance and sustainability has been long acknowledged in the literature. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been noted as a development of good governance, where companies with better governance are often found to be more socially responsible (Ntim & Soobaroyen, 2013). While corporate governance is the force behind CSR aims and objectives in organisations, the board of directors as a core element of corporate governance are responsible for achieving and monitoring the set aims and objectives (Harjoto et al., 2015). The achievement and realisation of these objectives are often investigated through the notion of CSR performance (Brower and Mahajan, 2013; Harjoto et al., 2015). Specifically, adopting various indices, researchers have examined CSR performance in terms of the company social performance (e.g., Community, Employee Relations and Human Rights), environmental performance (e.g. environmental strength, energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, regulatory performance and pollution prevention) and/or the overall CSR performance: the combination of company social and environmental performance (Bai, 2013; Chams & García-Blandon, 2019; Dixon-Fowler et al., 2017; Oh et al., 2019; Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Aragon-Correa, 2015; Rodrigue et al., 2013).

Scholars are increasingly recognizing that the board of directors' composition plays a critical influence in driving organizational outcomes in general, and CSR in particular (Harjoto et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2013). Prior studies have demonstrated the



crucial impact of board qualities such as director characteristics (e.g., gender, age, experience, etc.) and diverse board structures (e.g., independence, committees, CEO-duality, etc.) on CSR (Crifo et al., 2018; Marquis and Lee, 2013; Oh et al., 2019; Walls and Hoffman, 2013). For example, research has looked into the impact of board qualities on CSR reporting and disclosure, and CSR engagement (e.g., Jizi 2017; Nekhili et al., 2017). Similarly, academics have focused their research on the impact of board characteristics on CSR performance (e.g., Bai, 2013; Glass et al., 2016; Walls & Berrone, 2017).

While experts appear to agree on the importance of board qualities in driving CSR performance, the literature contains several contradictions and a lack of general clarity regarding their precise effects. According to several studies, female directors have a negative impact on environmental performance (Galbreath (2017). Others (Cook & Glass, 2018; Hussain et al., 2018; Lu and Herremans, 2019) have shown that female directors have a positive or non-significant influence on environmental performance. Similarly, while some studies in the literature have found beneficial benefits of board independence (the percentage of non-executive directors (NEDs) on CSR performance (Burke et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2013), others have found a negative (Naciti, 2019) or non-significant effect (Galbreath, 2018).

Some review studies have addressed various aspects of the overlap between corporate governance and CSR in recent years. For instance, Jain and Jamali (2016) found that corporate governance had a beneficial impact on CSR performance at three levels: business, group, and person. Rao and Tilt (2016) examined the relationship between board composition and both CSR performance and reporting from a strategy and decision-making perspective, focusing on board diversity, particularly gender diversity. While these studies emphasize the link between corporate governance and CSR, a comprehensive account of various board attributes, including both directors' characteristics and structure, as well as their interaction and sometimes inconstant role on CSR performance, has remained relatively unexplored. This is a particularly pressing issue, as recent research has revealed the importance of the two's interacting impacts in influencing CSR success (Galbreath (2017). According to Hafsah and Turgut (2013) the relationship between board diversity and CSR performance is mediated by the diversity of board structures. Similarly, Galbreath (2017) found that while executive directors have a negative influence on both environmental and social performance, the impact is favourable when combined with executive directors' CSR understanding.

As a result, the goal of this research is to synthesize this rich and diverse literature to answer the question: What is the influence of board-level corporate governance on corporate social responsibility performance? Specifically, this study hopes to examine and appraise the current state of research to explain contradictions in the literature and provide an organizing lens for future studies. This research adds to the existing body of knowledge in several ways. First, it contributes to a better understanding of the impact of board qualities on CSR performance by conducting a transparent and repeatable systematic literature study. In particular, the study finds parallels and point out inconsistencies in the present literature on the impact of board composition, structure, and interactions on CSR performance. Second, by detecting differences in conceptualisations, theoretical frameworks, and measuring scales, the study clarifies

the contradictions that were discovered. Furthermore, this research emphasizes the interplay between board traits and the context in which they are entrenched in influencing CSR success. The author provides numerous avenues for furthering research in this field after identifying plausible causes for previous literature's contradictory results.

