



A Bibliometric Analysis of Corporate Social Responsibility to Motivation Among Micro Food and Beverage Enterprises

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Abstract. This article investigates the changing motivations of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in China, especially in the micro food and beverage industry by using a bibliometric research technique that conducts a thorough literature review, outlining the critical themes and trends in CSR efforts among these small businesses. The study examines how CSR motivations are influenced by cultural norms, legal frameworks, and government requirements promoting sustainable development and social welfare. This research analyses co-citation and bibliographic data to show how micro firms incorporate CSR into their business processes, emphasizing the relevance of authenticity, transparency, and stakeholder involvement. The findings show how these companies use CSR to achieve a competitive edge, resolve crises, and foster long-term loyalty among consumers and workers, with more significant implications for business operations.

Keywords: bibliometric analysis, corporate social responsibility, Chinese micro food and beverage enterprises, motivation

1 Introduction

The dynamic CSR environment in China is shaped by its own legal, social, and cultural aspects. This paper assesses CSR in China using bibliometric analysis. This bibliometric analysis aggregates what is now known about the reasons driving CSR among these businesses by use of Publish or Perish and VOSviewer to identify significant themes, trends, and research needs.

The notion of social embeddedness has been identified as critical to properly integrating CSR into company operations. The critical areas for attaining this approach, which are especially important for enterprises targeting the Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP)[5]. These findings highlight the need of linking CSR efforts to larger social and cultural dynamics, a viewpoint that is consistent with the objectives of micro food and

beverage firms in China. Strong CSR consists in infusing fundamental ideals of openness, honesty, and social good into corporate governance rather than in a marketing or compliance approach. This is particularly relevant to how businesses prioritise the well-being, safety, and development of their employees during global crises such as pandemics, as they understand these issues as critical to their long-term CSR[5].

As per Zhang[17], Since CSR incentives are directly related to government efforts for sustainable development and social harmony, Chinese companies are driven to match their CSR initiatives with national objectives like environmental preservation, social welfare, and technical advancement. More precisely, this paper examines how small Chinese food and beverage businesses implement these CSRs. Smaller companies may have special difficulties trying to apply CSR due to limited resources.

2 Literature Review

Given the industry's unique significance, as traditional Chinese values and ethical concerns are fundamental motivations for CSR, CSR in the context of micro food and beverage enterprises in China has sparked significant scholarly attention. Knežević et al. [7]found that supervisory board diversity has a positive impact on the environmental and governance aspects of CSR practices, highlighting the connection between internal leadership structures and CSR strategies.

The bibliometric research reveals that CSR implementation varies between micro food and beverage enterprises in China, influencing ethical norms, legal responsibilities, market dynamics, and resource restrictions[13]. Furthermore, microbusiness CSR incentives might be classified as extrinsic or natural. In contrast to extrinsic concerns such as market demands, regulatory compliance, and competitive advantage, intrinsic motivations for entrepreneurs include ethics, company culture, and personal viewpoints[17].

Other scholars emphasised the strategic relevance of CSR in creating competitiveness and legitimacy for small firms. This highlights the need of culturally embedded CSR activities for sustainable business practices[4].

Another important issue is the regulatory and compliance aspects; CSR efforts are much influenced by the laws and frameworks created by the government. Compliance with environmental rules and food safety requirements is vital for these businesses to avoid paying legal fines and to improve their reputation among their stakeholders. This legislative drive ensures that initiatives in corporate social responsibility support national sustainable development objectives[12]. Microbusiness driven by competitive constraints and market factors carry out CSR initiatives. Since consumers give companies demonstrating ethical conduct and social responsibility top importance, made CSR even more important as good CSR communication might draw in and keep customers, therefore providing companies with a competitive advantage.

3 Methodological Approach

The software tools VOSviewer and POP were used to read 232 journal papers that came out in the last five years for this study. The search words that were used most often were "CSR in China" and "CSR Motivation." For this study, the Publish or Perish tool with Google Scholar and VOSviewer with the Web of Science database was used. Searches on the Web of Science could only find items in the Core Collection, which was made up of the SCI and SSCI forms of the Science Citation Index (SCI).

