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A hand pointing upwards with four labels: CSR, ADAPTATION, COMPETENCE, and MANAGEMENT. The background features a network of nodes and lines.

CSR

ADAPTATION

COMPETENCE

MANAGEMENT

LEARNING AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION, INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCIES,
GOAL ORIENTATION AND THE LEARNING CLIMATE IN THE CSR ADAPTATION PROCESS**

Learning and Corporate Social Responsibility

A study on the role of the learning organization, individual competencies, goal orientation and the learning climate in the CSR adaptation process

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Chapter 1

General Introduction



General Introduction

People and other organisms depend on natural resources such as fresh water, land, clean air, wood, and food for critical life requirements and wellbeing. It is well documented that today's Western way of living and the spread of capitalism is having a detrimental impact on societies and the natural environment. As such, for several decades now, scientists, practitioners, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs, e.g., Greenpeace) have urged for a reevaluation of the way we conduct business and for a change in lifestyle in order to prevent more damage and preserve a sustainable way of living for future generations. The grand challenges of today's societies are, among others, global warming, loss of biodiversity, and social issues such as health problems caused by malnutrition, and economic losses due to environmental disasters.

These challenges related to Earth's sustainability are regarded as "wicked problems" (WPs). Rittel and Webber (1973) introduced the term WP as opposite to "tamed problems", which are problems that are well-defined, stable, and solvable. They described WPs as highly complex and global problems with several specific characteristics. They are ill-defined, meaning that there is no definite formulation of what the problem is because it is ever-changing and context-dependent (cf. Rittel & Webber, 1973; Peterson, 2009). Moreover, the fact that the causes and effects of sustainability challenges are either unknown or uncertain, and that multiple stakeholders are involved, who often have conflicting norms, value frames, beliefs about the subject, and different ideas about what the "real" problem is or what the "real" cause is, makes the aforementioned sustainability challenges even more "wicked" (Blok, Gremmen, & Wesselink, 2016; Dentoni, Blok, Lans, & Wesselink, 2012). Tackling these challenges will therefore more than ever depend on the ability of societies, companies, and individuals, to find a responsible trade-off between three main categories of interests, namely ecologic, economic, and social interests. This thesis focusses on the efforts conducted within companies to contribute to sustainable development. The term *sustainable development* (SD) is often used to describe the journey one has to undertake to achieve "sustainability" (i.e., how we want to get there). SD can be defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Within a business context SD refers to development and practices that are economically viable, which the environment can bear, and which are socially justifiable (Van Meter, Marshall, & Just, 2012).

As one of the greatest users of natural and human resources, many companies have started doing their part in the journey toward Earth's sustainability and are actively working on translating the idea of SD into reality. They often do so through their *corporate social responsibility* (CSR) programs. CSR refers to as a company's continuing commitment to integrate ecological, social, and economic interests in company's operations and in its interactions with stakeholders. This commitment is usually done on a voluntary basis (Dahlsrud, 2008). Although in many countries Governments are gradually employing new laws and regulations to stimulate companies to contribute to SD, many companies go beyond compliance in their CSR practices.

This thesis aims to provide a better understanding of how the CSR adaptation process in private companies can be supported, which is of particular importance and interest since the economic interests (i.e., business case logic) of private companies often clash with CSR objectives. Consequently, adapting to CSR principles can be quite challenging for these companies. The research in this thesis focusses on CSR committed companies. The management of the CSR adaptation process in these companies can inform companies that are at the start of the SD journey of how best to configure their own CSR adaptation process. The latter is of particular importance as it is generally acknowledged that a thorough adaptation process is needed when aiming to establish CSR practices that are effective in the long run (Holder-Webb, Cohen, Nath, & Wood, 2009; Jamali, 2008). This adaptation process involves more than simply implementing CSR in isolated business practices (e.g., sustainable procurement) or developing a code of conduct. It requires the company to internalize CSR

principles into core business processes, policies, and systems, which can involve a (large-scale) continuous process of adaptation as CSR principles are continuously evolving (Holder-Webb et al., 2009; Jamali, 2008). It also requires companies to continuously develop their organization and competencies to improve or maintain company's effectiveness in dealing with the changing needs of internal and external stakeholders (Moran & Brightman, 2001). Therefore, in this thesis the CSR adaptation process refers to the process of adapting to CSR principles and implementing the organizational changes needed in order to achieve CSR-related objectives.

For many established companies adapting to or internalizing CSR principles remains a significant challenge (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Aguinis & Glavas, 2012) due to factors such as lack of support among employees or top management. Often such efforts result in CSR not being internalized within company's core business processes, policies, and systems, limiting CSR initiatives to individual (short-term) projects, which fails to tackle the big sustainability challenges (Visser, 2014). Many scholars have attempted to identify factors that can facilitate the CSR adaptation process. Most studies focus on institutional and organizational factors (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012) and several change process models have been proposed for that reason (e.g., Marcelino-Sádaba, González-Jaen, & Pérez-Ezcurdia, 2015; Vidal, Kozak, & Hansen, 2015).

Increasingly scholars focus on internal resources that can promote the adaptation process, because the complexity of sustainability challenges makes it imperative for companies to have internal resources that are able to rapidly adapt to changing circumstances. Differences in internal resources may also help explain why some companies are successful in their CSR performance and others are not (Waldman, Siegel, & Javidan, 2006). That is, according to the resource-based view of the firm, internal resources - referring to any attribute, asset, knowledge, or process which could be thought of as a strength or a weakness of a given company - can explain differences in organizational performance between companies, and if valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable those resources may even lead to competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Priem & Butler, 2001). Several internal resources (e.g., sustainability management systems and CEO's ethical and normative values) have been studied in relation to differences in CSR success among companies, often addressing this issue solely from a management perspective (see Aguinis & Glavas, 2012 for a review on CSR literature). However, any large-scale organizational change requires employees to learn new ways of doing their jobs (e.g., Jamali, 2008; Senge, Carstedt, & Porter, 2001). That is, many change processes fail because employees were not sufficiently prepared for the change (Bouckennooghe, 2010; Rafferty, Jimmieson, & Armenakis, 2013). Learning plays a crucial role in preparing employees for the change (cf., Jamali, 2008; Senge et al., 2001). Learning can increase employees' awareness of (1) the sustainability challenges the company faces, (2) the need for the change, (3) and the potential beneficial outcomes that may arise from the change. Furthermore, one also needs to learn in order to develop the right competencies and be able to deal with the intended change. Yet, the role of learning or human resource development (HRD) has remained largely unexplored in the CSR literature (Ardichvili, 2011, 2013; Garavan & McGuire, 2010). As such, this thesis will address the subject of the CSR adaptation process from a HRD perspective by looking at the role and potential of learning-related resources in this process.

Learning in companies occurs at the organizational, the group, and the individual level (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Whilst previous research has addressed the group level (e.g., Nijhof et al., 2005) this thesis will research the organizational and individual level. On the organizational level a company's learning capabilities have emerged as a group of internal resources that may explain differences in CSR performance among companies (e.g., Jamali, 2008; Marcus & Geffen, 1998; Nattrass & Altomare, 2002; Senge et al., 2001). Organization's learning capabilities can be described in terms of several characteristics of a learning organization (LO) including continuous learning opportunities for employees and leadership that stimulates learning (Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Tjepkema et al., 2002). It is suggested in the literature that these LO characteristics can help promote favorable conditions for the CSR adaptation process. As such, this thesis will assess the potential influences of

LO characteristics on the CSR adaptation process. On the individual level, this thesis will address the issue of individual competencies of those professionals who are managing the CSR adaptation process, namely the CSR managers. The effectiveness of CSR managers depends heavily on their individual competencies (cf. Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2000). As such, it is important for these managers to have and maintain the necessary individual competencies to perform their tasks (Willard et al., 2010; Heiskanen, Thidell, & Rodhe, 2016). In this thesis individual competence refers to a professional's integrated performance-oriented ability to achieve specific objectives. This ability is a cohesive combination of knowledge elements, skills, and other elements of being (e.g., attitudes; cf. Sandberg & Pinnington, 2009). Each element can be seen as a specification of a competence and situated in the context in which performance must be successful (Mulder, 2014).

This thesis aims to provide CSR managers with a competence framework and insights into how these competencies can be developed. This competence framework may guide CSR managers' personal reflection process. It can especially aid those CSR managers in companies that are in the earlier stages of the CSR adaptation process; it helps them understand their role in the CSR adaptation process, reflect on the competencies they have and perhaps need to develop, and helps them pinpoint the job roles (including subsequent competencies) that might aid the advancement of the CSR adaptation process. Furthermore, insights into which individual competencies should be developed and which learning activities could be used for this purpose will help CSR managers and their employers determine the appropriate path for competence development.

The following central research question guided the studies described in this thesis:

Which internal resources related to learning at the organizational and individual level contribute to the CSR adaptation process in private companies?

To answer the central research question, the following sub-research questions will be answered in this thesis:

- RQ1: To what extent can learning organization characteristics enhance corporate social responsibility adaptation?
- RQ2: Which individual competencies support the effective integration of CSR principles within private companies?
- RQ3: Which of the eight managerial roles described in the competing values framework of Quinn (1988) is relevant in the context of the CSR adaptation process?
- RQ4: Which individual competencies do CSR managers need in each role in order to effectively perform that role?
- RQ5: Which learning activities enable CSR professionals to develop their competencies?

Before elaborating on the individual studies conducted to answer the central and sub research question, the following section will discuss the concept of CSR from a historical perspective in order to show how sustainability gradually became a factor today's business leaders need to account for. Moreover, this historical perspective also provides a background of the CSR literature offering readers insights into the scientific context for which this thesis aims to provide a contribution. Next, a description of the CSR adaptation process is given. These sections lead to the formulation of the sub research questions and the methods employed in each study. Finally, the outline of the thesis is presented.

Corporate Social Responsibility: A Historical Perspective

According to Archie B. Carroll, a CSR scholar and influential contributor to the discussion on the concept of CSR, the concept of CSR for the most part started to take its current form in the 1950s (Carroll, 2009). Carroll detailed the development of the concept in several scientific contributions (e.g., Carroll, 1999; 2009; Carroll & Shabana, 2010), which, together with other publications (e.g., Lee, 2008; Montiel, 2008), are used to present a brief historical overview on the concept of CSR.

The 1950s can be described as a decade in which there was much talk about CSR (back then referred to as social responsibility, as the notion of “corporate” did not yet exist). Business leaders were familiarizing themselves with the notion and talk of social responsibility. Companies’ CSR practices in this period mainly concentrated on philanthropy in the form of donating to charities and local beneficiary organization. Thus, CSR practices were ad hoc and dependent on executive’s social consciousness and not the company itself (Carroll, 1999; 2009).

The 1960s can be characterized by the increased scientific interest in conceptualizing CSR (Lee, 2008; Carroll, 2009). Scholars such as Keith Davis and William C. Frederick started linking CSR to managerial decision making. Others like Milton Friedman (1962) criticized the whole notion of CSR, perceiving it as a development that went against the foundation of a free society and which unfairly burdened the shareholders. Friedman stated that the only responsibility companies should have toward the society is to ensure economic prosperity. He further argued that business leaders were too self-interested to effectively deal with sustainability challenges, and that, therefore, politician and civil society should deal with the social problems. Later on, scholars like Clarence C. Walton emphasized the importance of keeping CSR voluntary as opposed to coercing companies to be socially responsible because CSR may involve interventions that may not benefit the company financially. Companies’ CSR practices involved topics such as philanthropy, working conditions, and stakeholder relations. These practices show that engaging in CSR became less of an ad hoc-practice and more reoccurring; that companies’ sustainability challenges involved a broader range of stakeholders as compared to the 1950s as they now included employees and a broader range of philanthropy-recipients; and that CSR was slowly becoming more “managed” within companies (Lee, 2008).

The 1970s can be described as a decade where new concepts such as social responsiveness and corporate social performance were introduced or further explored in order to link CSR to strategic management and to provide a framework for dealing with CSR (Carroll, 1999; 2009; Valor, 2005). Sethi (1975) described these concepts in terms of three “dimensions of corporate social performance”, which he termed *social obligation* (company’s response to external pressures such as legal requirements), *social responsibility* (goes beyond legal obligations, in which company’s should align their practices with prevailing social norms and values), and *social responsiveness* (where company’ should adapt their behavior to social needs taking in an anticipatory perspective). This “managerial approach to CSR” was also visible in practice, where companies utilized traditional management function to tackle sustainability challenges (Carroll, 1977; Lee, 2008). CSR became more regulated, indicating a more public policy approach where company’s CSR practices were matched to public demands; company’s CSR efforts were no longer solely aimed at internal stakeholders and philanthropy-recipients but was gradually perceived in light of the responsibility toward the entire society as social movements became increasingly organized (e.g., Greenpeace). CSR practices focused on themes such as minority hiring, education, and ecology (Carroll, 2009).

The 1980s can be characterized by the focus on research on the outcomes of CSR. Although there was still discussion on how CSR should be conceptualized, scholars started studying other concepts such as business ethics, social responsiveness,

and corporate social performance (Lee, 2008; Carroll, 1999; 2009). They introduced new themes and theories in order to make the concept more concrete for companies. A particularly influential theory is the “stakeholder theory”, which was introduced by R. Edward Freeman (1984). The theory describes the relation between the company and actors in and outside the company who have a stake or claim on the company (i.e., stakeholder), such as employees, natural environment represented by NGOs, customers, shareholders, and the government. Freeman suggested that companies that manage to deal effectively with the needs of their main stakeholders will survive longer and perform better than those who are not able to do so. The stakeholder theory is now one of the most applied theories in CSR research (Lee, 2008; Montiel, 2008). The link between CSR and company’s financial performance also gained more scientific attention in the 1980s. Many quantitative studies have been conducted on this matter these past several decades. Yet, research is still inconclusive about the relationship; hence the link between CSR and financial performance remains a topic of heated debate (Montiel, 2008). Furthermore, it is in this period that CSR was introduced by Thomas Jones as a *process* and not a set of outcomes, advocating the importance of looking at ways to integrate CSR principles in business processes in order to realize favorable CSR outcomes (Carroll, 1999; 2009). With respect to companies’ CSR practices in the 1980s, activities centered on topics such as questionable practices of multinationals, decline in quality of urban life, employee health and safety, quality of work life, and environmental pollution.

The 1990s can be described as a decade in which the concept of CSR served as a foundation to further introduce new but related concepts (e.g., sustainability). What became apparent by the different concepts that were introduced was that CSR became explicitly linked to complex global sustainability challenges, linking companies’ practices to WP such as “sustainability” or SD. However, because of the close relationship with CSR, often these new concepts are used interchangeably in literature and in practice (Carroll, 2009). CSR practices in this period included philanthropy, hiring managers to manage specific themes such as public affairs and CSR, social investment, managing company’s reputation, and sustainability.

The 2000s up to 2015 can be characterized by a splintering of research focus on CSR-related concepts such as “corporate sustainability”, in which the idea of sustainability as a destination and sustainable development as the journey is increasingly translated to business practices (Visser, 2014). Another recurrent concept is “corporate citizenship (CC)”, which position companies as entities that should have status equivalent to a person; companies have rights and duties. Therefore they can be held accountable for broader social responsibilities (Matten, Crane, & Chapple, 2003). Whereas with CC scholars seem to focus on organizations’ general role in society, more recently others stressed the specific political role of organizations and CSR, introducing the term “political CSR”. Political CSR refers to practices where CSR influences politics intended or unintended, or vice versa (Frynas & Stephens, 2015). With this term, scholars point to the various ways CSR can have political impact. For example, organizations have the political role of providing community services (e.g., education and health care), they can excise political pressures by affecting regulations (e.g., lobbying against ban on smoking and alcohol), and can fill voids that are not covered by laws and regulations (Scherer & Pallazzo, 2011). CSR can be considered an umbrella term that included these new concepts.

With respect to the concept of CSR in this period, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 2002) introduced a definition for CSR which had a great impact as it was widely adopted both in the scientific world and practice. They defined CSR as “corporate’s continuing commitment to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of their workforce as well as the local community and society at large” (WBCSD, 2002). Yet, according to Dahlsrud (2008) one of today’s most utilized definitions of CSR is “a business approach to sustainable development whereby firms voluntarily integrate environmental, social, and economical challenges

in their business strategies and in their interactions with stakeholders” (Dahlsrud 2008). These definitions again emphasize the importance of a stakeholder perspective and of engaging stakeholders to tackle sustainability challenges.

Despite the growing popularity and acceptance of the concept of CSR, the concept remains controversial. For example, some still refer to Friedman’s (1962) concerns (see Carroll & Shabana, 2010 for a review), stating that if the free market cannot solve social problems, or if one really wants to change things, government should deal with social issues through laws and regulations, again emphasizing that companies are not goodhearted enough to deal with societal problems as corporate scandals have proved throughout the years (e.g., Volkswagen, which was caught cheating diesel emissions tests in the US). Others argue that the efforts to make profit motives more ethical or more social could inadvertently undermine the market system or weaken the role of firms as economic actors by reducing its profitability and, therefore, also the public good (e.g., Pinkston & Carroll, 1996; Husted & de Jesus Salazar, 2006). Nonetheless, over the years an increasing number of companies have started including CSR objectives in their strategy and core businesses (Esrock and Leichty’s, 1998; Lee, 2008; Taneja, Taneja, & Gupta, 2011).

When looking at the empirical researches on CSR between 2000 and 2015, scholars seem to focus on linking CSR with a broad range of mainly institutional and organizational-level antecedents and outcomes (Carroll, 2009; see Aguinis & Glavas, 2012 for an extensive review), in which scholars often attempt to demonstrate potential beneficial effects of engaging in CSR practices (Dobers, 2009). With respect to the outcome of CSR, CSR has been shown to enhance corporate legitimacy (Turban & Greening, 1996), increase valuable organizational capabilities such as more expertise as it attracts talented employees to the firms through attractive benefits like gym membership (Nguyen & Slater, 2010; Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998). Moreover, being socially responsible could also improve company’s reputation (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Pava, 2008), enhance employee’s commitment, and improve corporate (financial) performance (Ali, Rehman, Ali, Yousaf, & Zia, 2010; Hansen, Dunford, Boss, Boss, & Angermeier, 2011; Joyner & Payne, 2002; Waddock & Graves, 1997), although as mentioned earlier research findings are not conclusive in the latter relation (cf. Barnett & Salomon, 2006; Makni Claude & Francois, 2009; McWilliams & Donald, 2000). Nevertheless, the majority of the studies indicate a positive association between CSR and company’s financial performance, suggesting that CSR could enhance corporate financial gains as well (Lee, 2008; also see Van Beurden & Gössling, 2008 for a review). With respect to the antecedents of CSR, important factors are: institutional and stakeholder pressure, regulations and standards, rankings and indices, firm’s values, resource dependencies, employees’ perception and commitment to CSR and employees’ psychological and developmental needs (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Despite numerous potential antecedents of effective CSR, the extent to which CSR is integrated within the company, and therefore company’s internal value system, is generally acknowledged as *the* crucial success factor. Hence, many recent studies are conducted on different kinds of management and methods that can stimulate the CSR adaptation process (Dobers, 2009).

The 2000s are also characterized by an increased call from the practice for the business case behind CSR, and best practices in CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010), and a scientific call for more research on micro-level influences on CSR (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Moreover, as sustainability challenges became increasingly complex or “wicked”, companies started partnering with stakeholders to tackle national and global (i.e., macro-level) sustainability challenges. Consequently, scholars started researching practices such as multi stakeholder alliances and cross sector partnerships (e.g., Blok, 2014).

In sum, initially the concept of CSR referred to philanthropy. As the public became more interested in how companies conducted their businesses more and more social and environmental problems were attributed to business practices, which triggered a discussion in science and in practice about the social responsibility of companies. Several decades were spent on research which attempted to determine the scope and nature of CSR. After this initial focus on conceptualizing CSR, researchers started focusing on the outcomes of CSR in an attempt to convince companies to engage in CSR, and finally on

antecedents of CSR to provide companies with insights in how to stimulate the CSR adaptation process and CSR performance. With respect to CSR practices, CSR started out as a practice led by executive personal social consciousness aimed at local challenges. As the public became more critical, companies started to engage in CSR, rather than only the executives. Whereas, these efforts were initially focused on internal stakeholders, public demands forced companies to have a broader outlook on CSR, which involved “giving back” to the environment and the society. Consequently, the problems addressed by their CSR efforts increased in complexity and now covers global challenges and even future challenges. It became clear that no party could effectively deal with these challenges alone; a systematic process of integrating CSR principles and multi stakeholder alliances is needed in order to tackle these challenges.

The CSR Adaptation Process

With the CSR adaptation process being important for effective sustainable business practice, it becomes important to understand which internal resources can promote the adaptation process and as such improve companies’ CSR practices (Waldman et al., 2006). Such adaptations require changes within the company. Therefore the management of the CSR adaptation process can be viewed as a form of change management, which refers to the process of continuously modifying or transforming company’s strategy, structure, and capabilities in order to improve or maintain company’s effectiveness in dealing with the needs of internal and external stakeholders (Hayes, 2007; Moran & Brightman, 2001). Though the CSR adaptation process has some distinctive features, which set it apart from many other organizational changes, it is heavily normative and ethically-oriented, meaning that profit considerations are not the only drivers of the change concerned and that it involves wicked problems, which require companies to operate as open systems (e.g., Jamali, 2008; Senge et al., 2001) and form partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders.

In general, organizational changes differ in type and can be categorized by their rate of occurrence (discontinuous change vs. incremental change vs. continuous change), by how they came about (planned vs. emergent vs. contingency vs. choice), and by the scale of the change (fine-tuning vs. incremental adjustment vs. modular transformation vs. corporate transformation; see Table 1.1. for the different types of changes; Todem, 2005). CSR may involve different types of changes as will be explained in the next paragraph.

A company’s value system drives its ambition level and strategy with respect to CSR, which determines to a large extent the type of changes needed and how much time and effort companies are willing to spend on the CSR adaptation process (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010; Schoemaker, Nijhof, & Jonker, 2006; Van Marrewijk and Werre, 2003; Visser, 2014). Van Marrewijk and Werre (2003) identified six ambition levels based on different types of value systems (or stages): (1) pre-CSR, (2) compliance-driven CSR, (3) profit-driven CSR, (4) caring CSR, (5) synergic CSR, and (6) Holistic CSR. Within *the Pre-CSR* ambition level,

Table 1.1. Different Ways of Characterizing Organizational Change (Todem, 2005)

Categories	Description
Categorized by rate of occurrence	
1. Discontinuous change	Rapid shifts in companies' strategy, structure and/or culture or single abrupt shifts from the past
2. Incremental change	Shifts from past status quo are successive, limited (to departments) and negotiated
3. Continuous change	Organizational-wide shifts in status quo, including the ability to adapt to de needs of external and internal demands.
Categorized by how they came about	
1. Planned change	shifts of status quo are planned and is top-down driven
2. Emergent change	Change is driven from the bottom up. Change is described as continuous, non-linear and open-ended process of adapting to changing conditions.
3. Contingency change	Company's performance is dependent of situational variables it faces. These situational variables drive the change. Based on these variables there is one best way for each company to act. Changes need to be made accordingly.
4. Choice	Companies do not necessarily need to adapt to these situational variables. They can choose to influence these variables by maintaining or promoting a certain way of management.
Categorized by the scale of the change	
1. Fine-tuning	An ongoing process to align company's strategy, process, people, and structure. It usually involves only part of the company.
2. Incremental adjustment	Non-radical modifications to company's strategies and processes.
3. Modular transformation	Major modifications that involves multiple departments.
4. Corporate transformation	Radical organizational-wide changes that affect a company's strategies, structure, and culture.

companies are driven by regulations and external reinforcement is needed for them to engage in CSR practices. There is no real internal ambition with regards to CSR. Within *the compliance-driven CSR* ambition level, there is some sense of moral duty, which in this context is defined by what is appropriate behavior according to laws and regulations; one aims to comply with these laws. These companies might incidentally engage in practices that go beyond compliance, such as donating to charities.

Within *the profit-driven CSR* ambition level, companies are motivated because of a business case; they engage in CSR practices that are financially or otherwise profitable (e.g., improved reputation). Within *the caring CSR* ambition level, companies' motivations for CSR go beyond compliance and profit considerations, and so are their CSR practices. They view economic, social, and ecological objectives as important in themselves. Within *the synergistic CSR* ambition level, companies aim to find a functional balance between their economic, social, and ecological performance. CSR practices are determined in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, utilizing a win-win approach. CSR is important in itself and is viewed as the unavoidable path toward prosperity. Finally, within *the holistic CSR* ambition level, companies engage in CSR practices as they perceive themselves as part of a larger system in which all beings and phenomena are mutually interdependent and therefore responsible for each other. Van Marrewijk and Werre (2003) state that there is no one ideal value system, but rather companies should ensure that their value system fits the context they are in; the value system should allow them to adequately deal with the sustainability challenges they face.

Whilst Van Marrewijk and Werre (2003) do not explicitly propose a particular stage that would be adequate for the sustainability challenges companies face to date, Visser (2014; cf. Schoemaker et al., 2006) advocates that actions at the highest ambition level are needed in order to transform CSR practices from "doing things better and as such minimizing the damages of businesses", into "doing the right things and adding value to the society and maintaining or improving the ecosystem's sustainability" (Visser, 2014).

Visser goes on describing five prevailing organizational contexts – that closely resemble the ambition levels as described by Van Marrewijk and Werre (2003) - which he relates to typical manifestations of (or maturity stages in) CSR.

These five partially overlapping stages are: (1) *Defensive CSR*, in which companies engage in CSR practices as long as shareholders value is protected as a results of these practices. Practices include incremental adjustments or fine-tuning and result in short-term interventions (e.g., pollution controls and volunteering programs) that avoid fines and fend off regulations (cf. Pre-CSR and compliance-driven CSR; Van Marrewijk & Were, 2003). With this approach one's reasoning is that forces within the market will ensure that companies act according to what is best for the society. Visser argues that although a certain amount of selfishness is natural, the global financial crisis of 2007 (and earlier pops of "greed bubbles" [Visser, 2010, p. 8]) have proven that this mindset is flawed and harmful; (2) *Charitable CSR*, in which companies engage in CSR to "give back to the society" after they have achieved a lot of wealth or in other words, after they have taken something away from the society (cf. compliance-driven CSR; Van Marrewijk & Were, 2003). Thus, using this approach one ignores the unsustainable path taken to achieve the wealth or success. Here CSR practices are mainly aimed at philanthropy and changes within the company associated with this approach are incremental and non-radical; (3) *Promotional CSR*, in which companies engage in CSR to improve their brand, reputation, or consumers' trust (cf. profit-driven CSR; Van Marrewijk & Were, 2003). This way of addressing CSR can and have led to a gap between marketing and what the company is actually doing (so-called "greenwashing") and do not require radical transformational changes; (4) *Strategic CSR*, in which companies relate CSR interventions to their core business by for example implementing code of conducts and CSR management systems (cf. Caring CSR an Synergistic CSR; Van Marrewijk & Were, 2003). In this context one aims to address the material impact of the company and ensure a continuous improvement through a management system approach. Changes within the company are planned and can be long-term, however, according to Visser (2014), such an approach to CSR seldom leads to changes in organizational culture, strategy, or core business, but rather leads to doing the same things in a more sustainable way; (5) In contrast, with a *transformative CSR approach*, companies go beyond doing things better by doing the right things. Within this approach companies want to tackle the root causes of current sustainability challenges. This is often done through innovative business models, rigorous changes in core business processes, and actively working toward changes on a system-level (e.g., sector-level or [in] national level). One's aim is to not only reach zero negative impact, but also to end with a "net-positive balance" (Visser, 2014, p.17; cf. Holistic CSR, Van Marrewijk & Werre, 2003). This approach requires a planned corporate transformation and is, according to Visser (2014), needed to tackle sustainability challenges on a macro-level, whilst the other approaches are focused on local sustainability challenges.

In short, dealing with the bigger CSR challenges is extremely complex and difficult. Nevertheless, companies can contribute to SD, and by working together with other important stakeholders, they can addresses the (bigger) CSR challenges. In order to effectively deal with these CSR challenge, however, CSR principles should be thoroughly integrated within the company. This involves more than implementing CSR in isolated business processes (e.g., sustainable procurement) or implementing a code of conduct (Mamic, 2005); it requires an ambitious CSR strategy, long-term commitment, and planned changes in the company's organization, encompassing a variety of activities.

The next paragraphs provides an outline of the research questions and studies that will be conducted in order to provide insights into which internal resources related to learning may advance the CSR adaptation process in private companies.

Research Questions and Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of two sections describing several empirical studies that will be conducted to answer the central research questions: *Which internal resources related to learning at the organizational and individual level contribute to the CSR adaptation process in private companies?*

The first section focuses on learning at the organizational level in relation to the CSR adaptation process. The second section focuses on the micro-level influences on the CSR adaptation process, in which the first studies centers on the identification and contextualization of individual CSR-related competencies and the last study on measuring and developing the CSR-related competencies. Figure 1.1 provides the structure of the studies and chapters included in this thesis.

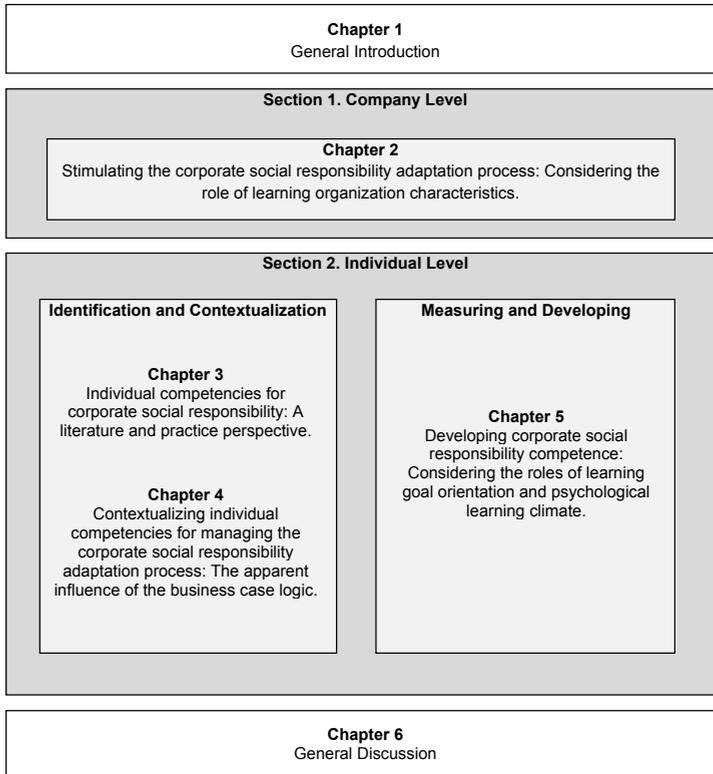


Figure 1.1. Structure of the Thesis.

Organizational Learning Characteristics and the CSR Adaptation Process

As mentioned earlier, adapting to new ways of working requires employees to learn and be receptive to the change. As such, many scholars have suggested that companies should promote certain learning organization (LO) characteristics (e.g., having facilities for employees' continuous development) in order to stimulate employees' receptiveness for CSR principles and as such improve CSR adaptation (e.g., Jamali, 2008; Marcus & Geffen, 1998; Nattress & Altomare, 2002; Senge et al., 2001). Moreover, LOs operate as open systems, interacting with and exchanging feedback with their communities. This is essential when one is dealing with changing stakeholder expectations and when one needs to form multi-stakeholder alliances in order to tackle complex problems, such as with CSR (e.g., Jamali, 2008; Senge et al., 2001).

Several conceptual articles have been published regarding the putative relationships between these LO characteristics and favorable conditions for the CSR adaptation process (e.g., employees readiness for change and support

for CSR). However, little empirical research is available to support these suggestions (Molnar & Mulvihill, 2002). More importantly, the suggested influence of LO characteristics on the CSR adaptation process have not yet been tested empirically among a large number of companies. In addition, the path through which certain LO characteristics may influence the CSR adaptation process remains unclear. Understanding these matters may provide companies with information about how they can improve CSR adaptation in their companies. Hence, a survey study will be conducted among a large group of Dutch companies to test the relationship between LO characteristics on the one hand and favorable conditions for the CSR adaptation process on the other hand. The following research question guided this study:

RQ1: *To what extent can learning organization characteristics enhance corporate social responsibility adaptation?* (See Chapter 2).

Individual Competencies and the CSR Adaptation Process

Besides influences of resources at organizational level, the CSR adaptation process will also likely be affected by resources on the individual level, as resources and practices on the organizational level are based on human activities, and therefore individual competencies; eventually individuals within the company are the ones who actually carry out CSR initiatives, conduct strategic deliberations, make decisions, and manage the adaptation process. Yet, only 4% of the CSR-literature focuses on micro-level influences on the CSR adaptation process and on company's CSR performance (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Those researches that do study micro-level influences on the CSR adaptation process predominantly study the psychological mechanisms behind CSR work behavior (Rupp & Mallory, 2015), addressing issues such as employee drivers for and commitment to CSR (Collier & Esteban, 2007) or focus on the role and influences of the top management and CEOs (Waldman et al., 2006). Indeed, the leadership and support of these top managers is important as they are the ones that set the company's strategic objectives. However, because many employees in large companies are not in direct contact with the top management or CEO, it is important to study leadership and the management of the adaptation process on different levels within companies (Waldman et al., 2006).

This thesis contributes to the literature on individual level influences on the CSR adaptation process by focusing on the role and competencies of CSR managers, which is the main focus of the second part of this PhD research. The concept of competence can be conceptualized in different ways. One can distinguish three dominant conceptualizations (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). With the *behavioral approach* (Neumann, 1979), one focuses on atomized behaviors and knowledge elements required to perform specific tasks. With the *generic approach* (Eraut, 1994) one focuses on underlying personal characteristics (e.g., knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or personal attributes) that separate successful performers from less successful performers and that are applicable in multiple contexts. Nowadays, most researchers use a more *comprehensive approach* - that takes the complexity of the practice into account without resulting in fragmented behavior requirements - in order to identify competencies and develop a competence framework (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005; Mulder, 2017). Here "a professional is competent when he/she acts responsibly and effectively according to given standards of performance." (Mulder, 2014, p.111). Thus, in the comprehensive approach, one focuses on the work, on the professional, and on contextualizing the competencies. This thesis applies this latter approach to the concept of competence.

With respect to individual level influences on the CSR adaptation process, and CSR managers' individual competencies in particular, several scholars have started exploring the different competencies (e.g., systems thinking and foresight competencies) professionals need in order to effectively deal with sustainability challenges. However, there are several research gaps that remain to be explored in order to get a better understanding of what these individual CSR-related competencies entail and how they can be developed. *First*, so far, studies on individual competencies for CSR are often conceptual (e.g., Dentoni et al., 2012) in nature, and oriented toward educational programs (e.g., De Haan 2006; Rieckmann

2012; Wiek, Withycombe, Redman, & Mills, 2011a; Wiek, Withycombe, & Redman, 2011b). Competencies learned in school, however, are often not sufficient to be successful in practice, where CSR managers are working in a highly dynamic context and where they need to deal with organizational politics and well-established habits and practices (Stenström, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to explore which individual competencies CSR managers need to integrate CSR principles within a business context. In order to identify important individual competencies for CSR managers a comprehensive literature review will be conducted in the second study. Moreover, interviews will be held with CSR managers to account for the business context in which these managers operate. The following research question was formulated for the second study:

RQ2: *Which individual competencies support the effective integration of CSR principles within private companies?* (See Chapter 3).

Second, when considering which individual competencies are needed by CSR managers, it is important to take into account contextual influences that may shape our understanding and evaluation of effective work behavior (Griffin, 2007; Johns, 2006; Robert & Fulop, 2014; Whetten, 2009). In its broadest definition, these so-called context effects refer to “the set of factors surrounding a phenomenon that exert some direct or indirect influence on it” (Whetten, 2009, p. 31). Context effects may refer to the CSR profession as a whole (i.e., the abstract omnibus-level; cf. Johns, 2006) or to influences at a more specific level, the discrete-level, such as one’s job roles and tasks. Studies on individual CSR-related competencies often limit the contextualization of the competencies to the omnibus-level, describing only how the competencies should be interpreted within the CSR profession. However, according to Johns (2006), the omnibus-level factors only influence an employee’s work behavior through discrete-level factors. In other words, competencies contextualized at the level of professions can only guide actual work behavior when they are interpreted within—or when they account for—discrete-level factors (e.g., contextualized within specific job roles). Discrete-level of analysis has remained largely unexplored in the CSR literature. In order to explore CSR managers’ job roles in the CSR adaptation process and assess which competencies are needed within each job role, interviews will be held with CSR managers accompanied by a brief survey study. The objective of this third study is to provide the initial steps for developing a competence framework for CSR managers. The following research questions guided the third study:

RQ3: *Which of the eight managerial roles described in the CVF are relevant in the context of the CSR adaptation process?*

RQ4: *Which individual competencies do CSR managers need in each role in order to effectively perform that role?* (See Chapter 4).

Finally, knowing which CSR-related competencies CSR managers need, it is important to study *how* these competencies can be developed. Such research, centering on CSR managers’ competence development, has gained little scientific attention and could provide valuable insights for determining the appropriate path for competence development. Competence development at work, or work-related learning, is defined as employees’ participation in formal and informal learning activities, through which they develop and/or enhance their competencies and which changes their current and future achievements and performance (Kyndt & Baert, 2013).

A specific focus on how CSR managers develop their competencies at work is important; learning at work is one of the most common forms of a professional’s competence development (Ellinger, 2005), and different jobs and hierarchical positions offer different opportunities to develop one’s competencies (e.g., Bryson, Pajo, Ward, & Mallon, 2006). The specific position of CSR managers in companies, as described earlier, might therefore influence the way these managers develop their competencies. Furthermore, given that sustainability challenges are extremely complex and that making strategic decisions based on these complexities can be challenging (Dentoni et al., 2012), the actual workplace is

often the only place where CSR professionals can develop their competencies; such decisions require reflection and deliberation with other decision-makers and can never become routine, given the ever-changing nature of sustainability challenges. Therefore, the competencies that CSR managers require in their jobs cannot be learned adequately from textbooks and should be developed at the workplace, making it particularly important to explore how these professionals can develop their competencies at work.

In order to provide CSR managers and their employers with knowledge about how the identified CSR-related competencies can be developed, a survey study will be conducted among CSR managers working in private companies in the Netherlands. The following research question was formulated for this fourth and final study:

RQ5: *Which learning activities enable CSR professionals to develop their competencies?* (See Chapter 5).

Chapter 5 outlines this study and elaborates on the importance of specific learning activities (e.g., learning from others outside of the company) and learning goal orientation (i.e., individuals' behavior and motivation to improve their competencies through active search and engagement in learning activities; Dweck & Legett, 1988; VandeWalle, Cron, & Slocum, 2001).

To conclude, in Chapter 6 the overall results of the different studies in relation to the central research questions are discussed. The implications of the research findings for CSR managers and their employers are further discussed in this chapter, followed by an outline of directions for further research on this topic.

Chapter 2

Stimulating the Corporate Social Responsibility Adaptation Process: Considering the Role of Learning Organization Characteristics¹.