2. Theoretical Context

One of the prevailing paradigms in corporate governance is agency theory, which states that directors have the best interests of shareholders at heart and that their agents ensure that managers have the same goals (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). While this theory has been used to explain the role of board attributes, particularly board structure, from a monitoring perspective, it cannot adequately explain why and/or how social goals should be considered in corporate strategic goals due to its focus on economic issues (Harjoto et al., 2015). On the other hand, the stakeholder theory (Hafsi & Turgut 2013), which views a firm's relationship with its stakeholders as extending beyond shareholders, appears to be a better lens for examining the impact of board attributes on issues related to the benefits of all stakeholders (Adams et al., 2017; Chams & Garca-Blandon, 2019). Board diversity is more than mere variation on the board when it comes to corporate governance. It's how distinct board processes, decision-making, and outcomes can be influenced by the variety of board members' personalities and experiences (Van der Walt & Ingley, 2003). This could be one of the key reasons why when researching the impact of board attributes on CSR performance, researchers have turned to resource dependency theory (e.g., Endo, 2020; Hafsi & Turgut, 2013) and much empirical research suggest that board diversity has a favourable impact on CSR performance (e.g., Hafsi & Turgut 2013; Harjoto et al., 2015). When investigating the impact of board qualities on CSR performance (e.g., upper echelon, legitimacy, accountability), scholars have recently turned to different hypotheses. Burke et al., 2019; Moussa et al., 2020; Olthuis and Van den Oever, 2020) Burke et al., 2019; Moussa et al., 2020; Olthuis and Van den Oever, 2020).

3. Methodology

A systematic review of 35 papers from 18 peer-reviewed, highly rated journals connected with the period between 2013 and May 2021 was undertaken using an evidence-based methodology.

Journals	Number of Articles
Journal of Business Ethics	13
Business Strategy and the Environment	3
Strategic Management Journal	2
Journal of Cleaner Production	2
Corporate Governance: An International Review	2
Journal of Management	1
Journal of Corporate Finance	1
Business & Society	1
World Development	1
Journal of Organisational Behaviour	1
Journal of Business Research	1



Journal of Business Finance & Accounting	1
International Journal of Human Resource Management	1
Human Relations	1
Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice	1
Business Ethics Quarterly	1
Accounting and Business Research	1
Academy of Management Journal	1

Bolourian et al. (2021) offer three processes for doing a review: planning the review, conducting the review, and reporting and dissemination. The literature search was conducted in EBSCO, Scopus, and the ABI/INFORM Collection using a keyword combination that reflected the core phenomena of interest (i.e., corporate governance, CSR and board attributes). Only articles that looked at both board and CSR performance were marked as "Include." In other words, articles that went outside the scope of the study, such as the impact of board qualities on CSR reporting and disclosure, CSR involvement, development, and orientation, were tagged "Not Include." To identify patterns that synthesize constructs and their relationships, the inquiry uses descriptive and thematic analysis.

The following sections set out the key themes that emerged from the review of articles.

4. Characteristics of Directors and CSR Performance

The traits of directors have been studied in a variety of methods. Gender, Knowledge, Skills, Expertise, and Experience, as well as Age and Tenure, are four of the most widely studied traits.

4.1 Gender

The presence of female directors (almost 57 percent of the current sample) is one of the most extensively considered director qualities, which is generally explored as either the number of female directors (e.g., Cook & Glass, 2018) or the proportion of such directors on the board (e.g., Francoeur et al., 2019). Inconsistent associations between this trait and other aspects of CSR performance have been documented in the research. According to a previous study, women are more concerned with social performance difficulties than males (Harjoto et al., 2015). Women, on average, are more concerned with long-term outcomes and stakeholder interests than men, even if it means compromising short-term earnings (Matsa & Miller, 2013). Female directors are also more likely to come from non-business backgrounds, to be community influencers, and to participate in charitable and philanthropic activities (Harjoto et al., 2015; Bolourian et al., 2021). In addition, women are more likely to develop sustainability-related partnerships as a result of their expertise and power (Post et al., 2015). As a result, boards with more women on them are more likely to involve the company in CSR activities (Perilleux & Szafarz, 2015).

According to a previous study, community traits such as friendliness, kindness, unselfishness, care for others, and expressiveness boost female directors' sensitivity toward various stakeholders (Perilleux & Szafarz, 2015). As a result, the board's role in driving CSR initiatives improves, and CSR performance improves. The communal decision-making style of women also aids in improving CSR performance (Harjoto et al., 2015).



