

Conceptual Analysis of the Social Responsibility of Moroccan Organizations in the Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract : *Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a significant socio-economic crisis. To address this, Moroccan organizations have had to adapt to protect the health of their employees, partners, and customers, while also ensuring business continuity. With the preservation of employee health and safety being a top priority, the renewal of HR approaches in the context of the health crisis is now shifting towards the integration of the concept of Sustainable Development into the practices of Moroccan organizations. In this regard, it is essential to highlight the three aspects of the "Health Crisis, CSR, and HR." Indeed, the current crisis emphasizes the importance of values such as benevolence, solidarity, ethics, and Sustainable Development, as Moroccan organizations are more than ever called upon to uphold these values and protect their employees. While the COVID-19 crisis has disrupted the lives of Moroccan organizations and impacted their economic performance, it has at least had the beneficial effects of placing the HR function at the heart of the organization and bringing CSR back into the spotlight. In this context, our modest contribution aims to analyze the link between CSR and human resource management in the context of the health crisis. The study is exploratory and aims to provide a platform for empirical research on responsible HR practices adopted by organizations in the future.*

Keywords : *COVID-19, Moroccan Organizations, CSR, Responsible HRM, Sustainable Development*

1. Introduction

The current Covid-19 health crisis has transformed into an economic and social crisis that is generating profound changes in organizational management practices. Furthermore, the boundaries of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are now questioning HR practices and raising the question of revisiting human resources practices, especially by moving towards socially responsible missions.

In this context, Moroccan organizations are more than ever invited to review and reconsider their CSR practices in order to better manage and even prevent crises. This involves developing strategies based on the integration of social, economic, and environmental values into their daily activities.

While the link between CSR and HR may seem evident at first glance, it is often not well conceptualized. The objective of this article is to attempt to study the relationship between these two practices, particularly by examining the main commitments and measures taken by organizations to emerge from

this crisis. It sheds light on the crisis as an accelerator and driver of responsible human resources management through profound changes in HR practices adopted within the framework of CSR.

2. Conceptual Study of CSR

2.1 Definition

CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) is defined as the set of measures and practices implemented by organizations to address current sustainable development issues.

Derived from the English expression 'Corporate Social Responsibility,' 'Corporate Social Responsibility' is a broader concept than that of 'Corporate Social Responsibility' as it includes other types of organizations besides for-profit companies such as municipalities, associations, mutual societies, and others" (Boisjoly-Lavoie, 2013). This is evident in the definition established by ISO 26,000, which speaks of "an organization's responsibility for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, resulting in ethical and transparent behavior that contributes to sustainable development, including the health and well-being of society. It takes into account the expectations of stakeholders. It complies with applicable laws while being consistent with international standards of behavior. It is integrated throughout the organization and implemented in its relationships." In fact, CSR:Se traduit par un comportement transparent et éthique qui doit :

- Contribute to sustainable development, including the health and well-being of society.
- Consider the expectations of stakeholders.
- Adhere to current laws and be compatible with international standards.
- Be integrated throughout the organization and implemented in its relationships.

Within the framework of organized governance, CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) unfolds around six fundamental thematic areas:

1. Human rights: Duty of vigilance, discrimination, and vulnerable groups, civil and political rights, labor rights, economic, social, and cultural rights.
2. Employment and working conditions: Employer-employee relations, social protection, health, and safety at work.
3. Environment: Pollution prevention, sustainable resource utilization, biodiversity protection, combating climate change.
4. Fair business practices: Anti-corruption efforts, responsible political engagement, fair competition.
5. Consumer issues: Fair business practices, consumer health and safety protection, after-sales service, access to essential services, education, and awareness.
6. Community and local development: Education and culture, job creation and skill development, wealth and income generation.

2.2 Implementation Process of CSR

Organizations should keep governance principles in mind to facilitate the implementation of effective processes. An initial assessment should be conducted, followed by engaging with various stakeholders to understand the challenges associated with a particular issue. Subsequently, an action plan should be developed, which will be continuously evaluated and adjusted as needed over time. This can be summarized as follows:

- Assessment: Begin by evaluating the current actions in light of CSR guidelines and the expectations of individuals within the organization.
- Stakeholder Identification: Identify and engage with stakeholders to understand their expectations.
- Strategic Alignment: Align the CSR action plan with the organization's strategy, missions, and values.
- Action Plan: Develop a detailed CSR action plan, including its integration within the organization and monitoring through key performance indicators (KPIs). Regular evaluations should be conducted to track progress and adapt practices as necessary.