Because corporate social responsibility (CSR) is potentially beneficial for both companies and their stakeholders, understanding which internal factors can improve a company's CSR practices becomes increasingly important. Scholars have hypothesized that facilitating learning organization (LO) characteristics may improve the CSR adaptation process, as these characteristics enable and stimulate the company and its members to implement and embrace changes. Yet, there is limited empirical evidence for this suggestion. In this study, we empirically assessed the relationships between LO characteristics and the CSR adaptation process among various Dutch companies. Each company's principal CSR professional (n = 280) completed an online survey, and bootstrap mediation analyses were performed to test several hypotheses. We found that specific LO characteristics (e.g., facilitating continuous learning) can benefit the CSR adaptation process, as they positively influence governance facilitators (e.g., leadership for learning). As such, our study provides much-needed empirical support for the often presumed associations between LO characteristics and the CSR adaptation process, including insights into the process by which certain LO characteristics can influence the adaptation process. Based on the results, we discuss possible avenues for further research.

2

¹ This chapter was submitted as: Osagie, E. R., Blok, V., Wesselink, R., & Mulder, M. (submitted). Stimulating the Corporate Social Responsibility Adaptation Process: Considering the Role of Learning Organization Characteristic.

2

Introduction

Nowadays, companies are expected to account for all aspects of their performance. In addition to accounting for their financial results, companies must also account for their social and ecological performance (Elkington, 1997). Companies often address these latter two issues through internal corporate social responsibility (CRS) programs. CSR is defined as a company's continuing commitment to integrate ecological, social, and economic interests in company's operations and in its interactions with stakeholders. This commitment is usually done on a voluntary basis (Dahlsrud, 2008).

With the growing importance of sustainable business practice, it becomes increasingly imperative to understand which internal factors can stimulate a company's CSR performance (Waldman, Siegel, & Javidan, 2006). In this respect, one particularly significant factor is the thorough integration of CSR principles into the company's core business processes, as this will ensure that continuous attention is paid to CSR (for example, see Bertels, Papania, & Papania, 2010; Jamali, 2008). The CSR adaptation process refers to the process of adapting and implementing the organizational changes needed in order to achieve CSR-related objectives (Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2009). For many established companies, however, the integration of CSR principles remains a significant challenge (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Consequently, many scholars have attempted to identify factors that can facilitate the adaptation process, and several CSR change models have been proposed (e.g., Marcelino-Sádaba, González-Jaen, & Pérez-Ezcurdia, 2015; Vidal, Kozak, & Hansen, 2015). Other scholars have stressed the importance of enhancing employees' commitment to CSR in order to stimulate employees' CSR behavior (Collier & Esteban, 2007).

Recently, there has been renewed interest in learning organization (LO) characteristics as a group of internal resources that could explain the differences between companies with respect to successful CSR performance (e.g., Jamali, 2008; Marcus & Geffen, 1998; Nattress & Altomare, 2002; Senge, Carstedt, & Porter, 2001). A company with LO characteristics is a company that has adaptive capabilities and the capacity to create an improved future for itself (Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Senge, 1990). LO scholars suggest that having LO characteristics is essential for dealing with organizational change, particularly in cases of major reforms as is the case in the CSR adaptation process. For example, Senge et al. (2001) describe the importance of developing core learning capabilities (i.e., building shared vision, developing and testing mental models, and developing systems thinking) for implementing CSR programs. Similarly, Baumgartner & Winter (2014), Nijhof et al. (2005), Osagie, Wesselink, Blok, Lans, and Mulder (2016), and Wesselink, Blok, Van Leur, and Lans. (2014) stress the importance of developing individual and collective competencies in order to stimulate the adaptation process. Moreover, Jamali (2006) conceptually links LO characteristics to specific aspects of a company's CSR performance. Jamali concludes that companies with LO characteristics are expected to adapt to CSR principles more easily, thereby improving their CSR performance because they are open to new ideas and experimentation; moreover, they can tolerate errors better than organizations that do not utilize LO characteristics (Jamali, 2006).

Several conceptual articles have been published regarding the putative associations between LO characteristics and conditions that favor the CSR adaptation process; however, little empirical research is available to support these associations (Molnar & Mulvihill, 2002). More importantly, these associations have not been tested empirically in a large number of companies. In addition, it remains unclear *how* specific LO characteristics can influence CSR adaptation. Nevertheless, case studies, document analyses, and interviews with both industry representatives and experts demonstrate that many companies currently use LO characteristics for addressing CSR challenges (Marcus & Geffen, 1998; Molnar & Mulvihill, 2002). Unlike previous research, our dataset enables us to test whether these proposed associations truly exist. Hence, the purpose of our study was to empirically test the associations between LO characteristics and CSR adaptation in a large sample of companies.

This article is structured as follows. First, we discuss what we perceive to be LO characteristics, we discuss how these characteristics might be associated with CSR adaptation, and we introduce our hypotheses. Second, we outline the methods used in our study. Third, we present our findings, and finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical relevance of our results.

Theoretical Framework

CSR Adaptation

To both achieve effective long-term CSR performance and benefit from sustainable business practices, implementing CSR in isolated business processes (e.g., sustainable procurement) or implementing a code of conduct (Mamic, 2005) is usually not sufficient. Effective CSR requires a long-term commitment and planned changes in the company's organization, encompassing a variety of activities. Numerous CSR change models are available in the literature and several essential steps in the change process can be depicted based on the activities described in these models. These are: (1) Sufficient support for CSR within the company is essential (Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2009), because many initiatives for change fail due to a lack of support among the employees (Bouckennooghe, 2010). (2) A thorough integration of CSR principles involves an organization-wide change and can have implications for all employees (Lozano, 2008), indicating that all departments should be involved in the process. (3) A company's values and vision guide its managers' decisions and its employees' work behavior; therefore it is important to ensure that CSR is part of the company's vision, mission, strategy, and values (Maon et al., 2009; Werre, 2003). (4) These values and visions should be translated into clear CSR objectives and integrated in a CSR program. In addition to showing top management's commitment and support for CSR, these objectives and CSR program also provides employees with a clear direction in which to work (Maon et al., 2009). (5) A company's CSR program should be a balanced compromise between the needs of the company and the needs of the company's primary stakeholders. Therefore, companies should involve their stakeholders in the development of the program (Maignan, Ferrell, & Ferrell, 2005; Maon et al., 2009). (6) These stakeholders dialogues should be held on a regular and continuous basis, thereby ensuring that the company is provided with sufficient input to adjust its CSR program (Maon et al., 2009; Welford, Chan, & Man, 2007). (7) Finally, the company's CSR practices must be communicated, both internally and externally. Good communication regarding a company's CSR commitment, ambition, and performance can stimulate enthusiasm and help ensure that everybody involved is well informed about the CSR adaptation process (Maon et al., 2009).

In the next section, we will elaborate upon the concept of LO, and we will discuss how developing LO characteristics can stimulate the CSR adaptation process.

Learning Organization Characteristics

The concept of LO increased in popularity after Peter Senge published his book entitled "The Fifth Discipline", in which he described LOs as organizations with both adaptive capabilities and the ability to create alternative futures. In his book, Senge (1990) outlines how a company could become an LO through systems thinking, commitment by individuals, realizing one's potential, being open to new ideas, building shared visions, and team learning. Despite its popularity, the concept of LO was initially criticized for failing to provide practitioners with practical knowledge and for a lack of agreement regarding the definition of LO, making it difficult to integrate the findings of LO research (Carley & Harrald, 1997; Huysman, 2010). Later fresh insights delivered a more compelling vision of LOs, offering practitioners concrete recommendations and practical tools for assessing an organization's learning characteristics (e.g., Garvin, Edmonson, & Gino, 2008). The concept of LO became an increasingly important area of empirical research (Örtenblad, 2002) and has been related to several

business outcomes, including the organization's dynamic capabilities (Hung et al., 2010) and the company's financial performance (Ellinger, Ellinger, Yang, & Hawton, 2002).

Nowadays, LO is studied from various perspectives. Örtenblad's (2002) typology of learning organizations describes four conceptualizations of LO (organizational learning, learning at work, learning climate, and learning structure). Watkins and Marsick (1993) combined these perspectives into one framework, operationalized and validated this framework, and developed an instrument for measuring the characteristics of an LO (Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Örtenblad, 2002). Their framework was used in this study.

Based on the approach of Watkins and Marsick (1993), learning is seen as a process that occurs at several discrete levels within an organization (i.e., the individual, group, and organizational level). This process leads to changes in knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors at all three levels. Each level contains several dimensions. The individual level includes the dimensions *continuous learning* (CL), which refers to the extent to which a company creates continuous learning opportunities for its employees, and *dialog and inquiry* (DI), which refers to the extent to which a company promotes inquiry-based behavior and dialog among its employees. The group level has one dimension, *group learning* (GL), which refers to the extent to which a company encourages collaboration and learning from and with each other. The organizational level has four dimensions. *Empowerment toward a shared vision* (E) refers to the extent to which a company involves its employees in developing and owning a collective vision. *Embedded information systems* (EIS) refers to the extent to which a company creates and maintains systems designed to capture and share knowledge. *Leadership for learning* (LL) refers to the extent to which a company provides leadership in order to encourage learning and to link these efforts to strategic objectives. *System connection* (SC) refers to the extent to which a company is connected to the communities in which it operates.

Learning Organization Characteristics in Relation to the CSR Adaptation Process

Successful implementation of any large-scale, planned organizational change requires employees to be receptive to change; more importantly, they need to believe (1) in the need for change, (2) in their capacity to successfully undertake the change, and (3) in the beneficial outcomes that will arise from the change (Bouckenooghe, 2010; Rafferty, Jimmieson, & Armenakis, 2013). LO characteristics are believed to provide employees with opportunities to develop this receptiveness to change, which in turn can stimulate the CSR adaptation process. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss these presumed associations.

Continuous learning. Stimulating continuous learning and adaptive competencies among employees is particularly useful in the context of CSR. This is important because a company's CSR-related challenges are continuously changing (Senge, 1990); in addition, this adaptability will likely make employees more amenable to change, which in turn will stimulate the integration of CSR principles. Empirical evidence supporting the importance of employee learning is provided by Benn and colleagues (2013), who interviewed leaders in sustainability education (e.g., professors and education specialists), and Fenwick (2007), who interviewed HR managers, HR directors, and owner-managers of small businesses. These studies concluded that the lack of CSR adaptation—or ineffective integration of CSR principles—can be attributed, at least in part, to a lack of education and/or training opportunities and to a lack of connections between important systems. Hence, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H1: *The extent to which a company facilitates continuous learning opportunities is positively associated with CSR adaptation.*

Dialog and inquiry, & Empowerment toward a shared vision. A corporate culture that encourages employees to ask for feedback, to experiment, and to participate in decision-making—as is the case in an LO—will stimulate employees' feelings of

empowerment (Choi, 2007; Gagné, Koestner, Zuckerman, 2000). Empowered employees believe that they are held accountable—at least in part—for the change and will therefore conduct themselves in a manner that supports the change and will achieve satisfaction in initiating and realizing these changes (Gagné et al., 2000; Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2004). Moreover, dialog and inquiry activities stimulate reflection upon one’s work behavior. Such a self-evaluation can lead to propositions that link successful and detrimental behavior with one’s performance (Heugens, 2006). Thus, promoting dialog and inquiry can help employees adopt work behaviors that support the CSR adaptation process. Furthermore, organizational change involves—to a large extent—sense-making processes, in which the meaning of the change is discussed and defined among the organization’s members (Rafferty et al., 2013). Reaching a shared, positive belief regarding the change can increase the likelihood of employees engaging in behaviors that support the change (Mohrman, 1999). Hence, we formulated the following two hypotheses:

H2: *The extent to which a company promotes dialog and inquiry is positively associated with CSR adaptation.*

H3: *The extent to which a company promotes involvement in creating collective vision is positively associated with CSR adaptation.*

Group learning. Working in groups is essential in an LO. Employees are expected to learn and work together, as this gives them access to various modes of thinking, thereby stimulating both creativity and innovativeness (Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Senge, 1990). Moreover, over time individuals will ultimately conform to the group’s mindset and views with respect to appropriate work behavior, and they will conduct themselves accordingly (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). Thus, learning new ways of thinking and/or performing—key elements needed for CSR adaptation—should be easier for employees in an LO compared to employees in a company that endorses group learning to a lesser degree. We therefore hypothesize:

H4: *The extent to which a company facilitates group learning is positively associated with CSR adaptation.*

Embedded information systems. Information systems such as meetings, training programs, and newsletters are important elements in any planned organizational change. These systems help inform employees regarding the challenges faced by the company and the need for change (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Chiang, 2010). In addition, these systems help prevent the implementation of projects that are not aligned with the company’s objectives (Kotter, 1995), and they prevent any bias and/or cynicism that could potentially give rise to resistance to change (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997). LOs have information systems that can both capture learning and distribute information throughout the company. Employees have access to these systems, and the systems are well maintained (Marsick & Watkins, 2003); therefore we hypothesize:

H5: *The extent to which a company creates and maintains systems that capture and share knowledge is positively associated with CSR adaptation.*

Leadership for learning. Employees have unique relationships with their managers and leaders. These relationships shape the behavior that is expected of all parties involved (Furst & Cable, 2008). Within an LO, leaders actively support learning and change by facilitating and providing a safe haven for employees to experiment with new ideas and behaviors. These leaders—which can be either formal or informal—are the champions who stimulate and encourage others to challenge the *status quo*, innovate, and engage in learning opportunities. These leaders show exemplary behavior and strategically use learning to achieve business objectives (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Hence, leaders can influence their employees’ learning

with respect to CSR objectives, thereby promoting sustainable behavior among employees (Ramus & Steger, 2000; Blok, Wesselink, Studynka, & Kemp, 2015). Moreover, leaders who are both visible and supportive increase their employees' commitment to achieving the company's goals (Burge, 2003), which is a key predictor of an employee's work behavior (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Moreover, it is an important antecedent of an employee's readiness for change (Kwakh & Lee, 2008). We therefore hypothesize:

H6: The extent to which a company provides and promotes leadership for learning is positively associated with CSR adaptation.

System connection. LOs operate as open systems, interacting with and exchanging feedback with their communities. Employees learn through these interactions, and work practices are adjusted based on the information they receive (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). These characteristics enable these companies to effectively interact with key stakeholders. This interaction is essential for CSR adaptation, as (1) a company's CSR program should address the needs and concerns of its stakeholders and (2) a continuous constructive dialog will ensure that the program remains aligned to these needs (Maon et al., 2009). Hence, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H7: The extent to which a company operates as an open system is positively associated with CSR adaptation.

Above, we discussed putative direct associations between individual LO characteristics and CSR adaptation. However, a more complex relationship may exist between these factors. Yang Watkins, and Marsick (2004) reported that some LO characteristics can mediate the effect of other LO characteristics with respect to organizational outcomes (e.g., knowledge and financial performance). The rationale behind this indirect effect is that LO characteristics can be separated into two groups of characteristics. One group is "employee-oriented learning facilitators", which includes continuous learning (CL), dialog and inquiry (DI), group learning (GL), and empowerment toward a collective vision (E). The second group is "governance facilitators", which includes the LO characteristics embedded information system (EIS), leadership for learning (LL), and system connection (SC). Individuals learn, and they share what they have learned with others. As they collaborate, individuals learn with and from each other, which in turn drives the development of a collective vision (Gagné et al., 2000; Laschinger et al., 2004). To facilitate this learning process, companies should provide their employees with opportunities to learn both individually (e.g., through CL) and in groups (e.g., through DI and GL), and empower their employees toward a collective vision (e.g., through E). This individual and group learning produces a greater need to incorporate what is learned into the company (thus making it an organizational asset) and to direct, transform, and connect learning to the company's strategic objectives and the needs of its stakeholders, thereby realizing intended favorable organizational outcomes. Therefore, companies should employ facilitators in order to govern learning (e.g., EIS, LL, and SC). Thus, the effects of CL, DI, GL, and E on CSR adaptation might be mediated by these governance facilitators. Based on this line of reasoning, we formulated the following additional hypothesis:

H8: The associations between CSR adaptation and CL, DI, GL, and E are mediated by three governance facilitators (EIS, LL, and SC).

Method

Material and Method

The primary objective of this study was to assess the association between a company's LO characteristics and its CSR adaptation. We therefore performed a quantitative study using an online questionnaire.

Sample and Procedure

The data were collected as part of a separate study among Dutch companies, which was conducted by CSR Netherlands (in Dutch, MVO Nederland)²; we incorporated our own questions into their questionnaire, which was distributed among the members of trade associations that were partners of CSR Netherlands. These trade associations were contacted and invited to send the questionnaire to the principal CSR professionals in their members' companies.

A total of 280 CSR professionals completed the questionnaire anonymously; these professionals worked in either a service industry ($n = 191$) or a manufacturing industry ($n = 89$). Each professional was either an owner-manager ($n = 125$), a CSR director or manager ($n = 104$), a principal CSR staff member ($n = 39$), or other CSR-related professional (e.g., R&D professional, senior CSR advisor, or product manager) ($n = 12$).

Measures

Learning Organization

We used an abbreviated version of the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) to measure LO characteristics. The DLOQ (Watkins & Marsick, 1993) describes seven LO characteristics from the perspective of action requirements and is therefore used to generate practical implications (Yang et al., 2004). The abbreviated version is reported to have better validity than the extended version (Yang et al., 2004) and includes 21 items—three for each of the seven characteristics—and response choices ranging from 1 (almost never true) to 6 (almost always true). A higher mean score indicates more prevalent levels of the respective LO characteristic. Table 2.1 shows example items for each of the seven characteristics; all scales were considered to be reliable based on Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (2010), which specifies a threshold of 0.70 for Cronbach's Alpha.

We performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the Lavaan package in the R software package (Rosseel, 2012) in order to assess whether our LO data fit the measurement model described by Yang et al. (2004). In addition, we used robust maximum likelihood estimations to account for any non-normality of our data. This approach returns robust standard errors and calculates the Saorra-Bentler chi-square ($SB\chi^2$) value, which adjusts the normal-theory chi-square (Rosseel, 2012). We reconstructed two models: a simple one-factor model and a complex seven-factor model Yang et al. (2004). The first model is a naïve model that assumes that each item is designed to measure only one factor. The second model is more realistic, as it allows the user to correlate measurement errors and latent variables, and items can be loaded on multiple factors. Similar to Yang et al. (2004), we used the following indices to assess the fit of the models: $SB\chi^2$, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the GFI adjusted for the degrees of freedom (AGFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the non-normed fit index (NNFI or TLI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). A model is considered to be acceptable if the following conditions are met: relative chi-square value (i.e., chi-square divided by the number of degrees of freedom) is <5.0 (or ideally, <2.0); GFI and NNFI are

² CSR Netherlands is an independent foundation that was founded in 2004 by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs. The primary focus of CSR Netherlands is to raise CSR awareness among Dutch companies and improving CSR practices within Dutch companies. CSR Netherlands has more than 2000 members, including companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), education and government agencies, and industry organizations.

>0.90; and CFI is >0.90. An RMSEA value <0.08 indicates an acceptable fit, and a value < 0.05 indicates an extremely good fit between the model and the population (Teo, Tsai, & Yang, 2013).

Table 2.1. Example Items and Cronbach's Alpha (α) for the Seven LO Characteristics Scales of the DLOQ (Watkins and Marsick, 1993).

LO Characteristic	Example Item
1. Continuous learning ($\alpha = 0.87$)	In my organization, people are rewarded for learning.
2. Dialog and inquiry ($\alpha = 0.89$)	In my organization, whenever people state their views, they also ask what others think.
3. Group learning ($\alpha = 0.86$)	In my organization, teams/groups revise their thinking as a result of group discussions or information collected.
4. Empower collective vision ($\alpha = 0.76$)	My organization recognizes people for taking initiative.
5. Embedded information systems ($\alpha = 0.80$)	My organization makes its lessons learned available to all employees.
6. Leadership for learning ($\alpha = 0.88$)	In my organization, leaders mentor and coach those they lead.
7. System connection ($\alpha = 0.70$)	My organization works together with the outside community to meet mutual needs.

CSR Adaptation

We developed a self-report tool to measure CSR adaptation in collaboration with CSR Netherlands. Items were constructed based on the literature and on the practical professional experiences of CSR Netherlands. The scale was then discussed with nine business owners (four owners had a membership at CSR Netherlands, one large company [≥ 250 employees] and eight small and medium-sized enterprises [SME, < 250 employees]), and items were amended based on their feedback (e.g., different wording).

The respondents were instructed to evaluate 12 statements regarding specific situations related to CSR adaptation in their company (Table 2.2). The possible responses were as follows: 1 = not true at all, 2 = almost never true, 3 = partially true, 4 = mostly true, 5 = completely true, and 6 = I do not know. A higher mean score indicates a higher level of CSR adaptation.

We used an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with principal axis factoring as the extraction method to identify the significant components that underlay the respondents' choices for the 12 statements. Using the SPSS syntax reported by O'Connor (2000), we performed a parallel analysis in order to determine the number of factors to extract; this approach is superior to other, more ambiguous methods (e.g., the Eigenvalue >1 rule and the Scree test; see Thompson, 2004, p.34).

Control Variables

A company's industry, size, and financial situation can have significant effects on the ratings of CSR outcomes (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Graves & Waddock, 1994). We therefore controlled for the effect of these factors in all analyses as follows:

- *The company's industry.* Mimicking the approach used by Waldman et al. (2006), we normalized the dependent variable (i.e., CSR adaptation) in order to control for industry effects.
- *Company size.* We included a dummy coded variable (1 = SME, 2 = large company) in the analysis.
- *The company's financial situation.* We instructed respondents to rate their company's general financial situation over the past four years in order to take into account any potential effect of the 2008 global financial crisis. The possible responses were as follows: 1 = much worse than before, 2 = worse than before, 3 = similar to before, 4 = better than before, 5 = much better than before. A higher score indicates a better financial situation.

Table 2.2. Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings
CSR Adaptation	X01: CSR is an integral part of my company's mission and vision.	.769
	X02: CSR is an integral part of our organizational strategy.	.795
	X03: We have established a CSR policy.	.749
	X04: CSR is an integral aspect that is accounted for in decision-making processes.	.760
	X05: We periodically ask our stakeholders what they expect from us with respect to CSR.	.720
	X06: There is support for CSR among our employees.	.605
	X07: All departments engage in CSR activities.	.698
	X08: My company has established clear CSR objectives for the coming year.	.840
	X09: My company achieves all its CSR objectives.	.732
	X10: We measure and evaluate our CSR practices periodically.	.780
	X11: We communicate about our CSR practices with internal and external stakeholders.	.781
	X12: We regularly amend our CSR programs based on changes in external demands.	.797

Data Analyses

To test our hypotheses, we used the bootstrap macro approach (with 5000 bootstrap samples) of Preacher and Hayes (2004). This approach was chosen because it depends less on assumptions regarding sampling distributions, and it permits one to perform analyses with multiple mediators. All variables were standardized prior to the analyses. Several mediation analyses were performed as described by Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, (2010); each analysis used a different LO characteristic as the predictor. This procedure involves the following three paths: the association between a given predictor (i.e., CL, DI, GL, or E) and the mediators EIS, LL, and SC (paths *a*); the association between CSR adaptation and EIS, LL, and SC (paths *b*); and the association between the predictor and CSR adaptation (path *c*). Path *c'* represents the total effect, which takes into account the effect of the control variables and the other LO characteristics.

The procedure consisted of three steps. First, we determined the mean indirect effect (point estimate; see Table 2.5.) for each predictor-mediator pair (path $a \times b$; see Table 2.4.), and we determined whether the effect was significant. The bootstrap test returns a 95% bias-corrected, accelerated confidence interval in order to test the significance of an indirect effect. If this interval excludes “zero”, the indirect path is interpreted as being statistically significant (Table 2.5.). Indirect effects are small at 0.01, medium at 0.09, and large at 0.25 (Kenny, 2012).

In the second step, we classified the type of effect by estimating the coefficients of paths *a*, *b*, and *c* (see Table 2.4.). The effect is classified as follows: “*indirect-only (mediation)*” if $a \times b$ (the indirect path) is significant but path *c* (the direct path) is not significant, which indicates a mediating effect consistent with the hypothesized theoretical framework; “*direct-only (no mediation)*” if $a \times b$ is not significant but path *c* is significant, which indicates a problematic hypothesized theoretical framework and the likelihood of absent mediators; “*no effect (no mediation)*” if both $a \times b$ and path *c* are not significant, which indicates an incorrectly hypothesized theoretical framework; “*complementary (mediation)*” if both $a \times b$ and path *c* are significant and $a \times b \times c$ is a positive value; and “*competitive (mediation)*” if both $a \times b$ and *c* are significant and $a \times b \times c$ is a negative value. The last two classifications indicate the presence of a mediating effect consistent with the hypothesized theoretical framework, although in these cases, one should also consider the likelihood of absent mediators in future studies (Zhao et al., 2010).

Results

The results of the CFA indicate that the complex seven-factor model in our study had an improved fit—or an equally good fit—with the model ($\chi^2/df = 390.90/168 = 2.33$; RMSEA = 0.07; GFI = 0.95; AGFI = 0.93; NNFI (TLI) = 0.89; and CFI

= 0.91) compared to the results reported by Yang et al. (2004) ($\chi^2/df = 2746.29/778 = 3.53$; RMSEA = 0.08; GFI = 0.75; AGFI = 0.71; NNFI (TLI) = 0.81; and CFI = 0.83). This result confirms the validity of the DLOQ used in our study.

The results of the EFA are presented in Table 2.2. Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2(66) = 1974.85$; $p < .001$) and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy (KMO = 0.92, which exceeds the required minimum value of 0.60) indicate that the data and sample were adequate and suitable for an EFA (Field, 2009). Following Stevens' recommendation (Stevens, 2002), factor loadings ≥ 0.40 or higher were used as an inclusion threshold. One component was extracted and labeled as "CSR adaptation". The scale was considered to be reliable ($\alpha = 0.94$) and explained 60.39% of the variance in the respondents' responses.

Table 2.3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Study Variables (n = 280)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. CSR adaptation ^a	0.52	0.25	1									
2. Continuous learning	4.37	1.15	.24**	1								
3. Dialogue and inquiry	4.48	1.00	.22**	.63**	1							
4. Group learning	3.94	1.09	.32**	.57**	.58**	1						
5. Empower collective vision	4.28	0.97	.21**	.51**	.58**	.69**	1					
6. Embedded information systems	3.85	1.16	.32**	.63**	.59**	.67**	.51**	1				
7. Leadership for learning	4.46	1.09	.32**	.63**	.70**	.59**	.59**	.64**	1			
8. System connection	3.73	1.14	.36**	.46**	.46**	.61**	.59**	.57**	.55**	1		
9. Company's size ^b	1.14	0.35	.24**	.02	-.02	.02	-.04	.07	.03	.10	1	
10. Financial situation	2.98	1.01	-.09	-.04	-.15*	-.14*	-.09	-.13*	-.12*	-.16*	-.04	1

Notes: a = based on normalized scores; b = company size was dummy coded (SME = 1, large company = 2). * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.001$.

Table 2.3. summarizes the descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables. Company size was the only control variable that had a significant correlation with CSR adaptation. Continuous learning (CL), dialog and inquiry (DI), group learning (GL), empowerment toward a collective vision (E), embedded information systems (EIS), leadership for learning (LL), and system connection (SC) were all strongly correlated with each other, and they were weakly to moderately correlated with CSR adaptation; these correlations were positive and significant.

The results of the mediation analyses are summarized in Tables 2.4. and 2.5. We found that company's size remains significant ($\beta = .20$, $p < .05$) after controlling for the other variables, indicating that larger companies have higher levels of CSR adaptation. Despite the significant correlations between the LO variables and CSR adaptation, only LL ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$) and SC ($\beta = .21$, $p < .05$) had a positive unique effect on CSR adaptation when controlling for the other variables (see Table 2.4., full model); SC had the largest effect on CSR adaptation. These results indicate that the first five hypotheses (H1 through H5) can be rejected; moreover, these results support H6 and H7. Effect size was calculated for the full model using Cohen's f^2 . Effect size is considered small, medium, or large if Cohen's f^2 is 0.02, 0.15, or large 0.35, respectively (Cohen,

1988). The full model explained 21% of the variance in CSR adaptation, which shows a medium effect of the control variables and LO characteristics on CSR adaptation ($f^2 = 0.27$).

Table 2.5. shows the effect of CL, DI, GL, and E on CSR adaptation through the governance mediators (EIS, LL, and SC). A medium, significant total indirect effect on CSR adaptation was found for all predictors, with estimates ranging from 0.09 to 0.12. This indicates that the associations between CSR adaptation and CL, DI, GL, and E are mediated by the combined effects of EIS, LL, and SC. A closer examination of the specific indirect effects, however, revealed that LL was the only significant mediator for the “CL- CSR adaptation link” and the “DI-CSR adaptation link”. The mean indirect paths (paths $a \times b$) were small and positive (for the CL-CSR adaptation link: 0.05 [BCa 95% CI = 0.01–0.12]; for the DI-CSR adaptation link: 0.07 [BCa 95% CI = 0.01–0.16]); in contrast, the direct paths (paths d) were not significant (for the CL-CSR adaptation link: $\beta = .08, p > .05$; for the DI-CSR adaptation link: $\beta = .02, p > .05$), indicating an indirect-only mediation effect for CL and DI on CSR adaptation (see Table 2.4.).

With respect to the “GL-CSR adaptation link”, SC was the only significant mediator. The mean indirect effect was small and positive (0.07; BCa 95% CI = 0.02–0.14). The direct path was significant ($\beta = .26, p < .05$; see Table 2.4.) and $a \times b \times c$ returns a positive value ($0.32 \times 0.21 \times 0.26 = 0.02$), which indicates that GL has a complementary mediation effect on CSR adaptation. Both LL and SC were significant mediators in the “E-CSR adaptation link”; their mean indirect effects were small and positive (0.03 and 0.06 for LL and SC, respectively), and the direct path was not significant ($\beta = -.01, p > 0.05$; see Table 2.4.), indicating that E has an indirect-only mediation effect on CSR adaptation. EIS was not a significant mediator in any association between the predictors and CSR adaptation.

Table 2.4. Path Estimations of Direct Effects using the Preacher and Hayes's (2004) Bootstrap Macro

Outcome variables	Paths a						Full model	
	EIS		LL		SC		CSR adaptation ^a (Paths c')	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
<i>Control variables</i>								
Company size ^b							0.20*	0.06
Financial situation ^b							-0.01	0.06
<i>Predictors</i>								
Continuous learning	0.29**	0.06	0.24**	0.05	0.10	0.06	-0.01	0.08
Dialogue and Inquiry	0.18*	0.06	0.38**	0.06	0.03	0.06	-0.06	0.08
Group learning	0.42**	0.06	0.12*	0.06	0.32**	0.07	0.15	0.09
Empower collective vision	-0.04	0.06	0.17*	0.06	0.31**	0.07	-0.10	0.08
							Paths b	
EIS							0.07	0.09
LL							0.18*	0.09
SC							0.21*	0.08
R^2								.21
Adjusted R^2								.19
f^2								.27

Notes: a = based on normalized scores; b = an additional multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the coefficients for company size (SME = 1, Large company = 2) and the company's financial situation in path c. EIS = Embedded information systems, LL = Leadership for learning, SC = System connection. Company size, company financial situation, and all remaining predictors were included as control variables in all analyses. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.001$. $n = 280$.

Table 2.5. Mediating Effects of EIS, LL, and SC in the Association Between CSR Adaptation and CL, DI, GL, and E

Predictors	CL			DI			GL			E		
	Point Estimate	SE	BCa 95% CI	Point Estimate	SE	BCa 95% CI	Point Estimate	SE	BCa 95% CI	Point Estimate	SE	BCa 95% CI
EIS	.02	.03	-.03 .09	.01	.02	-.02 .06	.03	.04	-.05 .11	-.00	.01	-.04 .01
LL	.05	.03	.01 .12	.07	.04	.01 .16	.02	.02	-.00 .07	.03	.02	.01 .09
SC	.02	.02	-.01 .07	.01	.02	-.02 .05	.07	.03	.02 .14	.06	.03	.02 .13
Total indirect effect	.09	.04	.01 .19	.09	.04	.02 .17	.12	.05	.04 .21	.09	.04	.03 .17

Notes: Dependent variable = CSR adaptation. CL = Continuous learning, DI = Dialog and inquiry, GL = Group learning, E = Empower collective vision, EIS = Embedded information systems, LL = Leadership for learning, SC = System connection. BCa 95% CI = Bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Total indirect effect = mean indirect effect of the mediators combined.

In summary, H8 is partially supported by the results, which suggest that CL, DI, and E can benefit CSR adaptation *because* they positively influence leadership for learning. In addition, E—like GL—stimulates the connection with communities (including local communities), which in turn can also facilitate CSR adaptation. Moreover, beside its indirect effect, GL also directly benefits CSR adaptation (see Figure 2.1).

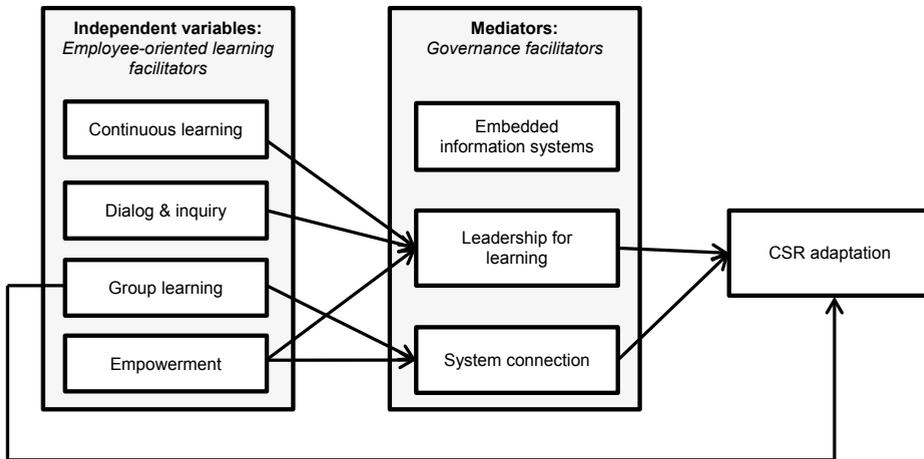


Figure 2.1. Results of the mediation analyses in this study.
Note. Each arrow indicates a significant path.

Discussion

In this study, we assessed the associations between various LO characteristics and CSR adaptation. Based on published reports regarding the LO-CSR link, we anticipated that the proposed LO characteristics (continuous learning [CL], dialog and inquiry [DI], group learning [GL], empowerment toward a collective vision [E], embedded information systems [EIS], leadership for learning [LL], and system connection [SC]) can help facilitate a company's CSR adaptation. We found that when we controlled for each effect and for the effect of company size and financial situation, LL and SC were the only LO characteristics that had a favorable effect on CSR adaptation. Furthermore, similar to Yang et al. (2004), we hypothesized that CL, DI, GL, and E would indirectly affect CSR adaptation through the governance facilitators EIS, LL, and SC. Our results provided evidence to support this hypothesis. On the other hand, in contrast to some studies that emphasize developing the employees' learning and competences to stimulate CSR adaptation (for example, see Osagie et al., 2016; Nijhof et al., 2005), our results show that governance LO characteristics—rather than employee-oriented LO characteristics—are particularly important. Indeed, the association between GL and CSR adaptation was the only association that was not completely mediated by these governance facilitators. However, this specific type of indirect effect—as described by Zhao et al. (2010)—indicates that the association between GL and CSR adaptation might in fact be mediated by other factors that were not included in this study (for example, a company's dynamic capabilities). Next, we will elaborate further on the mediating role of governance facilitators.

Embedded information systems as a mediator. We found that EIS—as a characteristic of an LO—did not stimulate the CSR adaptation process when we controlled for other variables. Consequently EIS was not a significant mediator in the association between CL, DI, GL, or E with respect to CSR adaptation. At first glance, this result seems to contradict previous studies, which found that good information systems are essential for implementing change, as these information

systems inform employees regarding both the need for change and the intended changes (e.g., Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Chiang, 2010). The lack of any significant effect of EIS on CSR adaptation could be attributed to the way in which we measured EIS. The abbreviated version of the DLOQ does not specify the kinds of information systems that are intended in the items. See for example the following item on the DLOQ: “My organization measures the results of the time and resources spent on training”. Thus, in principle respondents could have been thinking of technological systems in their response on the EIS-statements. Following this reasoning, our results indicate that having an embedded technological information system is not necessarily sufficient to stimulate the CSR adaptation process. Employees may not necessarily use mediated information channels such as websites, newspapers, or reports in order to stay informed regarding upcoming changes. Moreover, employees are not “targets of communication”; rather, they are active participants who can choose to ignore or not “hear” what they read (Jabri, Adrian, & Boje, 2008). In such cases, technological information systems can fail to achieve their intended goal of educating employees; therefore, these systems should be complemented using interpersonal information channels such as face-to-face meetings (Fidler & Johnson, 1984; Lewis, 2006).

Leadership as a mediator. Our analysis revealed that LL plays a central role in the effect of several LO characteristics on the CSR adaptation process; specifically, LL mediates the associations between CSR adaptation and CL, DI, and E. This mediating effect could be attributed to the employees’ personal feelings of ownership, which can be triggered by CL, DI, and E learning activities. In other words, learning and having a collective vision can stimulate an individual’s engagement and personal ownership—“a state in which individuals feel as though the target of ownership or a piece of that target is ‘theirs’” (Pierce, Kostova, Dirks, 2003, p. 86). A strong psychological bond with a target or an objective (in this case integrating CSR principles) can cause an employee to act as an informal leader due to a sense of responsibility for the objective. Such employees will actively encourage others to behave appropriately and to invest both time and effort into cultivating change (Wagner, Parker, & Christiansen, 2003). Companies should therefore ensure that they facilitate such leadership, as it can stimulate the CSR adaptation process.

System connection as a mediator. Companies should ensure that they collaborate with stakeholders in order to determine the direction of their CSR programs (Maon et al., 2009; Lozano, 2008). It is paramount that employees develop the competencies needed to participate in these collaborations, as such interactions can come with difficulties that are related to both the coordination costs and the different mindsets of the parties involved (Genefke, 2000). Our findings would seem to suggest that group learning activities and empowerment activities can stimulate the development of such competencies, as these activities promote system connection. Stimulating group learning and working together to realize a shared vision can enable employees to both develop competencies and gain experience with respect to reaching integrative solutions with others who may have other motives (Nadler, Thompson, & Van Boven, 2003). These experiences will serve as a step toward initiating new connections with external parties, as well as nurturing existing connections. Employees learn through these stakeholder interactions, and work practices can be adjusted based on the information received (Maon et al., 2009), demonstrating that potentially favorable outcomes for the CSR adaptation process can arise from stimulating GL and E.

It is not surprising that the CSR adaptation process is influenced by both leadership and system connection, in particular. Studies regarding general change often emphasize the importance of stakeholder engagement and change agents in implementing change (e.g., Barratt-Pugh, Bahn, & Gakere, 2013; Ford, Ford, & D’Amelio, 2008). Our findings reinforce the notion that CSR adaptation—despite being a specific type of change—does not necessarily require CSR-specific interventions; rather, companies should follow a path of general change management (Maon et al., 2009; Millar, Hind, & Magala, 2012).