On the other side, it has been suggested that in transitional economies such as China, where agency expenses are a major issue for male-dominated boards, women directors play an important role in improving decision-making quality and preventing waste of corporate resources (Jia & Zhang, 2013). As a result, unlike in Western countries, where it has been suggested that women directors support corporate philanthropy (Adams et al., 2017; Kabongo et al., 2013), women directors in some Asian countries will have a negative impact on corporate philanthropy while having a positive impact on overall organizational performance (Jia & Zhang, 2013).

Although the presence of one or two female directors can be beneficial, this has been referred to as "tokenism," and it has been suggested that the 'magic number is the presence of three or more (critical mass), female directors, to obtain the full advantage of women on boards (Bolourian et al., 2021). Also, Perilleux and Szafarz (2015) found that a minor female presence on boards is inadequate to affect CSR performance and that boards with more women act more socially responsible than boards with no or few women (Post et al., 2015). According to Ellwood and Garcia-Lacalle (2015), the importance of the position held by women, not the proportion, is what matters.

4.2 Knowledge, Skills, Expertise and Experience

The board must have relevant information, skills, expertise, and experience to advise and supervise management (Ortiz-deMandojana & Aragon-Correa, 2015). These characteristics have been garnering attention about CSR success. The number of outside directorships held by directors, as a proxy for experience, has been suggested to have no meaningful relationship with CSR success (Harjoto et al., 2015). However, because community influential directors have a favourable impact on CSR performance, the percentage of community influential directors is investigated for the experience they offer to the board as well as their community influence ((Harjoto et al., 2015). The number of different boards directors who can sit on at the same time is investigated as a proxy for boardroom experience and its favourable impact on environmental performance (Ortiz-deMandojana & Aragon-Correa, 2015). Education has been used as a proxy for examining the effect of diversity on CSR performance in nations like South Korea, which have male-dominated and ethnically homogeneous boards (Chang et al., 2017). Additionally, academic faculty members on corporate boards appear to improve CSR performance (Cho et al., 2017). This could be due to the knowledge gained through these directors' education, which is necessary for good organisational governance (Harjoto et al., 2015). According to the literature, the impact of expertise, experience, and knowledge appears to be dependent on the industry as well as the relevance of the expertise and experience. According to Bai (2013), having a physician on a hospital's board of directors has a good impact on social performance, whereas government officials have a negative impact on this aspect of CSR performance. Furthermore, it might be claimed that the importance of the experience and the CSR dimension investigated is equally significant. Environmental deviance and board member environmental experience have a good link, according to Walls and Hoffman (2013). Similarly, Homroy and Slechten (2019) discovered that having non-executive directors with prior knowledge in environmental concerns improves environmental performance by lowering corporate greenhouse gas emissions, whereas having legal skills on the board did not affect this

dimension. According to Galbreath (2017), executive directors who receive CSR training improve their environmental and social performance. However, Rodrigue et al. (2013) found that board directors' environmental awareness has no significant impact on environmental regulatory performance or pollution prevention. Furthermore, according to Bai (2013), having a lawyer on the board will improve environmental performance.

4.3 Age

Another characteristic studied by researchers about CSR performance is the director's age, which is sometimes referred to as board director's average age (e.g., Chams & Garca-Blandon, 2019) and sometimes referred to as age diversity on the board (e.g., Hafsi & Turgut, 2013). According to some reports, younger directors are more sensitive about environmental issues (Hafsi & Turgut, 2013). Younger directors, in particular, contribute more to climate-change practices due to their learning ability and innovativeness, resulting in higher performance (Galbreath (2017). However, the literature is divided on the significance of directors' age in CSR performance, comparable to the previous characteristics.

Generational conflict and disagreement among directors could have a negative impact on age diversity on the board (Hafsi & Turgut, 2013). Contrary to popular belief, the age diversity of women directors on boards with a critical mass of female representation improves women's influence on corporate humanitarian disaster response (Jia & Zhang, 2013).

4.4 Tenure

It has been suggested that director tenure is a key driver of CSR involvement in businesses (Harjoto et al., 2015). However, a review of the literature reveals conflicting results for another board attribute investigated about CSR performance, similar to age, either from a diversity perspective (e.g., Olthuis & Van den Oever, 2020) or average directors' tenure (e.g., Homroy & Slechten, 2019). It has been proposed that tenure has a favourable impact on overall CSR performance by lessening concerns about CSR performance (Harjoto et al., 2015). Bai (2013) concluded that the association between total environmental performance strengths and tenure is minor after investigating the various components of CSR performance. When it comes to sensitive CSR topics, such as environmental issues, Hafsi & Turgut (2013) believe that the insignificant relationship may occur because directors with shorter tenure are more unwilling to speak, whereas higher tenured directors may prefer to follow management.