- Communication: Maintain both internal and external communication regarding the CSR initiative.

Relevant practices may vary between organizations, evolving over time, and cannot be predetermined. The nature of these practices depends on factors such as location, activities, culture, existing practices, and available technologies. Additionally, they will be influenced by changing contexts and the evolving expectations of stakeholders. CSR requires organizations to identify and implement these relevant practices while continuously improving them.

2.3 CSR and RSE

Viewed from a managerial perspective, CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and RSO/RSE constitute "the organization's response mechanisms to societal demands by producing strategies, management devices, change management methods, and methods for monitoring, control, evaluation, and accountability" (according to Capron, Quairel-Lanoizelée, 2010).

CSR and RSO/RSE, one dedicated to organizations and the other to businesses, are pivotal tools in the fight for sustainable development and the construction of a more viable and environmentally respectful society. When used correctly, these tools can lead to the implementation of innovative, ethical, and ecological practices with a real and widespread impact. Within numerous companies and organizations, these measures have the potential for direct and rapid repercussions on lifestyles.

2.4 From HRM to Socially Responsible HRM

Various forms of HRM (Human Resource Management) are evident within organizations, ranging from "personnel administration" to "human relations management" and finally to "human resource management." Each transition represents a new conception of the role of humans within the organization, whether it's utilitarian, humanistic, or strategic. Alongside these transitions, distinct and dominant management modalities emerge, such as accounting and legal, social, technical, and instrumental. Furthermore, the field of HRM operates in a constantly evolving environment (Dietrich and Pigeure, 2016).

Indeed, the primary mission of human resource management is to "provide the organization with the human resources it needs... in line with its developments" (Dietrich and Pigeure, 2016).

Understanding the impact of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) on human resources and their management presents a unique opportunity to positively influence employees' perceptions of the organization (Bauman and Skitka, 2012).

Considering that the HR manager serves as the interface between employees and top management, they are called upon to address the challenges of socially responsible HRM within Moroccan organizations.

In the same vein, socially responsible HRM becomes more of a social issue than just a trend. CSR thus becomes a significant advantage for organizations concerned with ensuring the longevity of their activities, attracting top talent in the market, and developing a high-quality employer brand.

Table 1: Definitions of the HRM - CSR Coupling

<p>- "A shift in management toward instrumental humanism... where concern for humans is now part of the decision criteria used by managers."</p>	<p>Daudé et NoëlLemaître, 2006.</p>
<p>CSR enables: - "to promote employee well-being; to enhance the company's reputation to facilitate workforce attraction and retention; and</p>	<p>Beaupré, 2008.</p>

<p>to foster employee engagement and mobilization to reduce the negative impacts of the company on the environment, but above all, to increase the financial performance of the company."</p> <p>-"The term 'sustainable human resource management' now appears in every good sustainability or corporate social responsibility report."</p>	<p>Poissonnier et Drillon, 2008.</p>
<p>CSR is : "Considered as a pivotal concept capable of initiating a redesign of the HRM system."</p>	<p>Grimand et Vandangeon Derumez, 2010.</p>
<p>The GDRH model consists of: -"Human resource management practices that, while aiming for economic efficiency and ecological aspects, aim to provide consideration for the individual in their bio-psychosocial dimension, equity within the group, a balance between personal and professional life... at the organizational level, and respect for diversity in society." - This HRM (Human Resource Management) is expressed informally and is often driven by the leader or manager themselves."</p>	<p>Borter et al. 2011. Imbs, Ramoarison et Lalao, 2013</p>
<p>Socially responsible HRM is one that: - " while concerned with the development and sustainability of the company in compliance with regulations, adapts its practices to the needs and expectations of each employee. It provides them with greater equity and an optimization of the quality of their job and the work they do, all within a framework of long-term employment." "Transitioning from a management function constrained by legal frameworks to an animating function that provides meaning and is directly linked to its employees, hence the goal of socially responsible HRM." "SDHR is still in its infancy... currently seems to consist primarily of adopting the 'best' HR practices, adapted to a sustainability context."</p>	<p>Barthe et Belabbes, 2016. Barthe et Belabbes, 2016. Gareau, 2016.</p>

Indeed, HR practices become imbued with RSO principles, leading to innovative HR practices such as:

- RSE training programs for executives, communication, and awareness-raising on RSE (Peretti, 2016).
- Development of multimedia tools during working hours (Berger-Douce, 2008).
- Strong integration of the organization into local labor networks (Davister and Comeau, 2008).
- Consultation and dialogue with employees regarding their expectations and potential (Ramboarisata, De Serres, and Gendron, 2008; Poissonnier and Drillon, 2008; Dubruc and Salameh-Bchara, 2013).

