The Social Construction of CSR:

A Relational View on The Role of CSR Consultants in South Korea

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Abstract

While the notion of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has attracted wide attention from scholars and practitioners, little research has been conducted on the specific processes and mechanisms under which CSR is socially constructed and institutionalized. Existing research that links CSR and institutional theory has mainly focused on macro-institutional determinants and cross-national variations in CSR adoption and practice. Further, while increasing research has explored the processes and mechanisms by which actors, practices and strategies socially construct and institutionalize CSR, research has given lack of attention to the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing CSR; in particular, no related studies to date have been conducted in South Korea. This dissertation study aims to explore how CSR consultants contribute to the social construction and institutionalization of CSR in the context of South Korea. By adopting Bourdieu's theory of practice as a theoretical lens, this study explores: (a) what factors influence the adoption of CSR in Korea; (b) what factors influence the CSR consulting industry and practices in Korea; and, (c) how CSR consultants perceive their role in socially constructing CSR. The study findings provide important implications for the scholarship and practice in the fields of CSR, human resource development (HRD) and organization development (OD), and contribute to the growing literature on applications of the institutional theory in HRD research.

Keywords: Bourdieu, consultants, corporate social responsibility, human resource development, institutional theory

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The topic of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has gained widespread attention, from both academic and practitioner communities (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). While earlier discussions have focused on the role of organizations in society (e.g., Bowen, 1953), the notion of CSR has evolved over several decades, paralleled with long-standing debates over its contested meaning and unresolved differences in perspectives (Carroll, 1999; Matten & Moon, 2008). Nevertheless, CSR has become a management imperative – business organizations increasingly recognize the importance of considering wider interests of stakeholders and conducting business in a more responsible way (Freeman, 1984; Malik, 2015).

Global surveys of corporate executives show that companies are increasingly engaging in CSR, acknowledging its potential to add long-term shareholder value (McKinsey, 2011). More than 8,000 companies world-wide are now members of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), a global voluntary initiative that guides and supports responsible business practices (United Nations Global Compact, n.d.). Further, an increasing number of companies are disclosing their non-financial performance, in an effort to become more transparent and responsible in doing business (KPMG, 2017).

In academic research, scholars have paid much attention to different macro-institutional conditions under which CSR is adopted and institutionalized (Brammer, Jackson & Matten, 2012; Campbell, 2007). By taking an institutional theory perspective, research has provided insight on the institutional determinants of CSR adoption (Waddock, 2008) and cross-national variations in CSR policies and practices (Matten & Moon, 2008). Further, more recent attention has been given to the processes and

mechanisms of CSR institutionalization (Boxenbaum, 2006; Philips, Lawrence & Hardy, 2004). In contrast to macro-level studies, this research provides a more nuanced and micro-level view, on the role of different actors, practices and strategies by which CSR is interpreted, shaped and socially constructed in different institutional contexts (e.g., Dejean, Gond & Leca, 2004; Slager & Chapple, 2016).

While previous research has shed light on institutional aspects and institutionalization processes in CSR, most studies have only provided a partial explanation by adopting a single level of analysis (either macro- or micro-level) and by predominantly focusing on particular institutional actors, such as financial institutions and standard-setting organizations. To date, CSR research has overlooked the role of other focal actors and mechanisms, one of which is the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR.

This paucity of research is surprising, as business consultants have long been regarded as important suppliers in the transfer of management knowledge and ideas (Engwall & Kipping, 2004; Salhin-Anderson & Engwall, 2002). Institutional scholars have also noted the distinctive roles played by professions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and called for the need to further research the role of institutional agents, including consultants, in transporting ideas and influencing institutions – as "definers, interpreters, and appliers of institutional elements" (Scott, 2008, p. 223).

The purpose of this dissertation therefore is to address this gap in the literature and examine *how CSR consultants contribute to the social construction of CSR in the context of South Korea*. By taking an inductive qualitative approach, this study will explore how CSR consultants perceive their role in socially constructing CSR, what

factors enhance or hinder their role, and how CSR consultants respond to these factors. To accomplish this, Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice will be adopted as a theoretical lens. Bourdieu's relational approach and theoretical concepts offer a comprehensive lens to study the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing CSR by examining their positions, practices and power struggles within the socio-historical context of CSR in South Korea.

Research Context: CSR in South Korea

South Korea (hereby Korea) provides a unique context to examine the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing CSR. From an institutional viewpoint, the adoption and development of CSR in Korea has been underpinned by multiple national and global institutional factors (Kim, Amaeshi, Harris, & Suh, 2013; Nam & Jun, 2011), in which "complex institutional reciprocation and change…has led various approaches towards CSR" (Lee & Kim, 2014, p. 75).

Historically, *government reforms and regulative pressures* have largely influenced the adoption of CSR by Korean firms; in particular, by large family-owned conglomerates, or *Chaebols*. Notably, since the Asian Financial Crisis in the late 1990s, the Korean government pushed for the restructuring of *Chaebols'* corporate governance to enhance accountability and transparency (Chang, Oh, Park & Jang, 2017); this was followed by continuous efforts made by succeeding governments, in regulating and incentivizing responsible business conduct (Nam & Jun, 2011). With growing awareness and increased regulative pressures, Korean firms adopted more integrated approaches to doing business and attended to CSR-related concerns, such as environmental, social and labor issues (Kim et al., 2013).

Further, with rapid globalization, Korean firms including *Chaebols* have faced growing pressure and demands by investors, consumers and civil society, both domestically and overseas, to uphold global standards of responsible business practice. Such *institutional and normative pressures* led Korean firms to adhere to international standards and guidelines (e.g., ISO 26000 Social Responsibility Guidance Standard, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidelines for CSR reporting, etc.), and take more strategic and systematic approaches to CSR (Kim et al., 2013; Nam & Jun, 2011).

