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EFFECTIVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH CSR PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT
Effective communication between different levels of an organization plays critical role in the overall development process. Internal corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication and employee management impact widely on the company's structure and are they applied effectively from top-down and bottom-up communication for successful business outcome. This research aimed to build-up understanding of CSR programme, and its effectiveness for internal communication for branding CSR and also how good is it to channelize CSR content. The outcome from the survey revealed that employees and organizations they work for value the important role of CSR in establishing an effective internal communication and they have undertaken steps such as involving employees in CSR related programs, volunteering and even conduct trainings.

INTRODUCTION
Corporate service responsibility (CSR) system helps an organization to behave in a responsible way socially and environmentally to ensure the business contributes in a long-lasting way [1]. The strategy that aligns internal CSR communication and employee management with all-inclusive performance in business and company targets is the CSR strategies that are considered to be at the core of success. To manage the expectations of locals and the implementation of the CSR individual policies, CSR coordinators are appointed [1-2].

An increasing trend, among companies all across the globe, of investing in CSR activities is being noted by Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) who detailed that among the Fortune 500 companies – the largest ones in the world of

business, more than 80 percent of them are now extensively engaging in CSR activities and such companies are very active in communicating such activities, both internally and externally [3]. Whereas, Han and Childs (2016) stated that CSR is not essentially only viewed from an ethical aspect but companies and firms also now associate economic benefits with it and hence the increasing number of companies and increasing investments in CSR [4]. Many practitioners, professionals and researchers agree that for companies that intend to make a mark for themselves amid growing competitive markets, it is critical that they not only have well thought out CSR plans and strategies but also plans for effective communication of the same – both externally as well as internally with the company [5-6].

It is considered that all layers of a firms' structure are impacted by internal CSR communication and through employee engagement when they are implemented widely and in a continuous manner via the top-down and the bottom-up communication structures. Such communication can involve use and application of a number of tools and several varied mechanisms to achieve effective communication and engage the employees to the CSR activities of the company. This communication can range from informing the employees about the organization's CSR activities and its implementation strategy and why they are being done, to enabling an efficient two-way communication that facilitates the process of consultation and cooperation between the employees and the management [7]. Modern research into the implications of CSR now also include the strategic alignment of the internal CSR communication process and the process of employee engagement with the CSR activities which ultimately would ensure that the objectives of the employees are aligned with the overall business performance of a firm and the targets of the organization [8].Sasidharan Dhanesh, (2012) emphasized that successful implementation of CSR strategies would be possible if there are regular dialogue processes internally with all the business units in a company as well as the employees [9].

 Another strategy according to efficiently communicate of CSR activities internally is to make possible volunteering by the employees [10-11]. This creates s sense of greater engagement with the cause of the company and the CSR projects. For this purpose, simple formats and templates meant for the internal teams have to be created and communicated so that management and office programming of the local units is possible without affecting the work schedule and outputs [12].

Now that the role and importance of efficient internal communication of CSR in a company has been established and before dwelling into specific strategies of internal communication of CSR strategies and importance, one has to understand what internal communication is and how this internal communication can be effectively achieved. Thus, this study would look into the impact of internal communication of CSR activities in the employees and how employees can be integrated and better managed and engaged through effective communication of CSR activities of a company.

METHODOLOGY

The study would also make use of primary research technique with a quantitative research approach. This would be based on a set of closed ended questions that were sent to public relation (PR) professionals working for various firms in Oman. Hence, the set of questions were developed and designed as an effort to understand percentage of respondents that agreed on a particular aspect of effective of internal communication for CSR activities and the perceived role it plays in company development and in the development of company-employee relationships. For this purpose, the questionnaire consisted of 12 questions that were self-answerable with a simply tick on the chosen answer by each respondent and this assisted in finding out how the companies label CSR engagement using internal communication network.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the pie chart in Figure 1, it is found that most of the respondents effectively supported for the significance of CSR at their firm. Majority of respondents has highlighted the importance of CSR activities in a significant manner. It was notified that the CSR activities are significant for the development of internal communication system within the organization.
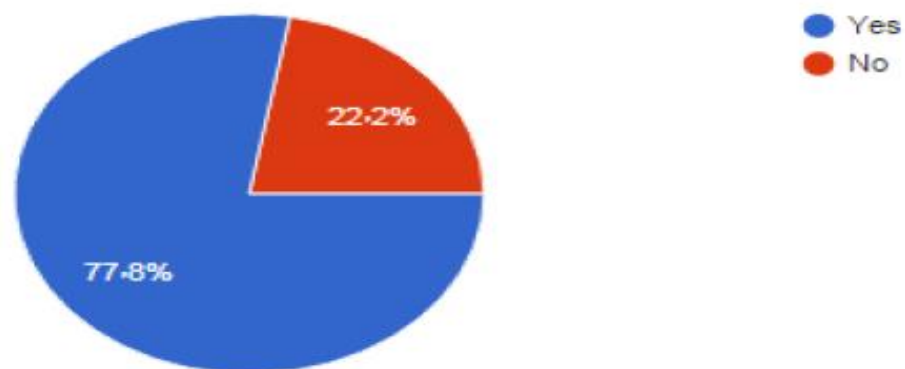