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Despite their strengths, these results should be interpreted with caution. First, we proposed that LO characteristics can boost a company's CSR adaptation process. However, because our study was cross-sectional by design, no definite conclusions can be drawn regarding causal relationships. Although we were interested in determining which LO characteristics can stimulate the CSR adaptation process, a reciprocal association between these concepts is also possible, as indicated by Koch and Lindenthal (2011), who found that the activities involved in integrating environmental aspects into an organization can foster organizational learning (and by extension, LO characteristics). Therefore, we cannot exclude the possibility that the conditions that favor the CSR adaptation process can strengthen a company's LO characteristics. Future studies should provide further insight into the causal direction between these concepts.

Another limitation is that we used a self-reporting tool to measure all variables. Such an approach can inappropriately elicit socially desirable responses, and common method variance could have inflated the correlations found between some of the variables. On the other hand, using a self-reporting tool does not guarantee that significant associations will be found. Moreover, correlations between variables measured using the same method, are not necessarily stronger than correlations between variables measured using multiple methods. This suggests that the influence of common method variance might be overestimated (Spector, 2006). Nevertheless, we cannot rule out these effects in our study. Future research should use multiple methods for assessing companies' LO characteristics and CSR adaptation; this was not possible in our study, as the participants were anonymous. For example, future studies can combine interviews with self-reporting tools in order to measure an employee's perception of the company's CSR adaptation and LO characteristics. Such studies should also include more than one representative from each company, ideally working at different levels, as perceptions of LO characteristics and CSR adaptation might differ between employees, even within the same company. Furthermore, organizational characteristics—and their effects on organizational outcomes—can be complex. The correlations between individual LO characteristics and CSR adaptation indicate that interaction effects may exist, in addition to the indirect effects assessed in our study, and these interactions should be explored in future studies. With respect to CSR adaptation, we found an important role for both LL and SC. Future studies can begin by assessing any possible interaction effects between these two variables.

Conclusion

In summary, our results serve as an initial step in developing an empirically validated explanation of how specific LO characteristics can facilitate the CSR adaptation process. In particular, our analysis underscores the key role of two LO characteristics, namely (1) providing champions and change agents who motivate and encourage employees to learn and embrace change (i.e., leadership for learning), and (2) operating as an open system through which employees can adjust their practices based on the needs of the community (i.e., system connection). The aforementioned limitations of this study notwithstanding, we believe that our findings have important theoretical and practical implications. Our findings add to the current body of knowledge regarding outcomes of LO characteristics, demonstrating that in addition to their effects on financial outcomes, these characteristics also have the potential to positively promote non-financial outcomes, in particular, CSR adaptation. Furthermore, research suggests that despite a lack of evidence for the effect of LO characteristics on CSR, companies are already developing such characteristics to support CSR adaptation. Our results suggest that these efforts are likely not in vain. Developing LO characteristics is a progressive way of dealing with challenges faced by companies that wish to improve their adaptation of CSR. Such efforts should be aimed specifically at supporting leadership for learning and system connection.

2

Chapter 3

Individual Competencies for Corporate Social Responsibility: A Literature and Practice Perspective³

Because corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be beneficial to both companies and its stakeholders, interest in factors that support CSR performance has grown in recent years. A thorough integration of CSR in core business processes is particularly important for achieving effective long-term CSR practices. Here, we explored the individual CSR-related competencies that support CSR implementation in a corporate context. First, a systematic literature review was performed in which relevant scientific articles were identified and analyzed. Next, 28 CSR directors and managers were interviewed. The literature review complemented with interview data resulted in the following eight distinct CSR-related competencies: (1) *Anticipating CSR challenges*; (2) *Understanding CSR-relevant systems and subsystems*; (3) *Understanding CSR-relevant standards*; (4) *CSR management competencies, including (4a) Leading CSR programs, (4b) Managing CSR programs, and (4c) Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunities*; (5) *Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes*; (6) *Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes*; (7) *Personal value-driven competencies, including (7a) Ethical normative competencies, (7b) Balancing personal ethical values and business objectives, and (7c) Realizing self-regulated CSR-related behaviors and active involvement*; and (8) *Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences*. Based on these results, implications for further research on this topic, as well as implications for practitioners, are discussed.



³ This chapter is based on: Osagic, E. R., Wesslink, R., Blok, V., Lans, T., & Mulder, M. (2016). Individual competencies for corporate social responsibility: A literature and practice perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 135, 233-252. doi: 10.1007/s10551-014-2469-0

3

Introduction

Companies increasingly recognize the importance of their role in sustainable development (SD), and by engaging in corporate social responsibility (CSR) companies aim to obtain a satisfying balance in the environmental, social, and economic aspects of their business practices. CSR can be viewed as a business approach to SD in which companies voluntarily integrate environmental, social, and economic challenges in their business strategies and in their interactions with stakeholders (Dahlsrud, 2008).

Interest in how the CSR performance can be enhanced is growing in both the scientific world and in practice. According to Accenture (2010) 93% of CEO's of leading firms in the world perceive CSR as essential for their company's success. Besides its potential beneficial effects for employees and external stakeholders, CSR is also regarded as an important source for new ventures and competitive advantages (Dentoni et al., 2012).

In order to benefit from sustainable business practices, it is not enough to develop CSR policies (Harris & Crane, 2002), create specific CSR departments (Holton, Glass, & Price, 2010), implement a code of conduct (Mamic, 2005) or sustainability management system (Holton et al., 2010), or having the senior manager's buy-in and commitment (Thomas & Simerly, 1994). Dealing with complex and ever-changing problems and challenges, such as sustainability, requires specific competencies and higher order thinking skills (Lans, Blok, & Wesselink, 2014; Wals & Jickling, 2002), which is also denoted by CEO's throughout the world (Accenture, 2010). These competencies are enacted, shaped, and further devolved by individuals (Wood, 1991).

The process of implementing CSR in core business processes, which is denoted in the literature for achieving effective long-term CSR performance (e.g., Accenture, 2010; Castka, Bamber, Bamber, & Sharp, 2004; Jamali, 2008), is often managed by a select group of people (or sometimes even an individual); the CSR professional(s). These professionals bear the responsibility of effectively implementing CSR within the company. Their competencies will also likely influence company's CSR performance in addition to important institutional and organizational factors and processes. The focus of this paper will be on the individual competencies of these professionals.

A relevant question for research and practice is therefore: *which individual competencies support effective CSR implementation?* This is important because on the one hand an answer to this question will provide CSR-committed companies the possibility to select suitable individuals to manage the implementation of CSR in their companies (cf. Accenture, 2010). It will further help those professionals who are already working on CSR implementation, with key insights into the competencies they should have or should develop in order to promote higher levels of CSR implementation in their company. On the other hand, an answer to this question will increase our scientific insight into relevant individual CSR-related competencies, which can serve as a guide for future scientific research focusing on the management of change toward SD and the implementation of CSR in particular.

So far, studies that investigate individual competencies for CSR (implementation) are often conceptual (e.g., Dentoni et al., 2012) in nature, and oriented toward educational programs (e.g., De Haan, 2006; Rieckmann, 2012; Wiek, Withycombe, Redman, & Mills, 2011a; Wiek, Withycombe, & Redman, 2011b). Here, we performed a theoretical and empirical analysis of the individual CSR-related competencies that CSR professionals need in order to contribute to achieving effective CSR implementation in a corporate context.

To answer the above-mentioned question we performed a systematic literature review accompanied with an empirical study in which we interviewed 28 CSR directors and managers regarding their individual competencies in relation to CSR implementation. These interviews were designed to assess the extent to which these professionals recognize and agree with the competencies derived from our literature review and to identify other important individual CSR-related

competencies. Because competencies can be examined at different levels (organizational, team, and individual level) and from different perspectives, we will first elaborate on the concept of individual competencies and explain how the concept is perceived in this study.

Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Individual Competence

According to Lans (2009) and Delamare Le Deist and Winterton (2005), three dominant approaches to the concept of competence emerged in recent decades. In the *behavioral-functionalistic approach* (Neumann, 1979) individual competencies are derived from detailed job descriptions and are described as simplified atomized behaviors and knowledge elements. This approach focuses on the actual tasks that must be performed and/or the challenges that must be overcome. This approach has become associated with behaviorism⁴ and mastery learning due to its fragmented description of competencies and its relationship with scientific management⁵ (Mulder, 2014). However, a fundamental criticism of the behavioral-functionalistic approach to the concept of competence is that a list of atomized work descriptions does not necessarily indicate whether the professional is indeed able to accomplish the job efficiently in practice. Moreover, this approach has been criticized for providing a mechanistic view of work; ignoring the professional's autonomy and identity; undervaluing the role of tacit knowledge; and generating relatively conservative models of competence (Cheetham & Chivers, 1996; Eraut, 1994).

In response to these criticisms, a more *generic approach* to the concept of competence was developed (Eraut, 1994). This approach perceives individual competencies as underlying characteristics (e.g., knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or personal attributes) that distinguish successful performers from less-successful performers, thereby placing the professional at the center of attention. A weakness of this generic approach, however, is its context-independent and therefore abstract description of competencies, which does not account for the complexity of the application of these knowledge elements and skills in a changing environment (Eraut, 1994).

Many recent interpretations of the concept of individual competence acknowledge the developmental and situated nature of professional practice and therefore provide a more comprehensive conceptualization (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005; Wesseling, De Jong, & Biemans, 2010). This *comprehensive approach* of competence can be viewed as an integration of the functionalistic and generic approaches. In the comprehensive approach, individual competencies are perceived as a person's integrated performance-oriented ability to achieve specific objectives. In this approach, 'integrated' refers to the interrelated combination of knowledge elements, skills, and attitudes (each of which can be seen as a specification of a competence), and the integration of these factors in the context where successful performance must occur (Mulder, 2014). With *knowledge* referring to a person's representation of facts, procedures, and principles about someone or something, *skills* describing important specific learned activities, and *attitudes* referring to a person's personal feeling, disposition, or position toward a person, an object or a subject.

Competencies for CSR

Heugens (2006) describes how individual CSR-related competencies can be translated into organizational CSR-related competencies and competitive advantages through the process of combining individual competencies with previously established organizational competencies. Yet, the question remains: which competencies should be developed? To date, some scholars have examined collective and organizational competencies for CSR (i.e., capabilities) (e.g., Nijhof et al., 2005;

⁴ Behaviorism is an approach to psychology that focuses on observable behavior instead of what is happening in the mind.

⁵ Scientific management is a theory of management that seeks to improve organization's efficiency by utilizing scientific, engineering, and mathematical analysis.

Ramachandran, 2011). With respect to individual CSR-related competencies educational researchers have proposed several competence specifications for educational purpose. For example, adopting a generic approach to competence, De Haan (2006) utilized the *Gestaltungskompetenz* (shaping competence) and composed a list of twelve competencies (such as foresighted thinking and interdisciplinary work) that are expected to enable active, reflective, and co-operative participation toward sustainable development. In Germany, these competencies are perceived to be the central objective of education for sustainable development (ESD) (De Haan, 2006).

Wick et al. (2011b) recently applied a generic approach to the concept of competence and reviewed the educational literature regarding sustainability. They formulated the following five key competencies that can guide the development of academic programs for sustainability: systems thinking competence, anticipatory competence, normative competence, strategic competence, and interpersonal competence. Rieckmann (2012) performed an empirical study to specifically address individual CSR-related competencies. Rieckmann used a comprehensive approach to the concept of competence and conducted a Delphi study with 70 ESD experts from Europe and Latin America and formulated 12 key competencies for ESD. Systemic thinking, anticipatory thinking, and critical thinking were deemed by these experts to be the most important competencies.

These studies provide valuable insight into the initial individual competencies of CSR professionals. Although professional practice and behavior are dependent—at least in part—on prior education (Gürel & Potthoff, 2006), other important work-related competencies are difficult to teach in a scholastic setting (Gulikers, 2006). It is understandable that in these settings competencies are often specified in terms of distinct skills, knowledge, and attitude requirements, to facilitate the assessment of students' competences (Mulder, 2014).

Work-related competencies usually develop through one's work experiences and by challenges experienced in one's professional life (Roe, 2000). These higher-level and additional competencies have a purely developmental purpose (and no assessment purpose) and are therefore often described more comprehensively. Here, we combined insights from educational and managerial literature with insights from practice in order to obtain a broader empirical outlook on individual competencies for CSR implementation in a corporate environment.

Method

In this study we conducted both a theoretical and empirical exploration to answer the research question. We have chosen this approach because we first wanted to identify the relevant competencies and second, wanted to see to what extent these competencies are applied in CSR managers' practice. Moreover, using mixed methods of data collection to answer the research questions enhances the robustness of our study findings and compensates in part for limitations associated with using any one data collection method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the next section, we will present our theoretical exploration of key individual CSR-related competencies; specifically, we will elaborate upon the materials and methods used, and we will present the results of our literature analysis. Thereafter we will present our empirical exploration of key individual CSR-related competencies.

Theoretical Exploration: Systematic Literature Review

Materials and Method

Our first step was to perform a literature review in order to determine the individual CSR-related competencies that have been reported in the scientific literature. This research method uses a reproducible, transparent procedure to identify the sources that will be included in the review and to evaluate what is currently known and reported regarding a certain issue

(Fink, 2010). The Web of Science database was used as our bibliographic source, as it covers scientific articles from a broad range of scientific disciplines, thus ensuring that the search was sufficiently comprehensive.

Our search strategy consisted of different building blocks (Table 3.1.) and is similar to the strategy used by Casimir and Tobi (2011). We used an extensive list of search terms in order to ensure that our search for relevant peer-reviewed scientific articles was sufficiently broad. Only articles published from 2000 onwards were included in the sample, as scientific attention to antecedents and outcomes of CSR increased significantly around this period (Thomas & Nowak, 2006). For practical reasons, we limited the search to articles that were written in English. The final search was performed on December 21, 2011 and resulted in 1229 scientific articles.

We used the following criterion to select applicable articles: the articles had to address individual sustainability competencies or CSR-related competencies of either students or professionals. Although students and professionals differ in their competencies and competence levels (students or new graduates generally perform at a more novice level than professionals), earlier developed competencies and novice-leveled competencies are often called upon in combination with newly learned competencies when performing at advanced competence levels (Roe, 2000). Therefore, we did not distinguish the level of competence, and we included articles regarding individual competencies that are taught in ESD programs in the literature review. We used the interviews, which we will elaborate later on in this paper, to specify and validate the competencies within a CSR professionals' practice.

Table 3.1. Search Terms for Competence and CSR/Sustainability.

Set	Search terms in "Title" and "Topic" fields
Competence	Competenc* OR Skill? OR Attitud* OR Knowledge OR Know-how OR 'Job requiremen*' OR Proficienc* OR Experience* OR 'Behavio?r criteri*' OR Qualification? OR power OR abilit* OR expertness OR readiness OR aptitude? OR dexterity* OR facult* OR capabilit* OR efficac* OR forc* OR strength OR capacit* OR efficienc* OR susceptibilit* OR cleverness OR energy OR talent? OR cogenc*
CSR/ Sustainability	AND 'Corporate social responsibilit*' OR csr OR 'Social consciousness' OR 'Organi?ational social responsibilit*' OR 'Corporate social performance*' OR csp OR 'Corporate citizenship' OR 'Good corporate governance*' OR 'Ethical organi*ation*' OR 'Inclusive organi*ation*' OR 'Civil organi*ation*' OR 'Organi*ational moral philosophy' OR 'Organi?ational societal responsibilit*' OR 'Organi?ational moral obligation*' OR 'Corporate social responsiveness' OR 'Corporate public responsibilit*' OR 'Business ethic?' OR 'Corporate social investment?' OR 'Triple* bottom* line' OR 'Social action?' OR 'Public policy' OR 'Public policies' OR 'Stakeholder management' OR 'Social license' OR Sustainab*
Other	AND Language = (English) and Document type = all document types ^a AND Year of Publication = 2000-present

Note: The question mark (?) is a wild card that can be replaced by one letter only (or no letter). The asterisk (*) is a sign that can be replaced by any string in a single run. Quotation marks ensure a search for the precise term as enclosed between the quotation marks. ^a = the search was later refined by checking the "Articles" and "Reviews" boxes under "Refine results: document types".

The first author screened the titles, key words, and abstracts of the 1229 articles identified in the search, and all articles that met any of the following criteria were excluded: (1) non-relevant subject matter (e.g., renewable energy, knowledge management, or effects of CSR/SD; *n* = 1008) (e.g., Bond, Viegas, Coelho, & Selig, 2010 and Kolodinsky, Madden, Zisk, & Henkel, 2010); (2) a non-multi-dimensional perspective of sustainability/CSR (i.e., not referring to an economic, environmental, or social dimension; *n* = 28) (e.g., Ashby et al., 2009), as CSR involves the interrelation or balance between these three dimensions; (3) a focus on competencies at the organizational/team/urban/community level (*n* = 53) (e.g., Ramachandran, 2011; Van Kleef & Roome, 2007), as our review focused on individual competencies; or (4) a focus on a

target group other than students or professionals (e.g., citizens, consumers, or countries; $n = 56$) (e.g., Gupta, 2003; Leiserowitz, Kates, & Parris, 2005), as the targeted group in this review was professionals working on CSR implementation and CSR-related challenges. Thus, only work-related competencies were perceived as being relevant. This first selection phase yielded 84 potentially relevant articles.

Next, the first and second authors independently reviewed the abstracts, titles, and key words of these 84 articles, again applying the above-mentioned inclusion and exclusion criteria. Differences between the researchers were discussed until agreement was reached, resulting in 22 articles that were read in depth. An additional four articles were excluded from the sample⁶, as it turned out they did not cover every dimension of sustainability or CSR (Csurgo Kovach, & Kucerová, 2008; Wolcott et al., 2011) or did not address upcoming professionals (Brammer, Williams, & Zinkin, 2007; Breu, Maselli, & Hurni, 2005). Thus, the final sample contained 18 relevant articles (Table 3.2.).

Data Analyses and Synthesis

We developed a coding scheme that matched the aim of the review. This coding scheme was used to analyze the content of each article in order to identify relevant statements. We performed a domain analysis using Delamare Le Deist and Winterton's (2005) model of competence to group-relevant statements. Accordingly, a multidimensional framework for work-related competencies was constructed. This framework is based on the comprehensive approach to the concept of competence and illustrates the interrelatedness of four domains of competence that are needed in a particular profession, namely a cognition-oriented competence domain, a functional-oriented competence domain, a social-oriented competence domain, and a meta-oriented competence domain.

The 'Cognition-oriented domain' is based on conceptual elements of competence (e.g., cognition, knowledge, and understanding). The 'Functional-oriented domain' is based on operational elements of competence (e.g., job-related skills and know-how). The 'Social-oriented domain' is based on elements of competencies that are linked to individual operational effectiveness in relation to other people. Finally, the 'Meta-oriented domain' is based on the personal conceptual attributes and values (e.g., reflection and learning to learn) that facilitate development of the other domains. Delamare Le Deist and Winterton (2005) stated that the competencies are not fixed; they influence one another and develop, stabilize, or decline in a specific organizational context. Moreover, although it is possible to separate each domain conceptually, one must be able to activate and use all four domains simultaneously and effectively in order to be competent.

Statements that reflect a common competence domain (i.e., the cognition-oriented, function-oriented, social-oriented, or meta-oriented domain) were selected and grouped by the first and second authors. Within each domain, all statements that describe a similar competence or competence specification were also grouped. These subgroups were then given a competence label and ranked according to the number of articles from which the statements were derived. The resulting findings of the systematic literature review are presented below.

Results of the Theoretical Exploration

Sixteen of the 18 selected articles (Table 3.2.) were educational in background. Eight articles described sustainability frameworks for education in specific occupations (articles 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 12; see Table 3.2.), and one described different target groups (article 5 focused on top managers, company representatives, and the public; this review included only competencies regarding managers and company representatives). Five articles elaborated on education for sustainability from a more general perspective (articles 1, 9, 10, 14, and 18). One article described key skills and competencies for

⁶ The total list of the articles included in the review can be derived through the author.

Table 3.2. Overview of the 18 Articles Reviewed and the Competencies for Which They Provided Statements.

Article No.	Authors	Year of Publication	Title	Journal	Empirical/Conceptual Article	Approach to Competence	Competence
1	Batterman et al.	2011	Development and application of competencies for graduate programs in energy and sustainability.	Journal of Professional issues in Engineering Education and Practice	Empirical (case study)	Functionalistic	C1, C3, C4, C5
2	Bremer and López-Franco	2006	Sustainable development: Ten years of experience at ITESM's graduate level.	Journal of Cleaner Production	Empirical (case study)	Generic	C4, C5, C5
3	Burkhardt-Holm and Chebbi	2008	Master's degree in sustainable development in Switzerland, the first master course comprising three faculties.	Environmental Science and Pollution Research	Empirical (case study)	Generic	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5
4	Fisk and Ahearn	2006	Creating policy analysis skills in postgraduate engineering for sustainable development.	Journal of Cleaner Production	Empirical (case study)	Functionalistic	C2, C7
5	Gao et al.	2006	Education for regional sustainable development: Experiences from the education framework of HHCEPZ project.	Journal of Cleaner Production	Empirical (case study)	Generic	C1, C4
6	Gürel	2010	Explorations in teaching sustainable design: A studio experience in interior design/architecture.	International Journal of Art and Design Education	Empirical (case study)	Functionalistic	C1, C2, C4, C5
7	Hansmann et al.	2010	Qualifications for contributing to sustainable development: a survey of environmental sciences graduates.	Gaia-ecological Perspectives for Science and Society	Empirical (case studies)	Generic	C2, C4, C5, C6
8	Hopkinson et al.	2008	Sustainable graduates: Linking formal, informal and campus curricula to embed education for sustainable development in the student learning experience.	Environmental Education Research	Empirical (case study)	Generic	C1, C4, C5, C6
9	Kuckertz and Wagner	2010	The influence of sustainability orientation on entrepreneurial intentions - Investigating the role of business experience.	Journal of Business Venturing	Empirical (cross-sectional study)	Generic	C1
10	Macris and Georgakellos	2006	A new teaching tool in education for sustainable development: Ontology-based knowledge networks for environmental training.	Journal of Cleaner Production	Conceptual	Functionalistic	C1, C2, C4, C5

Table 3.2. Overview of the 18 Articles Reviewed and the Competencies for Which They Provided Statements (continued).

Article No.	Authors	Year of Publication	Title	Journal	Empirical/Conceptual Article	Approach to Competence	Competence
11	Manoliadis	2009	Education for Sustainability: Experiences from Greece.	Journal of Professional Issues in Engineering Education and Practice	Empirical (cases studies)	Functionalistic	C1, C2, C3, C5
12	McAloone	2007	A competence-based approach to sustainable innovation teaching: Experiences within a new engineering program.	Journal of Mechanical Design	Empirical (case study)	Functionalistic	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
13	Ples et al.	2010	Value creation, management competencies, and global corporate citizenship: An ordonomic approach to business ethics in the age of globalization.	Journal of Business Ethics	Conceptual	Functionalistic	C1, C3, C4, C5
14	Segalas et al.	2009	Whathas to be learnt for sustainability? A comparison of bachelor engineering education competencies at three European universities.	Sustainability Science	Empirical (case studies)	Generic	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7
15	Slater and Dixon-Fowler	2009	CEO international assignment experience and corporate social performance.	Journal of Business Ethics	Empirical (cross-sectional study)	Generic	C2, C5, C6
16	Spurgin	2004	The goals and merits of a business ethics competency exam.	Journal of Business ethics	Empirical (case study)	Functionalistic	C1, C2, C5
17	Wiek et al.	2011a	Moving forward on competence in sustainability research and problem solving.	Environment	Conceptual	Generic	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
18	Wiek et al.	2011b	Key competencies in sustainability: A reference framework for academic program development.	Sustainability Science	Conceptual (review)	Generic	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5

sustainability professionals (article 17), and one article described the merits of applying business ethics competency exams in management curricula (article 16). The sample also included two research articles in the field of management science: one article described management competencies that are related to good global corporate citizenship, a construct closely related to CSR (article 13), and one article described how international experience and a CEO's functional background can enhance corporate social performance (article 15).

Despite the 14 empirical articles that were included in the sample (most of which were case studies); none provided empirical evidence for the relationship between proposed CSR competence specifications and CSR implementation. Nevertheless, considerable similarities were identified in the CSR competence specifications mentioned in these articles.

The synthesis of the selected CSR competence specifications resulted in the following seven CSR-related competencies: (C1) *Anticipating CSR challenges*; (C2) *Understanding CSR-relevant systems and subsystems*; (C3) *Understanding drivers, standards, and regulations*; (C4) *Managing CSR programs and projects*; (C5) *Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes*; (C6) *Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and affective attributes in CSR contexts*; and (C7) *Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences*. See Table 3.3. for the definitions of these competencies, and see Table 3.4. for exemplar quotations.

Empirical Exploration and Validation: Interviews with CSR Professionals

Materials and Method

The results of our review served as a useful starting point for empirically exploring key individual CSR-related competencies for CSR implementation in a corporate context. The aim of our empirical exploration was to: (1) identify other important CSR-related competencies as they are perceived in practice, and (2) examine whether the CSR-related competencies that were derived from the review are also deemed to be important by CSR professionals in the corporate world, thereby supporting and validating the theoretical results.

We interviewed 28 CSR professionals (primarily CSR directors and managers) from 20 Dutch companies in various sectors in order to obtain a basis for validating the theoretically derived competencies in several corporate settings (see Appendix 3.1. for specifications). We selected these companies using the annual Sustainability Transparency Benchmark from 2012⁷. This benchmark is prepared annually by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and provides insight into the quality and quantity of CSR reporting by Dutch companies. Thus, this benchmark also provides an indication of how active these companies are with respect to CSR-related issues. The companies included in the benchmark include the 550 largest Dutch companies and organizations (based on the number of employees and/or the highest turnover). The 100 highest ranked companies were contacted, as we perceived these companies to be the most active in terms of CSR. Each company's principal CSR professional (i.e., the individual responsible for developing the company's CSR policy and strategy and/or responsible for implementing CSR) was identified and invited to participate in the study.

To minimize any potential bias, the first author interviewed each participant using a standardized semi-structured interview format that was developed based on the review results. Each interview continued until it reached saturation (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The interviewer addressed the following topics sequentially: (1) basic background information (e.g., education, age, and prior work experience); (2) CSR-related competencies that were applied by the professionals and which they *themselves* (in their CSR role) deemed important for effective CSR implementation (for example, "What do you need to *know*, what must you *be able to do*, and *what kind of person* do you need to be in order to successfully integrate CSR in your company?"); and (3) a reflection on the CSR-related competencies that were identified from the comprehensive review.

⁷ Visit <http://www.transparantiebenchmark.nl/bedrijven> for The Transparency Benchmark 2012.

Table 3.3. CSR Competencies Derived From the Systematic Literature Review.

Competence Label	Competence Definition
Cognition-Oriented Competence Domain	
(C1) Anticipating future developments regarding CSR-related challenges.	This includes the ability to mentally construct pictures of how CSR-related issues, CSR-related behaviors, key concepts, and theories will develop in the future. This competence also includes the ability to think critically and anticipate potential consequences of organizational and individual actions.
(C2) Understanding of the interdependency between systems and subsystems relevant to CSR practice.	This includes the ability to mentally visualize, understand, and analyze complex dynamic systems and issues across different dimensions and temporal scales of CSR-related issues. This suggests that when addressing CSR challenges CSR professionals need to be able to identify relevant systems and subsystems and understand and reflect upon their interdependencies. Moreover, CSR professionals must be able to evaluate the implications of solutions to CSR challenges on those systems.
(C3) Understanding CSR drivers, CSR standards, and CSR regulations.	When faced with CSR challenges, CSR professionals must understand how to apply and cope with important industrial, national and international regulations such as collective industrial standards, integrity pacts, and political processes. In addition to these legal aspects, CSR professionals must also understand social drivers and normative fundamentals of CSR challenges. Moreover, they must have the ability to construct functional rules (e.g., a code of conduct) and incentives in order to regulate the CSR-related behaviors of others.
Functional-Oriented Competence Domain	
(C4) Managing CSR projects and programs.	This includes the ability to translate strategy into concrete actions and correct misuse and pitfalls of the CSR concept. It also includes the ability to plan, implement, and manage projects, decisions, and strategies that support CSR. Moreover, CSR professionals must take responsibility for their company and society, take action despite inconclusive evidence, build critical alliances, develop and apply solutions to practical, logical, and CSR-related problems, raise funds, write CSR-related reports and proposals, and present results.
Social-Oriented Competence Domain	
(C5) Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes.	This includes the ability to motivate, enable, and facilitate collaboration and cooperation in working on CSR challenges. CSR professionals must: be persuasive; network (locally and globally); be able to identify a broad group of stakeholders; have good communication and networking skills; and work well in multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural collaborations. Moreover, CSR professionals must successfully manage, negotiate, and represent their company's interest while showing respect, navigating, and mapping distinctive ideas and inputs of stakeholders.
Meta-Oriented Competence Domain	
(C6) Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and affective attributes in CSR contexts.	These attributes are the basic ingredients of an employee's actions. CSR professionals must be ethical, empathic, committed, enthusiastic, creative, open-minded, flexible, patient, persistent, and pragmatic in their work.
(C7) Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences.	This includes the ability to recognize and challenge one's own prior ideas, habits, and assumptions, as well as to construct meaning from this self-evaluation. Thus, CSR professionals must use a self-evaluative and self-learning approach when working on CSR challenges.

Note. The competencies are presented according to the competence domain they emphasize and are ranked within each domain according to the numbers of articles from which the statements were derived.

The results of our systematic literature review were presented after the interviewer explored the CSR-related competencies that the CSR professional found to be personally important. This approach enabled the interviewee to propose relevant CSR-related competencies without being influenced by the competencies derived from the review. In addition, these initial competencies provided an indication of the importance of proposed competencies to CSR implementation, as we assumed that the interviewees would first address the competencies that they believe are most important in their CSR role.

Data Analyses and Synthesis

We performed a content analysis of the interview transcripts. The software program ATLAS.ti was used to organize and analyze the transcripts (for a detailed description of this program, see Friese, 2012). First, all interview transcripts were read thoroughly to identify meaningful passages in the interviewees' responses to the interview questions. Next, the first and third authors independently assigned codes to excerpts from the transcript. We used the seven competencies derived from the comprehensive review as coding categories in order to group these excerpts. We added an eighth category—which we called 'Others'—to account for interviewees' statements that involve new competencies or competence specifications that were not covered by the other coding categories. More than one code could be assigned to a single excerpt.

Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960) was calculated for each category (i.e., code) and revealed good agreement between the two coders, with Kappa values ranging from 0.61 to 0.79 (see Altman, 1991, p.404; Landis & Koch, 1977). Differences between the coders were discussed until agreement was reached. The two coders also discussed all statements that were coded as 'Other', and these statements were then either assigned to one of the other coding categories or grouped and assigned a new competence label.

To improve the robustness of our study findings, we presented our initial findings to a separate group of CSR directors and managers (who were not interviewed) and then gave them the opportunity to provide feedback. The integrated results—in which both review data and interview data are considered—are presented in the next section.

Overall Results

Our analysis of the interview transcripts and the synthesis of the seven competencies derived from the systematic literature review resulted in a final list of eight individual CSR-related competencies. These eight competencies and their definitions are listed below based on the competence domain that they emphasize (see Table 3.4. for example quotations).

Cognition-Oriented Competence Domain

(1) Foresight thinking: Anticipating future developments regarding CSR-related challenges.

This competence was confirmed by all 28 CSR professionals; moreover, seven of the 28 CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies that were identified from the review. This competence was deemed to be important in cases in which the professional was responsible for developing the company's CSR strategy. *Competence definition:* The CSR professional must be able to mentally construct scenarios to describe how CSR-related challenges will develop in the future and how these challenges might affect the company. This definition includes the ability to think critically and anticipate potential consequences for future local and global CSR-related challenges of decisions made by the company today.

(2) *Systems thinking: Understanding the interdependency between systems and subsystems that are relevant to CSR practice.*

Nearly all of the CSR professionals (27 out of 28) confirmed this competence; ten CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies that were derived from the review. However, in addition to the externally oriented definition that was derived from the systematic literature review (see Table 3.3.); the CSR professionals also identified an internally oriented component to this competence. *Competence definition:* Systems thinking is the ability to identify and understand relevant socio-ecological systems from different domains and disciplines and reflect on their interdependency.

This competence has both an internal component and an external component. Here, ‘external component’ refers to the ability to have a system-wide perspective on CSR challenges. Thus, the CSR professional must be familiar with relevant CSR themes and should be able to understand the interdependency of these themes (e.g., the “3Ps”, which describes the relationship between People, Planet, and Profit). Moreover, the CSR professional must understand the role of the supply chain and how the company should work together with other actors in its supply chain to address common CSR challenges. Furthermore, the CSR professional must understand how a particular commitment by the company can affect how the company contributes to local and global CSR challenges.

The ‘internal component’ reflects the notion that the company is perceived as a system comprised several interdependent subsystems (i.e., business units and disciplines). In this internal perspective, ‘systems thinking’ refers to the ability of a CSR professional to analyze CSR-related challenges in an interdisciplinary manner. Thus, the CSR professional must be able to identify and understand the company’s various business units, their interdependency, and how they together contribute to the company’s CSR program and CSR challenges at large.

(3) *Instrumental understanding: Understanding CSR-relevant standards and regulations.*

The CSR professionals noted the presence of both an instrumental component and a value-driven component in the competence “*Understanding CSR drivers, CSR standards, and CSR regulations*” that was identified from the comprehensive review. The CSR professionals perceived these components to involve two distinct competencies. The first competence refers to the ethically oriented component and is described below under ‘Ethical normative competencies’.

The second competence refers to the instrumental component and is labeled as ‘*Understanding CSR-relevant standards and regulations*’. This competence was confirmed by 20 of the 28 CSR professionals; seven of these CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies derived from the review. *Competence definition:* When faced with CSR challenges, a CSR professional must understand how the company should cope with and apply important industrial regulations (e.g., collective industrial standards and integrity pacts), national and international regulations, political processes, and corporate governance (such as codes of conduct). Moreover, the CSR professional should be able to contribute to the development of these standards for example by participating in roundtable meetings.

Functional-Oriented Competence Domain

(4) *CSR management competencies.*

The competence ‘*Managing CSR projects and programs*’ (as defined in the literature review) was recognized by all 28 CSR professionals, even though they indicated that the specification of the competence included competencies that were related to leadership and management. In addition, the CSR professionals emphasized the importance of CSR entrepreneurial competencies, which were not included in the competencies that were derived from the review. Thus, the competence specifications related to this competence can be divided into three groups.

Table 3.4. Integrated Results: CSR-related Competencies and Supporting Exemplar Quotations Extracted From the Articles Reviewed and the Interview Transcripts.

Competence	Exemplary Quotation	Source
1. Anticipating future developments regarding CSR-related challenges	<p>"Anticipatory competence is the ability to collectively analyze, evaluate, and craft rich 'pictures' of the future related to sustainability issues and sustainability problem-solving frameworks."</p> <p>"You should especially realize how much you do not know. More importantly, you should realize that the future can go in several directions, which can vary dramatically. Therefore, you should think of possible scenarios, analyze them, look at your options and make decision based on the scenario that is most likely to occur."</p> <p>"This has to do with the mission to understand what is going to happen in 5 or 15 years and translate it back into concrete actions for today. So foresight thinking is very very important."</p> <p>"The ability to understand the interactions of natural, societal, and economic processes in accomplishing the sustainable exploitation and utilisation of resources."</p>	<p>Wiek et al. 2011b, p. 207.</p> <p>Interviewee N, Manager Sustainability</p> <p>Interviewee E 1, Director sustainability</p> <p>Burkhardt-Holm and Chebbi, 2008, p. 139.</p>
2. Understanding of the interdependency between systems and subsystems relevant for CSR practice.	<p>"Ability to identify systems, to think holistically in order to be able to handle complexity and balance between different dimensions of SD (to discern patterns, to understand cause-effect relationships, to understand conceptual models of systems, etc.)."</p> <p>"CSR departments deal with different business groups. So you have a "unusual" position within the company and you always have to have that helicopter view on things. For example, imagine you have to give a business group advice on sustainability. You should realize that certain advices can be detrimental for other business groups. Therefore, you must understand how the internal and external system of this company operates."</p>	<p>Segalas et al. 2009, p. 24.</p> <p>Interviewee R, Sustainability manager, Engagement & Learning</p>
3. Understanding CSR drivers, CSR standards, and CSR regulations.	<p>"Understand the principles and importance of environmental legislation and identify the authorities responsible for its enforcement."</p> <p>"Know the social context (current state, discourse, politics) and theoretical approaches concerning sustainable development as an overall concept and mission. Know normative fundamentals, such as justice, environmental ethics, and the accompanying problems. Know social and societal drivers, and the utilisation conflicts arising from these."</p>	<p>Manoliadis 2009, p. 72.</p> <p>Manoliadis 2009, p. 72.</p>
	<p>"I have noticed that the technical component in this job is getting more and more important. It is important for me to know all about important regulations such as ISO 26000, GRI indicators for CSR reporting, Dow Jones indicators for the Dow Jones Sustainability Index."</p>	<p>Interviewee I, Manager CSR</p>

Table 3.4. Integrated Results: CSR-related Competencies and Supporting Exemplar Quotations Extracted From the Articles Reviewed and the Interview Transcripts (continued).

Competence	Exemplary Quotation	Source
4. a. CSR leadership competencies	"Strategic competence is the ability to collectively design and implement interventions... This capacity requires an intimate understanding of strategic concepts...; in simple terms, this competence is about being able to get things done."	Wiek et al., 2011b, p. 210.
	"The people who are driving CSR often have a "free role" within their company. The role is very amorphous. This is an important feature and these professionals need to be able to deal with this. They have a close relationship with the Board and at the same time are very connected with the operation; Strategy and operation are very connected for these professionals"	Interviewee A1, Manager CSR and sustainable development
	"You need a leader that is working on the sustainability strategy or vision. This person should be able to motivate and inspire others, should be able to see, I don't know 5, 10, 15 years ahead, and be able to translate that into what is happening now, and provide the guidance for others."	Interviewee E1, Director sustainability
4. b. Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunity	"In a sense it is a bit of entrepreneurship. The financial component, which should be included in your list, is gaining more importance in this job. I think we are slowly but surely coming to a point that you should be able to understand business models and know how your company can make money with CSR."	Interviewee I, Manager CSR
	"I think that sustainability programs should finance itself. Meaning, there should be a business case behind the sustainability program, in that raising funds is no longer an issue."	Interviewee J, Program manager Sustainability and Advisor Sustainability
4. c. Managing CSR implementation	"... formulate questions, plan projects, provide substantive and methodological guidance, integrate different viewpoints, and present results effectively."	Burkhardt-Holm and Chebbi, 2008, p. 139
	"you need someone who is pragmatic, is able to translate the sustainability program into individual mile stones, overall objectives, and targets. Who is able to translate these targets into concrete activities, assign people to these activities and set the budget. In addition you need someone who is able to manage all this, who is not necessarily the same person."	Interviewee L, Global director sustainable sourcing development,
5. Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes in CSR integration	"The important role that social and communication skills play for contributing to sustainable development was confirmed."	Hansmann et al. 2010, p. 283
	"This job is very much about finding common ground between a range of different actors. I do not know exactly how to name this competence, but is very often busy with communicating, lobbying and convincing others."	Interviewee B1, Group coordinator corporate responsibility
	"For me, this job is very much about people. I find it very important that you are able to convince others of the importance of CSR. You collaborate a lot with others, you need to know what triggers others and what are important cultural differences."	Interviewee G2, Sustainability officer

(4a) *CSR leadership competencies.* This competence was confirmed by 14 of the 28 CSR professionals; nine of these CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies derived from the review. This first group includes CSR leadership competencies. *Competence definition:* The CSR professional must be able to develop a CSR vision and give the company’s CSR program direction. This includes being prepared to take risks and seeks new ways to pursue CSR (i.e., being a pioneer) and thinking about future CSR developments, as well as how those developments might affect the company’s current CSR program.