4 Conducting Research and Results

Figure 1 depicts the publications and citations relating to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) motivations from 2019 to 2024. The purple bars represent the number of papers published yearly, continuously climbing until 2022, followed by a decrease. The blue line represents the number of citations throughout the same period, peaking in 2022 and then falling by 2024.

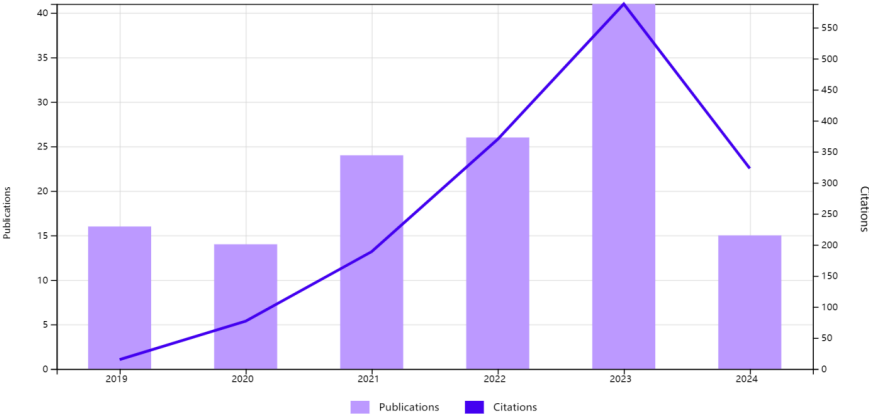


Fig. 1. Publication distribution of CSR motivation

Source: *own data*

From 2019 to 2022, there is a substantial increase in the number of papers on CSR reasons, reflecting a growing academic interest in the reasons that drive CSR behaviours. However, there will be a steep fall in publications by 2024, which might indicate a saturation point, a shift in research focus, or the appearance of new sub-themes that differ from the precise keywords employed initially. Citations have continuously increased from 2019, culminating in 2023, indicating that previous works have acquired acknowledgment and approval from the academic community over time. The decrease in citations in 2024 might be attributed to the customary delay in collecting citations for newer works.

4.1 Citation Analysis

Co-citation analysis is a bibliometrics method that measures the frequency and pattern with which two publications are quoted in other papers. The top 10 journals show that in China, CSR benefits are deeply rooted in many parts of business, putting much emphasis on the well-being of workers, new ideas, and following government rules [17]. It is also very important for handling crises and getting the economy back on track [10]. To build trust and support environmentally friendly practices, CSR activities need to be open and real, especially in industry [9]. Also, political ties have a big effect on CSR involvement, especially when it comes to using strategies that improve relationships with the government and improve market positioning [16].

4.2 The Co-Word Network Map Visualization

Figure 2 shows a co-word network map built with VOSviewer software. Different colours reflect unique subject clusters, whereas lines show the intensity and frequency of phrase co-occurrences in academic papers.