Corporate CSR practice in Korea has also been shaped by *social norms and cognitive pressures*, rooted in Confucian traditions and collectivist cultural values. Such cognitive pressures have strongly influenced Korean firms to adopt normative CSR practices, with a "distinctive focus on social contributions, reflected in philanthropy and volunteering activities" (Kim et al., 2013, p. 2586). Contrary to strategic CSR activities, Korean firms regard philanthropic donations and collective volunteering, as important ways to address societal demands and normative requirements – the "seed and core of CSR in Korea" (Lee & Kim, 2014, p. 73).

In sum, previous research suggests that CSR in Korea has been driven by complex interactions of regulative pressures, institutional drivers and cultural influences (Kim et al., 2013). While much attention has been given to institutions and drivers of CSR in the Korean context, no study to date has specifically examined how CSR is shaped and institutionalized in the hands of CSR consultants. This dissertation study aims to fill this gap and provide insight into the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in Korea.

Research Questions and Significance of Study

The overarching research question that guides this study is: *What is the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in Korea?* To address this question, the following sub-questions will be explored in this study:

a) What is the status of CSR in Korea, and what factors influence the adoption of CSR in Korea?

b) What is the status of the CSR consulting industry and CSR consulting practices in Korea?

c) How do CSR consultants perceive their role in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in Korea?

The study findings will contribute to scholarship and practice in the fields of CSR, HRD/OD, and management and organization studies. It will also offer practical implications for consulting agencies, policy makers and governmental bodies, in the areas of CSR and sustainability.

This study contributes to the increasing body of research on the processes and mechanisms of CSR institutionalization (Boxenbaum, 2006); specifically, it extends research on the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR (Bres & Gond, 2014). While CSR research has increasingly adopted an institutional lens, there is still a lack of understanding on the specific processes, mechanisms and meanings underlying the institutionalization of CSR (Philips et al., 2004). Further, despite emerging research on the role of CSR consultants, previous studies fall short on providing a holistic view of the role and practices through which CSR consultants

socially construct CSR. This study extends these lines of research, by providing a more comprehensive view on the dynamics of CSR consulting work and the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing CSR. It also sheds light on role of CSR consultants in non-Western contexts (Matten & Moon, 2008) – this is the first study to explore the role of CSR consultants within the institutional context of Korea.

The study findings also contribute to growing research interests in HRD and OD to employ institutional theory and sociological perspectives (Fogarty & Dirsmith, 2001; Korte, 2012; Kuchinke, 2000). By using Bourdieu's framework to examine the role and practice of CSR consultants, this study answers recent calls to adopt pragmatic views and practice theories to the field of HRD (Korte & Mercurio, 2017; Tkachenko & Ardichvili, 2017), that "not only recognize the important effects of human interactions in the world but also place human activity center stage" (Korte & Mercurio, 2017, p. 61). In addition, the findings add to the emerging research on CSR and sustainability in HRD/OD (Ardichvili, 2013; Garavan & McGuire, 2010).

This study also makes methodological contributions to research in institutional theory, and to the field of management and organization studies. Institutional theorists have long debated between the primacy of structure and agency (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). While recent years have seen renewed interests in reconciling actors' embeddedness (DiMaggio, 1988; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006), such attempts have also been criticized for overemphasizing the role of agency; thus, inadequately addressing the "paradox of embedded agency" (Battilana, 2006; Seo & Creed, 2002). By adopting Bourdieu's relational framework, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive view on the interplay between institutions and actors by examining the role of agency (i.e.,

CSR consultants) in the "structuration" of CSR consulting work (Giddens, 1984), within the socio-historical and institutional context of Korea.

In contributing to practice, this study aims to provide valuable insight for consulting agencies and other professional organizations on the [enabling and/or hindering] conditions and practices that underlie work, in the fields of CSR and sustainability. By providing a comprehensive view on the dynamics of CSR consulting work, the findings may benefit organizational leaders of CSR consulting agencies in developing and refining their approaches to increase success in CSR-related projects. In addition, policy makers and governmental bodies may also benefit from a better understanding of the roles and contributions of the CSR consulting industry in institutionalizing CSR in the context of Korea.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the previous theoretical and empirical work that informs this inquiry. Given that this study draws on academic work that links CSR research and institutional theory, my review will focus on the relevant theoretical perspectives and empirical studies in this area of scholarship. I start by providing some key definitions that are widely adopted in this study. What follows is a review of extant literature on CSR and institutional theory, including literature examining institutional perspectives in CSR, institutional determinants of CSR, and processes of institutionalizing CSR (i.e., inter- and intra-organizational levels). Then, recent and emerging research on CSR consultants is provided. Lastly, I present Bourdieu's theory of practice and its core concepts as a theoretical lens for this study.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

While the concept of CSR has widely been recognized, scholars have struggled to reach consensus on an agreed upon definition (Carroll, 1999; Clarkson, 1995; Friedman, 1972; van Marrewijk, 2003). The contested meaning and assumptions underlying CSR have led to confusing and overlapping conceptualizations in the field (Dahlsrud, 2008; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

An early foundational work that advanced the understanding of CSR is the *Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibilities* developed by Carroll (1979; 1991), in which CSR is defined as "the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (Carroll, 1979, p. 500). In the *normative stakeholder view*, organizations are argued to consider the wider interests of

multiple stakeholders, that can affect or are affected by the organization (Freeman, 1984, p. 25). Others maintained a *strategic view* that organizations can achieve long-term competitive advantage through the strategic investment and engagement in CSR initiatives (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Porter & Kramer, 2002).

Further, noticeable attention has been given to organizations' financial best interests in engaging in CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Malik, 2015); in this regard, the concept of corporate social performance (CSP) has become central to CSR research. According to Wood (2010), CSP is concerned with "the harms and benefits that result from a business organization's interactions with its larger environment" (p. 51); that is, it views "the business organization ('corporate') as the locus of actions that have consequences for stakeholders and society as well as for itself ('social performance')" (Wood, 2010, p. 54).