5. Board Attributes and CSR Performance

Several different board structures have been considered. Four of the most commonly mentioned board structure traits in this section are independence, CEO-duality, size, and committees.

5.1 Independence of the Board of Directors

One of the most widely studied board configurations about CSR success is the number or proportion of nonexecutive/independent/outside directors (over 61 percent of the current sample). NEDs, like female directors, are more likely to build sustainability-themed collaborations to improve social performance indirectly by using their extensive experience and network connections (Post et al., 2015). NEDs



are more engaged in the volunteer aspects of CSR than the economic results, according to past studies (Bai 2013; Harjoto et al., 2015). As a result of their commitment to stakeholders' expectations, NEDs, according to Mallin and Michelon (2013) will increase their reputation in society and lead the organization to engage in more CSR projects. NED's reputation is also based on its capacity to deal with stakeholder complaints. As a result, these directors are more likely than executive directors to address shareholder issues frequently (Post et al., 2015). They work with stakeholders to improve environmental performance and reduce the risk of environmental litigation, and they are regarded to have a positive impact on environmental performance (Endo, 2020).

On the other hand, several studies suggest that NEDs do not affect CSR performance (McGuinness et al., 2017; Chang et al. 2017). According to Chang et al. (2017), in countries where regulators specify a minimum number of NEDs, such as South Korea, said directors have a favourable impact on CSR performance when regulatory standards are exceeded. In contrast to the conclusions of the previous studies, Naciti (2019) finds a negative influence on social and overall CSR performance and claims that the information provided to NEDs by the corporation on CSR might be misleading at times. The potential impact of such false information on NEDs' reputation can influence their decisions and, as a result, negatively damage CSR performance.

5.2 CEO-Duality

CEO-duality, or joint CEO and board chair, is another quality investigated about CSR performance, while it is also utilized as a factor to assess leadership structure. From the perspective of an agency, these functions should be separated to avoid a dominant CEO from wielding undue influence over the board (Moussa et al., 2020). The literature is divided on the relationship between this structural attribute and CSR performance, just as it is on earlier board attributes. Some researchers have found that CEO duality has a detrimental impact on CSR performance (Hussain et al., 2018; Naciti, 2019), while others have found no link (Chams & Garca-Blandon, 2019; McGuinness et al., 2017). Fabrizi et al. (2014), on the other hand, discovered a positive relationship when the CEO is also the chairman of the board of directors and has a long tenure. The writers go on to say that the authority and position of such a CEO will drive them to participate in more CSR initiatives. Hafsi and Turgut (2013) suggest, similarly to NEDs, that while CEO-duality is the norm in nations like the United States, conclusions on the impact of this feature on CSR performance will have no substantial impact when considering a sample from such countries. This could explain why, according to results from a study conducted in a variety of geographical settings, companies with a distinct CEO and board chair perform better on board supervision in terms of climate change (Galbreath, 2017). CEO-duality has recently been found to have a positive impact on greenhouse gas emissions in high carbon-intensive industries but no significant impact in low carbon-intensive industries (Moussa et al., 2020), indicating that the industry in which the company operates also plays a role in these attributes' impact.

5.3 Board-Size

Larger boards, according to the literature, are associated with improved stakeholder representation, which can lead to more sensitivity to stakeholder concerns and

increased engagement in CSR initiatives (Chams & Garca-Blandon, 2019; Ntim & Soobaroyen, 2013). However, the literature on the impact of board size on CSR performance is divided. While some scholars (e.g., Cook and Glass, 2018; Endo, 2020) argue that a larger board is more likely to break environmental laws and negatively impact environmental performance and overall CSR performance (Olthuis & Van den Oever, 2020), others (e.g., Cook & Glass, 2018; Endo, 2020) argue that size has a positive impact on environmental performance.

5.4 Board Committees

Important board decisions are frequently taken in smaller groups or board-level committees (Kesner, 1988). The presence of such board-level committees has been explored as an independent or control variable in the majority of studies. Burke et al. (2019) have lately focused on the impact of the scope of such committees' different responsibilities on CSR performance, in addition to studying the effect of their existence on CSR performance. The author believes that when a sustainability committee focuses on a certain stakeholder group's interest (i.e., social or environmental) about the relevant performance, the relationship between the committee and performance improves. Similarly, Homroy and Slechten (2019) discovered that having an environmental committee reduces a company's greenhouse gas emissions.