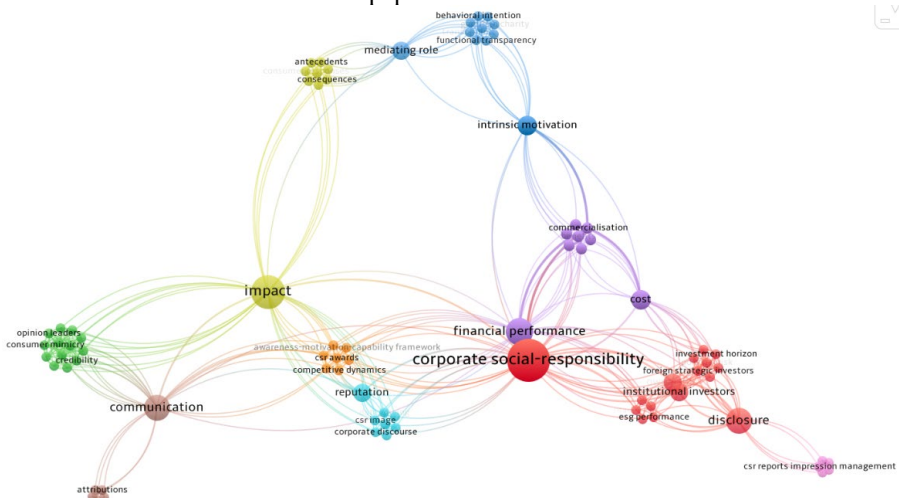


Fig. 2. Display network visualization of mapping types of CSR Motivation

Source: *own data*

Cluster groups' use of "Behavioural Intention" and "Functional Transparency" implies that there has been ample research on the subject of internal intentions and transparency in CSR initiatives. As for the second primary area, "Financial Performance and Innovation," CSR is mostly driven by financial incentives and innovation. "Consumer Credibility and Social Media Influence" demonstrates how social media and consumer attitudes impact corporate social responsibility initiatives. In "Impact and Reputation," another significant cluster, the effects of CSR on the public's perception of a firm are discussed. Institutional investor pressure on enterprises and CSR reporting are both highlighted in the "Disclosure and Institutional Environment" segment [16].

4.3 Visualization of Co-Word Density Map

The co-word density map provides valuable insights into the critical areas of CSR motives, shows in *Figure 3*.

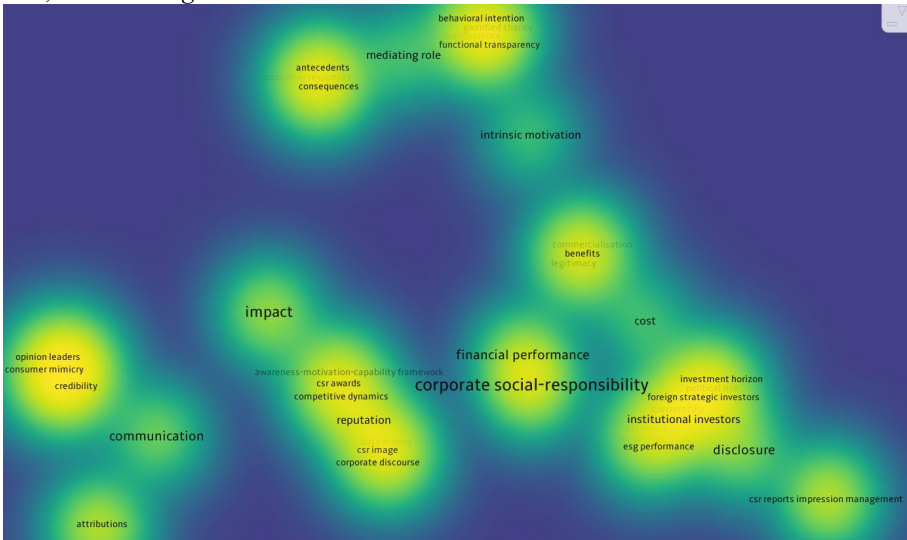


Fig. 3. Display Density Visualization of Mapping Types for CSR Motivation

Source: *own data*

"Behavioural Intention" and "Functional Transparency" are two important CSR reasons[2]. They stress the importance of having internal drives and clear CSR efforts[11]. The "Financial Performance and Innovation" cluster focusses on the business reasons why companies accept CSR: they want to make more money and come up with new ideas. Also, the focus on "Impact and Reputation" and "Consumer Credibility and Social Media Influence" shows how important public opinion is and how CSR can affect a business's name in a bigger way[1].