Figure 1. Results For 'Does Your Company Values CSR For Effective Internal Communication?'

The results for 'does your company take initiative to improve internal communication?' is presented in Figure 2. The respondents have addressed a positive response scale of 92.6% against the concept of improvisation of internal communication exclusively. From this prospect it can be analyzed that the employees are quite concerned about the importance of internal communication platform and thereby targets to improvise its venture in a systematic note. Moreover, it can also be added that a rhythmic flow of work is only maintained by an effectual intrinsic communication system.
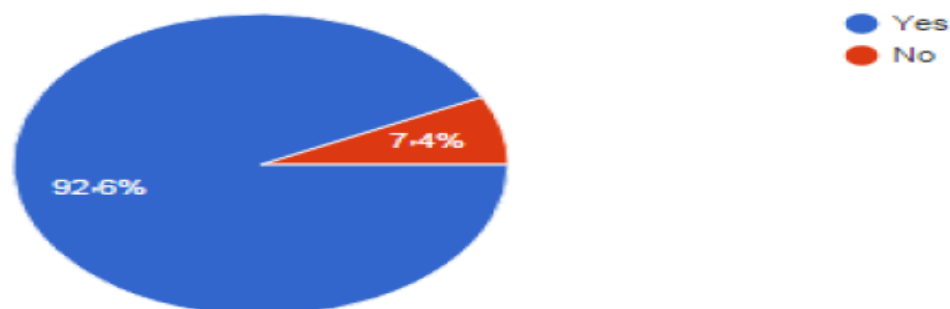
Figure 2. Results For 'Does Your Company Take Initiative To Improve Internal Communication?'

Table 1 tabulated the outcome of the questionnaire regarding how efficient is the CSR program being monitored and measures in the respondents' respective firm/company. Comparing the four options provided in the questionnaire, the respondents projected on the fact that the efficiency of CSR activities is monitored as per the standard of the organization which is indicated by 59.3% of the answers. Thus, it is proven that a large organization effectively and significantly devotes excessive attention to their CSR activities as compared to the small or medium organizations. On the other hand, there was a relative attention regarding the factor of intrinsic measures, which states to determine CSR programs to a subjective level.

Table 1. Results For 'How the Efficiency of CSR Program I Monitored and Measured in Your Company?'

Response	Percentage of response
Internally	33.3
Externally	3.7
By standards	59.3
Certificates	3.7

The response attained regarding whether 'do the respondents' organization arrange training program to improve the understanding of CSR', was homogenous and has a mixed implication on the concern. It can be observed that almost half of the population (55.6%) does experiences effective training programs in order to improvise the understanding of CSR practices. It can be analyzed that these organizations, which are subjected to training programs for developing the concern of CSR, are the most effectual ones in terms of maintaining a consolidated internal communication act. On the other hand, the remaining 44.4% respondents projected a negative feedback for this concern, which highlights towards the gap persisting in the infrastructure. The outcome of this question is shown in Figure 3.
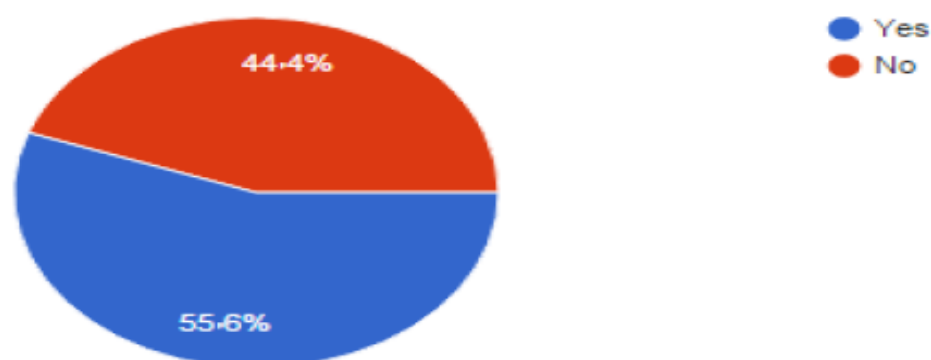
Figure 3. Results For 'Does Your Organization Arrange Training Program to Improve Understanding Of CSR?'