(4b) *Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunities.* This competence was confirmed by 27 of the 28 CSR professionals; 25 of these CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies derived from the review. *Competence definition:* A CSR professional should also have entrepreneurial competencies. Thus, the CSR professional should be alert to trends in CSR and should be able to translate and realize these developments into business opportunities for the company. In order to do so, the CSR professional must have at least some business, organizational, and sector-specific knowledge, and the CSR professional must be able to make a business case for CSR. At the same time, the professional must not lose sight of the bigger picture (i.e., tackling local and global CSR challenges) and should therefore avoid the trap of thinking in terms of short-term financial gains. Moreover, to realize CSR-related business opportunities, the professional must be able to deal with the company’s formal and informal decision-making processes and its organizational politics and culture.

(4c) *Managing CSR implementation.* This competence was confirmed by all 28 CSR professionals; 24 CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies derived from the review. *Competence definition:* These change management-related and program management-related competencies include the ability to lead the transition toward CSR, to develop crucial alliances with important individuals both within and outside the company, and to deal with ‘resistance to change’ by inspiring and motivating others. The CSR professional must be able to translate a strategy into individual milestones, targets, and concrete actions. The CSR professional must also be able to organize, facilitate, and manage this process and the people involved, all within the specified timeframe and budget. To do so, the professional must have good problem-solving skills, and he/she must be able to prepare reports and present results in a clear and convincing manner.

Social-Oriented Competence Domain

(5) *Interpersonal competencies: Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes in CSR implementation.*

This competence was recognized by all 28 CSR professionals, and all 28 professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies derived from the review. *Competence definition:* The CSR professional must have good social, communication, and networking skills, as he/she must be able to raise awareness of CSR, as well as challenge and stimulate ownership of CSR in others. Moreover, the CSR professional should be able to coach and help others integrate CSR into their daily work. Finally, the CSR professional must be able to work well in multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural collaborations, and he/she must be able to represent the company’s interests while mapping and showing respect to distinctive ideas and inputs of stakeholders.

Meta-Oriented Competence Domain

(6) *Personal attributes and attitudes: Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes.*

This competence was confirmed by all 28 CSR professionals; 26 CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies derived from the review. *Competence definition:* In implementing CSR in his/her company, the CSR professional must deal with various stakeholders, each of whom can have their own unique interests. Moreover, CSR implementation is a process of change that involves changing people’s mindset. Thus, CSR professionals

Table 3.4. Integrated Results: CSR-related Competencies and Supporting Exemplar Quotations Extracted From the Articles Reviewed and the Interview Transcripts (continued).

Competence	Exemplary Quotation	Source
6. Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes	<p>"...perseverance, hardheadedness, and patience were most important, followed by enthusiasm, commitment, and clear goals or visions (...). These responses show that sustainability-oriented values and personal involvement are important components of ... environmental problem-solving ability."</p> <p>"The people who are leading CSR are solid and autonomous thinkers. They have a clear view on things, not that they do not listen to others, but they have strong opinions about things. They are often authentic or original thinkers. They do not do or say things because others do so. So they are somewhat stubborn."</p> <p>"I often say that if you want to drive your company toward sustainability, you will have to learn how to walk. It is not about how you fall in case of resistance, rather it is about how to stand up and move forward again. Resilience is the word I am looking for."</p> <p>"You have to have perseverance because you will often encounter people who are not willing to change immediately. Also, because my company operated internationally, it also has to respond to local challenges in a manner that fits that particular context. Thus, you should be flexible as a CSR professional because the same "solution" may not help in that particular context."</p>	<p>Hansmann et al. 2010, p. 283</p> <p>Interviewee A1, Manager CSR and sustainable development</p> <p>Interviewee O, Senior advisor and strategist Sustainability</p> <p>Interviewee T, Manager Global Sustainable Development,</p>
7.a. Ethical normative competencies	<p>"It often comes back to your personal values. For me CSR should be something that is embedded within yourself. What are your values? Something that you are intrinsic motivated about, and which is not forced upon you."</p> <p>"you should fundamentally believe that a company or an organization should take into account its environment. You should believe that in life people should do the right things, which means you should take into account stakeholders' perspective on things. You should be intrinsic driven, You should not work in this job function if you are driven by carrier, progress or sales. That will not work."</p>	<p>Interviewee D2, Manager Portfolio & Innovation</p> <p>Interviewee Q, Director Corporate Communication & CSR</p>
7.b. Balancing personal ethical values and business objectives	<p>"I am constantly stressing addressing global sustainability challenges. However, you are working for a company, so you should also safeguard the continuity of the company. It is about balancing opposites. I sometimes felt that I had to make my personal values about sustainability digestible for the business context. My former CEO, who strongly believes in sustainability, sometimes called me his "internal NGO."</p>	<p>Interviewee I, Manager CSR</p>

Table 3.4. Integrated Results: CSR-related Competencies and Supporting Exemplar Quotations Extracted From the Articles Reviewed and the Interview Transcripts (continued).

Competence	Exemplary Quotation	Source
7 c. Realizing self-regulated CSR-related behavior and active involvement	<p><i>"The leadership style from sustainability "leaders" like Al Gore, the guy from Patagonia, and the guys from Unilever, their leadership styles facilitates the development of activities but mainly before the facilitating happens you need to inspire others, and you inspire by driving initiatives. And this is what these people have done. This means that you sometimes need to execute an initiative yourself, so you provide those who need to execute them with examples or you need to inspire others with what others have done. You do not have to do it, but you need to show what others have done and how they have done it and probably help with the translation to your own organization."</i></p> <p><i>"Self-learning" and "Ability to reflect on the professional role and responsibility as well as citizenship in relation to SD in a structured way."</i></p>	Interviewee E1, Director sustainability
8. Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences.	<p><i>"You should reflect on your own actions. You must be able to put things in perspective otherwise you can get really frustrated because you want and you know your company should act more rapidly to address sustainability challenges, such as climate change, than it does."</i></p> <p><i>"Reflecting on your own actions and assumption is not only important for CSR-related jobs. In any job you should always reflect on how you went about doing thing, what the effects were, how and why you should do things differently the next time, and what lessons you can learn from this. This is a competence that is very embedded in me and how I conduct my job."</i></p>	Segaas et al. 2009, p. 24 Interviewee S, Director Corporate Responsibility Interviewee B2, Development manager and Lawyer

often encounter resistance to change and will need to possess certain personal characteristics and attitudes in order to address these challenges. The most commonly mentioned features include patience, resilience, flexibility, a realistic attitude, pragmatism, innovativeness, empathy, and a positive attitude. These features are similar to the features that were derived from our systematic literature review.

(7) Personal value-driven competencies.

An important remark made by the CSR professionals regarding the list of CSR-related competencies that we derived from the literature review is that the competencies seemed to be somewhat instrumental. The CSR professionals stressed the importance of competencies that are more related to one's ethical values; the professionals felt that these competencies are specifically important to CSR professionals. The analysis of the interview data resulted in three sets of competencies that are related to the CSR professional's personal ethical values.

(7a) Ethical normative competencies. This competence was confirmed by 24 of the 28 CSR professionals; 16 of these CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies derived from the review. As mentioned above, the CSR professionals noted the presence of an instrumental component and a value-driven component in the competence 'Understanding CSR drivers, CSR standards, and CSR regulations' as defined in the systematic literature review. This competence involves the value-driven component and is related to the content of CSR challenges. *Competence definition:* The CSR professional is convinced of the urgency of CSR challenges and is intrinsically driven (i.e., intrinsic motivated) to address these challenges. This competence involves the ability to apply one's personal ethical standards and values while assessing CSR-related issues.

(7b) Balancing personal ethical values and business objectives. This competence was confirmed by 20 of the 28 CSR professionals; 15 of these CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies derived from the review. *Competence definition:* This competence is functionally oriented and includes the ability to strike a balance between idealism and pragmatism. Thus, the CSR professional must have the adaptive capacity to pursue both financial objectives and CSR objectives without losing sight of (or overstepping) his/her personal ethical boundaries and values.

(7c) Realizing self-regulated CSR-related behavior and active involvement. This competence was suggested by 25 of the 28 CSR professionals; nine of these CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies derived from the review. *Competence definition:* This competence involves the ability to apply one's personal ethical standards and values to CSR implementation. The CSR professional feels personally responsible for behaving ethically and assumes this responsibility. The CSR professional is actively involved in the implementation of CSR by being action-oriented and decisive; the CSR professional also serves as a role model for others by performing CSR-related activities. This competence is functionally oriented and is interpreted in practice as the congruence between what you stand for, what you say, and what you do.

(8) Reflection competence: Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences.

This competence was confirmed by 24 of the 28 CSR professionals; only one of these CSR professionals proposed this competence—or elements thereof—before viewing the competencies derived from the review. *Competence definition:* This competence includes the ability to recognize and challenge one's own prior ideas, habits, and assumptions, as well as the ability to derive meaning from this self-evaluation. Thus, CSR professionals use self-evaluation and self-learning approaches when working on CSR challenges.

Conclusion and Discussion

The synthesis of the review and the interview data resulted in the following eight individual CSR-related competencies for CSR implementation: (1) *Anticipating CSR challenges*; (2) *Understanding CSR-relevant systems and subsystems*; (3) *Understanding CSR-relevant standards*; (4) *CSR management competencies, including (4a) Leading CSR programs, (4b) Managing CSR programs, and (4c) Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunities*; (5) *Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes*; (6) *Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes*; (7) *Personal value-driven competencies, including (7a) Ethical normative competencies, (7b) Balancing personal ethical values and business objectives, and (7c) Realizing self-regulated CSR-related behavior and active involvement*; and (8) *Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences*.

These competencies are interrelated and applied in an integrated manner in practice (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton's, 2005) as the example of Starbucks's efforts to improve the sustainability of their coffee supply makes clear. Starbucks is faced with a challenging coffee market (Lee et al. 2007). They are specialized in specialty coffee and are operating on a market where market prices for coffee beans are down due to the oversupply of lower-grade coffee. This makes it hard for coffee farmers to earn sufficient money to stay in business. Starbucks success depends on a steady supply of high-quality coffee beans, making the company therefore highly interdependent with the coffee farmers. Starbucks started educating and providing loans to the farmers to help secure farmers' livelihood. As such, Starbucks is now contributing to a more sustainable supply chain by addressing their social responsibility (Lee et al. 2007). This example shows that CSR professionals needed to employ several competencies simultaneously. They needed to have (1) foresighted thinking to identify potential CSR-related challenges for their business, (2) systems thinking to acknowledge the interdependency between Starbucks and other important actors within the coffee supply chain (e.g., farmers), (3) business-oriented and *personal value-oriented* competencies to think of an intervention that is beneficial for both the company and the farmers; (4) and finally active involvement and management competencies to ensure that the intervention is properly implemented.

Several patterns emerged when we looked at the study results more closely. First, taking Delamare Le Deist and Winterton's (2005) perspective on the concept of competence, the articles that we reviewed seem to emphasize cognition-oriented competencies for CSR; nearly every article contained explicit statements regarding knowledge requirements. An emphasis that was also signified by Rieckmann (2012). However, although the CSR professionals recognized and acknowledged all seven competencies derived from the systematic literature review—including the cognition-oriented competencies—they highlighted particularly non-cognitive competencies that are needed for successful interpersonal processes and for realizing CSR-related business opportunities; they also highlighted specific CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes.

Second, because CSR is highly normative concept, one would expect the literature to report more about the personal and ethical attitudes and values that are needed when addressing CSR-related challenges; however, this was not the case in the reviewed articles; only seven of the 18 articles mentioned relevant attitudes. On the other hand, the interviewed CSR professionals particularly stressed the importance of competencies related to their personal values, including being intrinsically driven, being able to balance personal ethical values and business objectives, and identifying CSR challenges and taking responsibility for those challenges (cf. Rieckmann, 2012). The latter competence is related to what is referred to as "action competence" in ESD literature. Action competence refers to the moral transformation from a passive attitude with respect to sustainability issues into an active and engaged attitude, affecting all aspects of an individual's life (Lans et al., 2014; Rieckmann, 2012). Most studies on action competence are theoretical in nature. Our empirical findings provide support to formulate a more practical interpretation of this concept, namely "actively engaging oneself in the process of CSR implementation". It could be that compared to educational settings, in a business context more emphasis is put on

proactive involvement because it can help CSR professionals take that next step in actually implementing their company's CSR program. Future research could provide more insights into the role of action competence in realizing effective CSR implementation.

Finally, the third pattern that emerged from our findings is that the CSR professionals interviewed proposed additional CSR-related competencies (e.g., *Leading and managing CSR programs, Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunities, and Active involvement*), that were not represented fully in our systematic literature review. Thus, at the time of the review, important business-oriented individual competencies were not being researched in the context of CSR. A recent study regarding sustainable entrepreneurship (i.e., the contribution of entrepreneurial endeavors to CSR) concluded that pursuing sustainable entrepreneurship includes both sustainability competencies and entrepreneurial competencies (Lans et al., 2014), thereby indicating the importance of including business-oriented competencies when driving change toward CSR in a corporate context. Both of these perspectives were taken into account in the interviews that we conducted in the present study.

A possible reason for the difference between the competencies found in the literature and the competencies proposed by the CSR professionals regards companies' maturity in CSR. A thorough implementation of CSR is a continuous process in which several distinct stages can be found (Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2009). Often in the first stages of CSR implementation (sensitize stage), CSR professionals have to raise awareness of and gather support for CSR within their companies. After an explicit CSR strategy is chosen by board of directors, CSR professionals need to assess their company's societal role, establish a vision and working definition of CSR, assess their company's current CSR status, and (help) develop an integrated strategic plan for CSR (unfreeze stage). Next, CSR professionals need to manage and evaluate the change toward CSR (move stage), which in due time can become part of their company's core systems, culture, and values (refreeze stage; Maon et al., 2009). In each stage there is a different emphasis on the competencies that are required of CSR professionals.

Taking the process of CSR implementation into account, the results of the systematic literature review seem to focus on the initial stages of CSR implementation in which CSR professionals are working on positioning CSR within the company, and therefore need to know a lot about CSR (cognition-oriented competencies) and to be able to convince others of its importance (interpersonal competencies). The interviews with CSR professionals provided additional competencies that are important in more advanced stages of CSR implementation. In these stages companies have expressed a commitment to CSR and the focus is on developing and implementing their CSR program. At this stage more business-oriented competencies are required of CSR professionals as these two excerpts from the interviews seem to suggest:

"These content-related competencies and social competencies are important when you need to convince decision makers to invest in sustainability. And yes, on the one hand it is important to be patient. But you know, we do not need to be patient anymore. I mean nowadays it is clear what change we need. We are in crisis everywhere. If you look at when the group in Rome first talked about sustainability or the United Nations in Brazil about climate change and all that...it has been over 20 years already! (...) No we do not need to convince and be patient anymore. What we need is action and you have to be able to bring about this action. (Interviewee E1, Director Sustainability)"

"Before I was really pioneering, I needed to convince people of the need for sustainability. I really needed to be patient and know a lot about sustainability and about which aspects are important for the company, because I constantly needed to inform others and increase their awareness about sustainability. (...) Nowadays everybody understands that there is a limit to what we are doing, that we have limited resources, that we have climate change issues. So convincing others is not a big part of my job anymore. Other competencies are important now,

such as entrepreneurial competencies and being driven to constantly push my company's CSR performance to higher levels that go beyond compliance to regulations and risk management to really try to tackle sustainability issues. (...) In a sense it is a bit of entrepreneurship. The financial component, which should be included in your list, is gaining more importance in this job. I think we are slowly but surely coming to a point that you should be able to understand business models and know how your company can make money with CSR." (Interviewee I, Manager CSR)"

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

We present here one of the first scientific studies to provide a broad, empirical outlook on individual competencies for CSR implementation. This outlook resulted from synthesizing insights from both educational literature and managerial literature with insights gained from interviewing CSR directors and CSR managers. Nevertheless, our results should be interpreted with a degree of caution. First, because the present study was explorative in nature we did not distinguish in company's maturity in CSR when identifying relevant individual CSR-related competencies. As our results seem to suggest, it is quite possible that CSR professionals need different competencies for different stages in CSR implementation. Future studies could yield more insights into which competencies are of particular concern in the different stages of getting CSR implemented in the company.

A second caveat of this study is that all of the mentioned CSR-relevant competencies were included in the findings, regardless of the number of articles or CSR professionals that provided support for them. Therefore, no conclusive statements can be made with respect to which competencies are particularly important in driving change toward CSR implementation. Future research should be designed to determine which competence or competencies are unique and decisive in achieving effective CSR implementation and practice.

Practical Implications

Our results provide several directions for practical implications, in particular for those companies that are committed to CSR. First, world's leading CEOs have expressed the need to improve their managers' and leaders' competencies and mindsets to address CSR-related challenges (Accenture, 2010). Our results provide these leaders with key insights into the competencies which these managers should develop. The results seem to propose that different competencies are needed for different stages of CSR implementation, which suggests that CEOs should be careful in selecting the right professionals to manage the change toward CSR. It might very well be the case that companies should select their CSR professionals based on the fit of professionals' competencies and the company's current maturity in CSR and ambitions with respect to CSR, though further research is needed for more conclusive statements. Second, our findings provide those professionals, who are already working on CSR implementation, with criteria to reflect upon their own competencies. It shows that CSR implementation involves more than the attainment of knowledge about CSR. Our findings provide them with key competencies they should have or should develop in order to promote higher levels of CSR implementation in their company. Our proposed CSR-related competencies can serve as a template for designing CSR-related training and learning activities. It is expected that comprehensive attention for the development of the proposed competencies in key persons in companies will facilitate effective CSR implementation.

Appendix 3.1. CSR Professionals' Specifications

Company	Interviewee's ID	Gender	Age	Job Title	Job Experience (years)	Sector ^a	Certified GRI complaint ^c
A	A1	Male	47	Manager CSR and Sustainable Development ^b	7.5	Banks and Insurance	GRI
	A2	Male	34	Business Developer Sustainability	6	Banks and Insurance	GRI
B	B1	Male	38	Group Coordinator Corporate Responsibility ^b	4	Service	external
	B2	Female	44	Development manager and Lawyer ^b	16	Service	external
C	C1	Male	48	Manager HR Europe	13	Retail	external
	C2	Male	36	Manager CSR & Quality ^b	2	Retail	external
D	D1	Female	50	Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability lead and Health manager ^b	7.5	Service	self
	D2	Female	50	Manager Portfolio & Innovation	10	Service	self
E	E1	Male	40	Director Sustainability	6	Consumer products	external
	E2	Female	39	Sustainability manager supply ^b	8	Consumer products	external
F	F1	Male	55	Manager Compliance	4	Service	GRI
	F2	Male	27	Compliance officer ^b	2	Service	GRI
G	G1	Female	48	Program manager CSR	2.5	Banks and Insurance	external
	G2	Male	48	Sustainability Officer ^b	5	Banks and Insurance	external
H	H1	Male	43	Director Sourcing & Sustainability ^b	2	Transport	external
	H2	Male	33	Project manager Sustainable Contracting	1.5	Transport	external
I	I	Female	40	Manager CSR	5	Food and Drink	external
J	J	Male	34	Program manager Sustainability and Advisor Sustainability ^b	2	Service	self
K	K	Male	42	Manager CSR	3	Energy, Oil, and Gas	GRI
L	L	Male	57	Global director sustainable sourcing development ^b	18	Food and Drink	external
M	M	Female	43	Corporate Responsibility Office ^b	1	Service	external
N	N	Female	36	Manager Sustainability ^b	3	Energy, Oil, and Gas	GRI
O	O	Male	44	Senior advisor and strategist Sustainability ^b	17	Banks and Insurance	GRI
P	P	Male	53	Manager Safety, Health, Environment, & Quality ^b	5	Banks and Insurance	external
Q	Q	Male	50	Director Corporate Communication & CSR	12	Food and Drink	external
R	R	Female	49	Sustainability manager, Engagement, & Learning ^b	20	Technology	external
S	S	Female	45	Director Corporate Responsibility ^b	1	Industrial	external
T	T	Female	40	Manager Global Sustainable Development	3	Service	external
				Manager Global Sustainable Development	3	Food and Drink	external

Note. *a* Sector categorization is based on The Transparency Benchmark 2012. *b* = respondent included in questionnaire sample described in Chapter 4.

c = certified by GRI; GRI, external; external auditor, self; self-certified.

3

Chapter 4

Contextualizing Individual Competencies for Managing the Corporate Social Responsibility Adaptation Process: The Apparent Influence of the Business Case Logic.⁸

Companies committed to corporate social responsibility (CSR) should ensure that their managers possess the appropriate competencies to effectively manage the CSR adaptation process. The literature provides insights into the individual competencies these managers need, but fails to prioritize them and adequately contextualize them in a manner that makes them meaningful in practice. In this study, we contextualized the competencies within the different job roles CSR managers have in the CSR adaptation process. We interviewed 28 CSR managers, followed by a survey to explore the relative importance of the competencies within each job role. Based on our analysis, we identified six distinct managerial roles, including strategizing, coordinating, and stimulating roles. Next, we identified per role key individual CSR-related competencies as prioritized by the respondents. Our results show that the context, as indicated in this study by CSR managers' job roles, indeed influenced the importance of particular CSR-related competencies, because each role seems to require a different combination and prioritization of these competencies. Moreover, the results suggest that the relative importance of these competencies within each role may be driven by business logic rather than an idealistic logic. The results are presented as a competence profile which can serve as a reflection tool and as a frame of reference to further develop the competence profile for CSR managers.

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4.

Introduction

In addition to ensuring profits for their shareholders, companies should also account for their societal and environmental performance. Most companies address these issues through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. CSR is often referred to as a company's continuing commitment to integrate ecological, social, and economic concerns in company's operations and in its interactions with stakeholders; CSR is usually done on a voluntary basis (Dahlsrud, 2008). Some companies include CSR in their strategic agenda, as they consider it their moral obligation to ensure economic prosperity as well as to contribute to society; others view CSR primarily as a business opportunity (Banerjee, 2001), engage in CSR in response to external pressures (Marano & Kostova, 2016), or are motivated by a combination of these factors (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Regardless of the nature of their decision, a company's CSR ambition and resulting CSR-related activities can benefit stakeholders, including the company's employees, local communities, and environmental representatives (Nguyen & Slater, 2010; Veldhuizen, Blok, Dentoni, & 2013). For example, CSR can attract highly competent workers via the promise of favorable working conditions (Greening & Turban, 2000), and potentially increase company's financial performance (Tang, Hull, & Rothenberg, 2012; Van Beurden & Gössling, 2008). Thus, understanding how a company can improve its CSR performance is highly relevant for all stakeholders involved.

For companies that perceive CSR as a strategic objective, adapting to CSR principles involves more than simply implementing CSR in isolated business practices (e.g., sustainable procurement) or developing a code of conduct. These companies need to pay continuous attention to the adaptation process because CSR challenges are complex, meaning that there is no definite formulation of what the problem is because it is ever-changing and context-dependent (Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2009; Rittel & Webber 1973). Thus, strategic CSR requires a continuous adaption process in which a company's structure and competencies are continuously developed to improve or maintain company's effectiveness in dealing with the changing needs of internal and external stakeholders (Moran & Brightman, 2001). As such, it is generally accepted that companies should internalize CSR into business processes, policies, and systems when aiming to establish CSR practices that are effective in the long run (Holder-Webb, Cohen, Nath, & Wood, 2009; Jamali, 2008). For many established companies, however, adapting to and internalizing CSR principles remains a significant challenge (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Consequently, many scholars have studied factors that can facilitate the CSR adaptation process and have proposed CSR change models (e.g., Vidal, Kozak, & Hansen, 2015).

Scholars have also studied the role and influence of company's human capital on the CSR adaptation process. That is, managers and leaders play a crucial role in change processes, as they greatly influence employees' work behavior and because they can increase employees' commitment to achieving company's goals with respect to the change by being visible and supportive toward the intended change (Burge, 2003; Furst & Cable, 2008). As such, many scholars study CSR leadership and management by primarily addressing the role and support of the CEO. However, Waldman, Siegel, and Javidan (2006) call for more research on CSR leadership and management at various levels within a company, because other professionals within the company are usually the ones who actually drive and manage the CSR adaptation process. This study focusses on these professionals, who are referred here to as CSR managers.

There is some research available on the job profile of CSR managers. Several of these studies focus on characteristics such as managers' cognitive style (Wong, Ormiston, & Tetloch, 2011) and personality and values (e.g., Fernández, Junquera & Ordiz, 2006). Most recently, there is an emergent research area that focusses on the individual competencies that are needed by CSR managers (e.g., Osagie, Wesselink, Blok, Lans, & Mulder, 2016; Rieckmann, 2012). These studies provide laundry lists of individual competencies including competencies such as "systems thinking" and

“anticipatory thinking”. However, in order for the proposed individual competencies to be meaningful and useful for practitioners and as such contribute to the company’s strategic objectives, the competencies must be contextualized in such a way that they can inform current and future CSR managers about effective behavior in the CSR adaptation process (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). To date such contextualization is largely lacking. Moreover, there is still the question whether CSR managers need to develop all of the proposed individual competencies, or whether there are particular competencies that must be emphasized due, for example, to job roles they have in the CSR adaptation process. Contextualization can help to prioritize these CSR-related individual competencies.

An accepted way to contextualize work-related behavior, such as competencies, is to determine the job roles and tasks needed to reach a specific objective (Johns, 2006). A job role can be perceived as a set of related tasks that is assigned to a person. Several roles can be assigned to one individual, and each role can require a specific set of competencies (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2007). Therefore, our aim is to contextualize the proposed CSR competencies within the CSR manager’s job roles. In doing so, this study adds to the existing literature regarding individual CSR-related competencies by (1) empirically identifying and exploring the important job roles CSR managers have in the CSR adaptation process, and by (2) exploring the relative importance of the individual competencies that are proposed in the literature within these job roles. Gaining insight into these matters will help frame the context in which CSR managers’ behavior should be interpreted by researchers and practitioners. Furthermore, this study will provide practitioners and researchers with an initial competence profile which can guide CSR managers’ personal reflection process and which researchers can use as an initial step to further develop the competence profile for CSR managers.

The remaining sections of this paper are organized as follows. First, we will elaborate on the concept of “competence” and relate it to the concept of dynamic capabilities. Next, we will discuss the literature regarding individual competencies with respect to the CSR adaptation process and the importance of identifying relevant job roles. Third, we will describe the methods used in this study. Fourth, we will present our findings. Finally, we will discuss the study’s theoretical and practical contributions.

Theoretical Framework

Dynamic Capabilities and Competencies

Several scholars have stressed the importance of dynamic capabilities for strategic CSR. According to the dynamic capability perspective, companies generate and sustain competitive advantages through their dynamic capabilities. These capabilities refer to a company’s capacity to integrate, reconfigure, renew, and update its resources in response to the changing environment (Teece et al., 1994; 1997; Wang & Ahmed, 2007). The ever-changing nature of CSR challenges makes such dynamic capabilities especially important for companies aiming for strategic advantages through CSR.

Ramachandran (2011) identified two essential dynamic capabilities needed for strategic CSR success, namely “sense and respond capability” and “execution capability”. *Sense and respond capability* refers to a company’s ability to sense and identify relevant CSR challenges and to design an adequate response to these challenges and *execution capability* refers to a company’s ability to integrate internal and external resources into sub-combinations and new combinations of resources (Ramachandran, 2011, p. 288). By making explicit that the dynamic capability perspective includes the ability to sense changes within the environment, Ramachandran (2011) addresses a critique of this perspective on CSR, which is that little attention is paid to the ability to sense and identify environmental changes (here CSR challenges; see Day, 1994). However, a company’s dynamic capability originates, at least in part, from the individual competencies of its members; individuals

within the company utilize, adjust, and improve their competencies through feedback processes, and share it with others to embed the competencies within the organization and make it an organizational capability (cf. Heugens, 2006). This learning process can transform superior individual competencies of key actors with decision-making and boundary spanning job roles into “sense and respond capability” and “execution capability” (Ramachandran, 2011). In other words, the individual competencies of CSR managers, as important decision-makers, may be an important source for a company to develop the capabilities to effectively deal with changing societal demands with respect to CSR. Therefore this study focuses on CSR managers’ individual competencies.

The Concept of Individual Competence

As described in the previous section, individual competencies of CSR manager may stimulate the CSR adaptation process. The concept of individual competence has a relatively long history in business literature. It became popular in the business literature due to the disconnection between formal education and professional practice (Grant et al., 1979). Competence profiles were created to ensure a good fit between the individual competencies developed in school and the individual competencies required for effective performance in practice. The profiles provide a structured overview of the critical elements required for effective performance. However, the way in which individual competence is conceptualized largely determines the way in which essential work behaviors are described.

One can distinguish three dominant perspectives for approaching the concept of competence (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). With the *behavioral approach* (Neumann, 1979), one focusses on atomized behaviors and knowledge elements required to perform specific tasks. With the *generic approach* (Eraut, 1994) one focusses on underlying personal characteristics (e.g., knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or personal attributes) that separate successful performers from less successful performers and that are applicable in multiple contexts. Nowadays, most researchers use a more *comprehensive approach* that takes the complexity of the practice into account without resulting in fragmented behavior requirements- in order to identify competencies and develop competence profiles (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). In the comprehensive approach, which we also used in the present study, one focuses on the work, on the professional, and on contextualizing the competencies. Here, individual competence can be defined as a professional’s integrated performance-oriented ability to achieve specific objectives. This ability is a cohesive combination of knowledge elements, skills, and other elements of being (e.g., attitudes; cf. Sandberg & Pinnington, 2009). Each element can be seen as a specification of a competence and is situated in the context in which performance must be successful (Mulder, 2014).

Contextualizing Individual Competencies for CSR

Many scholars denote the importance that context has on work behavior (e.g., Griffin, 2007; Johns, 2006; Robert & Fulop, 2014; Whetten, 2009). In its broadest definition, these so-called context effects refer to “the set of factors surrounding a phenomenon that exert some direct or indirect influence on it” (Whetten, 2009, p. 31). Considering the role of these effects on work behavior is important (Johns, 2006; Whetten, 2009) because it shapes our understanding and evaluation of effective work behavior, which is of particular relevance in the current study. In other words, a specific work behavior (e.g., using medical terminology) can be highly effective in one context (e.g., among surgeons) yet largely ineffective in a different context (e.g., with patients).

According to Johns (2006), there are two broad levels of contextualization, commonly referred to as the “omnibus-level” and the “discrete-level”. With the *omnibus-level*, the focus is on a broad consideration of the context as a whole. For example,

one is interested in questions such as *who* (e.g., profession) or *what* (e.g., work behavior) has been studied, as well as questions such as *when* (e.g., an absolute or relative period of time), *where* (e.g., the country), and *why* the phenomena were studied. With the *discrete-level* of contextualization, the focus is on the particular consideration of the context that shapes one's behavior. This level is nested within the omnibus-level, and examples of contextual factors at the discrete-level include *specific job roles and tasks* (e.g., the stimulating role), *social components* (e.g., values), and *physical components* (e.g., physical working conditions).

Studies that attempt to identify individual CSR competencies regularly use the omnibus-level of contextualizing relevant competencies, thereby applying the omnibus factor of the CSR profession. Often, these studies are intended to aid curriculum development in education for sustainable development (ESD), making it important that the competencies are broadly applicable. As a consequence, the competencies lose their connection with the context in which CSR professionals have to operate. Wiek, Withycombe, and Redman's (2011) study, for example, identified relevant sustainability competencies for CSR professionals that can guide the development of academic ESD programs. Based on the results of their literature review, they formulated the following five key competencies: systems thinking competence, anticipatory competence, normative competence, strategic competence, and interpersonal competence. Similarly, De Haan (2006) identified twelve individual competencies (such as foresighted thinking and being able to work interdisciplinary). According to De Haan, these twelve competencies enable active, reflective, and co-operative participation toward sustainable development. Conducting a Delphi study among 70 ESD experts, Rieckmann (2012) formulated 12 key competencies that students in ESD programs should develop when training for a CSR-related profession. Among these 12 competencies, systemic thinking, anticipatory thinking, and critical thinking are considered to be the most important ones (Rieckmann, 2012).

More recently scholars focused on individual CSR-related competencies within a business context. In one of the first empirical studies in this context, Willard et al. (2010) composed six key skills that are needed for success as a CSR professional. With respect to hard skills, strategic planning, systems thinking, and project management skills were deemed most important to enable a strategic approach. With respect to soft skills, communication skills, problem solving skills, and inspirational skills were deemed most important. Using a more comprehensive approach to the concept of competence, Osagie and her colleagues (2016) conducted a mixed method study in which they systematically reviewed CSR-literature on individual competencies; they also interviewed CSR managers responsible for the CSR adaptation process. Their analyses resulted in eight distinct individual CSR-related competencies for the CSR profession (see Table 4.1. for more detailed description of these competencies): (1) Anticipating CSR-related challenges; (2) Understanding CSR-relevant systems and subsystems; (3) Understanding CSR-relevant standards; (4) CSR management competencies, including (4a) Leading CSR programs, (4b) Managing CSR programs, and (4c) Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunities; (5) Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes; (6) Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes; (7) Personal value-driven competencies, including (7a) Ethical normative competencies, (7b) Balancing personal ethical values and business objectives, and (7c) Realizing self-regulated CSR-related behaviors and active involvement; and (8) Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences.

Table 4.1. Individual CSR-related Competencies (Osagie et al., 2016)

Competence Label	Competence Description
Cognition-Oriented Competence Domain	
(1). Anticipating CSR-related challenges	The CSR professional must be able to mentally construct scenarios to describe how CSR-related challenges will develop in the future and how these challenges might affect the company. This definition includes the ability to think critically and anticipate potential consequences for future local and global CSR-related challenges of decisions made by the company today.
(2). Understanding CSR-relevant systems and subsystems	Systems thinking is the ability to identify and understand relevant socio-ecological systems from different domains and disciplines and reflect on their interdependency. This competence has both an internal component and an external component. Here, 'external component' refers to the ability to have a system-wide perspective on CSR challenges. The 'internal component' reflects the notion that the company is perceived as a system comprised of several interdependent subsystems (i.e., business units and disciplines). In this internal perspective, 'systems thinking' refers to the ability of a CSR professional to analyze CSR-related challenges in an interdisciplinary manner.
(3). Understanding CSR drivers, CSR standards, and CSR regulations.	When faced with CSR challenges, a CSR professional must understand how the company should cope with and apply important industrial regulations (e.g., collective industrial standards and integrity pacts), national and international regulations, political processes, and corporate governance (such as codes of conduct). Moreover, the CSR professional should be able to contribute to the development of these standards for example by participating in roundtable meetings.
Functional-Oriented Competence Domain	
(4a). CSR leadership competencies	The CSR professional must be able to develop a CSR vision and give the company's CSR program direction. This includes being prepared to take risks and seeks new ways to pursue CSR (i.e., being a pioneer) and thinking about future CSR developments, as well as how those developments might affect the company's current CSR program.
(4b). Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunities	A CSR professional should also have entrepreneurial competencies. Thus, the CSR professional should be alert to trends in CSR and should be able to translate and realize these developments into business opportunities for the company. In order to do so, the CSR professional must have at least some business, organizational, and sector-specific knowledge, and the CSR professional must be able to make a business case for CSR. At the same time, the professional must not lose sight of the bigger picture (i.e., tackling local and global CSR challenges) and should therefore avoid the trap of thinking in terms of short-term financial gains. Moreover, to realize CSR-related business opportunities, the professional must be able to deal with the company's formal and informal decision-making processes and its organizational politics and culture.
(4c). Managing CSR implementation	These change management-related and program management-related competencies include the ability to lead the transition toward CSR, to develop crucial alliances with important individuals both within and outside the company, and to deal with 'resistance to change' by inspiring and motivating others. The CSR professional must be able to translate a strategy into individual milestones, targets, and concrete actions. The CSR professional must also be able to organize, facilitate, and manage this process and the people involved, all within the specified timeframe and budget. To do so, the professional must have good problem-solving skills, and he/she must be able to prepare reports and present results in a clear and convincing manner.

Table 4.1. Individual CSR-related Competencies (continued; Osagie et al., 2016).

Competence Label	Competence Description
Social-Oriented Competence Domain	
(5). Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes	The CSR professional must have good social, communication, and networking skills, as he/she must be able to raise awareness of CSR, as well as challenge and stimulate ownership of CSR in others. Moreover, the CSR professional should be able to coach and help others integrate CSR into their daily work. Finally, the CSR professional must be able to work well in multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural collaborations, and he/she must be able to represent the company's interests while mapping and showing respect to distinctive ideas and inputs of stakeholders.
Meta-Oriented Competence Domain	
(6). Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes	In implementing CSR in his/her company, the CSR professional must deal with various stakeholders, each of whom can have their own unique interests. Moreover, CSR implementation is a process of change that involves changing people's mindset. Thus, CSR professionals often encounter resistance to change and will need to possess certain personal characteristics and attitudes in order to address these challenges. The most commonly mentioned features include patience, resilience, flexibility, a realistic attitude, pragmatism, innovativeness, empathy, and a positive attitude.
(7a). Ethical normative competencies	The CSR professional is convinced of the urgency of CSR challenges and is intrinsically driven (i.e., intrinsic motivated) to address these challenges. This competence involves the ability to apply one's personal ethical standards and values while assessing CSR-related issues.
(7b). Balancing personal ethical values and business objectives	This competence is functionally oriented and includes the ability to strike a balance between idealism and pragmatism. Thus, the CSR professional must have the adaptive capacity to pursue both financial objectives and CSR objectives without losing sight of (or overstepping) his/ her personal ethical boundaries and values.
(7c). Realizing self-regulated CSR-related behaviors and active involvement	This competence involves the ability to apply one's personal ethical standards and values to CSR implementation. The CSR professional feels personally responsible for behaving ethically and assumes this responsibility. The CSR professional is actively involved in the implementation of CSR by being action-oriented and decisive; the CSR professional also serves as a role model for others by performing CSR-related activities. This competence is functionally oriented and is interpreted in practice as the congruence between what you stand for, what you say, and what you do.
(8). Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences	This competence includes the ability to recognize and challenge one's own prior ideas, habits, and assumptions, as well as the ability to derive meaning from this self-evaluation. Thus, CSR professionals use self-evaluation and self-learning approaches when working on CSR challenges.

As mentioned earlier, an important limitation of the aforementioned studies is that they all used an omnibus-level of analysis to determine which individual competencies CSR professionals need. According to Johns (2006), the omnibus-level factors only influence an employee's behavior through discrete-level factors. Thus, competencies contextualized at the level of professions can only guide actual work behavior when they are interpreted within—or when they account for—discrete-level factors (e.g., contextualized within specific job roles). This discrete-level of analysis has remained largely unexplored in the literature as to yet.