4.4 Co-occurrence of Keyword

Based on the results presented above, nine groups discovered by keyword analysis illustrate a variety of factors motivating CSR actions are shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Keyword Analysis Relevance to CSR Motivation

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Cluster 6	Cluster 7	Cluster 8	Cluster 9
CSR report	Consumer	Behavior	Benefits	Discourse	Brand	Awareness	Attributions	Impres- sion
Disclosure	Credibility	Functional	Commer- cial	Image	Conse- quence	Competitive	Communi- cate	Supervi- sion
Perfor- mance	Engage- ment	Charity	CSR Cost	Data	Response	CSR Awards	Consumers	Infor- mation

Strategic	Online	Institution	Financial	Green	Cultural	Environ- ment	Hypocrisy	Pressure
Investors	Leaders	Intrinsic	Innovation	Impact	Customer	Manage- ment	Perception	Social
Investment	Perceptions	Mediating	Patent	Linguistic	Local	Rivalry	Implement	
Legitimacy	Satisfaction	S-O-R	Policy	Political	Trust			
Monitoring	Public	Technology	Resource	Reputa- tion				
Ownership	Strategy	Telepresenc e	Economy					
Price	Survey	Transparent						
Political								
Readability								
Ownership								
Stake- holder								

Source: *own compilation*

The first cluster emphasises the need to report on corporate social responsibility (CSR) openly. The third cluster is made up of psychological and practical parts that show how CSR methods are based on selfish goals and the need to follow social rules[3]. The fourth grouping focuses on the short-term business and financial benefits that drive companies, like the chance to improve profits and come up with new ideas through CSR policies. The fifth cluster is about cultural values and what customers expect. The sixth cluster is about strategic management. The sixth and seventh cluster views CSR as a strategic tool to manage image, political risks, and long-term planning under constraints[11], and this eighth cluster talks about those views. Finally, the ninth cluster talks about how media coverage and market pressures affect CSR activities.

4.5 Themes Generated from POP Software

Table 2 shows the results from POP software for another part of this bibliometric evaluation of top H-indexed journals over the last five years. They reveal numerous critical issues in studying CSR motivations and obstacles in China.

Table 2. Themes of CSR motivation

N o.	Themes	Details
1	Employee Focus	Employee well-being, safety, and development are emphasized.
2	Crisis Management	Focus on resilience and recovery during crises like COVID-19.
3	Competitiveness and In- novation	Enhances business competitiveness and fostering innovation.
4	Cultural and Societal In- fluence	Reflecting societal pressures and cultural norms.
5	Governmental Influence	Driven by government mandates and policies, particularly around

		employee welfare.
6	Stakeholder Engagement	Building loyalty and relationships with employees and customers.
7	Authenticity in CSR Practices Stakeholder Engagement	Highlighting genuine, transparent CSR efforts to reduce scepticism. Building loyalty and relationships with employees and customers.

Source: *own compilation*

Employee Focus emphasizes the crucial role of employee health, safety, and growth, acknowledging that a company's sustainability hinges significantly on these aspects. Crisis Management underscores that during events like COVID-19, firms prioritize resilience and recovery, with effective CSR practices bolstering organizational readiness and response to global challenges. Cultural and societal Influence explores how social forces and cultural norms shape CSR activities, particularly in diverse economies where societal expectations significantly influence corporate strategies. Stakeholder engagement focuses on building loyalty and relationships with employees and customers[6] Lastly, the emphasis on authenticity and transparency in CSR initiatives is vital for eliminating scepticism and building trust in an era where stakeholders are increasingly discerning[8]

5 Conclusion

Table 3 provides a clearer picture by combining POP's themes of CSR motivations in China's micro food and beverage business with the nine clusters of CSR motives created from the Vosviewer study. This strategy not only helps to customise CSR activities to specific sector demands, but it also increases the efficacy of these programmes in promoting sustainable behaviours.

Table 3. Combined CSR motivation themes

Cluster	Themes	Explanation
Cluster 3	Employee Focus	Intrinsic motivations and social norms drive employee-centred CSR initiatives.
Cluster 4	Competitiveness and Innovation	CSR enhances competitiveness and innovation through tangible financial benefits.
Cluster 5	Cultural and Societal Influence	Societal norms and cultural values significantly shape CSR strategies.
Cluster 6	Crisis Management	Strategic CSR supports crisis response and strengthens organisational resilience.
Cluster 2	Stakeholder Engagement	Consumer perceptions and CSR credibility are key to stakeholder engagement.
Cluster 8	Authenticity in CSR Practices	Genuine CSR efforts are essential to prevent public scepticism and perceived hypocrisy.