Given the multiplicity of perspectives in CSR, concepts closely related to CSR are often interchangeably used; these include: business ethics, corporate citizenship, corporate sustainability, sustainable development, and triple bottom line (Garriga & Mele, 2004; van Marrewijk, 2003). For example, corporate sustainability is defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987, p. 8). In this view, businesses are expected to balance their attention to all economic, social, and environmental outcomes, namely the 'triple bottom line' (Elkington, 1997).

Another often used construct is corporate citizenship (Matten, Crane, & Chapple, 2003; Matten & Crane, 2005); this implies that businesses need to consider the local

community, in which they belong and operate (Garriga & Mele, 2004). Matten et al. (2003) further distinguished corporate citizenship from CSR and maintained that organizations need to take on political responsibilities replacing (failure of) governmental institutions in "administering citizenship rights for individuals" (Matten & Crane, 2005, p. 173).

For this dissertation, I adopt the definition of CSR provided by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) – "*the continuing commitment by business to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the community and society at large*" (n.d.). This definition has been commonly accepted in the literature; and entails that, businesses not only have the responsibility to make profit through producing goods and services, but also need to consider the wider interests of multiple stakeholders (Carroll, 1991; Freeman, 1984).

Institutions, Institutionalization, and Organizational fields

Neo-institutional theory has set out to explain how institutions stabilize and sustain orderly behavior (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977); that is, the ways in which institutions constrain organizational structures and actions, and thereby explain homogeneity in organizational practices (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In this regard, researchers have proposed different mechanisms of institutional isomorphism – normative, coercive and mimetic (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and specified different elements of institutions – regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive (Scott, 2001).

More recent strands of institutional theory have sought to shed light on the role of agency and strategic action in institutional analysis (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991); these studies point to the importance of "understanding *why* these structures and practices are made to appear legitimate or *how* elements of the broader social environment become manifest and elaborated inside organizations" (Suddaby, Elsbach, Greenwood, Meyer & Zilber, 2010, p. 1234).

In this dissertation, I broadly define *institutions* as "multifaceted, durable social structures, made up of symbolic elements, social activities, and material resources" that "provide stimulus, guidelines, and resources for acting as well as prohibitions and constraints on action" (Scott, 2001, p. 57-58). I acknowledge that institutions are not merely comprised of formal aspects and structure; thus, I adopt the premise that institutional contexts, including formal and informal structures and practices within which organizations operate, are based on rational myths and ceremonies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977); that is, embodied meanings and symbolic aspects (not only formal aspects) are central to organizations' legitimacy and survival. In this context, *legitimacy* is defined as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman, 1995, p. 574).

The concept of *organizational fields* is also central to institutional analysis; here, it is defined as "those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies and other organizations that produce similar services or products" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148). Within organizational fields, the embodied meanings and institutions are

actively re-shaped, spread and institutionalized by different actors, professions and practices (Scott, 2001; Zilber, 2006). Social actors and practices are therefore central to the process by which activities become *taken-for-granted* (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991) or *institutionalized*; that is, "social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rule-like status in social thought and action" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 341).

In extending these perspectives, recent research in *institutional entrepreneurship* has shown how organized actors influence institutions (DiMaggio, 1988; Fligstein, 1997); the *institutional work* literature has paid increased attention to agency associated with institutional change; that is, how actors purposefully accomplish creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 215).

CSR and Institutional Theory

Institutional theory has provided a fertile theoretical framework for advancing CSR research, and CSR scholars have increasingly adopted an institutional lens to understand CSR-related phenomena (Brammer et al., 2012; Campbell, 2007). Campbell (2007), for instance, focused on macro-level institutional determinants of CSR, and theoretically proposed a number of conditions under which firms act in socially responsible ways. These include financial stability, moderate levels of competition, state regulation, collective industrial self-regulation, pressure from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), normative institutional environment, and engaging in stakeholder dialogue.

More recently, Brammer et al. (2012) argued that institutional theory may significantly advance CSR research, by "seeking to place CSR explicitly within a wider

field of economic governance characterized by different modes, including the market, state regulation and beyond" (p. 7). In this regard, the authors argued that adopting an institutional lens in CSR research may allow us to better understand *diversity* and *cross-national differences* in CSR forms and practices, and the *dynamics* of CSR; that is, "the way CSR has changed through imitation and adaptation by corporations" (Brammer et al., 2012, p. 8).

To date, by adopting an institutional lens, the extant CSR research has predominantly focused on institutional determinants of CSR adoption, and its variation across social contexts and national boundaries. Only recently have researchers started to focus on specific processes and micro-level dynamics underlying CSR institutionalization in different contexts.

Institutional Determinants of CSR

Research in this area has sought to examine the emergence and influence of macro-institutional pressures – such as socio-political institutions and CSR-related institutions and standards – on the institutionalization of CSR (Brammer et al., 2012; Waddock, 2008). This has been accompanied by research in comparative CSR analysis, aimed at understanding cross-national and cultural differences and similarities in CSR adoption and practices (Matten & Moon, 2008; Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010).

A substantive body of research has sought to understand macro-institutional pressures and their effects on CSR institutionalization (Campbell, 2007; Matten & Moon, 2008). At the global and transnational levels, research has focused on the influence of CSR-related institutions, that "seek to build rules through negotiated frameworks through

which companies engage in self-regulation" (Brammer et al., 2012, p. 15). These institutions aim to institutionalize CSR on a global level, by creating norms, rules and standardized procedures for CSR (Waddock, 2008; Vogel, 2010); and they include, for example, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), and the International Standards Organization (ISO) (Gilbert, Rasche & Waddock, 2011).