5.5 Board Attribute Interactions

While previous research has mostly concentrated on individual board qualities in explaining CSR success, more recent research has begun to place a greater emphasis on the interconnections between two board attributes. Despite their limitations, this new research suggests that board qualities do not work in isolation, but rather interact to influence CSR performance. Walls et al. (2012), for example, suggested that while board size and CEO duality had favourable and non-significant impacts on environmental concerns when studied independently, their interaction had a negative influence on environmental concerns.

Table 1 Summary of the Impact of Board Characteristics on CSR Performance

Author	Year	Theory	Board Characteristics	CSR Performance Results**
Bolourian et al.	2021	Agency, resource-dependence, Stakeholder, Upper Echelons & Critical mass	Director Gender (DG), Director Knowledge (DK), Director Age (DA), Board Independence (BI), CEO-Duality (CD), Board Size (BS), Board Committee (BC) & Board Attributes (BA)	Review
Endo	2020	Agency & resource-dependence	Board Independence (BI) & Board Size (BS)	BI (+) & BS (+)
Moussa et al.	2020	Agency & resource-dependence	CEO-Duality (CD) & Board Size (BS)	CD (+) & BS (0)

Nadeem et al.	2020	Resource-dependence & stakeholder	Director Gender (DG) & CEO-Duality (CD)	DG (+) & CD (+)
Olthuis and van-den-Oever	2020	Upper Echelons	Director Gender (DG), Director Tenure (DT) & Board Size (BS)	DG (+), DT (+), & BS (-)
Burke et al.	2019	Stakeholder	Director Tenure (DT), Board Independence (BI), Board Size (BS), & Board Committee (BC)	DT (0), BI (+), BS (+), & BC (0)
Chams Garcia-Blandon	2019	Stakeholder	Director Gender (DG), Director Knowledge (DK), Director Age (DA), Board Independence (BI), CEO-Duality (CD), Board Size (BS) & Board Committee (BC)	DG (+), DK (0), DA (0), BI (+), CD (0), BS (+), & BC (+).
Cruz et al.	2019	Stakeholder	Director Gender (DG), & Board Independence (BI)	DG (+) & BI (0)
Francoeur et al.	2019	Resource-dependence	Director Gender (DG)	DG (+)
Homroy and Slechten	2019	Resource-dependence	Director Knowledge (DK), Director Tenure (DT), Board Independence (BI), CEO-Duality (CD), Board Size (BS), Board Committee (BC) & Board Attributes (BA)	DK (0), DT (0), BI (0), CD (0), BS (0), BC (+), & BA (+)
Lu and Herremans	2019	Resource-dependence	Director Gender (DG) & Board Size (BS)	DG (+) & BS (+)
Naciti	2019	Agency & stakeholder	Board Independence (BI) & CEO-Duality (CD)	BI (0) & CD (+)
Oh et al.	2019	Agency & resource-dependence	Director Gender (DG), Director Knowledge (DK), Board Independence (BI) & Board Size (BS)	DG (0), DK (0), BI (+) & BS (0)
Cook and Glass	2018	Critical mass	Director Gender (DG), Director Age (DA), CEO-Duality (CD) & Board Size (BS)	DG (0), DA (0), CD (0) & BS (+)
Galbreath	2018	Stakeholder	Director Gender (DG), Board Independence (BI), CEO-Duality (CD) & Board Size (BS)	DG (+), BI (0), CD (0) & BS (0)
Hussain et al.	2018	Agency &	Director Gender (DG),	DG (0), BI (+),