Source: *own compilation*

Innovative data graphics and topic extraction were used to find important categories like "Employee Focus," "Competitiveness and Innovation," and "Crisis Management." For

instance, the focus on financial rewards and new ideas shows that there is a strong connection between CSR and business growth goals. According to recent research[17], Chinese CSR incentives are affected by both businesses' internal goals and external social pressures.

Many Chinese companies see CSR as a way to stay competitive and encourage new ideas, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic[10]. As an example,[6] says that CSR has helped the food and hotel industries by making customers and employees more loyal. The degree of government involvement also has a big effect on the direction of CSR rewards in China. These similarities suggest that Chinese companies not only use CSR projects as part of their business plans, but they also help build their trustworthiness and reputation in the market, all while meeting legal requirements [8]. This means that companies there often have to work within a larger framework of state-driven socioeconomic goals. A big change in the need for honesty and openness in CSR projects is also noticeable[2]. Most people think that for CSR activities to be successful, they need to have clear communication and benefits that can be measured [16].

6 Recommendations for Future Research

To fill in the gaps and move the research forward, future studies on CSR in China should focus on a few key areas.

In the eastern coastal regions—such as Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang—micro food and beverage enterprises often operate under more sophisticated market dynamics and stricter regulatory environments, which may lead them to adopt externally motivated CSR practices, such as compliance, brand positioning, or stakeholder signalling. In contrast, CSR projects in less developed western or central regions like Gansu or Guizhou may be motivated by informal social expectations or collective norms. As a result, comparing case studies across regions would help demonstrate how location-specific factors impact CSR motives, providing insights that aggregated national-level analysis may miss.

In addition to bibliometric approaches, future studies could greatly benefit from incorporating qualitative research methods to capture nuanced stakeholder perspectives. Techniques such as semi-structured interviews with microenterprise owners, employee focus groups, or ethnographic fieldwork within specific communities could reveal the underlying values, assumptions, and emotional dynamics that quantitative tools may overlook[9]. A mixed-method approach would not only enrich the theoretical framework but also provide a more holistic view of CSR as a lived practice.

For example, Green Monday China, a sustainable food initiative headquartered in Shanghai, promotes plant-based diets through local food startups and cafes. Its emphasis on environmental stewardship and carbon reduction reflects the type of CSR driven by external regulatory standards and urban consumer expectations prevalent in coastal regions[15]. In contrast, in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, the Yixin Community, in collaboration with the Chengli Charity Foundation, established an initiative called "Senior Citizen Public Welfare Canteen" in April 2023, guided more by cultural values and a sense of social obligation[14]. These contrasted

scenarios demonstrate how CSR motives can change depending on geography and environment, providing useful context for the themes revealed in bibliometric research. Looking ahead, the motivations driving CSR in China's microenterprise sector are likely to evolve in response to emerging technological and market developments. With the rise of digital tools—such as blockchain traceability in supply chains or mobile-based customer feedback platforms—enterprises may face new forms of accountability, transparency, and pressure for ethical behaviour. For micro food and beverage enterprises, adopting low-cost digital solutions could become a way to demonstrate authenticity, measure social impact, and gain competitive advantage—all of which would reshape the underlying motivations for CSR in the years to come.

To make CSR authenticity more feasible for microenterprises with limited resources, future research should translate abstract recommendations into operational strategies. For example, establishing employee suggestion mechanisms, publicly disclosing simple social impact metrics (e.g., food waste reduction), or partnering with local community groups for seasonal charity drives can foster credibility at a low cost. Additionally, leveraging free digital tools—such as WeChat public accounts or short-form video platforms—to transparently communicate CSR efforts may significantly enhance perceived authenticity.

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