In the absence of government regulations, these institutions are regarded as "one of the most powerful sources of isomorphic pressure to institutionalize CSR in business" (Brammer et al., 2012, p. 16). Research has also empirically demonstrated the influence of such institutions on standardizing CSR-related practices (Brown, de Jong & Levy, 2009; Etzion & Ferraro, 2010). For example, by tracing the emergence of the GRI, Brown et al. (2009) demonstrated the successful institutionalization of GRI, and showed that it played a dominant role in diffusing and standardizing CSR reporting practices among large multi-national corporations. This case also illustrated that the institutionalization process was dynamic and reflected "power relations among members of the field, their ability to mobilize alliances and resources, and constraints imposed by the broader institutions in which a field is nested" (p. 579).

Another vast body of CSR research has applied institutional theories in examining cross-national differences and cultural variations – patterns of convergence and divergence – in CSR adoption and practices (Doh & Guay 2006; Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010; Matten & Moon, 2008). This research seeks to understand variations in social context and institutional pressures (Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010); different patterns in corporate governance systems (Aguilera & Jackson, 2003); and their effects on different

patterns of CSR adoption and practices across national business systems (Matten & Moon, 2008).

A notable contribution was made by Matten and Moon (2008), in which they offered a framework that compared implicit and explicit forms of CSR practice. According to them, implicit forms of CSR are based on normative responses to mandatory rules and government regulations (e.g., in Europe); whereas explicit CSR is driven by voluntary acts and strategic objectives (e.g., in North America). Their study demonstrated that such differences in CSR were underpinned by the distinct national business systems and institutional contexts. Further, Jackson and Apostolakou's (2010) study empirically tested the influence of institutions on firms' performance in CSR and demonstrated that firms located in liberal market economies (LMEs) in Anglo-Saxon countries outperformed those based in coordinated market economies (CMEs) in Europe.

Institutionalization Processes of CSR

More recent attention has been given to understanding the institutionalization process of CSR in which CSR is adopted, shaped and legitimized in different contexts and organizational fields. This research addresses the need to more closely understand the processes and meanings underlying CSR institutionalization (Philips et al., 2004), and eschews functionalist approaches and universal definitions in understanding CSR (Boxenbaum, 2006). As such, these studies highlight the socio-cognitive aspects and meaning-making processes that underlie CSR construction (Boxenbaum, 2006; Philips et al., 2004).

Inter-organizational level.

At the inter-organizational level, researchers have focused on the processes under which CSR is diffused and institutionalized in different organizational fields and national contexts. These studies demonstrate the role of various actors, practices and intermediary institutions in institutionalizing and socially constructing CSR; in particular, a number of studies highlight the active role of CSR-related financial institutions – socially responsible investment (SRI) funds, rating agencies and security analysts – in legitimizing and institutionalizing CSR.

For example, Avetisyan and Ferrary (2013), by tracing the historical emergence and institutionalization process of CSR in France and the United States, demonstrated that the process of institutionalizing CSR was primarily driven by various groups of local and global stakeholders, rather than exogenous institutional pressures. In doing so, they highlighted the role of CSR rating agencies, as institutional entrepreneurs, in institutionalizing CSR by developing systemic measurement tools for the CSR field. Further, they showed that, while the state played a central role in promoting CSR in France, major corporations and institutional investors played a bigger role in the United States.

Further, drawing on the institutional entrepreneurship literature, Dejean et al. (2004) illustrated the legitimacy-building process of a social-rating agency in France. By tracing the historical development of the SRI industry in France, complemented by in-depth interviews with financial analysts, the authors showed that the social-rating agency played a role of an institutional entrepreneur, by institutionalizing a newly developed

measurement tool for evaluating corporate social performance and providing legitimacy to the emerging SRI field in France.

In this process, Dejean et al. (2004) highlighted three central mechanisms through which the measurement tool supported the institutionalization of SRI: it helped to adapt the notion of social performance to the financial community's cognitive framework, to align fund managers' professional standards and practices with non-financial measures, and to structure fund managers' behaviors and decision-making processes.

In a similar vein, Gond and Boxenbaum (2013) demonstrated how global responsible investment practices were shaped and adopted to local institutions by entrepreneurial actors. Drawing on the institutional work literature, their case studies illustrated how entrepreneurial actors, through so-called contextualization work, successfully imported RI practices from the U.S. to France and Quebec; in doing so, the agents actively re-assembled both material and symbolic aspects of RI practices – considering technical, cultural and political fit – between the countries.

Others have examined the role of institutional actors; in particular, institutional intermediaries (or infomediaries), such as financial analysts of socially responsible investments (SRI) and the business press, in shaping and socially constructing CSR (e.g., Grafstrom & Windell, 2011; Ioannou & Serafeim, 2015). This research demonstrates that these institutional intermediaries play a central role, in providing legitimacy and performance signals to businesses and the general public, when there is lack of concrete information and performance evaluation standards available (Doh, Howton, Howton & Siegel, 2010; Slager & Chapple, 2016).

Luo, Wang, Raithel and Zheng (2015), for example, showed that security analysts played a key intermediary role in linking firms' social performance and financial outcomes. Using qualitative interviews with security analysts and longitudinal data on corporate social performance, this study demonstrated that security analysts increasingly paid attention to firms' non-financial performance; and in doing so, played a key role in reducing information uncertainty associated with non-financial outcomes by incorporating such information into their recommendations for general investors (Luo, et al., 2015).

In another recent study, Slager and Chapple (2016) provided evidence for the role of responsible investment (RI) indices in providing information and incentivizing firms to increase their corporate social performance. Using an archival database from the FTSE4Good Index, they identified three mechanisms through which companies were incentivized to improve their corporate social performance over time – threatening exclusion from the index, signaling social reputation through the index, and constructing opportunities for engagement and dialogue (i.e., index engagement – dialogue between index officials and firms to improve social performance).