In short, previous studies of individual CSR-related competencies have provided us with valuable insights regarding important competencies for the CSR manager; however, further specification and contextualization at a discrete-level are needed to provide guidelines for specific behaviors in the management of the CSR adaptation process and to determine the relative importance of specific individual competencies that are needed by CSR managers.

Job Roles in the Adaptation Process

An accepted and often employed way to contextualize work-related behavior, such as competencies, is to determine the job roles and tasks needed to reach a specific objective (Cameron, Quinn, DeGraff, & Thakor, 2006; Johns, 2006; Mulder, 2014). A widely used taxonomy of job roles for management-related tasks is the competing values framework (CVF; Cameron et al., 2006; Quinn, 1988; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). This framework was developed initially through research on major indicators of organizational effectiveness, but was later also converted into a normative framework of effective leadership behavior (Quinn, 1988). Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) identified two key dimensions underlying organizational effectiveness, namely the focus of the manager (internally focused on internal processes and valuing human resources vs. externally focused on maximizing output and expansion and adaption to the external environment) and manager's preference for structure (a preference for control and stability vs. a preference for change and flexibility). The two dimensions are juxtaposed, forming four competing managerial models which include eight key managerial roles (Quinn, 1988): the *mentoring role*, *stimulating role*, *innovating role*, *networking role*, *monitoring role*, *coordinating role*, *producing role*, and the *strategizing role* (see Appendix 4.1. for the descriptions of the roles).

The CVF has been criticized mainly for being a simplistic reflection of reality and for its assumption that the values are competing. Several scholars (e.g., Belasen & Frank, 2008; Denison, Hooijberg, & Quinn, 1995; Hartnell et al., 2011) assert that they are neither competing nor paradoxical; rather they can coexist and strengthen each other. This notion was recently confirmed by a meta-analysis conducted by Hartnell and colleagues (2011), showing the limited value of using the CVF to position one's dominant managerial value. However, the model describes a broad range of managerial roles, which can and is widely used to explore and identify relevant managerial roles in research and in practice (Cameron et al., 2006; Ostroff, Kinicki, & Tamkins, 2003).

Scholars have identified similar managerial roles in different change contexts as described by Quinn (1988). However, unlike the CSR adaptation process these contexts mostly involved discontinuous or incremental organizational changes, which are rapid or successive but limited changes. For example, Barratt-Pugh and colleagues (2013) conducted a case study and signified the importance of the role of change agents (which seems to be a combination of the stimulating and mentoring role in the CVF) in driving an organizational merger between two state government departments in Western Australia. An example in which both discontinuous and incremental change processes were studied is the study of Higgs and Rowland (2011). These scholars interviewed change leaders from 33 organizations and found that certain leadership behavior (which corresponds to the strategizing, coordinating, stimulating, and mentoring role in the CVF) supports effective change management. Belasen, Benke, DePadova, and Fortuato's (1996) research directly studied all eight

managerial roles of the CVF simultaneously in the context of a discontinuous change process (significant downsizing) — and found that all eight roles were considered important during the change process. These previous studies indicate that the CVF provides a useful framework to identify the job roles involved in change management. Contrary to the aforementioned studies, however, (1) we explore the relevance of these managerial roles within the context of the CSR adaptation process, which has a large normative component and involves a continuous change. (2) Moreover, we use these managerial roles to determine which individual CSR-related competencies are needed to perform these roles effectively. Therefore, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: *Which of the eight managerial roles described in the CVF are relevant in the context of the CSR adaptation process?*

RQ2: *Which individual competencies do CSR managers need in each role in order to effectively perform that role?*

Method

Sample and Procedure

We conducted a qualitative study, which enabled us to explore, identify, and prioritize important job roles (and tasks) with respect to the CSR adaptation process, as well as the subsequent key individual CSR-related competencies. The data were collected in two phases. In the first phase, we interviewed 28 CSR professionals (primarily CSR directors and managers; see Appendix 3.1., p. 63) over a time span of three months (April 2013 through June 2013) to identify key roles, tasks, and individual competencies⁹. These 28 CSR professionals were recruited from 20 Dutch multinational companies, including companies that are internationally known for their CSR-related practices (e.g., Philips, Unilever, and DSM). The companies were selected from the 2012 Sustainability Transparency Benchmark¹⁰. This annual benchmark provides a clear indication of how active the included Dutch companies are with respect to addressing CSR-related challenges. We initially contacted the 100 highest ranked companies from various sectors as we perceived these companies to be the most active in terms of CSR. The companies represented the following sectors, as categorized by the Sustainability Transparency Benchmark: Bank and insurance, $n = 16$; Construction and maritime, $n = 10$; Consumer products, $n = 3$; Energy, oil, and gas, $n = 8$; Trading companies, $n = 2$; Industrial, $n = 5$; Media, $n = 4$; Services, $n = 17$; Technology, $n = 6$; Transport, $n = 11$; Real estate, $n = 3$; Food and drinks, $n = 12$; and Retail, $n = 3$. Each company's principal CSR professional (i.e., the individual responsible for developing the company's CSR policy and strategy and/or responsible for implementing CSR) was then identified and invited to participate in the study. Those who did not participate in this study could not be reached or declined our request due to time constraints, as for many companies the annual sustainability reporting was due in this period. As a consequence no CSR manager from the construction and maritime, trading companies, and the media sector were interviewed in this study (see Appendix 3.1., p. 63 for more information about the companies and sector represented in this study). Moreover, we included only CSR managers from companies that are not founded on CSR principles in order to ensure that their tasks and experiences reflected the difficulties faced by CSR managers in mainstream businesses (e.g., potential friction between economic interests and CSR objectives).

⁹ The current study focuses on identifying relevant job role. See Chapter 3 for more information regarding the process of identifying individual competencies for The CSR adaptation process.

¹⁰ The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs uses this benchmark to provide insight into the quality and quantity of CSR reporting by Dutch companies. The 550 largest Dutch companies and organizations (based on the number of employees and/or the highest turnover) are included in this benchmark. Visit <https://www.transparantiebenchmark.nl/resultaat-2012> for the 2012 Transparency Benchmark.

The interviews were conducted using a standardized, semi-structured interview format, and the interviews were continued until saturation was reached (Strauss & Corbin 1998), meaning that after the 28th interview it was decided to end the data collection because the last three interviews did not yield significant new information about the job roles and individual competencies needed in the CSR adaptation process. One researcher (the first author) conducted all of the interviews in order to minimize any potential bias. The interviewer addressed the following topics sequentially: (1) basic background information (e.g., education, age, and prior work experience); (2) the job roles held and/or deemed important in the CSR adaptation process (exemplary question: “Can you please describe your role in the CSR adaptation process?”); (3) CSR-related competencies that were used by the professional and/or which the professional deemed effective in the CSR adaptation process; and (4) reflection on the CSR-related competencies identified in the literature (see Table 4.1.).

In the second phase of the data collection, we aimed to show that the context can affect the individual competencies CSR managers need by determining the relative importance of the individual competencies within each managerial role. We decided to explore the prioritization of the competencies among the CSR managers interviewed in phase one, and as such provide the first, insights into the relative importance of the competencies for each job roles. Thus, in the second phase of the data collection and after the interview transcripts were analyzed, the results were sent to the participants via an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed by 18 of the 28 participating CSR professionals and consisted of two parts. In the first part, we asked participants to provide feedback regarding the list of identified job roles and individual CSR-related competencies. In the second part of the questionnaire, we asked the participants to prioritize these individual competencies for each role. The participants were instructed to rank the three competencies they considered most essential for successful role performance. The participants could choose from among the individual CSR-related competencies listed in Table 4.1.. We ensured diverse perspectives with respect to important competencies for each role by allowing all of the participants to rank all of the roles, even if a participant was not directly engaged in that particular role.

Data Analyses and Synthesis

We performed a content and domain analysis on the interview transcripts in order to better understand the job roles that are considered important in the CSR adaptation process. The software program ATLAS.ti was used to organize and analyze the transcripts (for a detailed description of this program, see Friese, 2012). First, all interview transcripts were read thoroughly by the first author to identify and extract meaningful excerpts— those excerpts that explicitly describe the role, tasks, or responsibilities involved in the adaptation process— from the interviewees’ responses. All coders were instructed to read the transcripts before coding and to check whether all relevant excerpts were identified. If other sentences were found that were not yet identified as relevant for analysis, they were added following a discussion and agreement between the coders. Next, the first and second authors independently assigned codes to the selected excerpts. The management-related roles and tasks were categorized using the eight managerial roles of Quinn (1988; see Appendix 4.1.). We included a category “others” as an additional code in order to account for excerpts that did not fit within any of these managerial roles.

Cohen’s Kappa (Cohen, 1960) was calculated for each role and revealed that agreement between the two coders ranged from good to very good for seven of the eight roles, with Kappa values ranging from 0.62 to 0.87 (see Altman, 1991, pp. 404; Landis & Koch, 1977). Agreement between the two coders with respect to the “monitoring role” was reasonable ($\kappa = 0.48$). To improve reliability for the “monitoring role”, all excerpts coded as such—as well as differences between the two coders with respect to the other seven roles—were discussed until agreement was reached. The excerpts coded as “others” were also discussed. These excerpts mainly represented tasks that are related to learning and working with peers. We concluded that being a “peer” is an important role for a CSR manager’s personal development, which can affect their

individual competence development and consequently influence the change process. However, we found that within the context of the CSR adaptation process it is the exposure to and sharing of best practices that is directly relevant for the change process; CSR managers can select these experiences through seeking and maintaining contact with peers, as such these statements were included in the definition of the “networking role”. The selected excerpts were then used to define the job roles specifically in the context of the CSR adaptation process (see Table 4.2. for example quotations). We were unable to obtain conclusive results for two of the eight managerial roles included in CVF (Cameron et al., 2006; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983), as only a few CSR professionals acknowledged their importance and provided information regarding these job roles within the context of CSR adaptation; thus, the “innovating role” and the “producing role” were excluded from further analyses.

Next, for each role we appointed scores to the competencies selected by the respondents in order to prioritize and prevent the creation of a laundry list of individual CSR-related competencies with respect to the job roles. The competencies that were ranked by a respondent as being the most, second-most, and third-most important were assigned 3 points, 2 points, and 1 point, respectively. Thereafter, we constructed a ranking of key CSR-related competencies for specific roles in the CSR adaptation process; this ranking was calculated by summing all of the individual scores given by the respondents for each competence within a particular role. In order to clearly distinguish between what respondent considered more important and less important competencies, we show here only the top half of the ranking and we specifically denote the three highest ranked individual competencies in the Results section.

Results and Discussion

RQ1: *Which of the eight managerial roles described in the CVF are relevant in the context of the CSR adaptation process?*

First, we explored which of the eight managerial roles of Quinn (1988) could be identified within a CSR adaptation context. Belasen and colleagues (1996) showed that in a discontinuous change context (i.e., significant downsizing) all eight managerial roles could be identified and were considered important for the management of the change process. In contrast we found that in the case of the CSR adaptation process, which involves a continuous change process, not all roles were considered as important. Six of the eight managerial roles described in the CVF were supported by the analysis of the interview data. These six job roles are the coordinating, stimulating, networking, strategizing, monitoring, and mentoring roles. The roles and their interpretation within the context of CSR adaptation are presented below in descending order based on the total number of interview participants that identified each role (see for exemplar quotations Table 4.2.).

A. **Coordinating role.** According to Quinn (1988), managers in this role coordinate the process through which a set strategy is embedded within the company. Twenty-six out of the 28 CSR managers that were interviewed described a similar role as Quinn’s coordinating role within the CSR adaptation process. Based on their responses we could define the coordinating role of CSR managers as follows: *the CSR manager in his/her role as coordinator supports the various business units during the CSR adaptation process. He/she is aware of the full range of changes that will be set in motion by the company’s CSR strategy, and he/she organizes, manages, coordinates, and facilitates people, processes, changes, and projects. Actual responsibility for integrating CSR into the organization’s daily activities lies with the various business units and employees. Nevertheless, the CSR manager provides support and monitors the progress.*

Table 4.2. CSR-related Roles and Supporting Exemplar Quotations Extracted from the Interview Transcripts.

Roles	Exemplary Quotation	Source
A. Coordinating role	<p>"I am responsible for the implementation of CSR within core business processes. That is, the CSR-related strategic objectives formulated by the top management reaches the rest of the company through me. I lead and coordinate the implementation of these objectives."</p> <p>"From my management role I need to have that helicopter view, and be alert of all the developments that are put in motion to see what needs adjustment, are where people need to be activated, to ensure that the right objectives are reached. Though the actual project and process management is done by others, it is my task to have that oversight and provide guidance to officers where and if needed."</p>	<p>Interviewee G1, Program manager CSR</p> <p>Interviewee S, Director Corporate Responsibility</p>
B. Stimulating role	<p>"It is a role in which you need to continuously trigger and stimulate people to set the bars higher, discuss with them what is going well and what can be improved, and link it to the bottom line. However, you need to be careful as it can come across as pushy, but what you want and need to be is an inspirer and a motivator."</p> <p>"The Board of Directors has formulated strategic CSR objectives, which are recognizable throughout the company. It is my task to ensure that we keep up a good performance with respect to these objectives, and to continuously stimulate the Board's and the company's ambitions regarding CSR, in that the bars are raised each year. I do the same for the various business units. For them I am their sustainability business partner and through this role I try to motivate them to set their own CSR objective and challenge themselves with respect to CSR while still earning money for the company."</p>	<p>Interviewee I, CSR Manager</p> <p>Interviewee K, CSR Manager</p>
C. Networking role	<p>"You often represent the company's CSR program. You have to present your company's CSR program and objectives to business groups such as Finance and R&D department. But we are also involved in curricula development of schools."</p> <p>"I am the company's CSR representative for other organizations, so I am representing my company's CSR ambitions and program during conferences, anchoring our message, our vision and definitely live up to our corporate and personal values. And I am in charge of our communication with external stakeholders so..."</p>	<p>Interviewee I, CSR Manager</p> <p>Interviewee E1, Director Sustainability</p>
D. Strategizing role	<p>"When you take into account the plan-do-check-act-cycle, then I am responsible for the planning. I have the task to develop CSR policies and programs and provide input for our CSR ambitions and strategic objectives. The Board sets the strategic objectives, but my department prepares and provides the input for the decision making process."</p>	<p>Interviewee N, Manager Sustainability</p>

Table 4.2. CSR-related Roles and Supporting Exemplar Quotations Extracted from the Interview Transcripts (continued).

Roles	Exemplary Quotation	Source
	<p><i>"I am a member of the steering committee that was formed based on the PPP idea. We included the financial director to ensure that the projects are profitable, marketing director for communicating and marketing our CSR efforts, and me for CSR. Together we formulate the company's CSR vision, CSR objectives and CSR agenda."</i></p> <p><i>"I was also assigned the task to earn money for the company (...). It makes no sense to do all sorts of cool green things, if ultimately you cannot make a business out of it. Such "projects" are not sustainable by definition. (...) and that is what I do, I develop new and plan sustainability business concepts."</i></p>	<p>Interviewee O, Senior advisor and Strategist sustainability</p> <p>Interviewee H1, Director Sourcing & Sustainability</p>
E. Monitoring role	<p><i>"Each year we publish a sustainability report, which includes three sections, of which the environment is one. It is my tasks to collect and verify relevant environmental data, from various sites and departments and establish a report of the results."</i></p> <p><i>"It is our tasks to improve and broaden our CSR reporting. As such I also conduct internal audits for the set sustainability-related key performance indicators. As such it I collect and verify relevant data, and report on the results."</i></p>	<p>Interviewee E2, Sustainability manager supply</p> <p>Interviewee F2, Compliance officer</p>
F. Mentoring role	<p><i>"For example, I am not responsible for sustainable procurement. The people from the procurement department are. I am not there to determine how they should do their jobs and include CSR principles in their jobs. They themselves are more knowledgeable in that respect. But I am there to think along and help them, bring those officers together so they can learn from each other, get them in touch with suppliers or stakeholders so they can discuss how to include sustainability objectives in their procurement activities, or brainstorm together to find ways to really make a difference, like using fewer air travels through more efficient logistics."</i></p> <p><i>"It is my task to train others to integrate sustainability in their dealings with customers. I teach them how to discuss sustainability issues with the customers, translate the outcomes of these interactions in to concrete investments that contributes to sustainable development and benefits our company financially."</i></p>	<p>Interviewee Q, Director Corporate communications & CSR</p> <p>Interviewee A2, Business developer sustainability</p>

B. **Stimulating role.** According to Quinn (1988) this role focuses on encouraging others and developing and maintaining a supportive group moral. Twenty-four out of the 28 CSR managers that were interviewed described a job role that resembles Quinn's stimulating role. Many interviewees described this role in terms of activating, stimulating, and inspiring others on a continuous basis because CSR challenges change over time. These "others" not only include fellow employees but also the Board members. One CSR manager argued in favor of an "idealistic role", which he described as "a role in which the CSR manager's personal ideals and way of living are based on CSR principles. This individual employs these ideals, authenticity, and engaging attitude in activating others to engage in CSR behavior." Because his description fits well with the role of the "stimulator" we included this idealistic role in the definition of the stimulating role. Based on the interviewees' responses we could define the stimulating role of CSR managers as follows: *The CSR manager acts as an ambassador of CSR. His/her personal ideals and way of living are based upon CSR principles, through which he/she motivates, stimulates, inspires, and activates others to integrate CSR objectives into their assigned tasks. The CSR manager often does so despite having no formal authority.*

C. **Networking role.** According to Quinn (1988) this role is oriented toward the external environment in which the manager seeks and maintains a network of contacts. Twenty-two out of the 28 CSR managers that were interviewed described a similar job role as Quinn's networking role. Many stated to be the CSR spokesperson for their respective companies, and described how they represent their companies in various external CSR events. Some also stressed the importance of having contact with peers in order to keep up to date and exchange best practices. Based on the interviewees' responses we could define the networking role of CSR managers as follows: *In this role, the CSR manager acts as a representative of the CSR profession and for his/her company's CSR program at external venues (e.g., panels and platforms) or in meetings with external parties (e.g., stakeholder dialogs). He/she seeks and maintains contact with external parties, meets with and learns from his/her peers, and is responsible for formally communicating his/her company's CSR performance (e.g., by giving presentations).*

D. **Strategizing role.** According to Quinn (1988) in this role it is the task of the manager to formulate objectives and develop a company's strategy. Twenty-one out of the 28 CSR managers that were interviewed described a job role that resembles Quinn's strategizing role. The CSR managers interviewed in this study often reported directly to the CEO or Board of Directors (if they were not members of the board themselves). Based on their responses we could define CSR manager's strategic role as follows: *In this role, the CSR manager is particularly focused on developing a CSR strategy and is responsible—at least in part—for integrating this strategy into the company's general strategy. The manager establishes and refines CSR-related business models and establishes CSR initiatives, and he/she is perceived and approached as a business partner by other business units.*

E. **Monitoring role.** According to Quinn (1988) evaluating and reporting is one of the key tasks in this role. Twenty-one out of the 28 CSR managers that were interviewed described a similar job role in which auditing and reporting on company's CSR activities was mentioned most often. Based on the interviewees' responses we could define the monitoring role of CSR managers as follows: *In this role, the CSR manager monitors and evaluates specific applications of the CSR strategy and policies (for example, by performing internal audits). He/she also develops CSR standards, tools, and procedures for promoting specific CSR activities and internal measurement systems. He/she is also responsible for—or contributes to—the content of the annual CSR report. Therefore, he/she collects and analyzes relevant data (e.g., data regarding the company's CSR performance and carbon footprint).*

F. **Mentoring role.** According to Quinn (1988) the manager acts as a coach and stimulates the professional development of individuals. Eighteen out of the 28 CSR managers that were interviewed described a job role that resembles this role and in which the manager is the CSR experts within the company. Based on the interviewees' responses we could define the mentoring role of CSR managers as follows: *In this role, the manager advises, informs, and trains employees so they can achieve CSR objectives in their respective assigned tasks. He/she collects relevant information and ensures that employees are informed with respect*

to CSR in the context of their company. Because employees often know best how to integrate CSR into their assigned tasks, the mentor's task is to support, counsel, and coach others.

With respect to the “innovating role”, though the support was limited, some evidence could be found in the interviews to support this role, which focuses on creating new—or improving existing—CSR activities. For example, Interviewee H1 (Director Sourcing & Sustainability), described how it is his responsibility to develop new business models: “I was also assigned the task to earn money for the company (...). It makes no sense to do all sorts of cool green things, if ultimately you cannot make a business out of it. Such “projects” are not sustainable by definition. (...) and that is what I do, I develop new and plan sustainability business concepts.” The interview transcripts provided little evidence for the “producing role”, which focuses on performing the actual execution of specific CSR activities. Thus, the results suggest that Dutch CSR managers consider these two roles to be less important for their daily practice in the context of CSR adaptation. A possible explanation is that the CSR managers were often positioned as supporting staff members and were therefore not the ones that were involved in the actual production and R&D process, which are managed by line managers. Interviewee K and Interviewee Q describe it as follows:

“It is not per se that you are the one that innovates, but rather that you manage and facilitate innovative ideas from others or organize innovation sessions to stimulate original thinking. If we want to develop our CSR program even further we need to set the bars higher and innovate. We therefore try to be innovating within our sector.” (Interviewee K, CSR Manager).

“For example, I am not responsible for sustainable procurement. The people from the procurement department are. I am not there to determine how they should do their job and include CSR principles in their jobs. They themselves are more knowledgeable in that respect. But I am there to think along and help them, bring those officers together so they can learn from each other, get them in touch with suppliers or stakeholders so they can discuss how to include sustainability objectives in their procurement activities, or brainstorm together to find ways to really make a difference, like using fewer air travels through more efficient logistics.” (Interviewee Q, Director Corporate Communications & CSR).

These findings confirm that CSR managers may have different roles and tasks and that six of the eight managerial roles described by Quinn (1988) are important for driving the CSR adaptation process. In this study we provide a definition for these job roles for CSR managers.

RQ2: *Which individual competencies do CSR managers need in each role in order to effectively perform that role?*

Following the identification of the roles in CSR adaptation, we explored the relative importance of the CSR-related competencies within each role. Table 4.3. shows the ranking for each managerial role. The results show that the CSR-related competencies are differently prioritized within the six managerial roles.

These results differ somewhat from previous research. That is, studies on CSR-related competencies have yielded inconsistent results with respect to the importance of systems thinking competencies (i.e., “Understanding CSR-relevant systems”), “ethical normative competencies”, and foresight competencies (i.e., “Anticipating CSR-related challenges”). Some scholars such as De Haan (2006), Rieckmann (2012), and Wiek et al. (2011) assert that systems thinking, ethical normative, and foresight thinking competencies are crucial in the CSR profession. For example, Rieckmann (2012) asked 70 scientific

Table 4.3. Ranking of Individual CSR-related Competencies According to Level of Importance for Effective Role Performance.

A. Coordinating role		B. Stimulating role		C. Networking role	
1.	Managing CSR implementation (28)	1.	Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes (32)	1.	Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes (39)
2.	Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes (18)	2.	Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunities (15)	2.	Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes (15)
3.	Anticipating CSR-related challenges (18)	3.	Anticipating CSR-related challenges (15)	3.	Ethical normative competencies (14)
4.	Understanding CSR-relevant systems (11)	4.	Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes (13)	4.	Understanding CSR-relevant systems (8)
5.	Realizing self-regulated CSR-related behaviors and active involvement (9)	5.	CSR leadership competencies (11)	5.	Anticipating CSR-related challenges (6)
6.	Understanding CSR-relevant standards (8)	6.	Ethical normative competencies (6)	6.	CSR leadership competencies (6)
D. Strategizing role		E. Monitoring role		F. Mentoring role	
1.	CSR leadership competencies (31)	1.	Understanding CSR-relevant standards (35)	1.	Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes (25)
2.	Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunities (18)	2.	Understanding CSR-relevant systems (23)	2.	Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences (18)
3.	Anticipating CSR-related challenges (11)	3.	Balancing personal ethical values and business objectives (11)	3.	Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes (17)
4.	Balancing personal ethical values and business objectives (10)	4.	Ethical normative competencies (10)	4.	Understanding CSR-relevant systems (12)
5.	Understanding CSR-relevant systems (10)	5.	Realizing self-regulated CSR-related behaviors and active involvement (10)	5.	Ethical normative competencies (12)
6.	Ethical normative competencies (8)	6.	Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences (7)	6.	Anticipating CSR-related challenges (6)

Note. The scores between parentheses are sum scores based on the individual rankings of all CSR professionals ($n = 18$).

and public experts which competencies they thought are needed in order to understand CSR-related challenges and to contribute to sustainable development. Foresight competencies were ranked as the second most important, with systems thinking competencies ranking first. Although according to Rieckmann these competencies are needed by anyone wanting to understand and contribute to SD, these tasks are according to Wiek et al. (2011) in particular essential to the CSR profession, indicating that foresight competencies and systems competencies are also important for CSR managers. In addition to foresight thinking and systems thinking, Wiek et al. (2011) also stresses the significance of normative competencies for the CSR profession, through which professionals develop and generate virtues that constitutes his or her good character, and which forms a basis for decision making processes concerning CSR (Blok, Gremmen, & Wesselink, 2016). Others like Willard and colleagues (Willard et al., 2010) and Osagie et al. (2016), who surveyed CSR professionals and interviewed CSR managers respectively, found little empirical evidence for the importance of “ethical normative competence” in a business context.

Contrary to the abovementioned studies, our findings enabled us to go beyond a list of general CSR competencies and better explore the relative importance of these particular CSR competencies in a CSR adaptation context. That is, when looking at the three key individual CSR-related competencies for each role (Table 4.3), we found that system thinking was only considered crucial in the monitoring role; foresight competencies is crucial in three out of the six managerial roles; and ethical normative competencies is crucial only in the networking role. Thus, although our study was explorative in nature, the results strongly suggest that it is worthwhile to include discrete-level contextual factors, and managers’ job roles in particular, when determining the importance of particular CSR-related competencies, as each role seems to require a different combination and prioritization of these competencies.

Interestingly “ethical normative competencies” was not ranked among the three most essential individual competencies for the “stimulating role” — a role focused on activating and inspiring others to integrate CSR principles into their assigned jobs. During the interviews the CSR managers were very passionate about CSR and about their work. We expected that “ethical normative competencies” and specific personal attitudes would have ranked higher in terms of prominence in the stimulating role; personal involvement and authenticity are incremental in stimulating others (cf. Gardner & Schermerhorn, 2004) and according to the literature personal values are an essential determinant of one’s actions at work (e.g., Hay & Gray, 1974; Swanson, 1999). We were surprised to see that these competencies were considered less important in the stimulating role when prioritizing the competencies and that the business case logic (i.e., a bottom-line rationale) seems to be far more prominent than the idealistic logic. The key competencies with respect to the stimulating role are interpersonal competencies, being able to anticipate CSR challenges, and being able to translate these challenges into business opportunities. Here, the business context evidently guides the individual competencies that CSR managers must use, suggesting that in the case of the CSR adaptation process, there might be a discrepancy between CSR managers’ personal beliefs and the behaviors that they consider effective in stimulating sustainable work behavior in others. In fact, beside idealistic logic, one must clarify how the business—and as such, the company—could benefit from engaging in these initiatives to stimulate others within the company. The following excerpt from the interview with CSR manager K illustrates this notion:

“The Board of Directors has formulated strategic CSR objectives, which are recognizable throughout the company. It is my task to ensure that we keep up a good performance with respect to these objectives, and to continuously stimulate the Board’s and the company’s ambitions regarding CSR, in that the bars are raised each year. I do the same for the various business units. For them I am their sustainability business partner and through this role I try to motivate them to set their own CSR objective and challenge themselves with respect to CSR while still earning money for the company”.

The discrepancy between CSR managers' beliefs and their work behavior reinforces Hahn and Aragón-Correa's (2015) and Hemingway (2005) suggestion that employees' personal beliefs about CSR may not be aligned with what they themselves do at work because a mismatch between employees' beliefs and that of their companies may lead them to align their work behavior with what is acceptable within their companies (Hemingway, 2005); CSR managers particularly use the business case discourse and the economic language in order to effectively stimulate others to engage in CSR activities.

Moreover, the study findings strongly suggests that besides the stimulating role, the business case logic may even influence the relative importance of specific individual competencies in the other managerial roles; the results show that the more general management related competencies (e.g., interpersonal competencies, being able to anticipate CSR challenges, and being able to translate these challenges into business opportunities) are considered important in multiple roles (see Table 4.3.). This provides support for previous research that show that business case arguments for engaging in CSR are dominant and remain directive for employees' CSR work behavior (e.g., Gao & Bansal, 2013; Hahn & Aragón-Correa's, 2015).

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Our study has some limitations that merit discussion. First, we stressed the importance of contextualizing reported individual CSR-related competencies. Yet, as discussed earlier, contextual effects can include different factors at both the omnibus-level and the discrete-level (Johns, 2006). Here, we contextualized reported CSR competencies within relevant job roles, an essential yet initial step in contextualizing CSR competencies at a discrete-level, because other discrete-level factors may also have provided valuable information about the relative importance of the individual competencies for CSR managers' managerial roles. For example, the social context in which individuals work can also influence work behavior (Johns, 2006), indicating that the configuration of relevant CSR competencies can also differ between different social situations. Moreover, Rieckmann (2012) showed that the relative importance of CSR-related competencies may differ between cultures. Thus, company's internal and external context, which has its specific culture and governance, might also affect the individual competencies that should be denoted in the CSR adaptation process. Future studies should include this and/or other factors at the discrete-level in order to yield further insight into contextual effects on individual CSR competencies.

A second limitation is that we sent the survey, in which we asked respondents to prioritize the individual competencies, to the original interview sample. As our aim was not to provide a validated competence profile, but rather to show that the context can affect the individual competencies and the relative importance of the competencies CSR managers need, we decided to explore this issue by first asking those we interviewed to provide a prioritized list. Moreover, this choice also allowed us to member check the results that we distilled from the interviews. Nevertheless, in order to validate the competence profile presented in Table 4.3., it is important to assess it in a larger sample. By working together with national CSR associations, scholars can distribute an online questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions among a larger group of CSR professionals. Respondents could be asked to list and explain their three most important job roles including the individual competencies they need to master in order to be effective in those roles. This step is important in order to validate and perhaps complement the job roles and competencies identified in the present study. Next, respondents can be asked to provide feedback regarding the list of identified job roles and individual CSR-related competencies as presented in this study. Here one can also ask respondent to add their proposed job roles and competencies that are not yet represented in this list. Finally, to validate the competence profile presented in this study, respondent could be ask to prioritize the competencies within each job role - if technically possible, one could add the competencies and job roles respondent proposed in the previous step to the list.

Another limitation of the present study is the fact that not all sectors were represented in this study and that we only included large companies in our study. It is well documented that small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) differ from large companies in a number of respects, aside from simply the number of employees. SMEs also differ from large companies with respect to resource availability, organization, and management (Roper & Scott, 2009; Spence, 1999). More importantly, other factors such as support for CSR, the company's view of their role in CSR, their implementation of CSR, and CSR practices differ between SMEs and large companies (Apospori, Zografos, & Magrizos, 2012; Castka, Balzarova, Bamber, & Sharp, 2004; Gallo & Christensen, 2011). Thus, key job roles and individual competencies may differ as well between SMEs and large companies and between the sectors included in this study and other sectors. Future studies may provide additional insight into these matters.

Furthermore, as adapting to CSR principles involves joint efforts of all employees within the company, future studies may also assess to what extent the proposed individual CSR-related competencies are useful for others within the companies. Because managers play a crucial role in promoting sustainable work behavior among their subordinates, it might be interesting to conduct a study among different types of managers (e.g., asset managers), using a similar research method as was done in the current study. Moreover, a focus on other managers within the company might be especially interesting, because in an ideal situation CSR managers are no longer needed as CSR is fully integrated within core business process. In such situations the role of other managers within the company becomes more essential for ensuring CSR.

Conclusion

We present in this study one of the first empirical contextualization of individual competencies needed in the CSR adaptation process. We showed that CSR managers have different managerial roles in the adaptation process, that the individual competencies that are needed to effectively perform these roles may differ between roles, and that the relative importance of these competencies within each role may be driven by business logic rather than an idealistic logic. The limitations notwithstanding, our results have several practical implications. First, our study addresses a concern that is often voiced by many CEOs. Specifically, previous research suggests that CEOs of leading companies express the need to improve the competencies and mindsets of their managers in order to address CSR-related challenges (Accenture, 2010). Here, we report that CSR managers have unique roles in the CSR adaptation process; moreover, depending on his/her actual role(s) in the adaptation process, different individual CSR-related competencies might be needed in order to successfully perform the role(s). Our study findings are particularly relevant to CSR professionals and researchers. Our competence profile, though an initial version due to the exploratory nature of this study, can guide CSR managers' personal reflection process. It can especially aid those CSR managers in companies that are in the earlier stages of the CSR adaptation process; it helps them understand their role in the CSR adaptation process, reflect on the competencies they have and perhaps need to develop, and helps them pinpoint the job roles (including subsequent competencies) that might aid the advancement of the CSR adaptation process. Researchers can use the competence profile as a framework to further develop the competence profile for CSR managers and unravel the micro-, meso-, and macro-level influences on a company's CSR adaptation process (cf. Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

Appendix 4.1. Quinn's (1988) Managerial Roles

Role	Description
1. Innovating role	In this role the professional identifies trends, envisions the future, and anticipates changes that need to be made to ensure the existence of the company.
2. Networking role	In this role the professional is focused on maintaining the company's external legitimacy. Key tasks are developing, scanning and maintaining a network of contacts.
3. Producing role	In this role the professional is task-oriented and focused on completing the actual activities that needs to be executed.
4. Strategizing role	In this role the professional is focused on determining and setting the strategy, goals, and objectives.
5. Coordinating role	In this role the professional is focused on implementing set strategy. Key tasks here are scheduling, coordinating and problem-solving.
6. Monitoring role	In this role the professional is in charge of collecting and distributing information for evaluation and reporting purposes.
7. Stimulating role	In this role the professional is focused on internal group relations, the professional facilitates and stimulates collaboration and teamwork among employees, encourages others, and stimulates the development of group moral.
8. Mentoring role	In this role the professional is focused on individual employees. The professional listens to individual needs and stimulates and attempts to facilitate professional development.

4.

Chapter 5

Developing Corporate Social Responsibility Competence: Considering the Roles of Learning Goal Orientation and Psychological Learning Climate¹¹

The implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives in companies is often managed by a CSR manager or by a small group of CSR professionals. The effectiveness of these professionals depends to a large extent on their competencies. Previous studies have identified the competencies needed by these professionals. However, it remains unclear how these competencies can be developed. This survey study conducted among 176 Dutch CSR professionals explores which learning activities are favored by these professionals. The results showed that informal learning activities that center on learning with and from others outside the company are particularly favored. In addition, this study examines *if* and *how* dimensions of companies' learning climates (i.e., facilitating, awarding, and error-avoiding learning climates) and CSR professionals' learning goal orientation (LGO) affect CSR professionals' competence. We found significant interaction effects between the learning climate dimensions, and we found an even stronger connection between LGO and CSR competence; irrespective of the various conditions of a learning climate, LGO strongly affects professionals' CSR competence in a positive manner. Hence, it seems important to attract CSR professionals with a strong LGO for driving CSR implementation. Moreover, a supportive learning climate further stimulates their engagement in continuous learning, which is needed to cope with the complexities associated with implementing CSR.

¹¹ This chapter is based on: Osagie, E. R., Wesselink, R., Runhaar, P., & Mulder, M. (resubmitted). Developing corporate social responsibility competence: Considering the roles of learning goal orientation and psychological learning climate.

Introduction

Challenges related to sustainable development (SD) such as global warming and loss of biodiversity are considered “wicked problems” because they involve ill-defined global problems for which the causes and effects are either unknown or uncertain, and which require multi-stakeholder alliances in order to tackle them (cf. Rittel & Webber, 1973; Dentoni, Hopes, & Ross, 2012; Peterson, 2009). Many companies address these SD challenges through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. CSR is often referred to as a company’s continuing commitment to integrate ecological, social, and economic concerns in the company’s operations and in the company’s interactions with stakeholders, which is usually done on a voluntary basis (Dahlsrud, 2008).

It is commonly acknowledged that thorough implementation of CSR in the company’s core business processes is essential for effectively dealing with SD-related challenges (cf. Bertels, Papania, & Papania, 2010; Jamali, 2008). Managers and leaders play a crucial role in this implementation process, as they greatly influence the employees’ work behavior (Furst & Cable, 2008). As such, many scholars study CSR leadership and management by primarily addressing the role and support of the CEO. However, others within the company are usually the ones who actually drive and manage the CSR implementation process; these employees are referred to here as CSR professionals. Thus, Waldman, Siegel and Javidan (2006) call for more research on CSR leadership and management at various levels within a company. Hence, this study focuses on CSR professionals and on their individual competencies in particular, as their effectiveness in driving the necessary changes depends to a large extent on their competence. Individual competence refers to a complex set of performance-oriented knowledge elements, skills, and attitudes needed to achieve specific objectives (Mulder, 2014).

The CSR profession is a relatively new profession, and many large companies employ CSR professionals to manage the implementation of CSR (Hutjens, Dentchev, & Haezendonck, 2015). These professionals occupy a somewhat specific position within these companies; similar to other functional managers who work autonomously across the entire company, CSR professionals are often in direct contact with both top management and coworkers (Heiskanen, Thidell, & Rodhe, 2016; Hutjens et al., 2015), and they often lack the formal authority needed to instruct others to integrate CSR into their daily practice (Heiskanen et al., 2016; Osagic, Wesselink, Blok, & Mulder, in press). However, unlike many other functional managers, CSR professionals must deal with many uncertainties and must work extensively with external stakeholders due to the wicked nature of SD challenges (Dentoni et al., 2012). Moreover, these professionals must work in environments in which little support is available for CSR or in which employees are ambivalent toward the proposed changes, for example because the beneficial effects of CSR for the company are often not directly observable (Heiskanen et al., 2016).

Following several studies conducted to identify *which* individual CSR-related competencies (CSRCs) are key (e.g., Rieckmann, 2012; Willard et al., 2010), studies on *how*—and through which learning activities—CSR professionals can develop their competencies (e.g., balancing CSR objectives and commercial objectives) are needed in order to inform practical interventions that ensure that CSR professionals have and maintain the necessary competencies and warrant a thorough transition toward CSR (Willard et al., 2010; Heiskanen et al., 2016). To the best of our knowledge, such research centering on CSR professionals has not yet been conducted. The present study aims to explore and provide information regarding these issues.

A specific focus on how CSR professionals develop their competencies at work is important; learning at work is one of the most common forms of a professional’s competence development (Ellinger, 2005), and different jobs and hierarchical positions offer different opportunities to develop one’s competencies (e.g., Bryson, Pajo, Ward, & Mallon, 2006). Furthermore, given that SD challenges are extremely complex and that making strategic decisions based on these complexities can be challenging (Dentoni et al., 2012), the actual workplace is often the only place where CSR professionals

can develop their competencies; such decisions require reflection and deliberation with other decision-makers and can never become routine, given the ever-changing nature of SD challenges. Therefore, the competencies that CSR professionals require in their jobs cannot be learned adequately from textbooks and should be developed at the workplace, making it particularly important to explore how these professionals can develop their CSRCs at work.

