

Abstract The purpose of this study is to explore whether different aspects of corporate social responsibility (i.e., economic, legal, and ethical) have independent association with job applicants' attraction to organizations and how applicants combine the information. Further, from a person–organization fit perspective, we examine whether applicants are attracted to organizations whose corporate social responsibility (CSR) reflects their differences in ethical predispositions (i.e., utilitarianism and formalism) and Machiavellianism. Using factorial design, we created scenarios manipulating CSR and pay level. Participants read each scenario and answered questions about their attraction to the organization depicted in the scenario. We found that each aspect of CSR had an independent relationship with organizational attraction and the probability of accepting a job offer. Participants combined information from each type of CSR in an interactive, configural manner. Applicants with different ethical predispositions and Machiavellianism personality were affected by CSR to different extents. Understanding how job applicants evaluate CSR information may give managers an opportunity to influence applicant attraction. Further, our study shows that organizations may be able to maximize the utility of their CSR investments by selectively conveying CSR information in recruitment brochures that are attractive to their ideal applicants. This is the first study to examine how job applicants form their perception based upon different configurations of the multiple aspects of CSR. In addition, this is the first study to examine the moderating effect of individual differences in ethical predispositions and Machiavellianism on the relationship between CSR and applicant attraction.

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