Further, a small body of research has examined the role of business press in improving transparency of corporate CSR policies and activities (Dubbink, Graafland & Liedekerke, 2008), and socially constructing CSR for business organizations (Frig, Fougere, Liljander & Polsa, 2016; Grafstrom & Windell, 2011). For example, Grafstrom and Windell (2011), based on a content analysis of international business press across a 10-year period, found that the business press as infomediaries played a central role in socially constructing CSR by linking CSR to corporate activities, shaping corporate

arguments to create a business case for CSR and affecting corporate spokespersons. Their findings showed that the business press may "not only accentuate CSR as an idea worthy of attention but also define the actual content of CSR" (p. 234).

Intra-organizational level.

At the intra-organizational level, research has focused on the internal dynamics of CSR adoption and institutionalization in organizations; these studies aimed to provide a rich understanding of the underlying processes and mechanisms by which organizational actors interpret, translate and construct CSR in organizations (e.g., Humphreys & Brown, 2008; Wright & Nyberg, 2012; Vigneau, Humphreys & Moon, 2015). In doing so, these studies highlight intra-organizational processes and consequences of CSR social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967); that is, how CSR institutionalization is influenced and shaped by internal organizational members, systems, practices and power dynamics (Basu & Palazzo, 2008).

To illustrate, Bondy, Moon and Matten's (2012) study demonstrated that, while CSR institutionalization in U.K. organizations was initially driven by isomorphic pressures, the process and form of CSR was later actively shaped and determined by agency. In interviews with 38 CSR practitioners in 37 different organizations, the authors found that the initial intentions and meanings attached to CSR, to promote changes towards addressing social and environmental issues, was redefined by dominant organizational members during the process. These organizations implemented CSR strategies and programs by primarily relying on their existing systems, tools and frameworks; that is, "redefining it internally to be consistent with the market logic" (p. 295).

Similarly, Humphreys and Brown's (2008) study provided a detailed account by which CSR was discursively constructed among internal organizational members, through on-going collective sense-making, identity construction and internal power dynamics. In a narrative case study of a U.K. financial institution, the authors showed that institutionalizing CSR in the case organization was perceived as a complex and contested process, in which organizational members struggled to understand the notion of CSR and accept the organization's rationale for adopting it in the first place. The case also highlighted the role of power; members of the CSR team engaged in continuous power struggles to incorporate CSR issues, using legitimizing practices aimed at promoting CSR stories and altering organizational structures in favor of the CSR agenda.

More recent research has focused on specific individual actors in organizations, dedicated to CSR- and sustainability-related work – namely, CSR and sustainability managers (Anderson & Bateman, 2000; Strand, 2014; Wright & Nyberg, 2012). This research shows that CSR and sustainability managers are intra-organizational agents who play a vital role in shaping and institutionalizing CSR in organizations (Strand, 2014); while often confronted with conflicting organizational goals and personal tensions, such as balancing between 'profit and social responsibility' and 'short-term vs long-term corporate goals' (Carollo & Guerci, 2017).

For example, Visser and Crane (2010) delineated four distinct types of sustainability change agents: experts, facilitators, catalysts and activists. They showed that the variety of types reflected personal meanings in life and work of sustainability practitioners and were shaped by (changing) work roles and organizational contexts. Similarly, Tams and Marshall (2011) identified several characteristics of responsible

careers. Drawing on 32 formal interviews with sustainability practitioners, their study identified six distinct practices that characterized these careers. These included institutionalizing, field shaping and systematically engaging with social issues, among others.

Others have highlighted different types of roles undertaken by these CSR and sustainability managers (e.g., Tams & Marshall, 2011) and particular influence tactics and strategies through which CSR managers champion and legitimize their work (e.g., Wickert & De Bakker, 2018). Further, research has demonstrated that CSR and sustainability professionals, in order to successfully promote and champion social and environmental issues, relied on diverse influence tactics and activities, such as issue-identifying, -packaging and -selling (Anderson & Bateman, 2000), language use and rhetorical strategies (Sonenshein, 2006), and cultural framing tactics (Howard-Grenville & Hoffman, 2003).

To illustrate, Wickert and De Bakker (2018), drawing on the notion of issue selling, demonstrated that CSR managers, in selling social issues, drew on a "repertoire of engagement strategies" that combined personal motivations and the organization's social context. Specifically, they found that the issue-selling process and engagement with buyers in the organization required a relational approach, in which CSR managers engaged in relationship building with buyers, appealed to buyers' emotions and focused on "perspective-taking" to adopt different perspectives.

In sum, the reviewed research sheds light on the processes and mechanisms under which CSR is institutionalized in different contexts; in contrast to structuralist views, these studies provide a more nuanced account of the role of different actors, activities and

strategies by which CSR is shaped, legitimized and socially constructed at inter- and intra-organizational levels.

However, most research tends to overly focus on the role of CSR-related financial institutions and actors, such as SRI funds and security analysts, whilst little insight is provided on other focal actors and institutions that may contribute to the social construction and institutionalization of CSR. In this regard, recent attention has been given to CSR consultants, as major drivers in institutionalizing and socially constructing CSR (Sahlin-Andersson, 2006; Young et al., 2003).

The Role of CSR Consultants

To date, there has been limited research on CSR consultants; only few empirical studies have attempted to explore the role of CSR consultancies and CSR consultants in the context of CSR. This research can be categorized into the following three research streams: (1) the emergence and structure of CSR consulting industries; (2) the role of CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR; and (3) work tensions and meaning-making processes in CSR consulting work.