As shown in Table 2, 66.7% of the respondents projected their viewpoint towards the e-mail platform and considered it to be the most effective channel for communicate in an internal manner. The main prospect behind this is that e-mail communication is cost free, rapid and formal. E-mail communication do provide a complete evidence of every documents transacted. Moreover, respondents have also cased effective votes for internet platform with 14.8% and claimed it to be effectual for maintaining internet communication system significantly. Newsletter with 0% vote appeared not to be used in internal communication of the organizations.

Table 2. Results Of 'What Is the Most Effective Way or Channel Used to Communicate Internally?'

Response	Percentage of response
Screens with CSR related information	3.7
Internet platform	14.8
e-mails	66.7
Newsletter	0.0
Social media	11.1
Monthly update	3.7

Figure 4 presented the breakdown in percentage of the methods used by companies or firms in engaging their employees in CSR program to achieve effective internal communication. It was found that the most effective protocol involved for the engagement of employee participation in CSR program in order to enhance internal communication include employee volunteering, followed by making the employees participate in the CSR programs with 40.7% and 37.0% respectively. Based on this note, one can analyze that direct involvement definitely plays the most significant outcome for internal communication as compared to other methods.
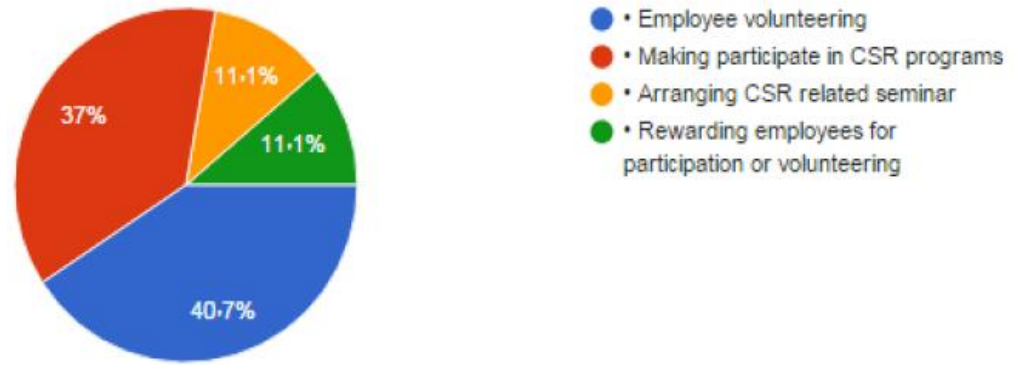
Figure 4. Results For 'How Your Company Engages Employee in CSR Program for The Enhancement of Internal Communication?'

Based on Figure 5, there seemed to be a mixed response for the prospect of measuring CSR program in the organization. It can be considered that all the surveys, such as monthly, quarterly, annual and online are effectively practiced in the organizations. However, the annual survey factor is the most evident in the list with 33.3% followed by monthly survey (25.9%), online survey (22.2%) and lastly quarterly survey (18.5%).
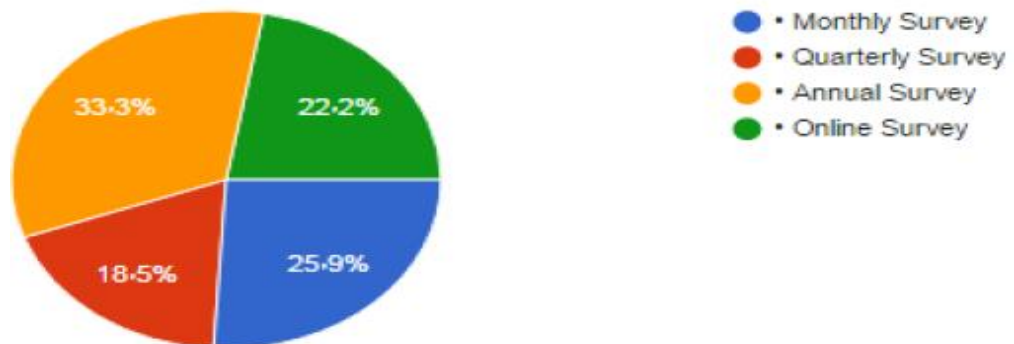

Figure 5. Results For 'How Effectiveness of CSR Program Is Measured in Your Organization?'