RSO provides employees with activities that satisfy their psychological needs in addition to material comfort and social acceptance. RSE could "place people at the heart of concerns to enable sustainable

development of the company (risk management, safety, performance, motivation)" (Bachelard, 2017, p.175). When integrating RSO, HR practices can go beyond formalization and fundamentals, reflecting either the pillars of RSO or innovation (Beaucourt, 2011).

3. CSR and HRM facing Covid-19

The health crisis has had a significant impact on the activities of organizations and their management and operation methods. To cope with this, several practices have been adopted:

3.1 Ensuring the health and safety of employees

In the current health crisis situation, the employer, through the human resources department, must protect and prevent its employees, obligations already prescribed by the code. The role of HR in the face of the COVID-19 health crisis was therefore to inform employees and implement preventive actions:

- Enforce social distancing measures:
 - Limit meetings to the essentials,
 - Restrict gatherings of employees in confined spaces,
 - Cancel non-essential travel,
 - Adjust team organization (rotation, etc.),
 - Ensure that barrier gestures are properly applied.
- Communicate through:
 - Posters,
 - A dedicated newsletter,
 - A reminder in the morning when employees arrive.
- Update the Single Document for Risk Assessment in the Workplace (DUERP) to take into account the risk of COVID-19. Once finalized, the document must be shared with all employees of the organization.
- Evaluate the nature and duration of contacts if employees are in contact with the public to implement preventive measures. The virus is transmitted through close contact. Employees may be anxious, and HR functions must reassure them and find protective measures.

3.2 Supporting the implementation of telecommuting

The government has been clear since the beginning of the crisis: telecommuting must be implemented for all those who can do it to limit the spread of the virus.

In this context, HR departments must consider several things to make the telecommuting system effective:

- Profiles of telecommuters.
- Employees' equipment needs based on their tasks.
- New collaborative tools to facilitate remote work.
- Accessibility to remote servers, instant messaging, email management.
- Remote management methods.
- Implementation of a telecommuting charter.
- Updating the organization's internal regulations.

3.3 Adapting the Forecast Plan

In the face of this crisis, employers will need to adapt the organization's forecast plan to account for the current context. The HR teams and the entire leadership team will need to analyze the overall

activity of the organization as well as the activities of different departments. The goal is to assess the "health" of the organization.

- Impact on activity.
- Impact on finances.

HR will be called upon to take stock of contracts and upcoming deadlines. After this analysis of the organization's activities, HR will update their forecast plan for employment and skills:

- Decisions to be made.
- Implementing partial unemployment for certain professions.
- Freezing hiring and reevaluating skills needs.
- Hosting interns remotely.
- Implementing indicators to support the company's strategic decisions.

In the case of RSO and HR during the Covid-19 period, the continuous changes in the external context compel the organization to seek adaptation. In fact, in the contingent approach of HRM, the HR function rethinks change in the traditional HR practices (Peretti, 2016):

- Recruitment and onboarding.
- Compensation.
- Management and development of jobs and skills.
- Communication and information.
- Quality of work life (health and safety).
- Relations with stakeholders.

All these factors push for the adoption of personalized, agile, mobilizing, sharing, and anticipatory approaches to change within these structures.

Table 2: HR Model during the Integration of CSR and the Covid-19 Crisis

HR - CSR - Covid-19 Model	
Models - HR Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovative HR Practices - Sustainable HR Practices - Responsible HR Practices
	- Modèle innovant
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalize HR policy or innovate better - Healthy and safe work environment - Humanization of work - Concern for the human being - Cultural diversity - Strong integration of the organization into local worker networks - Personalized working conditions - Respect for the individual - Bio-psycho-social health
Promotion evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Merit - Recognition
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and awareness on CSR - Covid-19 - Multimedia tool, remote, during working hours
Departure, dismissal	- Voluntary

Professional relationships	- Consultation and collaboration with employees: expectations and potential
Training	- Programs on training on la CSR – Covid-19
Working time- private	- Flexible working hours, multimedia tools, remotely, during working hours
Participation	- Sharing of responsibilities - Freedom to act and use one's skills - Employee employability - Social construction by and through employees
Dominant actors	- Management, administrators, users - Employees are actors and creators of performance - Flattened hierarchy - Increase in the tasks and responsibilities of employees
Organizational configurations	- Adhocratic - Professional

4. Success factors for an RSO/HR approach in the post-Covid-19 era:

The reflection on societal performance is characterized by some major models that have become reference points in the literature: Carroll's model (1979), Wood's model (1991), and finally Clarkson's model (1995). Carroll (1979) defined Corporate Social Performance (CSP) as the intersection of three dimensions:

- The principles of societal responsibility (economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary),
- Philosophies of responses to societal problems that arise,
- Societal domains within which the company is involved.