In the first stream, researchers have focused on the macro-level and examined the emergent structures of CSR consulting industries in different national contexts. For example, Young et al. (2003) examined the emergence of the U.K.'s CSR consulting industry. Relying on online documents and archival data, the authors demonstrated the historical emergence and unique structure of the U.K. CSR consulting market. Their study showed that the CSR market in the U.K. was characterized by an oligopolistic structure and an unsegmented market: a small number of consulting firms dominated the

market in which similar consulting services and products were offered. Young et al. (2003) highlighted the unique position of CSR consultancies in relation to businesses and the broader society; noting that "firms value their relationships with consultants to the extent that they are willing to pay for it…society has a derived interest in the consultancies to the extent that they influence the conduct of their clients" (p. 2-3).

In the context of Mexico, Molina (2008) found that despite its high potential for growth, the CSR market in Mexico was overall fragmented and faced with several challenges; these included, lack of government support, strong profit-driven behaviors of firms and low awareness on CSR issues in society. In addition, in-depth interviews with several business representatives revealed that, in this context, CSR consultancies lacked a sufficient number of qualified consultants, and overall had limited influence on local businesses.

The second stream of research paid closer attention to the role played by CSR consultants and examined how different institutional contexts affected these roles. These studies viewed CSR consultants as institutional agents and/or intermediaries, and focused on the roles and strategies through which CSR consultants contributed to the diffusion and social construction of CSR.

Windell (2009), for example, demonstrated the role of CSR consultants in the (social) construction of CSR. By tracing the growth of the Swedish CSR consulting industry, the study highlighted the early and prominent roles of CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR; findings indicated that CSR consultants in Sweden played an important role in drawing corporate attention to CSR issues and translating CSR ideas into business solutions. In this context, Windell (2009) observed that CSR consultants,

using rhetorical strategies and expert knowledge, strived to commercialize CSR, noting that the consultants "highlighted the perspective that CSR was a business case and avoided moral arguments…they recognized the importance of building their arguments on economical logics" (p. 374).

On the other hand, in the context of Greece, Skouloudis and Evangelinos's study (2014) of CSR consultants showed that the role of CSR consultants as intermediates for knowledge transfer and organizational change was limited. Drawing on in-depth interviews with CSR consultants in Greece, their findings indicated that CSR consultants' motives and roles were largely driven by their own firms' self-interests and clients' narrow expectations for business opportunities in CSR.

As noted by Skouloudis and Evangelinos (2014), the "consultants' capacity to affect a company's behavior and pursue society's interests is marginalized, and CSR issues are reduced to conventional and marketable consulting products" (p. 269). The authors attributed this finding to the fact that, the CSR industry in Greece, driven by exogenous factors such as international initiatives and foreign competition, was characterized by fierce competition among a small number of CSR consultancies (i.e., oligopolistic structure) and superficial approaches to CSR issues by Greek business managers and organizations.

Further, a notable study conducted by Bres and Gond (2014), in the context of Quebec, provided a detailed account on the role played by CSR consultants. In multiple interviews with CSR consultants (and other stakeholders), the authors delineated three distinctive roles of CSR consultants in socially constructing Quebec's CSR market; these include: social and environmental issues translators, market boundary negotiators, and

responsive regulation enactors. By engaging in these roles, CSR consultants were viewed as focal actors in CSR commodification and development of the CSR consultancy market, by reconstructing and repackaging CSR issues in meeting business needs, expanding and protecting market boundaries of CSR consulting services, and regulating business conduct through promoting CSR regulations and standards (p. 1349).

The last stream of research focused on the individual and/or occupational level; in contrast to work reviewed above, these studies emphasized the micro-level dynamics and subjective meaning-making processes of practitioners dedicated to CSR- and sustainability-related work. In this stream, it is assumed that CSR-related work, including consulting practices, is inherently paradoxical and involves balancing opposing interests, such as profit-making and social responsibility. Empirical studies therefore aimed to uncover underlying mechanisms and processes through which CSR practitioners manage and deal with tensions and conflicts in daily work.

Drawing on paradox theory and identity research, Ghadiri, Gond and Bres (2015) examined how CSR consultants managed tensions, engendered by the search for both profit and social responsibility. In analyzing the discourse of 18 CSR consultants from three different U.K. consultancies, Ghadiri et al., (2015) found that the consultants managed everyday tensions by engaging in linguistical tactics, which aimed at either avoiding illegitimacy perceived in their work or legitimizing their paradoxical positions. The authors labelled this process as "paradoxical identity mitigation"; that is, "the paradoxical use of linguistic strategies aimed at simultaneously embracing and distancing oneself from contradictory identity demands" (p. 612). Through this process, according to

Ghadiri et al., (2015), CSR consultants formed "hybrid identities" and made sense of their professional work.

In a similar vein, Mitra and Buzzanell (2017) explored the conditions and processes in which sustainability practitioners derived meaningfulness from their work. By taking a tension-centered approach, the authors demonstrated that work meaningfulness in this context was viewed as dynamic and contested, which reflected "the importance of political structures and discourses that influence practitioners' meaning-making, thereby connecting the personal, professional and political realms of work" (p. 612). In their interviews with 45 sustainability practitioners including consultants, Mitra and Buzzanell (2017) showed that those practitioners dedicated to sustainability-related work, derived meaningfulness from work in tensional and contested ways; this involved on-going negotiations in everyday activities, evaluating the impact and deliverables of work, and positioning career trajectories.

Summary to the Section.

The review of literature indicates the need to further explore the processes and mechanisms under which CSR is adopted, shaped and legitimized. Most previous studies have been conducted at the macro-level; while emerging research has explored the role of different actors in shaping and socially constructing CSR in organizational fields, there is still lack of research addressing the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR.