The workplace learning literature shows that there are various ways for CSR and other professionals to develop their competencies at work (e.g., learning from others, learning by doing, etc.; cf. Bolhuis & Simons, 2001). Competence development at the workplace—or work-related learning—is defined as the employees’ participation in learning activities through which they develop their competencies and which changes their current and future achievements and performance (Kyndt & Baert, 2013). The present study explores which learning activities at the workplace are favored by CSR professionals. Furthermore, as studies show that actual engagement in these learning activities depends both on motivational factors and on work context (Billett, 2004), this study examines how CSRC is affected by two factors that are denoted for competence development at work, namely the “learning climate” and individual “learning goal orientation” (LGO; cf. Kyndt & Baert, 2013). Learning climate refers to one’s perception of the extent to which one’s workplace facilitates learning opportunities and rewards and supports one’s learning behavior (cf. Nikolova, Van Ruysseveldt, De Witte, & Van Dam, 2014). LGO refers to individuals’ behavior and motivation to improve their competencies through an active search and through engagement in learning activities (Dweck & Legett, 1988; VandeWalle, 2001). Using survey data from 176 CSR professionals working in various companies in the Netherlands, we address the following research question: *How can CSR professionals develop their competencies?*

Theoretical Framework

This section is organized as follows: first, we outline the different ways in which professionals can develop their competencies. Next, in order to present informed hypotheses, we elaborate on the concepts of PLC and LGO and discuss how these constructs might interact and affect the competencies of CSR professionals.

Learning Activities for CSR Professionals

There are various ways in which professionals can develop their competencies. Bolhuis and Simons (2001) distinguish four ways to improve one’s competence at work. These methods are learning through experience, learning through social interaction, learning through theory, and learning through critical reflection. *Learning through experience* refers to learning by performing the tasks assigned to you and by being exposed to and part of the work context (Nikolova et al., 2014); through processes of socialization, observing, and experimenting, one can develop effective work behaviors, obtain new knowledge, and enhance one’s competencies (Lawson, Petersen, Cousins, & Handfield, 2009). *Learning through critical reflection* is focused on gaining insights by reflecting on theory and the ideas of others and by reflecting on one’s own behavior, context, values, and past experiences. By thinking these things through, one can learn new ways to act and work, thereby improving one’s competencies (Tynjälä, 2008).

Learning through theory involves prearranged learning situations (i.e., formal learning) and learning activities such as courses, training, and formal education. These learning activities are generally focused on the needs of the majority of the workforce, and they are often oriented toward enhancing simple competencies (e.g., vertical learning network; Poell, Chivers, & Van der Krogt, 2000). In contrast, *learning through social interaction* can occur without being prearranged (informal learning)—although it is important that one is aware of the learning in order for the right competencies to be learned—and centers on active interaction with others and involves learning with and from others (Bolhuis & Simons, 2001). Learning through social

interaction includes learning activities such as collaborating with colleagues with a different background, discussing, and requesting or obtaining feedback from others (Mulder, Lans, Versteegen, Biemans, & Meijer, 2007; Cheatham & Chivers, 2001). Van der Krogt (1995) puts a specific emphasis on learning through social interaction, stressing that learning is a social activity. In his “learning network theory”, he describes how employees are central actors in the learning networks that they are part of and which they co-create. Competence development occurs through interactions and collaborations with others in these learning networks. For example, within the company employees can form a learning network with colleagues, supervisors, and training staff and they can learn by collaborating and discussing challenges with these fellow employees. However, employees are also part of a network with learning actors outside of the company (e.g., peers and professional associations), and they can create opportunities to learn through interactions with these actors (Poell et al., 2000). The type of learning networks that professionals co-create and use in order to develop their competencies depend largely on the way in which their work and position are organized and on the dynamics between the various actors within each network (Poell et al., 2000; Van der Krogt, 1995; 1998). With their specific position and complex tasks, CSR professionals are unlikely to be the subject of prearranged learning interventions. Therefore, we expect that CSR professionals will favor informal ways of learning over formal learning activities.

Psychological Learning Climate

As stated in the Introduction, the development of competence at work can be affected by a broad range of contextual factors. Given the aim of the present study, however, the company’s learning climate is considered a promising contextual factor, as it shapes the learning processes within the company (Vera-Cruz, 2006) and—as such—affects employees’ learning behavior (Nikolova et al., 2014). However, there seems to be some debate regarding what constitutes a learning climate. Some scholars conceptualize it as “the support and learning opportunities companies provide their employees” (e.g., Marsick & Watkins, 2003), some scholars focus on access to information (e.g., Bartram, Foster, Lindley, Brown, & Nixon, 1993), and still others focus on the awarding and stimulating climate already present in a company (e.g., Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen, & Moeyaert, 2009). Moreover, some scholars view a learning climate as a one-dimensional concept (e.g., Bartram et al., 1993), whereas others view it as a multi-dimensional concept (Tracey & Tews, 2005).

In an effort to tap into the core of most conceptualizations of a learning climate, Nikolova et al. (2014) recently conducted an extensive literature review and proposed a three-dimensional conceptualization of the concept, which is used in the present study. The first dimension, *facilitating learning climate*, addresses the extent to which the company and workplace supports, provides, and facilitates learning opportunities for its employees (Kyndt et al., 2009). The second dimension, *appreciation learning climate*, addresses the extent to which the company rewards learning behavior. The third dimension, *error-avoidance learning climate*, addresses the extent to which a company focuses on avoiding mistakes. At the individual level (the so-called “psychological learning climate” or PLC), which is the focus of the current study, these dimensions represent *an employee’s perception of organizational policies and practices aimed at facilitating, rewarding, and supporting employee learning behavior* (cf. James et al., 2008; Nikolova et al., 2014).

Companies with a stimulating learning climate generally implement practices that show their commitment to learning; these companies provide employees with sufficient opportunities to improve their competencies (psychological *facilitating* learning climate or PLC-F) (Billett, 2004; Fuller & Unwin, 2004). It is through these opportunities (i.e., learning activities) that employees learn new ways to do things (Tynjälä, 2008) and develop new competencies or improve existing competencies (Bezuijen, Van den Berg, Van Dam, & Thierry, 2009). A stimulating learning climate also has invitational qualities such as financial and non-financial incentives, which stimulate employees to participate in these activities (psychological *awarding* learning climate or PLC-A; Tracey & Tews, 2005). In addition, in such a learning climate employees feel safe because the

company is tolerant of learning-related errors, allowing employees to experiment and even make mistakes in order to improve their competencies (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). In contrast, a restrictive learning climate such as an error-avoidance learning climate (psychological *error-avoiding* learning climate or PLC-E) hinders competence development (Payne, Youngcourt, & Beaubien, 2007). In this type of learning climate, companies strive to avoid mistakes that can cause employees to feel insecure and/or anxious (Schein, 1993). When employees are anxious, they are less likely to try new things and are less likely to make use of learning opportunities. Because learning by doing new things is one of the most common forms of at-work learning (Carmeli, Tishler, & Edmondson, 2012), such an error-avoidance learning climate is likely to be detrimental to competence development (Payne et al., 2007). Given this existing theory and previous research, we expect that CSR professionals' competence will be affected by their PLC-F, PLC-A, and PLC-E. Thus, we formulated the following hypotheses:

H1. *PLC-F and PLC-A are positively related to an employee's CSRC.*

H2. *PLC-E is negatively related to CSRC.*

Learning Goal Orientation

As discussed above, in addition to contextual influences on employees' competencies, an individual's engagement or motivation (i.e., agency) also affects competence development (Billett, 2004). An essential motivational aspect that is related to learning is one's "learning goal orientation". According to the goal orientation theory (Dweck & Legett, 1988; VandeWalle, 1997), an employee's goal orientation largely determines the way in which the individual approaches a task, the ability to perform the task, and the belief in the extent to which the competencies needed to complete the task successfully can be developed. The theory distinguishes between two basic dimensions in the employee's goal orientation. The first dimension refers to *performance goal orientation*, in which individuals are motivated to perform better and therefore compare their competencies with those of others. They do so either to seek confirmation for their abilities and performance (i.e., to prove or approach performance) or to avoid negative competence appraisal (i.e., avoid performance). The second dimension refers to *learning goal orientation (LGO)*, where the main motivation for engaging in learning is to improve one's competencies. LGO not only determines the extent to which employees seek opportunities to learn and invest in the learning itself, but it also determines the extent to which they put into practice what has been learned (Blokhuis, 2006; Grossman & Salas, 2011), thereby making their competence evident. Hence, we believe that employees' LGO can be helpful in understanding differences between CSR professionals with respect to CSRC.

Previous studies showed that LGO can enhance favorable employee behaviors (Payne et al., 2007). For example, survey studies indicated that employees with a stronger LGO are more likely to show proactive behavior and learning behavior (Chughtai & Buckley, 2011; Parker & Collins, 2010). These employees also seek feedback more often (Runhaar, Sanders, & Haudong, 2010; Parker & Collins, 2010), and they often demonstrate higher levels of self-efficacy than employees with a weaker LGO (Payne et al., 2007). Moreover, because individuals with a stronger LGO are more confident in their own abilities and less anxious of new situations compared to employees with a weaker LGO, they are more likely to seek out ways to improve their competencies, engage in uncertain and/or challenging tasks, and set higher goals in these situations (Payne et al., 2007; Sujan, Weitz, & Kumar, 1994). Therefore, differences in LGO might explain differences in CSRC among CSR professionals. Hence, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H3. *LGO is positively related to CSRC.*

An Interaction Between PLC and LGO

Recent studies on work-related learning describe competence development from a more socio-constructivist perspective, focusing on the interaction effects of contextual and motivational factors on competence development (Billett, 2004). For example, Billett (2004) argues that the extent to which employees are proactive and engage in learning activities can affect the quality of the learning conditions they experience—and vice versa. In terms of the concepts used in the current study, Dragoni (2005) provides a theoretical description of the same interplay between PLC and LGO, suggesting that employees adjust their LGO based on their perception of the learning climate. For example, in an error-avoidance learning climate, employees with a weak LGO will align their learning behavior to this learning climate, which in turn reinforces the error-avoidance learning climate; in contrast, employees with a strong LGO will use their proactive behavior to seek out learning opportunities themselves.

This notion of a potential interaction between contextual and personal factors is supported by empirical studies. For example, Bryson et al. (2006) showed that despite having restrictive learning conditions, vineyard workers who showed high levels of proactive behavior and sought out opportunities to learn often received more opportunities to improve and develop their competencies than workers who did not show this proactive behavior. Similarly, in a study among 351 junior managers, Dragoni, Tesluk, Russell, & Oh (2009) demonstrated that the positive relationship between learning opportunities and managerial competencies was stronger for manager with a stronger LGO than managers with a weaker LGO. Thus, to examine possible interactions between PLC and LGO in this study, we formulated the following hypotheses:

H4. *LGO strengthens the effect of PLC-F and PLC-A on CSRC.*

H5. *LGO acts as a buffer and weakens the negative effect of PLC-E on CSRC.*

Method

We conducted a survey study to include a broad range of experiences with respect to CSR professionals' competence development activities and to test the interrelation between CSRC, PLC, and LGO. Here, we describe the study context, followed by an outline of the study design.

Study Context

The Dutch approach to CSR is broad. This approach includes various themes and is formed by collaborations between the Dutch government, NGOs, and VNO-NCW, the largest employers' organization in the Netherlands (Van Tulder, 2006). Although CSR is a voluntary practice for companies, the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs has implemented several policies and interventions to promote CSR within Dutch companies. One example of such an intervention is the launch of CSR Netherlands (in Dutch: MVO Nederland)¹² in 2004. CSR Netherlands is an independently operated foundation with the primary task of raising CSR awareness among—and stimulating ownership of—CSR within Dutch companies in order to increase their involvement in tackling SD challenges. CSR Netherlands's efforts seem to be effective—a growing number of companies (particularly medium-sized and large companies) now employ a CSR manager to manage the CSR implementation process; in contrast, multinational companies such as Unilever and Philips often employ a small group of formally appointed CSR professionals. The present study focuses on CSR professionals and the way in which they experience their work setting. We included only CSR professionals from private companies that are not founded on CSR

¹² CSR Netherlands has over 2000 members (partners), including companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), education and government agencies, and industry organizations. We approached CSR professionals of partner companies in November 2014.

experience their work setting. We included only CSR professionals from private companies that are not founded on CSR principles in order to ensure that their experiences reflect the difficulties faced by CSR professionals in mainstream private businesses (e.g., potential friction between economic interests and CSR objectives, working from a relatively autonomous position, etc.).

Sample and Procedure

All medium-sized and large companies ($n = 679$) that are partners of CSR Netherlands were contacted by phone. We were ultimately able to contact the principal CSR professionals of 227 companies, and we invited these professionals to complete an anonymous questionnaire online (the CSR professionals at 130 companies could not be reached, and the remaining 322 companies were just beginning their CSR journey and were therefore not yet active in CSR). Data were collected in September and October of 2015. A total of 195 questionnaires were completed. After we excluded respondents who work in public organizations, the final sample included 176 professionals (99 males and 98 females). The mean age was 42.71 (standard deviation = 9.6 years), and the professionals worked either in a service industry ($n = 117$) or in a manufacturing industry ($n = 59$). Finally, each professional had either a managerial ($n = 96$) or non-managerial CSR role ($n = 80$; see Table 5.3. for more descriptive statistics).

Non-response research. We were unable to determine the precise response rate in this study, as we encouraged the CSR professionals who we contacted to distribute the questionnaire to other CSR professionals (if any) in their companies. To gain more insight into the characteristics of non-response group, we contacted all 227 CSR professionals who received the initial invitation and asked those who did not complete the questionnaire to answer several questions; 24 professionals responded to this follow-up questionnaire. Based on their responses, we determined that the principal reason for not completing the initial questionnaire was high workload. In addition, our analysis established that this group did not differ significantly from the 176 respondents in our sample with respect to age, gender, tenure, CSR role (non-managerial vs. managerial), company size, and type of organization (commercial vs. non-commercial).

Measures

Learning Activities

We formulated a list of learning activities based on the literature (e.g., Bolhuis & Simons, 2001; Cheetham & Chivers, 2001). Respondents were instructed to indicate the extent to which each activity contributed to the development of their CSRC. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) was used. In addition, respondents were given the opportunity to suggest other learning activities that were not included in this list.

CSR Competence

Several scholars have proposed lists of individual competencies for CSR (e.g., Riekman, 2012; Willard et al., 2010). Osagie, Wesseling, Blok, Lans and Mulder (2016) expanded these lists and elaborated on the specific meaning of the competencies for driving the CSR implementation process. Therefore, this expanded list was used in our study. Twelve individual CSRCs were identified based on an extensive literature review and interviews with CSR professionals. Examples of these competencies include “the ability to apply one’s personal ethical values in one’s work” and “being able to cope with possible conflicts between these personal values and business objectives” (see Table 4.1, p. 71 for a more detailed description of these competencies). Using these 12 CSRCs, a scale was developed to measure the CSR professional’s competence in performing tasks involved in CSR implementation. Although one can theoretically distinguish specific competencies and/or elements of competencies, in practice, one’s competence is often the result of a set of highly interrelated competencies (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). Therefore, we measured these 12 competencies as one construct by formulating one item for each competency. For the first 11 items, the respondents were instructed to score themselves on a commonly

used grading scale in the Netherlands ranging from 1 to 10, including an additional score of “11” (meaning “not applicable”; see Table 5.1. for these 11 items). For the 12th item (the personal characteristic element of CSRC; Osagie et al., 2016), the following statement was formulated: “I see myself as being inventive in the preparation/implementation of our sustainability program.” For this item, we used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). A single score for CSR competence was then calculated for each respondent by taking the average of the standardized scores for these items. A higher mean score indicates higher perceived competence in tasks involved in CSR implementation.

Psychological Learning Climate

PLC-F, PLC-A, and PLC-E were measured using the recently developed and validated learning climate questionnaire published by Nikolova et al. (2014). All items (three per dimension) were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). Example items include “My organization provides sufficient resources to develop my competencies (PLC-F; Cronbach’s $a = 0.80$)”; “In my organization, employees who make an effort to learn new things earn both appreciation and respect (PLC-A; Cronbach’s $a = 0.73$)”; and “In my organization, employees do not dare to discuss mistakes (PLC-E, Cronbach’s $a = 0.85$)”. A higher mean score on these three scales indicates that the respondent perceived the learning climate in the companies as being more facilitating, appreciating, and error avoidance-oriented, respectively.

Learning Goal Orientation

LGO was measured using a five-item scale developed by VandeWalle (1997), with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). This scale was chosen because it was specifically developed and validated for a broad range of professions. An example item is “I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge” (Cronbach’s $a = 0.77$). A higher mean score indicates a stronger LGO.

Control Variables

Age, education, tenure, CSR role (non-managerial vs. managerial), company size, and organizational financial situation were included as control variables in the correlation analysis, as these factors have been related to competence development in previous studies (e.g., Kyndt & Baert, 2013). Only those variables that were significantly correlated with one or more of study variables were included in the regression analysis.

Data Analyses

To determine which learning activities can help stimulate CSRC, we used the average scores of each learning activity to rank the activities based on their means within each of the four ways to improve one’s competencies as described by Bolhuis and Simons (2001). The learning activities proposed by the respondents were evaluated. These activities were actually specifications of activities listed in the survey and are therefore presented as examples (e.g., meetings with peers, working in multi-stakeholder collaborations, etc.).

A principal component analysis was performed (Table 5.1) in order to identify the significant components that underlay the respondents’ choices for the 12 statements measuring CSRC. To determine the number of factors to extract, we performed a parallel analysis (O’Connor, 2000). A single component was extracted with all loadings $>.40$ and was labeled “CSR competence” ($a = .91$).

Using SPSS AMOS 22 (IBM Co.), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted for the LGO and PLC scales, using established goodness-of-fit indices (Hu & Bentler, 1999). A four-factor model produced an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 (71) = 94.23, p < .05$; RMSEA = .043; SRMR = .045; NNFI = .97; CFI = .97; IFI = .98) with all items loading $\geq .40$ on their respective scales. There were no indications of problematic cross-loading of items on other factors. Moreover, this model had a significantly better fit than a two-factor model (with all PLC-items loaded on one factor and all LGO items loaded on

another factor ($\Delta\chi^2(5) = 191.13, p < .001$) and a one-factor model (with all items loaded on a single factor ($\Delta\chi^2(6) = 434.76, p < .001$)).

Table 5.1. Factor Loadings CSR Competence Items

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings
CSR Competence	01: I am able to anticipate sustainability-related developments that are important to our sustainability program (for example regarding the environment, politics, technology, and/or society).	.789
	02: I am able to identify those practices my company undertakes that have the highest impact (positive as well as negative) on the sustainability challenges relevant to us.	.783
	03: I am able to assess the sustainability performance of my organization in light of what our sector judges to be "good sustainability practices".	.776
	04: I am able to develop my company's strategic sustainability objectives into a sustainability program.	.753
	05: I am able to utilize my own network to influence decision-making concerning sustainability in my company.	.752
	06: I am able to pay extra attention—where necessary—to the content or the change process to achieve the desired sustainability objectives (e.g., in the case of resistance to change).	.725
	07: I am able to encourage others to raise the bar when it comes to sustainability in their work.	.709
	08: I am able to translate my own ideals concerning sustainability into a practical approach to sustainability challenges.	.706
	09: I am able to cope with possible conflicts between the seriousness and urgency of sustainability challenges and the possibilities in my company to address these issues.	.689
	10: I am able to actively make myself available to perform/coordinate sustainability interventions.	.664
	11: I am able to adjust my thinking based on the lessons I have learned from previous experiences as a sustainability professional.	.610
	12: I see myself as being inventive in the preparation/implementation of our sustainability program.	.414

To test our hypotheses, we performed a hierarchical regression analysis in which we first centered the independent variables to reduce issues related to multicollinearity (Aiken & West, 1996). In Model 1, we entered the control variables into the model. In Model 2, we entered PLC-F, PLC-A, and PLC-E into the model. In Model 3, we entered LGO. Finally, in Model 4, we entered all possible two-way interactions into the model. We limited our analyses to two-way interactions for interpretation reasons and to maintain sufficient statistical power in order to obtain robust, meaningful results. Effect sizes were calculated for Models 2, 3, and 4 using Cohen's f^2 . An effect size is considered small, medium, or large if Cohen's f^2 is 0.02, 0.15, or 0.35, respectively (Cohen, 1988).

Results

Learning Activities for CSR Competence

Table 5.2. shows the ranking of the learning activities for the development of CSRC. "Learning through interaction" ($M_{category} = 3.85$) was the most applied activity for developing CSRC, followed by "learning through critical reflection" ($M_{category} = 3.78$), "learning through experience" ($M_{category} = 3.60$), and "learning through theory" ($M_{category} = 2.35$). Looking at the averages of all learning activities, "discussions with others" ($M = 4.19$), "collaborating with others" ($M = 4.19$), and "asking advice from others" ($M = 4.00$) were the activities that were suggested most often for developing one's CSRC. The CSR professionals emphasized that "others" could refer to people or groups either within or outside of the company. Specific activities suggested by the CSR professionals included *meeting with other CSR professionals*; *participating in think tanks*; *visiting and asking advice from pioneering companies and CSR professionals*; *collaborating in multi-stakeholder partnerships*; and *collaborating with startups*. The formal learning activities—"participating in online or offline training/courses" ($M = 2.47$) and "participating in formal education" ($M = 2.22$)—were the least commonly used activities for developing CSRC.

Table 5.2. The Learning Activities Used by CSR Professionals to Develop CSRC

Learning Activities	M (SD)
A. Learning through social interaction ($M_{category} = 3.85$)	
1. Discussions with others	4.19 (.72)
2. Collaborating with others	4.19 (.78)
3. Asking questions of / obtaining advice from others (e.g., colleagues with more or less experience, experts)	4.00 (.78)
4. Getting feedback from others	3.94 (.78)
5. Training others	2.91 (1.2)
B. Learning through critical reflection ($M_{category} = 3.78$)	
1. Reflecting on experiences	3.91 (.80)
2. Evaluating/checking the information obtained	3.64 (.75)
C. Learning through experience ($M_{category} = 3.60$)	
1. Looking for information (e.g., in books or on the Internet)	3.86 (.84)
2. Observing and imitating others (e.g., role models)	3.56 (.92)
3. Experimenting	3.53 (.96)
4. Performing in-role and extra-role tasks	3.45 (.94)
D. Learning through theory ($M_{category} = 2.35$)	
1. Participating in online and offline training/course (courses shorter than one year)	2.47 (1.2)
2. Participating in formal education (courses one year or longer)	2.22 (1.3)

Descriptive Statistics of Variables Included in Hypothesis Testing

The descriptive statistics and correlations among CSRC, LGO, PLC-F, PLC-A, and PLC-E are summarized in Table 5.3. Among the control variables, only company size, company financial situation, age, and the CSR professionals' role were significantly correlated with at least one study variable. The PLC variables were correlated weakly to moderately with each other, and all of these variables were significantly correlated with CSRC in the expected direction. None of the PLC variables were correlated significantly with LGO.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5.4. summarizes the results of the regression analysis. Company size ($\beta = .18, p < .05$) and age ($\beta = .20, p < .05$) were positively correlated with CSRC, indicating that older CSR professionals and CSR professionals who worked for larger companies reported higher levels of CSRC.

With respect to H1 and H2, we predicted that PLC-F and PLC-A would be positively correlated with CSR professionals' CSRC and that PLC-E would be negatively correlated with CSRC. Although the relationships were in the expected direction, the relationships between CSRC and PLC-F ($\beta = .11, p > .05$), PLC-A ($\beta = .03, p > .05$), and PLC-E ($\beta = -.13, p > .05$) were not significant when controlled for the other variables in the model. Therefore, H1 and H2 are not supported by our results.

Next, we tested the hypothesis that LGO would have a positive relationship with CSRC. This hypothesis (H3) was supported by the data, as the results show that professionals with a stronger LGO perceive themselves as more competent in driving the transitions in CSR implementation ($\beta = .38, p < .05$). Adding LGO to the model yielded a large effect on CSRC ($f^2 = .37; R^2 = .27$). Furthermore, the relationship between LGO and CSRC remained significant after we entered all

Table 5.3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Study Variables ($N = 176$)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. CSRC	0.00	.70	1										
2. PLC-F	3.63	.71	.22**	1									
3. PLC-A	3.41	.66	.20**	.55**	1								
4. PLC-E	2.56	.87	-.21**	-.35**	-.47**	1							
5. LGO	4.13	.50	.41**	.11	.13	-.10	1						
6. Financial situation	2.93	.98	-.01	.09	.07	-.17*	.08	1					
7. Company size	3.46	.82	.16*	.08	.10	-.06	.02	-.07	1				
8. Age	42.71	9.5	.22**	.23**	.14	-.09	.06	.08	-.04	1			
9. Role	.55	.50	.14	.08	.16*	-.14	.24**	.15	-.14	.18*	1		
10. Education	5.59	.86	.08	.03	.08	.04	.15	-.01	.30**	-.13	-.05	1	
11. Job tenure	6.57	5.2	.07	.10	.07	-.06	-.11	-.09	-.09	.40**	-.09	-.08	1

Note. CSRC = CSR competence, based on standardized scores. PLC-F = psychological facilitating learning climate. PLC-A = psychological awarding learning climate. PLC-E = psychological error-avoiding learning climate. LGO = Learning goal orientation. Role dummy coded (non-managerial = 0, managerial = 1). * $p < .05$, ** $p < .000$.

two-way interaction terms into the model (see Table 5.4., Model 4), indicating that a strong proactive learning behavior can enhance CSRC.

With respect to hypothesis 4, we expected that LGO would regulate the relationships between CSRC and PLC-F, PLC-A, and PLC-E. We found no significant two-way interaction effects between LGO and PLC-F ($\beta = -.08, p > .05$), PLC-A ($\beta = -.02, p > .05$), or PLC-E ($\beta = -.05, p > .05$) on CSRC. Therefore, H4 was not supported by the data. However, we did find significant positive interaction effects between PLC-F and PLC-A ($\beta = .22, p < .05$) and between PLC-F and PLC-E ($\beta = .30, p < .05$). Further examination of these interaction effects showed that when PLC-F was low, there was no effect of PLC-A ($B = -.10, p > .05$) and there was a significant negative effect of PLC-E ($B = -.26, p < .05$) on CSRC (see Figures 5.1. and 5.2.). In contrast, when PLC-F was high, there was a positive effect of PLC-A ($B = .22, p < .05$) and no effect of PLC-E ($B = .13, n$) on CSRC. These results indicate that an awarding learning climate can enhance CSR professionals' competence only when CSR professionals are also provided with ample opportunity to learn. Moreover, these results indicate that an error-avoidance learning climate can be detrimental to a CSR professional's competence in cases in which professionals also have few opportunities to learn.

Table 5.4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis with PLC-F, PLC-A, PLC-E, and LGO as Predictors of CSR Competence (N = 176).

Control variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Financial situation	-0.02	.05	-0.04	.05	-0.05	.05	-0.06	.05
Company size	0.15	.06	0.13	.06	0.12	.06	0.14	.06
Age	0.02	.01	0.01	.01	0.01	.01	0.02	.01
Role	0.19	.11	0.16	.11	0.04	.10	0.02	.10
Predictors								
PLC-F			0.11	.09	0.09	.08	0.05	.09
PLC-A			0.03	.10	0.01	.09	0.06	.09
PLC-E			-0.11	.07	-0.10	.07	-0.07	.06
LGO					0.53	.10	0.56	.10
Moderators								
PLC-F*PLC-A							0.23	.09
PLC-F*PLC-E							0.27	.10
PLC-A*PLC-E							0.01	.10
LGO*PLC-F							-0.15	.17
LGO*PLC-A							-0.03	.21
LGO*PLC-E							-0.08	.13
R ²	.09		.14		.27		.33	
Adjusted R ²	.07		.10		.23		.26	
ΔR ²			.04*		.13**		.06*	
f ²			.16		.37		.47	

Note. CSRC = CSR competence. PLC-F = psychological facilitating learning climate. PLC-A = psychological awarding learning climate. PLC-E = psychological error-avoiding learning climate. LGO = Learning goal orientation. Role dummy coded (non-managerial = 0, managerial = 1). *p < .05, **p < .000.

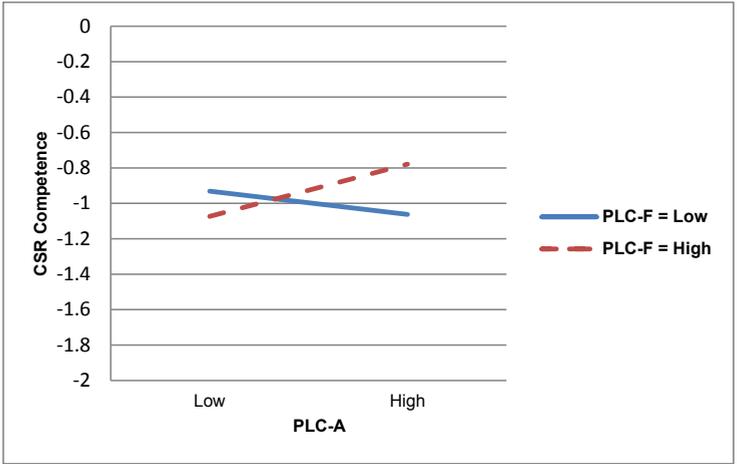


Figure 5.1. CSR competence as a function of PLC-F and PLC-A.
Note. PLC-F = psychological facilitating learning climate. PLC-A = psychological awarding learning climate.

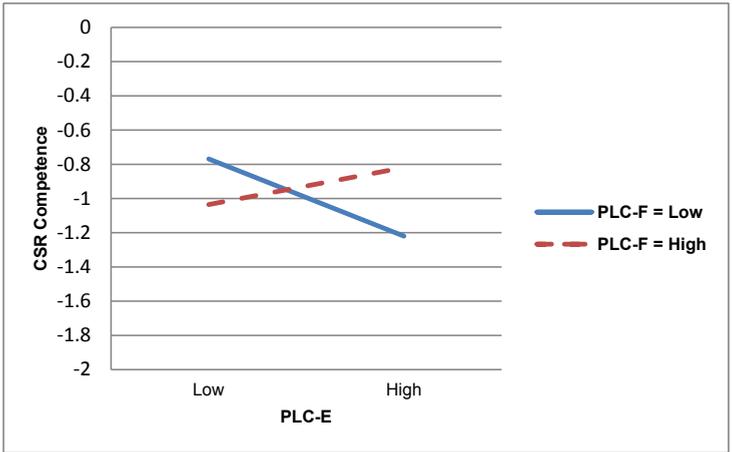


Figure 5.2. CSR competence as a function of PLC-F and PLC-E.
Note. PLC-F = psychological facilitating learning climate. PLC-E = psychological error-avoiding learning climate.

Conclusion and Discussion

The aims of this study were to (1) explore the learning activities that CSR professionals favor in order to develop their CSR-related competencies (CSRCs), and (2) assess *if* and *how* a company's learning climate—as experienced by the CSR professionals (PLC)—and the professionals' learning goal orientation (LGO) affect their competence.

With respect to the first aim, we addressed a gap in the literature regarding individual CSR-related competencies, and we explored how these competencies can be developed. Our study helps narrow this gap by showing that external learning networks are seen as a valuable way for CSR professionals to develop their CSRC. Our results indicate that CSR professionals favor learning activities that are related to what Bolhuis and Simons (2001) describe as “learning through social interactions” in order to develop their competencies. Activities that involve discussions with others, collaborating with others, and/or asking questions and receiving advice from others were especially valued. The professionals explicitly emphasized the importance of learning from others who are outside their company, for example by engaging in think tanks and by visiting and asking advice from pioneering companies and CSR professionals. Learning in formal educational settings (i.e., learning through theory; Bolhuis & Simons, 2001) was the least preferred activity. The complexity of SD challenges, the fact that CSR professionals must work extensively with external stakeholders, and the professionals' relatively autonomous position within the company might explain their placing emphasis on learning from others who are outside the company. Indeed, there are often few CSR professionals within the company; thus, forming learning networks with others in the company in order to develop competencies—as described in the learning network theory of Van der Krogt (1995)—might not be the ideal option for CSR professionals (nor is it necessarily even an available option). Therefore, these professionals must find peers outside the company, and they must establish external learning networks in order to learn from other CSR professionals and discuss common difficulties they might face in their jobs.

With respect to the second aim of this study, we addressed another gap in our understanding of how CSRC can be developed. Specifically, we studied the role of PLC and LGO in explaining differences in CSRC among various CSR professionals, and we conclude that LGO plays a central role in promoting CSR professionals' competence. To arrive at this conclusion, we tested several hypotheses. First, as we expected, the way in which professionals experience their learning climate as facilitating (PLC-F), awarding (PLC-A), and error-avoiding (PLC-E) plays a significant role in explaining differences among professionals with respect to CSRC. In other words, our results show that rewarding CSR professionals for learning may promote their CSRC, but only if they are also given ample opportunity to learn. Moreover, a PLC-E will negatively affect CSR professionals' competence only when few opportunities to learn are available. These findings seem to contradict previous studies that found a significant main effect of PLC on work-related learning (for review, see Kyndt & Baert, 2013) and competencies (Dragoni et al, 2009). Differences in the conceptualization of PLC might explain—at least in part—why we found no such effects (cf. Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008; Dragoni et al, 2009). For example, although Dragoni et al. (2009) assessed the relationship between PLC and managerial competencies, they only included the extent to which companies provide their managers with ample opportunities to learn (i.e., PLC-F). In contrast to previous studies, we found that focusing on individual level experiences regarding the learning climate, and including multiple dimensions of PLC—which is particularly important, as companies can have several types and dimensions of climate simultaneously (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013)—may yield a different picture regarding how PLC affects employees' learning outcomes (i.e., CSRC).

Second—and as expected—we found that a proactive learning behavior (i.e., LGO) can help enhance CSRC. However, contrary to what one might expect based on existing theory (e.g., Billett, 2004; Bryson et al., 2006; Dragoni et al.,

2009), this relationship is not affected by how CSR professionals experience their learning climate. It is unclear why we did not find the suggested interaction between contextual factors (i.e., PLC) and motivational factor (i.e., LGO) in our study. The fact that CSR professionals explicitly denoted “learning from others outside the company” might provide a possible clue; it indicates that the learning opportunities provided in their companies (e.g., “vertical learning network”; Poell et al., 2000), although supportive of their learning process, are not sufficient for developing the necessary competencies, thereby driving these professionals to seek out external resources for competence development. These professionals might therefore have created what Poell et al. (2000) termed a “liberal learning network” in order to develop their competencies. In such a learning configuration, there is little interference from the company in individual’s learning. Professionals self-direct their learning, and they create their own relevant learning situations. This suggestion of a liberal learning network is reinforced by the high mean LGO score (4.13 on a scale from 1 to 5), which shows that the CSR professionals included in our study perceive themselves as strongly learning goal oriented. Such individuals are likely to take charge of their own learning process (i.e., self-directed learning), as they are confident in their abilities and proactively seek out opportunities to improve their own competencies (Payne et al., 2007; Sujan et al., 1994). However, future research can provide more conclusive answers by directly testing this hypothesis.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Our results provide insight into how CSR professionals’ competencies can be developed. Nevertheless, several issues with respect to the study design should be considered when interpreting these findings. *First*, to explore which learning activities were favored by CSR professionals, we provided a structured list of learning activities and instructed the respondents to indicate the extent to which each activity contributed to the development of their CSRC. Such a design may have limited the depth to which we could explore the reasoning behind the learning activities denoted by the professionals. Alternatively, by interviewing CSR professionals, we could have explored why certain learning activities should be emphasized, if and why they find PLC less important for enhancing their competence, and whether their jobs and/or positions elicit the above-mentioned liberal learning network. *Second*, the study design was cross-sectional, which limited our measurement of CSR professionals’ competence to a static view of their self-perceived current competence. Moreover, this design precludes our ability to draw definitive causal inferences based on the results. *Third*, several scholars (e.g., Matten & Moon, 2008) have asserted that a company’s organization of CSR depends on the cultural and/or institutional context in which it operates (e.g., political and cultural circumstance). Thus, our use of a non-random sample of CSR professionals working in medium-sized, large, or multinational private companies, as well as the Dutch context in which this study was conducted, may limit our ability to generalize our results to other CSR professionals, for example CSR professionals who work in small companies and/or in other countries.

Finally, we used a self-reporting tool to measure all variables. Such an approach can inappropriately elicit socially desirable responses regarding one’s LGO (and one’s CSRC in particular). This approach can also elicit a common method variance, which could have inflated the correlations found between some variables. On the other hand, using a self-reporting tool does not necessarily guarantee that significant associations will be found, as indicated by Table 5.3. Moreover, correlations between variables measured using similar methods are not necessarily stronger than correlations between variables measured using different methods. Thus, the influence of a common method variance might be overestimated (Spector, 2006). Nevertheless, we cannot rule out these effects in our study. Therefore, future studies should assess CSRC and LGO using several methods and several sources. For example, these studies could include the supervisor’s judgment of proposed competence in addition to the professional’s rating of their own competence, or it could include a past review of competence in the measurement. Future research regarding the topic of competence development among

CSR professionals could assess also other contextual factors (e.g., the supervisor's support of learning) and personal and/or motivational factors (e.g., self-efficacy, employability, and learning motivation); this research may further help account for the differences in CSRC among CSR professionals.

Practical Implications

Here, we present one of the first studies regarding the development of competencies by CSR professionals. Our results are an initial step toward identifying effective learning activities through which CSR professionals can develop their competencies. We show that current CSR professionals favor learning activities that center on learning with—and from—others outside of their own company. We also show that current learning activities provided within companies are likely to be inadequate for CSR professionals, given the complexity of the activities. These results can be used to help human resource professionals and CSR professionals decide on appropriate activities for competence development; by facilitating self-directed learning for CSR professionals, companies can help create external learning networks for developing their competencies. In this respect, potentially effective learning activities can include peer meetings, participation in think tanks, and inviting and/or visiting pioneering companies and other CSR professionals. In addition, our results highlight the importance of proactive learning behaviors (i.e., LGO) in promoting CSRC. Thus, it is important to select employees with a strong LGO in order to drive the changes needed in CSR implementation. Having such an LGO will increase the likelihood that these professionals will engage in continuous learning, thereby ensuring that they maintain the necessary competencies for cementing their role in implementing CSR.

Chapter 6

General Conclusion and General Discussion

This chapter answers the central research question posed in Chapter 1 by combining the results of the individual studies. The integrated results are then discussed in relation to previous literature on CSR. In addition, the limitations of the studies conducted, the practical implication of the findings, and suggestions for future research are presented.



Conclusion

The central research question guiding the studies in this thesis is:

Which internal resources related to learning at the organizational and individual level contribute to the CSR adaptation process in private companies?