In general, the implementation of a comprehensive strategy within the organization that integrates the principles and challenges of sustainable development allows for:

- Identifying and managing potential risks
- Anticipating the future
- Innovating and saving
- Analyzing and enhancing overall performance
- Improving its external image
- Strengthening its internal well-being

For an RSO/HR approach in the post-Covid-19 era, it is important to:

- Integrate RSO (Responsible Social Organization) into the core of HR and overall strategy: RSO provides an opportunity to reflect on the overall strategy and activities. To be effective, the approach should be disseminated throughout all departments and personnel.

- Involve stakeholders throughout the process: Engaging internal and external stakeholders is a crucial prerequisite for defining a relevant RSO/HR/post-Covid-19 strategy, especially for diagnosis and action plan definition.

- Draw inspiration from good HRD (Human Resource Development) practices during the Covid-19 crisis: Many organizations share their experiences with RSO approaches as part of transparency and external communication. This can be an opportunity to find ideas for actions to implement.
- Adopt an iterative approach in risk management: RSO is a continuous improvement process that should be constantly monitored and nurtured. It is wise to regularly question practices and commitments and implement new measures for progress.

Thus, the RSO/HR approach in the post-Covid-19 era will enable:

Becoming more attractive and humane:

- To clients and prospects, by projecting an appealing image, clear values, and a strong identity. Furthermore, RSO principles involve adopting a listening attitude toward clients and prospects, which leads to regular assessment of their satisfaction, addressing their needs with tailored responses, potentially developing new services, and strengthening their loyalty.
- To the workforce, through the retention of employees involved in the approach and those benefiting from it, resulting in reduced turnover, which is often forgotten to be a costly expense beyond recruitment costs.
- To young talents, who are increasingly inclined to join organizations that align with their values and sense of purpose.

Equipping for enhanced performance:

- By taking a fresh look at the organization, fostering innovation at all levels.
- By achieving direct financial savings through greater environmental responsibility (water, coffee, waste, energy, transportation, paper, etc.).
- By establishing a genuine network through the engagement of organizational stakeholders, who become active contributors to its development.

Let's discuss "overall performance" in this context because RSO involves analyzing the interactions and impacts of the organization within its ecosystem, including internal and external stakeholders, economic, social, and environmental impacts, etc. This analysis aims to identify both "qualitative" and "quantitative" factors for improvement and innovation in the service of the organization's "sustainability" and development:

- Better control of risks associated with the business activity.
- Improvement of internal practices in terms of governance, management, and work organization.
- Attracting and retaining new employees, clients, and partners.
- Setting oneself apart from competitors.
- Fostering creativity and innovation.
- Creating value for the community or territory.
- Strengthening intangible assets, thus creating value.

5. Conclusion

In the face of these unprecedented changes and their unique impacts on their activities or supply chains, organizations have adopted a wide range of measures. Many of them have allocated resources, logistical arrangements, skills, and innovative approaches to combat the pandemic. For these organizations, the primary concern was to preserve the health and safety of their personnel and reduce their exposure to the COVID-19 risk in the workplace.

At this point, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be seen as a means to better align human resource practices. Conversely, HR practices can also be considered a powerful vehicle for developing socially responsible practices within Moroccan organizations.

Today, more than ever, in the current context marked by the COVID-19 health crisis, CSR is a real test for Moroccan organizations. The adoption of socially responsible human resources practices based on responsible conduct will undoubtedly help organizations strengthen their resilience and create long-term value:

- Social dialogue, labor relations, and involving stakeholders.
- Employee leave, benefits, and access to healthcare.
- Managing environmental, health, and safety issues.
- Organizational governance related to disaster preparedness, business continuity plans, and emergency plans.

In conclusion, aligning CSR practices with HR practices provides HR with an opportunity to successfully evolve and transform into a socially oriented mission that gives meaning to its contribution towards socially responsible and sustainable management in the face of the unprecedented COVID-19 health crisis.

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