al.		stakeholder	Board Independence (BI), CEO-Duality (CD), Board Size (BS), Board Committee (BC) & Board Attributes (BA)	CD (-), BS (0), BC (+) & BA (-)
Adams et al.	2017	Stakeholder	Director Gender (DG), Director Knowledge (DK), Board Independence (BI) And CEO-Duality (CD)	DG (+), DK (-), BI (+) & CD (0)
Chang et al.	2017	Agency & resource-dependence	Director Age (DA), Board Independence (BI) & Board Size (BS)	DA (0), BI (+) & BS (+)
Dixon-Fowler et al.	2017	Agency & resource-dependence	Director Knowledge (DK) & Board Committee (BC)	DK (0) & BC (+)
McGuinness et al.	2017	Critical mass	Director Gender (DG), Board Independence (BI) & CEO-Duality (CD)	DG (+), BI (0) & CD (0)
Byron & Post	2016	Upper Echelons	Director Gender (DG)	DG (+)
Galbreath	2016	Agency & resource-based view	Director Gender (DG), Board Independence (BI), CEO-Duality (CD) & Board Attributes (BA)	DG (+), BI (+), CD (0) & BA (+)
Jain and Jamali	2016	Agency, resource-dependence & resource-based view	Director Gender (DG) & Board Independence (BI)	Review
Ellwood and Garcia-Lacalle	2015	Stakeholder & upper echelons	Director Gender (DG), Board Independence (BI) & Board Size (BS)	DG (0), BI (0) & BS (0)
Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Aragon-Correa	2015	Resource-based view	Director Knowledge (DK) & Board Size (BS)	DK (+) & BS (0)
Harjoto et al.	2015	Stakeholder	Director Gender (DG), Director Knowledge (DK), Director Age (DA) & Director Tenure (DT)	DG (+), DK (0), DA (0) & DT (+)
Perilleux and Szafarz	2015		Director Gender (DG)	DG (0)
Post et al.	2015	Resource-dependence & upper echelons	Director Gender (DG) & Board Independence (BI)	DG (+) & BI (0)

Boulouta	2013		Director Gender (DG) & Board Independence (BI)	DG (+) & BI (0)
Hafsi and Turgut	2013	Agency & resource-dependence	Director Gender (DG), Director Knowledge (DK), Director Age (DA), Director Tenure (DT), Board Independence (BI) & CEO-Duality (CD)	DG (+), DK (0), DT (0), BI (+) & CD (0)
Jia & Zhang	2013	Critical mass	Director Gender (DG), Board Size (BS) & Board Attributes (BA)	DG (+), BS (0) & BA (+)
Kabongo et al.	2013	Resource-dependence	Director Gender (DG), Board Independence (BI) & Board Size (BS)	DG (+), BI (0) & BS (+)
Marquis and Lee	2013	Upper Echelons	Director Gender (DG) & Board Size (BS)	DG (+) & BS (+)
Rodrigue et al.	2013		Director Knowledge (DK) & Board Committee (BC)	DK (0) & BC (0)
Walls and Hoffman	2013		Director Knowledge (DK), Director Tenure (DT), Board Independence (BI), CEO-Duality (CD), Board Size (BS) & Board Attributes (BA)	DK (+), DT (0), BI (0), CD (0), BS (-) & BA (+)
Zhang et al.	2013		Director Gender (DG) & Board Independence (BI)	DG (+) & BI (+)

6. Underlying Theories

The research has employed a variety of models to investigate corporate governance about CSR, particularly the impact of board qualities on CSR performance. Our analysis revealed three key theoretical frameworks that have underpinned the relationship between board qualities and CSR performance, which are agency theory, resource-dependence, and stakeholder theory, which are consistent with prior reviews (Jain & Jamali, 2016). Furthermore, in recent years, some researchers (over 35% of the current sample) have used more than one theory in their theorisation to overcome limitations of existing theories and to capture all the complexities of the relevant literature, arguing that one single theory cannot comprehensively explain the relationship between various board attributes and CSR performance (e.g., Dixon-Fowler et al., 2017; Hussain et al., 2018; Moussa et al., 2020). Frequently, agency and resource-dependence theories are combined or used in conjunction with other theories. The reason for this approach could be that boards have two primary functions: oversight and control from the perspective of the agency, and increasing access to a variety of resources from the perspective of resource reliance (Mallin et al., 2013). The assumption that board diversity has an impact on performance is likewise based on this viewpoint, and many empirically conducted research suggests that board



diversity has a beneficial impact on CSR performance (e.g., Hafsi & Turgut 2013; Harjoto et al., 2015).

Multiple theoretical perspectives have been proposed as a means of fully appreciating the board's many duties (de Villiers et al., 2011; Moussa et al., 2020). Based on the findings of this review and prior research (Jain & Jamali, 2016), it appears that this method is a positive step toward creating theory to fully comprehend the intersection of corporate governance and CSR. Despite this, Walls et al. (2013) claim that despite all of the progress made in understanding the phenomenon, there is still no prevailing paradigm that can fully explain the occurrence. They go on to say that more "facts"-the based proof is needed before additional theory-based empirical research can be performed.