With reference to Figure 6, the two major effective challenges faced by the organization include educating the employees (37%) and developing the work culture (29.6%). These are the two loopholes associated to the organization which tends to limit the influence of CSR on internal communication to an effective level.
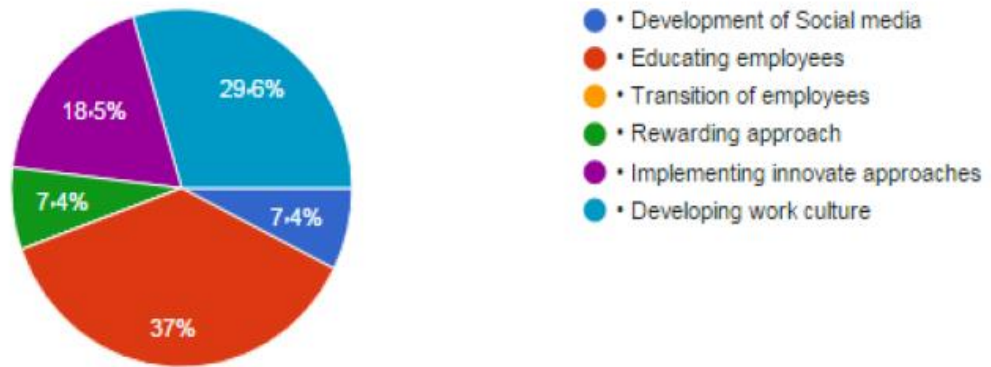
- • Development of Social media
- • Educating employees
- • Transition of employees
- • Rewarding approach
- • Implementing innovate approaches
- • Developing work culture

Figure 6. Results For 'How the Organization Treats the Challenges Faced in CSR Program Related to Internal Communication?'

The response as presented in Figure 7 showed that it was quite firm and clear that internal communication through CSR programs do influences an overall performance of the organization since 70.4% agreed to this question. This is due to an internal harmony and work life balance is developed which do influences a hike in the net outcome of an organization.
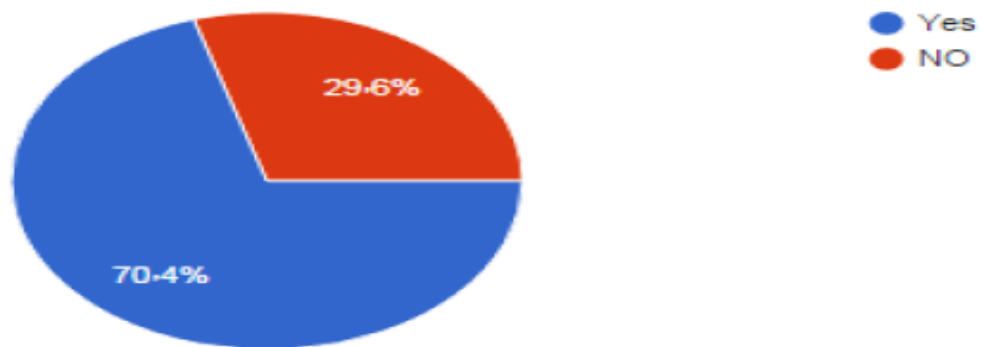

Figure 7. Results For 'Does Internal Communication Through CSR Program Influences Overall Performances of Your Organization?'

The results of major challenges faced by organization in attaining an effective internal communication are presented in Table 3. The most effective and significant challenge faced by the organization is the limited access and availability of CSR information (44.4 %), which was followed by lack of awareness and education (29.6 %). Poor management and lack of employee engagement appeared not to be a barrier in achieving effective internal communication since these two factors had the lowest scoring of 3.75 %. Often it is interpreted that CSR do not have a relative impact on the business note, which thereby tends to limit its access on a significant level.

Table 3. Results For 'What Is the Major Challenges Faced by Your Organization on Effective Internal Communication?'

Response	Percentage of response

Lack of transparency in CSR information	18.5
Limited availability and accessibility of CSR information	44.4
Lack of awareness and education	29.6
Ineffectiveness of the management	3.75
Lack of employee engagement	3.75

CONCLUSION

The results obtained from the analysis indicated that employees and organizations do understand the need of CSR in achieving effective internal communication. Nevertheless, there are still some challenges faced such as limited availability and accessibility of CSR information. These challenges can be overcome my developing a proper work culture and engaging employees in CSR related activities.

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