Further, emerging research on CSR consultants tends to provide a partial explanation of the role played by CSR consultants in socially constructing and

institutionalizing CSR. First, previous work predominantly adopts a single level of analysis; some studies examine the structure of CSR consulting industries (macro-level), whilst others focus on the group- and individual-level dynamics (meso- and micro-level) of CSR consulting work. The only exception was Bres and Gond's (2014) study; while the study offered a more comprehensive view on the role of CSR consultants in Quebec, it narrowly focused on the role of CSR consultants in "CSR commodification" and constructing the "market for virtue".

In addition, previous studies overly emphasize constraining aspects of structures and institutions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), which limit the role of CSR consultants (agency). Currently, there is little research that provides a detailed account on the "structuration" of CSR consulting work (Giddens, 1984) – the dynamic interplay between institutional structures and actors, and the *socio-cognitive aspects* that underlie the mean-making processes through which CSR is socially constructed. Furthermore, these studies tend to overlook the role of *power*, which may influence the roles, positions and practices of CSR consultants within organizational fields.

Lastly, the reviewed studies are exclusively conducted in Western countries; that is, the findings can only be interpreted within Western national business systems and cultural contexts (Matten & Moon, 2008). To the best of my knowledge, no research has been conducted on the role of CSR consultants in non-Western countries; to date, studies conducted in the context of Korea are non-existent.

In the following, Bourdieu's theory of practice is presented as a potential theoretical lens for this study. Bourdieu's relational approach and theoretical concepts offer a comprehensive framework, and the means to broaden the understanding of the

role played by CSR consultants in socially constructing CSR within the socio-historical context and national institutional environment of Korea.

Bourdieu's Theory of Social Practice

As a theoretical lens, this study will be guided by the works of French philosopher and sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, and his philosophical perspectives and theoretical concepts, grounded in the theory of Social Praxeology (1977). Bourdieu's theoretical framework, rooted in his early field work in Algeria and on the French educational system, has greatly influenced the fields of education and sociology; and more recently, management and organization studies (Özbilgin & Tatli, 2005; Townley, 2015).

Bourdieu's work, underpinned by a relational approach to social inquiry, has attracted much attention from scholars in management and organization studies; this led to numerous theoretical reviews of his intellectual legacy and work (e.g. Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008; Everett, 2002; Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Özbilgin & Tatli, 2005; Swartz, 2008), and conceptual or empirical studies that draw on his relational approach and core concepts (e.g., Ardichvili, 2013; DiMaggio, 1982; Hallett, 2003; Oakes, Townley & Cooper, 1998). This suggests that Bourdieu's theory has much to contribute to the field of organization and management studies; by providing, for example, a multilevel and holistic research agenda, reflexivity in research process, and a relational approach in reconciling the duality between structure and agency (Özbilgin & Tatli, 2005, p. 855).

In his theory of practice, Bourdieu aimed to transcend the longstanding *dualism* in social sciences, between the objectivist versus subjectivist (or structure versus agency)

approaches, through outlining his relational thinking of "structuralist constructivism or constructivist structuralism" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 11). That is, Bourdieu's *relational* approach to social inquiry allows researchers to view "symbolic structures whilst considering their relation to both the cognitive structures of the individual and social structures of society" (Everett, 2002, p. 56).

The social world, according to Bourdieu, is conceived of a *social space* governed by principles of differentiation within which individual agents struggle and compete for different forms of objective and symbolic resources, or *capital*. As opposed to earlier economic views, Bourdieu points to social relations, cultural production, class struggle and power, as central to understanding social reality; that is, he views "the unequal distribution of cultural and social resources as critically important to an understanding of society, hence his concern with reproduction and distinction" (Townley, 2015, p. 4).

Bourdieu's relational inquiry is also underpinned by the importance of *reflexivity*; this requires breaking from preconceptions and taken-for-granted understandings of the world, and to be reflexive about "…how these affect the way they go about understanding organizational life, discourse, and practices" (Özbilgin & Tatli, 2005, p. 859).

To fully comprehend Bourdieu's approach, "it is important to determine precisely how its constituent actors, differently positioned as they are within the field in respect to the distribution of capital (or capitals) operative therein, perceive themselves, their competitors, and the field as a whole, in all its opportunities and challenges" (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005, p. 693). Thus, it is important to understand the theoretical concepts

that underpin Bourdieu's thinking and relational approach; he refers to these concepts as 'thinking tools' that include *field*, *capital* and *habitus*.

Field.

According to Bourdieu, fields are "networks of social relations, structured systems of social positions within which struggles or maneuvers take place over resources, stakes and access" (Oakes et al., 1998, p. 260). These social microcosms (or semi-autonomous fields) are governed by and function according to their own distinct logic and taken-for-granted rules and assumptions (i.e., *doxa*); they are nested in hierarchical structures, constituted by several widespread general fields and more restricted sub-fields in which the former tends to influence and colonize the latter (Everett, 2002). Bourdieu also acknowledges the role of agents that enact and reproduce the field; "a field is not simply a dead structure…but a space of play which exists as such only to the extent that players enter into it who believe in and actively pursue the prizes it offers" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 19).

Social fields are viewed as fields of power, competition and conflict (Everett, 2002); that is, dominant and dominated actors continuously struggle over field-specific resources or capital, to attain power, legitimate authority, and control (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). For Bourdieu, field positions are "objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents, or institutions…"; therefore, any given field, either dominant or dominated, "must be analyzed in terms of the distinctive profiles of capital associated with them" (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005, p. 691).

Capital.

Bourdieu referred to a wide range of capitals. In any given field, these capitals and their sub-forms are "capable of conferring strength, power and consequently profit on their holder" (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005, p. 4). As Bourdieu (1986) notes, "the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world…determining the chances of success for practices" (p. 241); that is, the amount and type of capital(s) individual actors possess determines their position in a specific field; and the different forms of capital, according to Bourdieu (1986), include economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital.