With respect to the organizational level, we found that certain learning organization characteristics can support the CSR adaptation process (as indicated in Chapter 2). We found that stimulating group learning, leadership that encourages learning, and connecting to the local communities are LO characteristics that can directly influence CSR adaptation in a positive way. Furthermore, we found that the other three LO characteristics - creating continuous learning opportunities for employees, stimulating inquiry-based behavior and dialogue among employees, and involving employees in formulating a collective vision - do benefit CSR adaptation *because* these factors positively influence the LO characteristic “leadership for learning”. In addition, having a collective vision and group learning stimulates active connection with the local community, which in turn can also favorably affect the CSR adaptation process.

With respect to the individual level, we found (see Chapter 3) that CSR managers, those managing the CSR adaptation process, need specific individual competencies in order to do their jobs effectively. In this thesis we identified that there are eight distinct individual competencies that are relevant for CSR managers, namely:

- (1) Anticipating CSR-related challenges;
- (2) Understanding CSR-relevant systems and subsystems;
- (3) Understanding CSR-relevant standards;
- (4) CSR management competencies, including
 - a. Leading CSR programs,
 - b. Managing CSR programs, and
 - c. Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunities;
- (5) Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes.

More related to values and virtues, the following personal value-driven competencies were denoted by the CSR managers:

- (6) Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes;
- (7) Personal value-driven competencies, including
 - a. Ethical normative competencies,
 - b. Balancing personal ethical values and business objectives, and
 - c. Realizing self-regulated CSR-related behaviors and active involvement; and
- (8) Reflecting on personal CSR values, virtues, views and experiences.

We also found that CSR managers have different job roles in the CSR adaptation process. We identified six job roles through the interviews with the CSR managers, namely the

- (1) coordinating,
- (2) stimulating,
- (3) networking,
- (4) strategizing,

- (5) monitoring, and
- (6) mentoring roles.

Moreover, we found in this study that depending on the job roles CSR managers have in the CSR adaptation process, particular competencies are emphasized (Chapter 4). We showed that the business case logic influences the relative perceived importance of specific individual competencies in these job roles; the results show that the more general management-oriented competencies are considered to be most important in multiple roles (e.g., interpersonal competencies, being able to anticipate CSR challenges, and being able to translate these challenges into business opportunities). We also found that the relative importance of certain more value-related competencies (e.g., ethical normative competencies) – which one would expect to be important for a highly value-dependent topic such as CSR – differs across the job roles involved. A competence framework was provided in this study, showing which CSR-related competencies are considered important in the six job roles identified in this thesis (Chapter 4, Table 4.1., p.71).

Furthermore, our results indicated that the somewhat unusual position CSR managers have within companies affect the way they prefer to develop their competencies (Chapter 5). CSR managers favored learning activities that center on social interactions. Because they have few peers within their companies, CSR managers specifically favor learning from others (peers) outside of their company. We also assessed if and how company's learning climate, as experienced by the CSR managers and CSR managers' personal learning goal orientation affect their competencies. We found that rewarding CSR managers for learning promote their competencies, but only if they are also provided with sufficient opportunities to learn. Furthermore, we found that individual's agency, here operationalized as CSR managers' personal learning goal orientation, is of particular importance to promote CSR-related competencies in CSR managers.

In short, the key message of this thesis is two-fold. *First*, because CSR managers are the ones who actually manage the CSR adaptation process they can play a crucial role in the CSR adaptation process if they possess the right individual competencies. In order to develop these individual competencies, CSR managers should take ownership of their learning process and seek opportunities to learn with and from others.

Second, leadership and connecting with external parties are of particular importance to the CSR adaptation process. *With respect to connecting with external parties*: on the organizational level, having good relations with external parties improves CSR adaptation, because such relationships stimulate learning processes within the company. Furthermore, on the individual level, relationships with external parties promote the development of the individual competencies of the CSR managers responsible for the adaptation process. *With respect to leadership*: on the organizational level, leadership for learning, referring to active support and stimulation of learning, indirectly affects CSR adaptation; it enhances employees' learning behavior and therefore improve employees' cognitive readiness and support for the changes needed to integrate CSR within the company. Furthermore, on the individual level, leadership competencies are essential for driving the changes needed in the CSR adaptation process.

With these results this thesis contributes to the literature on the CSR adaptation process in several ways. First, this thesis addresses the issue of the CSR adaptation process from a learning or human resource development perspective and as such complements previous research employing the (human resource) management perspective on CSR. Second, it addresses learning from both the organizational and individual level, thereby providing valuable insights into if and how specific internal resources related to learning can contribute at different levels to the CSR adaptation process in private companies. Third, little is known about how factors on an individual level can support companies in their adaptation to CSR principles and their social performance at large (Aquino & Glavas, 2012). This doctoral thesis is one of the first providing insights into

this matter and demonstrates that learning-related influences on the individual level may be of value to the adaptation process. More specifically, this thesis adds to the literature by (1) identifying the job roles and individual competencies CSR managers need to effectively do their jobs within private companies; previous studies on CSR-related competencies often studied this topic from an educational point of view, thereby not fully addressing the complexity of the business context in which CSR managers operate; (2) by exploring how CSR managers can develop their competencies, which up till now remained unexplored in the CSR literature; and (3) by showing how certain organizational characteristics (i.e., learning climate) and personal characteristics (i.e., learning goal orientation) affect the development of CSR managers' competencies.

Questions for Further Research

Aside from these theoretical contributions, our research also raises some questions. Three, of what we think are the most evident questions, are discussed in the following section. This discussion will provide the context, in which the contribution of this thesis to the CSR literature should be understood and highlights interesting directions for future research on learning-related factors that may influence the CSR adaptation process. The three questions are:

- (1) *What are the consequences of the approach taken in this thesis to identify and define the CSR-related competencies?*
- (2) *The literature on CSR stresses the importance of (personal) values and virtues in CSR. Why do CSR managers not emphasize these aspects in their assessment of essential individual competencies for effective role performance?*
- (3) *To what extent can the individual competencies identified in this thesis help companies tackle sustainability challenges?*

In the remainder of this chapter, these questions will be discussed.

(1). What are the consequences of the approach taken in this thesis to identify and define the CSR-related competencies?

In Chapter 4 we described the importance of contextualizing individual competencies in order to make them meaningful for CSR managers and their employers. One can contextualize the competencies by taking into account potential context effects, or situational effects, which can affect the competencies needed to be effective. Situational effects may refer to the CSR profession as a whole (i.e., the omnibus-level; cf. Johns, 2006) or to the more specific discrete-level effects such as job roles and tasks and one's conceptions of work (Sandberg & Pinnington, 2009). According to Johns (2006), the omnibus-level factors only influence an employee's behavior through discrete-level factors. In other words, competencies contextualized at the level of professions can only guide actual work behavior when they are interpreted within—or when they account for—discrete-level factors. We conducted behavioral interviews with CSR managers to contextualize the competencies we identified in Chapter 3. At the time of the study little was known about the CSR profession, specifically about the job roles and tasks of those CSR professionals working in a business setting. Therefore, the behavioral interview method, in which questions are asked about past effective behavior, was considered most useful as compared to, for example, the critical incidents method, in which one explores predetermined specific situations. This method allowed us to explore the relevant job roles and tasks CSR managers have in the CSR adaptation process, and contextualized the previously mentioned individual CSR-related competencies within the discrete level factor “job role and tasks”. However, the competencies could be even more contextualized to the extent that it is contextualized for specific companies or individuals. The question is then, what are the consequences of our chosen approach and level of contextualization?

This question is related to the different perspectives or positions scholars can have when identifying competencies; a position on the continuum from highly contextualized individual competencies on one side to context-independent competencies on the other side (Figure 6.1).

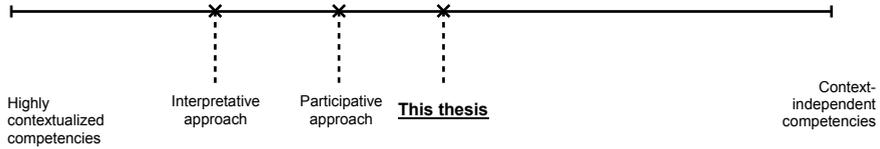


Figure 6.1. Illustration of the Continuum of Contextualizing Individual Competencies.

Some scholars for example urge for a (socio-) constructivist and humanistic perspective (i.e., high contextualized individual competencies), proposing an “interpretative approach” or “participative approach” to identifying competencies (e.g., Brown & Duguid, 1991; Capaldo, Ianoli, & Zollo, 2006; Sandberg, 2000). These scholars put emphasis on individual agency and state that the influence of the context is vast, therefore eventually it is how an individual or a group of individuals ascribe meaning to these influences that determines one’s actions and as such the competencies one needs in a job.

For example, Sandberg (2000) argues that job-related competencies derive their description through one’s experiences of the context and interpretation of one’s job; the way one conceives its work creates and shapes the interpretation of the attribute (e.g., skills, knowledge or attitude) that one thinks is needed for competent work performance, and determines whether the competence is used and how it is used. This individual “conceiving of work“ also determines the emphasis one puts on certain attributes because it indicates which attribute to develop and maintain for effective performance in that particular context. Moreover, according to Sandberg (2000) a more mature conception of work elicits a broader and more complex range of available attributes. Thus, one’s subjective conception of work precedes and constitutes the interpretation of one’s competencies. As such, to understand the meaning of specific competencies, one needs to observe and interview individuals and discuss and interpret the results with individuals. However, a consequence of this position on the continuum of contextualizing individual competencies is that the competencies derived through the analysis are only generalizable to others when others have the same conceptions of work.

Other scholars have attempted to tackle this restriction. For example, Capaldo, Ianoli, and Zollo (2006) stress the social-dependency of competencies, which are viewed as socially constructed. Thus, what constitutes competencies not only depends on one’s personal conception of work, but also on that of others or what is socially considered as competent behavior. Therefore, they, like others before them, urge for a “participative approach” to understand the meaning of specific competencies needed for a particular job, in which one includes employee representatives in all stages of the research. For example, interviews can be held with representative employees. Then include the individual “conceptions of work” of these employees in the analysis phase by discussing the data and results with them, and by defining the competencies with them based on consensus in representations. Hence, this approach is more objectified than the interpretative approach as this is a group effort. The generalizability in the participative approach would be extended to groups or a specific organization; however, one could not compare CSR managers from different organizations, because each organization has its own culture, language and other contextual dependencies.

Thus contextualizing individual competencies may come with losses in transferability and gains in the developability of the competencies as they become more personalized. Scholars suggest that there is no one best level of contextualization or situatedness; rather, it is a choice that researchers have to make taking into account the merits and drawbacks of the choice. Moreover, the choice of level of contextualization should be aligned with the study aims (Johns, 2006; Whetten, 2009) and the manner the competencies are intended to be employed, although higher levels of contextualization will improve the meaningfulness and direct applicability of competence frameworks (Mulder, 2014). In this thesis we aimed for a balanced approach. This position was empirically informed as we intended to identify (Chapter 3), operationalize, measure, test, compare, and explain differences in competencies among CSR managers (Chapter 5) and in the CSR adaptation process (Chapter 2, 3, & 4). As such, on the one hand we needed to ensure that the competencies were to some extent generalizable. Yet, on the other hand we also wanted to account for specific contextual influences. Therefore, efforts were taken to address the context-dependent nature or situated nature of competencies by contextualizing CSR competencies using important job-roles. However, this balanced approach does not personalize the identified CSR-related competencies in such a way as could have been done by employing a humanistic approach as described by Sandberg (2000) and Capaldo et al. (2006). Therefore, the *direct* usability of the competence framework presented in Chapter 4 (p. 81.), for specific HR interventions - such as determining development trajectories for individual CSR managers - might be limited. Personal development trajectories would probably be more supported by a “personalized” meaning of the competencies. Yet, by ensuring some level of generalizability and at the same time accounting for specific contextual influences, we provide a large group of CSR managers with newly identified individual CSR-related competencies and with more recognizable meaning of the competencies than previously identified in the CSR literature. The competence framework can be used as a tool to further formulate a personalized meaning of the CSR-related competencies. We will elaborate on the potential uses of the framework later on in the thesis.

(2). The literature on CSR stresses the importance of (personal) values and virtues in CSR. Why do CSR managers not emphasize these aspects in their assessment of essential individual competencies for effective role performance?

CSR is by definition a highly value dependent construct because what is considered a good or essential CSR practice is socially determined and, therefore, culturally and sector dependent. Therefore, one would expect that “values” would play a prominent role in the competencies CSR managers need in their jobs. Values refer to “*desirable, transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity*” (Schwartz, 1994, p.21). Indeed, in the study described in Chapter 3 we found that CSR managers emphasized the importance of employing value-driven competencies such as “ethical normative competencies” and “personal CSR supportive attitudes”. Yet, when urged to prioritize the competencies within managerial job roles in the CSR adaptation process (Chapter 4), these competencies were deemed less important than general management competencies (i.e., interpersonal competencies, systems thinking, and leadership competencies). What may explain this discrepancy? We think that the alignment between one’s personal values and that of the company might provide a possible explanation.

CSR is a sustainable way of conducting business which companies engage in on a voluntary basis. It is therefore linked to the company’s value systems (Van Marrewijk & Werre, 2003). Dealing with the company’s value system can be a challenge for CSR managers, as their personal value system does not always match that of their companies (Hemingway, 2005). The mismatch can lead to a discrepancy in how CSR managers want to behave and how they actually behave. That is, their work behavior (and as such the competencies which one can infer from the behavior) also depends on what is considered acceptable and desirable within their companies (Ajzen, 1991). To explain this notion further we make use of Hemingway’s (2004; 2005) work on behavior of CSR agents. Hemingway (2005) presented a typology describing four situations which

might occur based on the (mis)match between an individual's personal CSR value system and that of their companies. Based on her typology we can infer four types of behavior CSR managers may show. CSR managers may show proactive behavior and openly pursue (ambitious) CSR objectives (i.e. *Active CSR agent*; cf. Hemingway, 2005) if their personal pro-CSR values are aligned with that of their companies. If both the CSR manager and the company are not inclined to pursue CSR objectives, the manager will likely ignore CSR or will dismiss its value (i.e. *Apathetic CSR agent*; cf. Hemingway, 2005). CSR managers will conform to their company's pro-CSR value system and pursue CSR when asked to do so, even when they are personally not oriented toward CSR (i.e. *Conformist CSR agent*; cf. Hemingway, 2005). Challenges may especially arise when CSR managers' personal pro-CSR values do not match their company's value system. The CSR manager may become frustrated (i.e. *Frustrated CSR agent*; cf. Hemingway, 2005), which may lead to the manager either doing "nothing" and reframing CSR initiatives in commercial terms to make it acceptable within the company or lead to "covertly" pursuing CSR objectives, in which the CSR manager perceives his or her actions as a win-win situations (i.e., profitable for the company and for sustainability).

How does Hemingway's (2005) typology provide a possible explanation of why CSR managers put hardly any emphasis on values and virtues in their assessment of essential individual competencies for effective role performance? The CSR managers interviewed in this thesis may have either experienced a match or a (partial) mismatch between their personal pro-CSR values and that of their companies (i.e., active CSR agent and frustrated CSR agent). In the case of a match, ethical-oriented competencies could have been considered less important for CSR managers because the company already values ethical behavior. This leaves room for the CSR manager to focus on other more general management-related tasks in the CSR adaptation process, resulting in an emphasis on general management competencies. The following passage from one of the interviews held with a CSR manager provides support for this suggestion (Chapter 3, p. 61):

"Nowadays everybody understands that there is a limit to what we are doing, that we have limited resources, that we have climate change issues. So convincing others is not a big part of my job anymore. Other competencies are important now, such as entrepreneurial competencies and being driven to constantly push my company's CSR performance to higher levels that go beyond compliance to regulations and risk management to really try to tackle sustainability issues. (...) In a sense it is a bit of entrepreneurship. The financial component, which should be included in your list, is gaining more importance in this job. I think we are slowly but surely coming to a point that you should be able to understand business models and know how your company can make money with CSR." (Interviewee I, Manager CSR, Appendix 3.1, p. 63)"

However, it is also possible that less emphasis is put on value-driven competencies because there was a (partial) mismatch between the CSR managers' personal pro-CSR values and that of their companies; the CSR manager's pro-CSR values and ambitions go beyond that of his or her company. Although in such situations the CSR manager might still consider value-driven competencies important (see Chapter 2), value-driven competencies may elicit work behavior (e.g., urging others to behave sustainably) that is considered less *effective* and, therefore, less important for effective role performance because the company is not, or is to a lesser extent, supportive of such behavior. The latter demonstrates the dynamic nature of competencies, showing that certain competencies could be triggered by specific circumstances (Mulder, 2017). So, one can conclude that although CSR managers are in the position to directly influence the CSR adaption process through their actions, their behavior and as such the competencies they employ are to an extent informed by the company's value system; their personal value-driven competencies may be as useful to promote the CSR adaptation process in as much as they feel that they can express it freely within the company.

(3). To what extent can the individual competencies identified in this thesis help companies tackle sustainability challenges?

As mentioned in the introduction section of this thesis, companies can have different ambition levels with respect to CSR. Visser (2014) described these ambition levels in terms of stages in CSR maturity, which ranges from implementing incremental changes to protect shareholders values (*Defensive CSR*) to a *transformative CSR stage* in which companies go beyond doing things better by doing the right things. Within this stage companies want to tackle the root causes of current CSR challenges. This is often done through innovative business models, rigorous changes in core business processes, and actively working toward changes on a system-level (e.g., sector-level or [inter]national level). According to Visser (2014) companies go through each stage successively (cf. Schoemaker et al., 2006). The ideal approach in terms of sustainability is according to Visser (2014) an approach that not only guarantees zero negative impact, but that also ensures a “restorative business” (i.e., giving more than one takes; Visser, 2014, p.17) by tackling the root of CSR-related problems and changing the system as a whole. Such an approach requires established companies to radically transform (cf. Rotmans, Kemp, & Van Asselt, 2001), where actions are also taken by the company to change practices within their respective industry sectors (e.g., lobbying to change the rules of the game). Visser calls this maturity stage the transformative CSR stage, which is needed to tackle CSR challenges on a macro-level, whilst in the other stages efforts are focused on local sustainability challenges.

With this in mind, one could question whether the companies included in this research and their maturity stage or approach to CSR represented the “ideal” approach for sustainability. Consequently, one could also question whether the competencies proposed by their CSR managers are the appropriate ones to help the company reach a transformative CSR maturity level, especially when the results seem to suggest that the competencies employed by these CSR managers are to some extent informed by their company’s CSR values.

Several companies included in this research are internationally known for their CSR-related practices, and are seen as frontrunners in their respective industry sectors (e.g., Philips, Unilever, and DSM). According to Visser, (2013; 2014) Unilever, for example, can be seen as a pioneer of the transformative approach (Visser, 2014). Unilever views sustainability as the only way to long-term prosperity, demonstrating this by embedding CSR-related objectives in their core businesses (detergents, foods, toiletries, and specialty chemicals); they are active in bringing about changes sector-wide, although it remains a challenge for them to encourage others within the supply chains to adopt their approach (Pretty et al., 2008); they have an ambitious sustainability plan (i.e., Sustainable Living Plan; McKinsey Quarterly, 2009) which, for example, aims to improve the hygiene habits of a billion people and bring safe drinking water to 500 million people by 2020 (McKinsey Quarterly, 2009). Nonetheless, the future will tell to what extent Unilever’s approach is also restorative (Visser, 2014).

However, many other companies included in the studies that aimed to identify and contextualize individual CSR-related competencies (Chapter 3 & 4) can at best be categorized within the strategic CSR stage (Visser, 2014). In these companies the business case arguments for engaging in CSR seemed to be dominant. This suggestion is strengthened by the individual competencies their CSR managers deemed most important in their roles, which were mainly oriented toward the profitability of CSR (Chapter 4), implying that CSR was not yet part of their companies’ core value system and culture. Although business-case-driven change can benefit society, the extent to which they benefit sustainability challenges is very limited (Bowman, 2014). So, the competence framework derived from this research seems specifically useful for CSR managers working in companies that are in one of the first four stage of CSR maturity as described by Visser (2014; the defensive, charitable, promotional, and strategic CSR approach). The framework provides these CSR managers with insights in to which key competencies they should have or should develop in order to promote the CSR adaptation process. Assuming that it is possible for a well-established private company to become restorative with respect to sustainability, it remains to be explored which individual competencies are needed in order to transform the company from a strategic CSR maturity stage to a transformative CSR stage in that one can address and tackle wicked sustainability challenges. There is

growing scientific attention for the role of virtuous (competence) in CSR (e.g., Blok, Gremmen, & Wesselink, 2016; Macaulay & Lawton, 2006; Vucetich & Nelson, 2010). That is, sustainability can be seen as an ethical norm – it describes the world as it should be and consequently how one should act – (Hahn, 2009; Wals, 2010). Therefore, according to Blok and colleagues, ethical decision making involves a normative (affective) and an action component. Blok and colleagues (2016) introduced the term “virtuous competence” to conceptualize what the two component perspective means in terms of the knowledge, skills and attitude needed in ethical decision making. These scholars were informed by philosophical, educational, and psychological studies, in which the affective component in competencies and human behavior is emphasized for effective performance (e.g., Aristotle, 1990; Krathwohl, Bloom, & Bertram, 1964; Kraut, 2014). The normative (affective) component in virtuous competence refers to using one’s virtues related to sustainability as a normative basis for ethical decision making. The action component in virtuous competence refers to one’s ability to engage oneself in behavior - on a personal and company level and in collaboration with stakeholders - that makes one’s virtues regarding sustainability apparent to others (Blok et al., 2016). This means that even if one’s personal virtues related to CSR do not match with that of the company, one still actively searches for ways to let these virtues drive corporate sustainable behavior. Research on virtuous competence may therefore provide valuable insights into the competencies needed to secure CSR in a company’s culture and transform the company from a strategic CSR maturity stage to a transformative CSR stage.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Besides the questions discussed in the previous section, there are other considerations that one needs to take in to account when interpreting our findings. *First*, in identifying relevant job roles and CSR-related competencies we only included the perspective of CSR managers. Scholars like Quinn (1988), Mulder (1992; 2016), and Hooijberg and Choi (2000), however, have argued and shown that different types of respondents may have different ideas about what is important for effective performance. Hooijberg and Choi (2000), for example, used a 360-degree feedback approach to study to what extent managers and their subordinates, peers, and superiors vary in their ideas of what roles and behaviors are needed for effective performance. They found that managers’ judgements are very much consistent with that of their superiors, but are not always consistent with that of their subordinates and peers. Yet, in order to have a fruitful discussion on important individual CSR-related competencies with multiple stakeholders, it is important to have a common point of departure. This thesis provides such a point of departure specific for the CSR profession, by addressing the subject of the CSR adaptation process from the perspective of those professionals that are actually managing the change process. We found high agreement among CSR managers about essential roles and competencies needed in the CSR adaptation process. Future studies could examine whether other important actors share their perception on relevant roles and competencies. It is important to try and include representatives with different backgrounds in further discussions about individual CSR-related competencies for CSR managers, as there are different sides to the subject of CSR (e.g., empirical, political, environmental, economic, normative and ethical). The internal actors that one could include in such discussions would be CSR managers’ superiors. With respect to subordinates, often CSR managers do not have formal subordinates (Chapter 3 & 4). Yet it is important to include the perspective of other employees, as most change implementation fails because of too little consideration of subordinates’ conceptions of the change (Rafferty, Jimmieson, & Armenakis, 2013). One could include employees from the employee council in the research; in the Netherlands, companies with more than 50 employees have employee councils to represent the needs of employees in meetings with the top management. Important external actors that could be included in the discussion are representatives of NGO’s, employers’ associations, and scientific experts.

Second, as mentioned earlier we only explored the individual competencies that brought the CSR managers to the point where they were at the moment we interviewed them. We did not explore the competencies that they expected to need in order to help their companies evolve toward a higher CSR maturity level (cf. Van Marrewijk & Werre, 2003; Visser, 2014), specifically those needed in the highest ambition level as described by Visser (2014; i.e., Transformative CSR). The need to look forward in the identification of competencies is also discussed by Mulder (2017). He describes three categories of competence (competencies included) used by scholars and practitioners. The first, which he termed competence 1.0, involves identifying competencies needed for specific, narrowly described tasks. The second, competence 2.0, involves identifying integrated statements about the competencies needed in specific occupations and professions including broader responsibilities than tasks (this thesis). The third, competence 3.0, involves identifying the competencies that one needs in order to prepare oneself as comprehensively as possible for the unknown future (i.e., future-oriented competencies). Researchers have already started studying and have identified competencies that are needed in the future for various professions and tasks; for example, for “reading” (Alexander & The Disciplined Reading and Learning Research Laboratory, 2012), “public health professionals” (Rodriguez, 2013), and for “the engineering profession” (Robinson, Sparrow, Clegg, & Birdi, 2005).

In the context of the CSR adaptation process, exploring future-oriented competencies with CSR managers and other parties (e.g., management and NGO) could be a meaningful way to help practitioners start the change process toward transformative CSR. One way scholars could go about executing such research is to first determine which companies could be seen as pioneers in transformative CSR. Often (scientific) experts have clear ideas on which companies can be considered as such. However, one could also determine this by combining research methods, as no one method can provide a relatively “clear” categorization of a company’s CSR maturity level. One could, for example, combine analyzing rankings (e.g., The Dow Jones Sustainability Indices) and companies’ sustainability reports with interviews with companies’ (CSR) professionals. A next step could be to interview groups of CSR managers and, as mentioned earlier, other key actors (e.g. key public figures as representatives of “the society”) to explore the competencies needed for transformative CSR and possibly the unknown stages beyond. Thus, scholars will need to apply a different methodology than used in this thesis in order to identify future-oriented competencies needed for sustainable development. “Scenarios” is a method that is often applied in futurology and might be useful in this respect; they help to disconfirm assumptions and stimulate new challenging ideas (Kreibich, 2006; Ramirez, Mukherjee, Vezzoli, & Kramer, 2015). When using this method, different sets of structured and equally plausible future contexts are described and advice is given or actions are planned accordingly (Van der Heijden, Ramirez, Selsky, & Wilkinson, 2010). One can also apply the three-phase methodology of Robinson et al. (2007) specifically proposed to identify future competencies. In the first phase preliminary interviews are conducted to identify and describe the most important future scenarios. In the second phase, a questionnaire study is conducted to identify present and future importance of various competencies. Finally in the third phase, interviews using the critical incident method are conducted to develop the final list of future competencies (Robinson et al., 2007). The competence framework presented in this thesis can be used in the second phase.

Third, scholars could study if one CSR manager should master all job roles and competencies identified in this research. Although we did not explore this in our research, the literature provides evidence in favor of assembling a team of CSR professionals. For example, studies regarding leadership have shown that shared leadership has a greater effect than individual leadership with respect to organizational functioning (Carmeli & Halevi, 2009; O’Reilly, Snyder, & Boothe, 1993, p. 150; Pearce & Conger, 2003). With respect to CSR, this finding suggests that a top team—rather than one top individual, which is often the case in practice—would likely be more successful at driving the change toward CSR. Nevertheless, some researchers have also indicated that professionals who can perform multiple, complementary roles are more effective in their

jobs (Denison, Hooijberg, & Quinn, 1995). Regardless, one can conclude that in practice most managers are often unable to perform all roles with equal effectiveness, as this also depends largely on which roles each individual prefers. Information about individual competencies can be used to form a team in which all competencies are covered by the team as a whole. However, more research is needed in order to gain additional insights regarding the need and effectiveness of a single CSR champion or a CSR team in the various stages of CSR maturity.

Finally, there are some methodological issues that affect the generalizability of our findings. Convenience sampling was used in all studies and participation in the studies was voluntary, which raises the possibility of selection bias. It could, for example, be that mostly professionals that are inclined toward learning and that are proactive in their learning participated in this research, which might explain why one's learning goal orientation did not interact with the dimensions of a learning climate (i.e., facilitating, rewarding, and error-avoiding learning climate) and why learning goal orientation in particular was important for explaining differences in competencies among CSR managers (Chapter 5). Also, we focused our research on Dutch companies and mainly on multinationals, because CSR managers (i.e., a specific person that is appointed for driving the changes and interventions related to CSR) are mainly found in larger companies (Hutjens, Dentchev, & Haezendonck, 2015; Molteni & Pedrini, 2009). It is well documented, however, that large companies differ from small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in a number of respects, aside from simply the number of employees. Large companies also differ from SMEs with respect to resource availability, management (Roper & Scott, 2009; Spence, 1999), the company's view of their role in CSR, and in CSR practices (Apospori, Zografos, & Magrizos, 2012; Castka, Balzarova, Bamber, & Sharp, 2004; Gallo & Christensen, 2011). Our findings are therefore mainly generalizable to (CSR managers of) large private companies in the Netherlands. Further research is needed to explore and improve the generalizability of our findings and to further the understanding of individual CSR-related competencies in relation to the CSR adaptation process.

Practical Implications

Our findings provide insights which have several implications for CSR managers and their employers, particularly for private companies that are committed or are committing themselves to tackle sustainability challenges. First, our study addresses a concern that is often voiced by many CEOs. Specifically, previous research suggests that CEOs of leading companies express the need to improve the competencies and mindsets of their managers in order to address sustainability challenges (Accenture, 2010). In Chapter 3 and 4 we report that CSR managers have unique roles in the CSR adaptation process and that depending on his/her actual role(s) the CSR managers seem to require particular CSR-related competencies. We provide a competence framework that, as mentioned before, can serve as a tool to initiate a talk about what these competencies mean within a specific organization or initiate a talk about CSR manager's personal conception of work and how this relates to his or her competencies. On an organizational level, personalizing the proposed competence framework and matching it to the company's ambitions with respect to CSR can ensure that the company appoints the appropriate persons to manage the CSR adaptation process toward the intended CSR maturity level. However, it is important to include external CSR experts (NGO and scientific experts) in the process of personalizing the CSR competence framework so one avoids relapsing to the previous status quo and, as such, ensure that real changes are being made. That is, by involving external experts in this process the company will be challenged to continuously aim for higher goals with respect to CSR. On an individual level, personalizing the competence framework by using an interpretative or participatory methodology can help determine which competencies CSR managers need to develop in order to effectively perform their roles in the CSR adaptation process. Moreover, such competence framework can help determine the right learning activities to develop the competencies.

There are several implications to be derived from our research with respect to learning (activities) for the benefit of CSR. For one, developing LO characteristics may help companies create favorable conditions for integrating CSR principles. Although no empirical evidence has been provided up till now, the potential of such characteristics has apparently been very appealing to many companies, as research shows that companies are already employing LO characteristics to stimulate the CSR adaptation process (Marcus & Geffen, 1998; Molnar & Mulvihill, 2002). Our research suggests that these efforts may not be in vain as we find that specific LO characteristics could promote CSR adaptation (Chapter 2). That is, adapting to CSR principles, like any large-scale planned organizational change, requires employees to be receptive to change. They need to believe (1) in the need for change, (2) in their capacity to successfully undertake the change, and (3) in the beneficial outcomes that will arise from the change (Bouckenooghe, 2010; Rafferty et al., 2013). By facilitating learning, companies provide employees with the opportunity to develop their “receptiveness to change”. As such, we suggest that companies experiment with employing LO characteristics to advance the integration of CSR principles. In particular we suggest that company’s management show leadership for learning by endorsing learning behavior among their employees as this LO characteristic in particular seem to promote the integration of CSR principles. The management can stimulate such behavior by providing employees with continuous opportunities to learn (e.g., provide formal trainings and professional development opportunities), learn in groups (e.g., stimulate team work), and learn with and from external parties (e.g., stimulate stakeholder involvement; see also Chapter 5).

Furthermore, it is important for companies to set up and structure a learning system within the company that enables customized learning, meaning a learning system that provides learning opportunities that fit’s the job and needs of individual workers. Companies often provide their employees with various ways to develop their competencies. However, the choices of learning activities are often limited to activities that fit the majority of the workers tasks (Poell Chivers, Van der Krogt, & Wildermeersch, 2000). As was discussed in Chapter 5, CSR managers have to deal with complex sustainability challenges and often have a relatively autonomous position within the company, suggesting that the current learning activities that are provided within companies are likely to be inadequate for them. Indeed, the results in Chapter 5 show that CSR managers prefer learning activities that enables them to learn from others outside of the company (e.g., peer meetings, participation in think tanks, and inviting and/or visiting pioneering companies and other CSR professionals). Learning with and from external parties not only helps them to develop their personal competencies, but it also broadens their professional network. These contacts might inform them of different ideas and innovative ways to manage the CSR adaptation process or to tackle sustainability challenges. Moreover, learning with and from others enables CSR managers to gain experience in formulating integrative solutions with others who may have other motives, which is essential when dealing with wicked problems (Nadler et al., 2003). Companies can enable customized learning among CSR managers by, for example, providing them with flexible working hours and fixed budgets and hours that they can use for professional development. Such a learning system promotes meaningful learning and self-directed learning behavior among employees (Baars-van Moorsel, 2003), which, according to our findings (Chapter 5), can stimulate the development of CSR-related competencies.

To conclude, we hope that this thesis will encourage more research on the role of learning in the CSR adaptation process. As discussed earlier, our research provides ample directions to further explore this topic. Furthermore, we hope that this research will inspire CSR professionals to start a dialogue with their employers about their competencies and professional development opportunities or that it inspires them to take control of their learning process and create their own learning network in order to develop their competencies, if needed. Moreover, we hope that by developing the relevant CSR-related competencies, CSR managers will effectively manage the CSR adaptation process and that higher CSR maturity levels are reached and more ambitious sustainability challenges are successfully addressed by private companies.

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Summary



SU

Introduction

People and other organisms depend on natural resources such as fresh water, land, clean air, wood, and food for critical life requirements and wellbeing. It is well documented that today's Western way of living and the spread of capitalism is having a detrimental impact on societies and the natural environment. The grand challenges of today's societies are, among others, global warming, loss of biodiversity, and social issues such as health problems caused by malnutrition, and economic losses due to environmental disasters. These challenges related to Earth's sustainability are regarded as “*wicked problems*” (WPs). Rittel and Webber (1973) introduced the term WP as opposite to “tamed problems”, which are problems that are well-defined, stable, and solvable. They described WPs as highly complex and global problems with several specific characteristics (cf. Rittel & Webber, 1973; Peterson, 2009). The fact that the causes and effects of sustainability challenges are either unknown or uncertain, and that multiple stakeholders are involved, who often have conflicting norms, value frames, beliefs about the subject, and different ideas about what the “real” problem is or what the “real” cause is, makes sustainability challenges even more “wicked” (Blok, Gremmen, & Wesselink, 2016; Dentoni, Blok, Lans, & Wesselink, 2012). Tackling these challenges will therefore more than ever depend on the ability of societies, companies, and individuals, to find a responsible trade-off between three main categories of interests, namely ecologic, economic, and social interests

As one of the greatest users of natural and human recourses, many companies have started doing their part in the journey toward Earth's sustainability and are actively working on translating the idea of *sustainable development* (SD) into reality. SD can be defined as “a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Within a business context SD refers to the development and practices that are economically viable, which the environment can bear, and which are socially justifiable (Van Meter, Marshall, & Just, 2012). Companies often address SD through their *corporate social responsibility* (CSR) programs. CSR refers to as a company's continuing commitment to integrate ecological, social, and economic interests in company's operations and in its interactions with stakeholders. This commitment is usually done on a voluntary basis (Dahlsrud, 2008).

This thesis aims to provide a better understanding of how the CSR adaptation process in private companies can be supported, which is of particular importance and interest since the economic interests (i.e., business case logic) of private companies often clash with CSR objectives. Consequently, adapting to CSR principles can be quite challenging for these companies. The research in this thesis focuses on CSR committed companies. These companies can inform other companies that are at the start of the SD journey of how best to configure their own CSR adaptation process. The latter is of particular importance as it is generally acknowledged that a thorough adaptation process is needed when aiming to establish CSR practices that are effective in the long run (Holder-Webb, Cohen, Nath, & Wood, 2009; Jamali, 2008). This adaptation process requires the company to internalize CSR principles into core business processes, policies, and systems, which can involve a (large-scale) continuous process of adaptation as CSR principles are continuously evolving (Holder-Webb et al., 2009; Jamali, 2008). Therefore, in this thesis the *CSR adaptation process* refers to the process of adapting to CSR principles and implementing the organizational changes needed in order to achieve CSR-related objectives.

For many established companies adapting to or internalizing CSR principles remains a significant challenge (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Aguinis & Glavas, 2012) due to factors such as lack of support among employees or top management. Often such efforts result in CSR not being internalized within company's core business processes, policies, and systems, limiting CSR initiatives to individual (short-term) projects, which fails to tackle the big sustainability challenges (Visser, 2014). Many scholars have attempted to identify factors that can facilitate the CSR adaptation process. Increasingly scholars focus on internal resources that can promote the adaptation process, because the complexity of sustainability challenges makes it

imperative for companies to have internal resources that are able to rapidly adapt to changing circumstances. Several internal resources (e.g., sustainability management systems and CEO's ethical and normative values) have been studied in relation to differences in CSR success among companies, often addressing this issue solely from a management perspective (see Aguinis & Glavas, 2012 for a review on CSR literature). However, any large-scale organizational change requires employees to learn new ways of doing their jobs (e.g., Jamali, 2008; Senge, Carstedt, & Porter, 2001). That is, many change processes fail because employees were not sufficiently prepared for the change (Bouckennooghe, 2010; Rafferty, Jimmieson, & Armenakis, 2013). Learning plays a crucial role in preparing employees for the change (cf., Jamali, 2008; Senge et al., 2001). Yet, the role of learning or human resource development (HRD) has remained largely unexplored in the CSR literature (Ardichvili, 2011, 2013; Garavan & McGuire, 2010). As such, this thesis addresses the subject of the CSR adaptation process from a HRD perspective by looking at the role and potential of learning-related resources in this process. Learning in companies occurs at the organizational, the group, and the individual level (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Whilst previous research on CSR and learning has addressed the group level (e.g., Nijhof et al., 2005) this thesis has researched the organizational and individual level.

The following central research question guided the studies described in this thesis:

Which internal resources related to learning at the organizational and individual level contribute to the CSR adaptation process in private companies?

To answer the central research question, the following sub-research questions were answered in this thesis:

RQ1: To what extent can learning organization characteristics enhance corporate social responsibility adaptation?

RQ2: Which individual competencies support the effective integration of CSR principles within private companies?

RQ3: Which of the eight managerial roles described in the competing values framework of Quinn (1988) are relevant in the context of the CSR adaptation process?

RQ4: Which individual competencies do CSR managers need in each role in order to effectively perform that role?

RQ5: Which learning activities enable CSR professionals to develop their competencies?

Main Research Findings

Organizational Learning Characteristics and the CSR Adaptation Process

As mentioned earlier, adapting to new ways of working requires employees to learn and be receptive to the change. As such, many scholars have suggested that companies should promote certain learning organization (LO) characteristics (e.g., having facilities for employees' continuous development) in order to stimulate employees' receptiveness for CSR principles and as such improve CSR adaptation (e.g., Jamali, 2008; Marcus & Geffen, 1998; Nattress & Altomare, 2002; Senge et al., 2001).