7. Discussion and Suggestions for Future Research

This investigation looked into a variety of board characteristics and their impact on CSR success. The study has distinguished the two prevailing qualities of director traits and board structure in studying the underpinning effects, and have emphasized and uncovered several contradictions regarding their specific effects in the literature.

7.1 Reasons for Inconsistencies in The Effects of Board Attributes on CSR Performance

First, studies believe that contextual factors such as the company's location and industry influence the effects of board qualities on CSR performance (Chams & GarcaBlandon, 2019; Chang et al., 2017; Harjoto et al., 2015; Jia & Zhang, 2013). Byron and Post (2016) found that the association between women directors and CSR performance is more positive in nations with better gender parity and shareholder protection, based on a meta-analysis of 87 independent samples from over 20 countries. Chang et al. (2017) agrees with this line of reasoning, believing that existing theories used in western countries regarding the overlap of corporate governance and CSR may not apply in the same way in eastern countries and that it depends on the institutional contexts of where the organization is located.

Second, the conceptualization and theorisation of the relationship between board qualities and CSR performance could be the source of the disparities. This link has been described as linear by several scholars (Chang et al., 2017; Harjoto et al., 2015; Jia & Zhang, 2013). However, it has recently been claimed that the link for some qualities may be non-linear. Chang et al. (2017), for example, found a convex association between diversity in directors' education and CSR success (U-shaped). According to de Bai (2013), the link between board independence and environmental performance is concave (invert U-shaped). Furthermore, some scholars have claimed that board qualities are exogenous when it comes to CSR success (e.g., Mallin & Michelon 2013; Rodrigue et al., 2013). Nonetheless, given that the relationship between director traits and organizational performance is frequently regarded as endogenous in corporate governance (Adams et al., 2010), some scholars have lately begun to treat the relationship as such (e.g., Harjoto et al., 2015; Shaukat et al., 2016). Shaukat et al. (2016) discovered a positive cyclical relationship between board CSR qualities, strategies, and CSR performance, and indicated that this cyclical relationship may be used to identify CSR leaders and laggards.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that CSR performance is a multidimensional and complicated notion (Harjoto et al., 2015; Mallin & Michelon, 2011; Walls et al., 2012), with different factors affecting different dimensions in different ways (Francoeur et al., 2019; Galbreath, 2010; Harjoto et al., 2015; Mallin & Michelon, 2011; Naciti, 2019). For example, Mallin & Michelon (2011) discovered that the fraction of NEDs has a considerable impact on overall CSR performance by influencing environmental performance, but has no influence on other CSR performance parameters. Furthermore, the authors discovered that board size, as a control variable, has no significant impact on overall CSR performance but has a beneficial impact on human rights performance. As a result, while industries execute the social and environmental dimensions differently (Bansal et al., 2014), a new study supports examining individual CSR performance dimensions in explaining the effects of board qualities (Mallin & Michelon, 2011; Nadeem et al., 2020; Shaukat et al., 2016; Walls et al., 2013).

Finally, the inconsistencies might be explained by the method used to calculate CSR. Using other indexes may yield different results (Boulouta, 2013; Shaukat et al., 2016). Particularly because the methodology employed by academics for CSR performance indices vary, with some using positive screening criteria like Dow Jones, some using negative screening criteria like KLD, and others a combination of both (Bolourian et al., 2021). In addition, several indices are comprised of CSR performance problems, strength, or both (Boulouta, 2013). As a result, focusing solely on the aggregate score of CSR performance (a linear accumulation of strengths and problems) may not provide the full picture (Walls et al., 2013).

7.2 Direction for Future Research

Taking all of this into account, it's only reasonable to refer back to earlier research and recommend that more research is needed to throw more light on the aforementioned difficulties. We've come up with two ideas that could help to resolve some of the contradictions in the literature about the impact of board qualities on CSR success.