Several conceptual articles have been published regarding the putative relationships between these LO characteristics and favorable conditions for the CSR adaptation process (e.g., employees readiness for change and support for CSR). However, little empirical research is available to support these suggestions (Molnar & Mulvihill, 2002). More importantly, the suggested influence of LO characteristics on the CSR adaptation process have not yet been tested

empirically among a large number of companies. In addition, the path through which certain LO characteristics may influence the CSR adaptation process remains unclear. Understanding these matters may provide companies with information about how they can improve the CSR adaptation process in their companies. Hence, in the first study a survey study was conducted among a large group of Dutch companies to test the relationship between LO characteristics on the one hand and favorable conditions for the CSR adaptation process on the other hand (see Chapter 2).

We found that certain learning organization characteristics can support the CSR adaptation process. We found that stimulating group learning, leadership that encourages learning, and connecting to the local communities are three LO characteristics that directly influence CSR adaptation in a positive way. Furthermore, we found that three other LO characteristics - creating continuous learning opportunities for employees, stimulating inquiry-based behavior and dialogue among employees, and involving employees in formulating a collective vision - do benefit CSR adaptation because these factors positively influence the LO characteristic “leadership for learning” and as such affect CSR adaptation. In addition, “having a collective vision” and “group learning” stimulates another LO characteristic, namely “active connection with the local community”, which in turn also favorably affects the CSR adaptation process. These findings, therefore, show a potentially important role for “leadership in learning” and “system connection” in the CSR adaptation process.

Individual Competencies, Learning Goal Orientation, Learning climate and the CSR Adaptation Process

Besides influences of resources at the organizational level, the CSR adaptation process will also likely be affected by resources on the individual level, as resources and practices on the organizational level are based on human activities, and therefore individual competencies; eventually individuals within the company are the ones who actually carry out CSR initiatives, conduct strategic deliberations, make decisions, and manage the adaptation process. Yet, only 4% of the CSR-literature focuses on micro-level influences on the CSR adaptation process and on company’s CSR performance (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). As such, in the empirical studies that followed the first study we addressed the individual level, and researched the management of the CSR adaptation process. We particularly focused on those agents that are formally responsible for driving the transition towards CSR; *the CSR managers*. Because the performance of these managers depends to a large extent on their competencies, it was important to determine which competencies they need to have or develop in order to effectively manage the CSR adaptation process. Individual competencies are perceived as a person’s integrated performance-oriented ability to achieve specific objectives, in which “integrated” refers to the interrelated combination of knowledge elements, skills, and attitudes (each of which can be seen as a specification of a competence), and the integration of these factors in the context where successful performance must occur (Mulder, 2014).

We conducted a comprehensive literature review accompanied by interviews with CSR managers ($n = 28$) in order to identify important individual competencies for CSR managers. In this research we found eight distinct individual competencies, namely:

- (1) Anticipating CSR-related challenges;
- (2) Understanding CSR-relevant systems and subsystems;
- (3) Understanding CSR-relevant standards;
- (4) CSR management competencies, including
 - a. Leading CSR programs,
 - b. Managing CSR programs, and
 - c. Identifying and realizing CSR-related business opportunities;
- (5) Realizing CSR-supportive interpersonal processes.

More related to values and virtues, the following personal value-driven competencies were denoted by the CSR managers:

- (6) Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes;
- (7) Personal value-driven competencies, including
 - a. Ethical normative competencies,
 - b. Balancing personal ethical values and business objectives, and
 - c. Realizing self-regulated CSR-related behaviors and active involvement; and
- (8) Reflecting on personal CSR values, virtues, views and experiences.

We also found that CSR managers have different job roles in the CSR adaptation process. We identified six job roles through interviews with the CSR managers, namely the

- (1) coordinating,
- (2) stimulating,
- (3) networking,
- (4) strategizing,
- (5) monitoring, and
- (6) mentoring roles.

Moreover, we found in this study that depending on the job roles CSR managers have in the CSR adaptation process, particular competencies are emphasized (Chapter 4). We showed that the business case logic influences the perceived importance of specific individual competencies in these job roles; the results show that the “more general management-oriented competencies” are considered to be most important in multiple roles (e.g., interpersonal competencies, being able to anticipate CSR challenges, and being able to translate these challenges into business opportunities). We also found that the perceived importance of certain more value-related competencies (e.g., ethical normative competencies) – which one would expect to be important for a highly value-dependent topic such as CSR – differs across the job roles involved. A competence framework was provided in this study, showing which CSR-related competencies are considered important in the six job roles identified in this thesis (Chapter 4, Table 4.1., p. 71).

Finally, knowing which CSR-related competencies CSR managers need, it is important to study how these competencies can be developed. Such research, centering on CSR managers’ competence development, has gained little scientific attention as to yet and could provide valuable insights for determining the appropriate path for competence development. A specific focus on how CSR managers develop their competencies at work is important; learning at work is one of the most common forms of a professional’s competence development (Ellinger, 2005), and different jobs and hierarchical positions offer different opportunities to develop one’s competencies (e.g., Bryson, Pajo, Ward, & Mallon, 2006).

Our results indicated that the somewhat unusual position CSR managers have within companies affect the way they prefer to develop their competencies (Chapter 5). CSR managers favored learning activities that center on social interactions. Because they have few peers within their companies, CSR managers specifically favor learning from others (peers) outside their company. We also assessed if and how company’s learning-oriented climate, as experienced by the CSR managers and CSR managers’ personal learning goal orientation (LGO) affect their competencies. LGO refers to individuals’ behavior and motivation to improve their competencies through an active search and through engagement in learning activities (Dweck & Legett, 1988; VandeWalle, 2001). We found that rewarding CSR managers for learning promotes their competencies, but only if they are also provided with sufficient opportunities to learn. Furthermore, we

found that individual's agency, here operationalized as CSR managers' personal learning goal orientation, is of particular importance to promote CSR-related competencies in CSR managers.

In short, the key message of this thesis is two-fold. *First*, because CSR managers are the ones who actually manage the CSR adaptation process they can play a crucial role in the CSR adaptation process if they possess the right individual competencies. In order to develop these individual competencies, CSR managers should take ownership of their learning process and seek opportunities to learn with and from others.

Second, leadership and connecting with external parties are of particular importance to the CSR adaptation process. *With respect to connecting with external parties*: on the organizational level, having good relations with external parties improves CSR adaptation, because such relationships stimulate learning processes within the company. Furthermore, on the individual level, relationships with external parties promote the development of the individual competencies of the CSR managers responsible for the adaptation process. *With respect to leadership*: on the organizational level, leadership for learning, referring to active support and stimulation of learning, indirectly affects CSR adaptation; it enhances employees' learning behavior and therefore improves employees' cognitive readiness and support for the changes needed to integrate CSR within the company. Furthermore, on the individual level, leadership competencies are essential for driving the changes needed in the CSR adaptation process.

Theoretical Contribution of the Research

This thesis contributes to the literature on the CSR adaptation process in several ways. *First*, this thesis addresses the issue of the CSR adaptation process from a learning or human resource development perspective and as such complements previous research employing the (human resource) management perspective on CSR. *Second*, it addresses learning from both the organizational and individual level, thereby providing valuable insights into if and how specific internal resources related to learning can contribute at different levels to the CSR adaptation process in private companies. *Third*, little is known about how factors on an individual level can support companies in their adaptation to CSR principles and their social performance at large (Aquinis & Glavas, 2012). This doctoral thesis is one of the first providing insights into this matter and demonstrates that learning-related influences on the individual level may be of value to the adaptation process. More specifically, this thesis adds to the literature by (1) identifying the job roles and individual competencies CSR managers need to effectively do their jobs within private companies; previous studies on CSR-related competencies often studied this topic from an educational point of view, thereby not fully addressing the complexity of the business context in which CSR managers operate; (2) by exploring how CSR managers can develop their competencies, which up till now remained unexplored in the CSR literature; and (3) by showing how certain organizational characteristics (i.e., learning climate) and personal characteristics (i.e., learning goal orientation) affect the development of CSR managers' competencies.

With respect to future research on this topic, it is important to try and include representatives with different backgrounds in further discussions about individual CSR-related competencies for CSR managers, as there are different sides to the subject of CSR (e.g., empirical, political, environmental, economic, normative and ethical). Future studies could examine whether other important actors share CSR managers' perception on relevant roles and competencies. Important external actors that could be included in the discussion are representatives of NGO's, employers' associations, and scientific experts. Furthermore, in our research we only explored the individual competencies that brought the CSR managers to the point where they were at the moment we interviewed them. We did not explore the competencies that they expected to need in order to help their companies evolve toward a higher CSR maturity level (cf. Van Marrewijk & Werre, 2003; Visser, 2014), specifically those needed in the highest ambition level as described by Visser (2014; i.e., Transformative CSR), which

are important to tackle the bigger sustainability challenges. In the context of the CSR adaptation process, exploring future-oriented competencies with CSR managers and other parties (e.g., management and NGO) could be a meaningful way to help practitioners start the change process toward transformative CSR.

Practical Implications

There are several implications to be derived from our research with respect to learning (activities) for the benefit of CSR. For one, developing LO characteristics may help companies create favorable conditions for integrating CSR principles. By facilitating learning, companies provide employees with the opportunity to develop their “receptiveness to change”. As such, we suggest that companies experiment with employing LO characteristics to advance the integration of CSR principles. In particular we suggest that company’s management show leadership for learning by endorsing learning behavior among their employees as this LO characteristic in particular seems to promote the integration of CSR principles. The management can stimulate such behavior by providing employees with continuous opportunities to learn (e.g., provide formal trainings and professional development opportunities), learn in groups (e.g., stimulate team work), and learn with and from external parties (e.g., stimulate stakeholder involvement; see also Chapter 5).

Furthermore, it is important for companies to set up and structure a learning system within the company that enables customized learning, meaning a learning system that provides learning opportunities that fit’s the job and needs of individual workers. Companies can enable customized learning among CSR managers by, for example, providing them with flexible working hours and fixed budgets and hours that they can use for professional development. Such a learning system promotes meaningful learning and self-directed learning behavior among employees (Baars-van Moorsel, 2003), which, according to our research (Chapter 5), can stimulate the development of CSR-related competencies.

To conclude, we hope that this thesis will encourage more research on the role of learning in the CSR adaptation process. As discussed earlier, our research provides ample directions to further explore this topic. Furthermore, we hope that this research will inspire CSR professionals to start a dialogue with their employers about their competencies and professional development opportunities or that it inspires them to take control of their learning process and create their own learning network in order to develop their competencies, if needed. Moreover, we hope that by developing the relevant CSR-related competencies, CSR managers will effectively manage the CSR adaptation process and that higher CSR maturity levels are reached and more ambitious sustainability challenges are successfully addressed by private companies.

**Samenvatting
(Dutch Summary)**



SA

Inleiding

Mensen en andere organismen zijn voor hun voortbestaan en persoonlijke welzijn afhankelijk van natuurlijke hulpbronnen zoals zuiver water, land, schone lucht, hout en voedsel. Wetenschappelijk onderzoek laat zien dat de huidige westerse manier van leven en de verspreiding van kapitalisme een nadelig effect heeft op de samenleving en het milieu. De grote uitdagingen van de huidige samenleving zijn onder andere de opwarming van de aarde, verlies van biodiversiteit en maatschappelijke vraagstukken zoals de gezondheidsproblemen die ontstaan als gevolg van ondervoeding en de economische verliezen die ontstaan als gevolg van milieurampen.

Deze uitdagingen hebben te maken met de duurzaamheid van de aarde en worden beschouwd als zeer complexe problemen ook wel '*wicked problems*' (WP) genoemd. Rittel en Webber (1973) introduceerde de term WP als tegengesteld aan 'tamed problems' (minder complexe problemen). Tamed problems zijn problemen die goed gedefinieerd, stabiel en oplosbaar zijn. Auteurs beschrijven WP als zeer complexe en mondiale problemen die een aantal specifieke kenmerken hebben (zie Rittel & Webber, 1973; Peterson, 2009). Duurzaamheidsgerelateerde problemen zijn extra complex omdat de oorzaken en de gevolgen van deze uitdagingen onbekend of onduidelijk zijn. Tevens maakt het feit dat er meerdere partijen bij betrokken zijn - die vaak tegenstrijdige normen, waarden, opvattingen over het onderwerp hebben en verschillende ideeën hebben over wat het 'echte' probleem is of wat de 'echte' oorzaak is – de uitdagingen nog complexer (Blok, Gremmen, & Wesselink, 2016; Dentoni, Blok, Lans, & Wesselink, 2012). Het aanpakken van deze duurzaamheidsgerelateerde uitdagingen zal dan ook sterk afhankelijk zijn van het vermogen van de samenleving, bedrijven en individuen om gezamenlijk een verantwoord evenwicht te vinden tussen ecologische, economische en sociale belangen.

Bedrijven zijn één van de grootste gebruikers van natuurlijke en menselijke hulpbronnen. Een toenemend aantal bedrijven pakt hun rol in de strijd voor duurzaamheid op en zijn actief aan de slag gegaan met verduurzamen. Zij stellen hier vaak programma's voor op onder de noemer '*maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen (MVO)*'. MVO verwijst naar de aanhoudende inzet van een bedrijf om ecologische, sociale en economische belangen te integreren in hun bedrijfsactiviteiten en in hun interacties met stakeholders. Het gaat om een verbintenis die meestal op vrijwillige basis plaatsvindt (Dahlsrud, 2008).

Dit proefschrift is er op gericht om inzicht te verschaffen in hoe de integratie van MVO principes in commerciële ondernemingen bevorderd kan worden. Dit is voor deze groep ondernemingen vooral een uitdaging omdat hier vaak de economische belangen (de zogenaamde business case gedachtegang) botsen met MVO doelstellingen. Het aanpassen aan en integreren van MVO principes blijkt voor veel commerciële bedrijven, die niet ontstaan zijn op basis van MVO principes, dan ook een uitdaging te zijn. Het onderzoek in dit proefschrift betreft voornamelijk bedrijven die serieus werk maken van MVO. De manier waarop deze bedrijven invulling geven aan dit veranderproces kan informatief zijn voor andere bedrijven die nog aan de start staan van het proces. Zij kunnen hier lessen uit trekken en bepalen hoe zij hun eigen veranderproces het beste kunnen configureren. Dit laatste is vooral van belang omdat een grondig veranderproces noodzakelijk is om ervoor te zorgen dat MVO activiteiten ook op lange termijn effect hebben (Holder-Webb, Cohen, Nath, & Wood, 2009; Jamali, 2008). Het *MVO veranderproces* wordt in dit proefschrift daarom gedefinieerd als het proces van aanpassing aan MVO principes en de uitvoering van de organisatorische veranderingen die nodig zijn om MVO principes te verwezenlijken. Een grondig veranderproces vereist dat het bedrijf MVO-principes internaliseert in de kernactiviteiten, -processen, -beleid en –systemen van het bedrijf. Het betreft in veel gevallen een grootschalig veranderproces, dat doorlopend aangepast dient te worden omdat MVO principes zich voortdurend ontwikkelen (Holder-Webb et al, 2009; Jamali, 2008).

Zoals eerder gezegd, blijkt het aanpassen aan en integreren van MVO principes voor veel gevestigde bedrijven een uitdaging te zijn (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Aguinis & Glavas, 2012), veelal doordat er een gebrek aan draagvlak is bij het management en onder medewerkers. Vaak resulteert dit in geïsoleerde (kortlopende) MVO projecten die alleen (zeer) korte termijn effecten hebben en nagenoeg niets bijdragen aan de grote duurzaamheidsvraagstukken (Visser, 2014). Veel wetenschappers hebben daarom getracht factoren te identificeren die het MVO veranderproces kunnen vereenvoudigen. Omdat het voor bedrijven belangrijk is om snel in te kunnen spelen op veranderende omstandigheden, richten steeds meer onderzoekers zich op interne factoren die het MVO veranderproces kunnen bevorderen. Inmiddels hebben onderzoekers verschillende

factoren onderzocht (bv. duurzaamheidsmanagement systemen en de invloed van ethische en normatieve waarden van de CEO) waarbij men veelal een management perspectief inneemt (zie Aguinis & Glavas, 2012 voor een review over de MVO literatuur). Echter, elke grootschalige organisatorische verandering vereist dat medewerkers nieuwe manieren aanleren om hun werk te verrichten (Jamali, 2008; Senge, Carstedt & Porter, 2001). Dat wil zeggen, veel veranderprocessen mislukken, omdat medewerkers niet voldoende zijn voorbereid op de verandering (Bouckennooghe, 2010; Rafferty, Jimmieson & Armenakis, 2013). ‘Leren’ speelt hierbij een cruciale rol (cf., Jamali, 2008; Senge et al., 2001). Desondanks, wordt er weinig wetenschappelijk onderzoek gedaan naar de rol van leren en professionalisering (ofwel human resource development; HRD) in het MVO veranderproces (Ardichvili, 2011, 2013; Garavan & McGuire, 2010). Daarom is in dit proefschrift het MVO veranderproces benaderd vanuit het HRD perspectief. Dit is gedaan door de rol en potentie van competenties en leren in het MVO veranderproces te onderzoeken. Hierbij hebben we ons gericht op het organisatie- en het individueel niveau - het groepsniveau is eerder onderzocht door onder andere Nijhof et al., 2005.

De volgende centrale onderzoeksvraag is als leidraad gebruikt voor de verschillende studies in dit proefschrift:
Welke interne factoren die gerelateerd zijn aan leren, op organisatie- en individueel niveau, dragen bij aan het MVO veranderproces in gevestigde commerciële bedrijven?

Om de centrale onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden zijn de volgende deelvragen beantwoord in dit proefschrift:

- RQ1: Welke kenmerken van een lerende organisatie kunnen het MVO veranderproces bevorderen?
- RQ2: Welke individuele competenties ondersteunen het MVO veranderproces in commerciële bedrijven?
- RQ3: Welke van de acht managementrollen die beschreven zijn in de Competing Values Framework van Quinn (1988) zijn relevant in het kader van het MVO veranderproces?
- RQ4: Welke individuele competenties hebben MVO managers nodig in elke rol om de rol effectief uit te voeren?
- RQ5: Welke leeractiviteiten stellen MVO professionals in staat om hun competenties te ontwikkelen?

Belangrijkste Onderzoekresultaten

Lerende organisatie kenmerken en het MVO veranderproces

Zoals eerder gezegd is het voor het succes van een veranderproces belangrijk dat medewerkers ontvankelijk zijn voor en bereid zijn tot veranderen en dat zij nieuwe manieren aanleren om hun werk te verrichten. Onderzoekers dringen er daarom op aan dat bedrijven zich op een aantal kenmerken tot een *lerende organisatie* (LO) ontwikkelen (bv. door het faciliteren van professionalisering onder medewerkers) of zich volledig ontplooiën tot lerende organisaties (LOs). Hiermee zouden medewerkers sneller veranderingen (inclusief MVO-gerelateerde veranderingen) eigen kunnen maken omdat zij dan de competenties en ervaring hebben om zich snel aan te passen aan nieuwe omstandigheden. Dit zou het MVO veranderproces ten goede komen (Jamali, 2008; Marcus & Geffen, 1998; Nattress & Altomare, 2002; Senge et al, 2001).

Er zijn verschillende conceptuele artikelen verschenen over de vermeende relatie tussen deze LO kenmerken en het MVO veranderproces. Er is echter weinig empirisch onderzoek beschikbaar om deze suggesties (Molnar & Mulvihill, 2002) te ondersteunen. Ook is de manier waarop bepaalde LO kenmerken het MVO veranderproces beïnvloeden onbekend. Inzicht in deze relaties kan bedrijven handvatten bieden om hun MVO veranderproces positief te beïnvloeden. In de eerste empirische studie (zie Hoofdstuk 2) is daarom de relatie tussen LO kenmerken en het MVO veranderproces getoetst door middel van een vragenlijstonderzoek onder een grote groep CSR managers van Nederlandse bedrijven. De resultaten tonen aan dat bepaalde LO kenmerken het MVO veranderproces kan ondersteunen. Drie ervan beïnvloeden het proces direct en

op een positieve manier, namelijk “leren in groepen”, “leiderschap dat leren stimuleert” en “actieve en open relatie met de omgeving”. Daarnaast hebben drie andere LO kenmerken (“doorlopende leermogelijkheden”, “stimuleren van onderzoekend gedrag en dialoog onder medewerkers” en “het betrekken van medewerkers bij het formuleren van een gezamenlijke visie”) een indirecte invloed op het veranderproces omdat zij “leiderschap in leren” stimuleren. “Een gezamenlijke visie” en “groepsleren” stimuleert bovendien ook een “actieve en open relatie met de omgeving”. Daarmee kan vastgesteld worden dat er een potentieel belangrijke rol is weggelegd voor “leiderschap in het leren” en “het actief in verbinding staan met de omgeving” in het MVO veranderproces.

Individuele Competenties, Leerdoel Oriëntatie, Leerklimaat en het MVO veranderproces

Omdat handelingen en processen op organisatieniveau hun basis hebben in individuele handelingen, zullen zij ook beïnvloed worden door individuele factoren zoals individuele competenties van medewerkers. Met andere woorden, het zijn uiteindelijk individuele medewerkers die de MVO activiteiten uitvoeren, strategische overleggen voeren, MVO-gerelateerde besluiten nemen, en het veranderproces ‘managen’. Desondanks, is slechts 4% van de MVO literatuur gericht op de invloeden op en rol van het microniveau in het MVO veranderproces (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Daarom zijn de overige drie empirische studies in dit proefschrift gericht op het niveau van het individu, waarbij we ons voornamelijk hebben gericht op de medewerkers die formeel verantwoordelijk zijn voor het aansturen of managen van het MVO veranderproces: *de MVO managers*. Omdat de prestaties van deze managers in grote mate afhankelijk is van hun competenties, is het belangrijk te bepalen welke competenties zij nodig hebben om effectief te zijn. *Competenties* zijn een cluster van kennis, vaardigheden en attitudes, die een persoon inzet om effectief hun beroep uit te oefenen. Competenties zijn context- en situatie afhankelijk (Mulder, 2014).

Om te bepalen welke competenties voor MVO managers van belang zijn, hebben we een literatuurstudie uitgevoerd. Daarnaast zijn er interviews gehouden met MVO-managers ($n = 28$). Deze studie heeft geleid tot de formulering van acht verschillende individuele competenties:

- (1) Anticiperend vermogen;
- (2) Systeem denken;
- (3) Technisch/instrumenteel normatieve vaardigheden;
- (4) Management competenties, inclusief
 - a. Leiderschapsvaardigheden;
 - b. Identificeren en realiseren van MVO gerelateerde kansen in de markt;
 - c. Verandermanagement- en programmamanagementvaardigheden;
- (5) Interpersoonlijke competentie.

De volgende persoonlijke waarden-gedreven competenties zijn door de MVO managers als relevant aangeduid:

- (6) Persoonlijke kenmerken en attitudes;
- (7) Competenties gericht op ethische waarden, inclusief
 - a. Ethisch normatieve competentie;
 - b. Balanceren tussen ethische principes en economische belangen;
 - c. Handelingscompetentie; en
- (8) Reflectieve competentie.

We hebben ook vastgesteld dat MVO managers verschillende rollen vervullen in hun bedrijf. Op basis van de interviews hebben we zes rollen kunnen identificeren, namelijk:

- (1) coördinerende rol;
- (2) stimulerende rol;
- (3) netwerker;
- (4) strategievormende rol;
- (5) monitoringsrol; en
- (6) mentor.

Daarnaast wijzen de resultaten van deze studie uit dat, afhankelijk van de rol, specifieke competenties door de MVO managers belangrijker worden geacht dan anderen (Hoofdstuk 4) en dat het economisch belang van invloed is op het gepercipieerd belang van specifieke competenties. Over het algemeen kan gesteld worden dat de meer 'algemene management-georiënteerde competenties' (bv. interpersoonlijke competenties, de vaardigheid om te anticiperen op MVO-uitdagingen, en identificeren en realiseren van MVO gerelateerde kansen in de markt) in meerdere rollen als belangrijkste worden geacht door de MVO managers. Ook kan worden vastgesteld dat het relatief belang van bepaalde meer waarden-gerichte competenties (bv., ethisch normatieve competentie) – waarvan verwacht mocht worden dat deze vooral van belang zouden zijn voor een sterk waarden-afhankelijke thema als MVO – verschillend is in de zes managementrollen. We besluiten deze studie met een competentieraamwerk dat voor iedere managementrol weergeeft welke MVO-gerelateerde competenties van belang zijn (Hoofdstuk 4, Tabel 4.1. p. 71).

Nadat is vastgesteld welke MVO-gerelateerde competenties MVO-managers nodig hebben, is het belangrijk om te bepalen hoe deze competenties ontwikkeld kunnen worden. Dergelijk onderzoek dat zich richt op de competentieontwikkeling van MVO managers kan waardevolle inzichten opleveren; MVO professionals kunnen hiermee bepalen welke activiteiten zij kunnen ondernemen om zich te ontwikkelen in de eerder genoemde MVO-gerelateerde competenties. Een specifieke focus op hoe MVO managers hun competenties ontwikkelen op het werk is belangrijk; leren op het werk is een van de meest voorkomende vormen van een competentieontwikkeling (Ellinger, 2005), en verschillende banen en hiërarchische posities binnen bedrijven bieden verschillende mogelijkheden tot competentieontwikkeling (Bryson, Pajo, Ward, & Mallon, 2006).

Onze resultaten laten zien dat de ietwat ongebruikelijke positie die MVO managers hebben binnen bedrijven invloed heeft op de manier waarop zij hun competenties ontwikkelen (Hoofdstuk 5). MVO managers prefereren leeractiviteiten waarbij ze in contact zijn met anderen en omdat zij veelal geen gelijken hebben binnen hun bedrijf, gaat hun voorkeur uit naar leren van en met anderen buiten hun bedrijf. Tevens hebben we in deze studie onderzocht of en in hoeverre het leerklimaat binnen het bedrijf, zoals ervaren door de MVO professional, en de persoonlijke leerdoeloriëntatie - het actieve leergedrag dat iemand toont en de motivatie dat iemand heeft om zijn of haar competentie te ontwikkelen (Dweck & Legett, 1988; VandeWalle, 2001) - van de professional van invloed is op zijn of haar MVO-gerelateerde competentie. Het waarderen en belonen van professionalisering blijkt invloed te hebben op hun competentie, maar alleen wanneer de MVO professional genoeg mogelijkheden ervaart om zich professioneel te ontwikkelen. Belangrijker is echter de persoonlijke leerdoeloriëntatie van de professional, deze blijkt een relatief sterke invloed te hebben op zijn of haar competenties.

Kortom, de belangrijkste boodschap van dit proefschrift is tweeledig. In de eerste plaats, kan gesteld worden dat MVO managers een belangrijke rol kunnen vervullen in het aansturen en managen van het MVO veranderproces wanneer zij over de juiste individuele competenties beschikken. Om deze individuele competenties te ontwikkelen, moeten MVO managers eigenaarschap over hun leerproces nemen en actief zoeken naar mogelijkheden om te leren met én van anderen.

Ten tweede kan gesteld worden dat leiderschap en het in verbinding staan met de omgeving bijzonder belangrijk is voor het MVO veranderproces. *Met betrekking tot het in verbinding staan met externe partijen*: zorg voor goede betrekkingen met de omgeving zodat bepaalde leerprocessen in gang worden gebracht, welke het MVO veranderproces ten goede komt. Op individueel niveau bieden goede betrekkingen met externe partijen MVO professionals de mogelijkheid om hun individuele competenties te ontwikkelen, waardoor zij effectiever worden in het managen van het veranderproces. *Met betrekking tot*

leiderschap: verhoogt 'leiderschap in leren' op organisatieniveau, verwijzend naar een actieve ondersteuning en stimulering van leren onder medewerkers, het leergedrag onder medewerkers, en daarmee verbetert het de individuele ontvankelijkheid en bereidheid voor de veranderingen die gepaard gaan met het MVO veranderproces. Daarnaast, blijkt op individueel niveau dat leiderschapscompetenties essentieel is voor het effectief managen van het veranderproces.

Theoretische Bijdrage van het Onderzoek

Dit proefschrift draagt op verschillende manieren bij aan de literatuur over het MVO veranderproces. *Ten eerste* door het onderwerp vanuit een HRD perspectief te benaderen biedt het een aanvulling op de resultaten van eerder onderzoek die het onderwerp voornamelijk vanuit een managementperspectief benaderen. *Ten tweede* biedt het in tegenstelling tot eerder onderzoek inzichten over de rol en invloed van leren op het MVO veranderproces op twee niveaus, namelijk het organisatieniveau en het individueel niveau. *Ten derde* is in de MVO literatuur maar weinig bekend over de invloeden van factoren op individueel niveau op het MVO veranderproces en MVO prestaties van bedrijven (Aquinis & Glavas, 2012). Dit proefschrift is een van de eerste onderzoeken dat hier inzicht over verschaft. Dit doet het door aan te tonen dat factoren die gerelateerd zijn aan leren van waarde kunnen zijn voor het stimuleren van het MVO veranderproces. Dit proefschrift draagt in het bijzonder bij aan de literatuur door (1) het identificeren van de rollen en individuele competenties die MVO managers nodig hebben om effectief hun werk te kunnen verrichten binnen commerciële bedrijven. Eerdere studies over MVO-gerelateerde competenties onderzochten dit onderwerp ten behoeve van duurzaamheidsopleidingen, waardoor de complexiteit van het MVO praktijk en de zakelijke context niet voldoende tot haar recht kwam in de competenties; (2) door na te gaan hoe MVO managers hun competenties kunnen ontwikkelen, waar tot op heden nog geen onderzoek naar is gedaan; en (3) door te laten zien hoe bepaalde kenmerken van de organisatie (dat wil zeggen, het leerklimaat) en het individu (dat wil zeggen, hun leerdoelgerichtheid) van invloed zijn op de ontwikkeling van de competenties van MVO managers.

Wat betreft toekomstig onderzoek over dit onderwerp: allereerst is het belangrijk om vertegenwoordigers met verschillende achtergronden te betrekken in verdere discussies over individuele MVO-gerelateerde competenties die MVO managers nodig hebben, omdat het thema 'MVO' verschillende kanten heeft (bijvoorbeeld empirisch, politiek, ecologische, economische, normatieve en ethische) die allen een effect kunnen hebben op de effectiviteit van de competenties. Toekomstige studies kunnen onderzoeken of andere belangrijke actoren de mening van de MVO-managers delen over de belangrijkste rollen en competenties in hun beroep. Belangrijke externe actoren die in dit soort studies meegenomen kunnen worden zijn vertegenwoordigers van NGO's, werkgeversorganisaties, en wetenschappelijke experts.

Daarnaast hebben we in ons onderzoek alleen de individuele competenties meegenomen waarmee de MVO managers hun bedrijf hebben gekregen tot het MVO volwassenheidsniveau dat hun bedrijf had op het moment dat we hen interviewden. We hebben niet verkend welke competenties zij nodig achten om hun bedrijf tot een hoger MVO volwassenheidsniveau te krijgen (cf. Van Marrewijk & Werre, 2003; Visser, 2014) en in het bijzonder de competenties die zij nodig achten om het hoogste volwassenheidsniveau te bereiken waarmee de grotere duurzaamheidvraagstukken aangepakt kunnen worden volgens Visser (2014). Dat wil zeggen, de transformatieve MVO, waarbij een bedrijf niet alleen haar impact op het milieu compenseert maar ook het milieu voorziet van extra draagkracht. In het kader van het MVO veranderproces, kan het verkennen van toekomstgerichte competenties met MVO managers en andere belangrijke actoren (bv. het management en NGO's) een zinvolle manier zijn om bedrijven op weg te helpen richting de transformatieve MVO volwassenheidsniveau.

Implicaties voor de Praktijk

Er kunnen verschillende implicaties worden afgeleid uit de onderzoeksresultaten. Allereerst kunnen bedrijven hun MVO veranderproces bevorderen door zichzelf bepaalde LO kenmerken eigen te maken. Door 'leren' te faciliteren kunnen medewerkers zich beter voorbereiden op veranderende omstandigheden. We adviseren bedrijven daarom leiderschap in leren te tonen, door actief leergedrag te stimuleren en te belonen. Dit kan een bedrijf doen door leermogelijkheden te faciliteren (bv. trainingen en cursussen aanbieden die gericht zijn op de verandering), door groepsleren te stimuleren en door

leren van én met anderen buiten de organisatie te stimuleren (bv. door de betrokkenheid van externe belanghebbenden te stimuleren).

Daarnaast is het van belang dat bedrijven een leernetwerk implementeren 'die leren op maat' mogelijk maakt. Daarmee krijgen MVO professionals, ondanks hun relatief ongewone positie in bedrijven, voldoende mogelijkheden om aan hun competenties te werken, om hun eigen leerproces te reguleren en om gebruik te maken van leermogelijkheden buiten het bedrijf. De mogelijkheid tot flexibel werken en vaste budgetten en uren die MVO professionals kunnen inzetten voor hun professionele ontwikkeling kunnen hierbij helpen. Een dergelijk leernetwerk stimuleert betekenisvol leren en zelfstandig leergedrag bij medewerkers (Baars-van Moorsel, 2003), wat volgens dit onderzoek (Hoofdstuk 5) de ontwikkeling van MVO-gerelateerde competenties kan stimuleren.

Tot slot, we hopen dat dit proefschrift meer onderzoek zal aanmoedigen naar de rol van leren in het MVO veranderproces. Zoals eerder besproken bieden onze onderzoeksresultaten voldoende aanwijzingen om dit onderwerp verder te verkennen. Tevens hopen we dat dit onderzoek MVO professionals zal inspireren om een dialoog te starten met hun werkgevers over hun competenties en professionele ontwikkelingsmogelijkheden, of dat het hen inspireert om de controle over hun leerproces over te nemen en indien nodig een eigen leernetwerk op te zetten om aan hun competenties te werken. Tenslotte hopen we dat door de ontwikkeling van MVO-gerelateerde competenties, MVO managers effectiever zijn in het managen van het MVO veranderproces, zodat hogere MVO volwassenheidsniveaus en ambitieuzer duurzaamheidsdoelstellingen gerealiseerd kunnen worden in commerciële bedrijven.

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“It can take a village to complete a PhD project”

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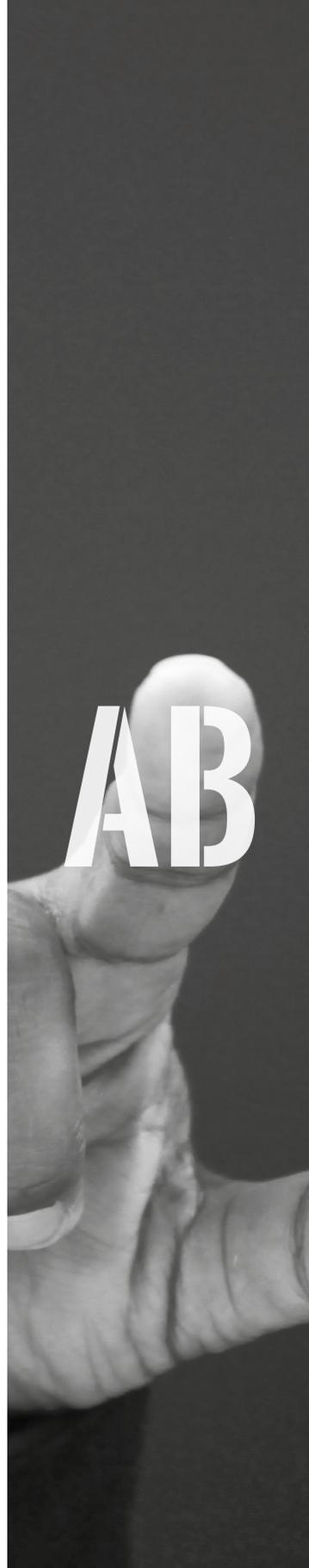
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**Much love,
Eghe Rice Osagie**

About the Author



Background

Eghenayahiore Rice Osagie (Eghe) was born on August 8, 1982 in Alema, Nigeria. In 1989 she moved to Nijmegen (The Netherlands) with her family. After secondary vocational education she studied Social Work (B; 2007) at the HAN University of Applied Sciences and Pedagogy & Educational Sciences (BSc; 2009) at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. In 2011 she successfully completed the Research Master “Behavioral Science” course (MSc) at the Radboud University. After graduation she started her PhD-project on the role of learning in the CSR adaptation process at Wageningen University. In addition to her PhD research, Eghe started working as a lecturer at Utrecht University and at Iselinge University of Applied Sciences in 2014. Here she, respectively, supervised MSc thesis projects and lectured in statistical topics. Eghe is currently working at the HAN University of Applied Sciences. She is a lecturer in HRM and an assistant lector at the research group (i.e., lectoraat) HRM.

Publications

Peer Reviewed Publications

- Osagie, E. R., Wesselink, R., Blok, V., Lans, T., & Mulder, M. (2016). Individual competencies for corporate social responsibility: A literature and practice perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 135, 233-252.
- Jong, C. J., Moolenaar, N. M., Osagie, E., & Phielix, C. (2016). Valuable connections: A social capital perspective on teachers’ social networks, commitment and self-efficacy. *Pedagogia Social Revista Interuniversitaria*, 28, 71-83.

In press / (Re)submitted

- Osagie, E. R., Wesselink, R., Blok, V., & Mulder, M. (in press). Contextualizing individual competencies for managing the corporate social responsibility adaptation process: The apparent influence of the business case logic. *Business & Society*.
- Osagie, E. R., Wesselink, R., Runhaar, P., & Mulder, M. (resubmitted). Developing corporate social responsibility competence: Considering the roles of learning goal orientation and psychological learning climate.
- Osagie, E. R., Blok, V., Wesselink, R., & Mulder, M. (submitted). Stimulating the corporate social responsibility adaptation process: Considering the role of learning organization characteristics.

Presented Conference Papers

- Osagie, E. R., Blok, V., Wesselink, R., & Mulder, M. (2015). *Creating a learning organization to stimulate CSR implementation and companies’ CSR practices*. Paper presented at the European Business Ethics Network (EBEN) Research Conference 2015. - Copenhagen, Denmark, 1-3 October, 2015.
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a review. Paper presented at the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) 2013 Conference. - Washington DC, US, 13-17 February, 2013.

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Completed Training and Supervision Plan

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Course/ Activities	Department/ Institute	Year	ECTS
A. Project related competences			
Competence theory and research	WASS/ICO	2012	4
Interviewing professionals	WASS	2012	0.5
Qualitative data analysis: Procedures & Strategies, YRM 60806	WUR	2013	3
Learning in and for vocations and professions	ICO	2013	3
The CSR Research seminar	Business School Vlerick	2013	1
ICO Introduction course	ICO	2013	5
Toogdag/ICO National Fall School	ICO	2013	1
Multi-Level analysis	ICO	2014	3
ICO International Fall School	ICO	2014	3
<i>'Contextualizing Individual Competencies for Corporate Social Responsibility Implementation'</i>	WASS PhD Day	2015	1
B. General research related competences			
WASS Introduction course	WASS	2011	1
Scientific Publishing	WGS	2011	0.3
Information Literacy	WUR Library	2011	0.6
Research Methodology: from topic to proposal	WASS	2011	4
Voice and Presentation skills	WASS	2012	0.3
Techniques for writing and presenting scientific papers	WGS	2012	1.2
BKO Course Supervising MSc Thesis	Educational Staff Development	2012	1.5
Presentations at (Inter)national conferences	International and national conferences	2012-2015	5
Project and Time management	WGS	2015	1.5
C. Career related competences/personal development			
ECS PhD Committee & Meetings	ECS	2011-2016	4
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