7.2.1 Identifying the Combined Impact of Board Attributes on CSR Performance

It has been suggested that the interaction of several board qualities influences CSR performance, as indicated above. Building on these findings and focusing on more than two attributes at a time, a new line of research could focus on identifying the combinations of multiple, interrelated attributes and their impact on CSR performance, with different configurations of board attributes being seen as a step toward a better understanding of the phenomenon. While general linear regression models may be limited in their ability to interpret interactions involving more than two variables, new methodological advancements such as Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) would allow for the investigation of multiple configurations of board attributes that lead to CSR performance (Misangyi et al., 2017). Board characteristics do not work in isolation; they interact to shape CSR performance. Female board members, female CEOs, female board chairs, and executive family female-directors, for example, have been shown in several studies to have a favourable impact on CSR performance (Cruz et al., 2019; Galbreath, 2010; Mallin & Michelon, 2011; McGuinness et al., 2017). The interplay of a female board chair and female directors, on the other hand, has no bearing (McGuinness et al., 2017). As a result, we can conclude that gender, when

combined with all of these characteristics, can produce different outcomes than when considered alone.

7.2.2 Identifying Board-Level CSR Committee Attributes and Their Combined Impact on CSR Performance

The makeup of board-level committees is also crucial, as it may differ from that of the entire board (Kesner, 1988). Organizations voluntarily set up additional board-level committees dedicated to stakeholder interests and concerns in business, where the value of relationships with key stakeholders has become paramount (Burke et al., 2019; Dixon-Fowler et al., 2017). However, it has been suggested that previous research has primarily focused on the board's overall implications (Johnson et al., 2013; Kesner, 1988). Board-level sustainability committees as a component of board structure have received little attention. While the literature is split on the impact of these committees on CSR performance (Burke et al., 2019; Dixon-Fowler et al., 2017), the composition of these committees and their impact on CSR performance have remained largely unexplored, despite the efforts of Eberhardt-Toth (2017), who looked at the composition of 177 non-financial companies' board-level sustainability committees about achieving higher sustainability performance. Higher CSR performance has a favourable relationship with some sustainability committee traits, according to the findings. As a result, a new line of investigation would look into the impact of board-level sustainability committee qualities, composition, and interactions with other board attributes on CSR performance.

8. Theoretical and Practical Implementation

From a theoretical standpoint, this is accomplished by defining and distinguishing two common board attributes: board characteristics and board structures. The research reveals both parallels and differences in the effects of board qualities on CSR performance. We discover significant differences in conceptualizations, theoretical frameworks used, measuring methods used, and study contexts across studies. The identified factors served as a foundation for explaining the discrepancies in the data, identifying research gaps, and suggesting future study possibilities. While there has been a push to look at corporate social responsibility via the lens of corporate governance processes (Jain & Jamali, 2016; Walls et al., 2013), only a few comparative studies have done so. Our study adds to this line of research by providing a synthesis of prevalent academic discourses as well as an organizing lens for future studies on the role of board qualities in CSR success. In addition, the current literature's shift toward multi-theory use is considered as a beneficial step toward better understanding this research topic, and the need to include culture and country while using theory is urged.

From a practical standpoint, our research shows that board qualities do not work in isolation, but rather combine to shape CSR performance. This necessitates practitioners taking into account the synergistic effects of these characteristics when building a board to aid in CSR performance. Although it has been suggested that the interaction of a female board chair and female directors has no significant impact on CSR performance (Cruz et al., 2019; Galbreath, 2010; McGuinness et al., 2017), companies would need to consider the positions appointed when appointing female-directors, chairs, and CEOs (McGuinness et al., 2017). The number of female



directors and the age diversity among these directors, on the other hand, is thought to have a beneficial impact on CSR performance (Jia & Zhang, 2013). This shows that not only the role but also the quantity and age of female board members matters. It has been shown that directors with CSR expertise and training have a beneficial impact on CSR performance (Galbreath, 2017; Homroy & Slechten, 2019). Overall, it can be claimed that the composition of the director traits presents at the board table, rather than individual attributes, should be examined.

9. Conclusions

This systematic study of the literature was undertaken to determine what the literature says about board qualities related to the organization's CSR goals. The impact of director traits and board structure, as two dimensions of board attributes, on CSR performance, as well as the external factors influencing this relationship - which contribute to the current literature's conflicting conclusions - were investigated. This is the first review that the writers are aware of that takes this stance. This is especially relevant because it has been proposed that, despite being important components of corporate governance, board structures can only completely explain CSR success when combined with director characteristics (Hafsi & Turgut, 2013). Some solutions to the main study question were found by drawing on the literature. What effect does corporate governance have on corporate social responsibility performance at the board level? However, additional questions have developed, particularly in terms of investigating the impact of more than two board attributes at the same time. Exploring the areas recommended for future research in this report may provide answers to such queries.

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