Economic capital consists of the physical and material resources directly convertible into monetary value. *Cultural capital* manifests in different sub-forms or states – the *embodied* state represents the "long-lasting dispositions" in one's mind and body, acquired through personal or formal socialization; the *objectified* state exists in forms of cultural goods, such as pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments and machines, and of which "can only be obtained in proportion to the extent of the holder's embodied capital" (p. 247); the *institutionalized* state is manifested in formal education, knowledge and competence that are officially recognized, such as in academic qualifications, and in which "one sees clearly the performative magic of the power of instituting…to impose recognition" (p. 248). Furthermore, *social capital* is the aggregate of resources based in one's network of relationships; they are "…not simply connections, but the added value which membership in a group brings" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 69).

Finally, *symbolic capital* is the form other capitals take when recognized and legitimized in any given field; symbolic capital may include attributes such as prestige, status and authority, and thus form the ultimate basis of power in the field (Bourdieu, 1998). It is through symbolic capital that powerful dominant members of the field determine the taken-for-granted structures and rules, by which dominance or *symbolic violence* occurs (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In the field of power, therefore, continuous struggles and contestations over symbolic capital are crucial, and "those actors who succeed in amassing it gain considerably thereby in their efforts to assume a dominant position within the field" (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005, p. 692).

Habitus.

An actor's position in a social field is not solely dependent on the possession of capitals; it is also influenced by the individual social actors' habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Habitus refers to the "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). As systems of dispositions, habitus is deeply embodied in individual actors and manifested in different forms; these include, "deeply ingrained modes of perception, emotional response, and action within the world but also manners and bearings, ways of speaking, forms of dress, and personal hygiene" (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005, p. 694). Further, social actors – with homologous positions and similar socialization experiences – may form *shared or collective habitus*, through which consensus exists around legitimate capital and social practices in a given field (Bourdieu, 1977).

Habitus, in any form, can be both enabling and constraining for social actors in the field; as Bourdieu (1988) notes, "the field, as a structured space, tends to structure the

habitus, while the habitus tends to structure the perceptions of the field" (p. 784). In other words, Habitus enables social actors to understand the taken-for-granted rules, or *doxa*, in a given field; that is, how to play the game more or less effectively (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). At the same time, doxa, the shared and taken-for-granted knowledge, values and language in the field, shapes the shared understandings and habitus; and therefore, determines the relative positions of social actors within the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

In sum, Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977) provides a holistic view and relational framework for investigating the phenomena under study – *the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing CSR in Korea*. Specifically, it offers a theoretical lens to study CSR consultants within their socio-historical context and organizational fields, and to examine their position and roles in respect to the distribution of capital and power in their fields. In so doing, Bourdieu's theoretical concepts will not be defined *a priori*; instead, the theory and concepts will be used as an overarching theoretical framework; they will guide the research process – e.g., interview questionnaire development, data analysis and interpretation of findings.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how CSR consultants contribute to the social construction and institutionalization of CSR in the context of Korea. Specifically, the research question guiding this inquiry is: *What is the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in Korea?* To address this question, an inductive approach and an interpretive qualitative research design are employed, to gain an in-depth understanding of how CSR consultants make sense and construct meaning of complex social phenomena (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Further, this study is guided by a critical realist ontological framework, which assumes that, while there are multiple realities which are socially constructed, there exists a "real" social world independent of individuals' perceptions (Fairclough, 2005); that is, "the social world is pre-constructed" (p. 922).

Interpretive research attempts to understand and explain human and social reality, through looking for cultural and historical interpretations of the world (Crotty, 1998). This approach eschews the objective quantification of positivist research and primarily aims to understand human experience and social interactions; thus, "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). Interpretive research is therefore underlined by social constructivism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) that is based on the assumption that "meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 43).

Unlike positivist research that seeks objective reality through deductive reasoning, cause-effect relationships, prediction and generalization, interpretive research assumes

the existence of multiple realities and concerns itself with understanding human interactions through conducting interviews, observations, and document analysis (Crotty, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, in interpretive research, presenting a rich description of the phenomenon under study is an important indicator of rigor (Geertz, 1973); this may "provide the basis for consideration of the potential for application to other times, places, people, and contexts" (Anderson, 2017, p. 130).

While diverse forms of interpretive qualitative methodologies exist, those most commonly used in the fields of organizational studies and education include: phenomenology, ethnography, and case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Thus, to further justify the decision to employ an interpretive qualitative research design, these three approaches are briefly discussed and compared below. While an extensive discussion is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the discussion focuses mainly on the underlying assumptions, purpose of inquiry, and methods used.

Phenomenological research aims to gain a deep understanding of the meanings ascribed to the lived experience of individuals (van Manen, 2014). In phenomenology, reality manifests in embodied experience; thus the primary aim of phenomenological research is to describe the essence or core meanings of human experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). To fully comprehend the essence, phenomenological research mainly concerns itself with the process of reduction, or *epoche*, in which the researcher isolates the phenomenon as much as possible from cultural contexts and the external world (Moustakas, 1994); in doing so, researchers need to identify and bracket their own biases and preconceived assumptions in order to take a fresh perspective on the phenomenon of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Phenomenological research mainly

relies on open-ended interviews, among others, through which a rich and comprehensive description of the essence of the phenomenon can be presented (Creswell, 2007).

Ethnography, rooted in cultural anthropology, is mainly interested in the examination of cultures or social-cultural systems (Wolcott, 2008), thus "the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group" (Creswell, 2007, p. 90). Ethnographic research therefore primarily aims to provide a rich description of social behaviors, patterns, and worldviews of an identifiable group of people (Geertz, 1973; Wolcott, 2008). Compared to other methodologies, ethnography requires researchers to spend extended periods of time in the field; thus, the primary method of inquiry involves "immersion in the site as a participant observer" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As such, data collection methods in ethnographical research, include participant observations, interviews, document analysis, and field diaries (Creswell, 2007).

Similar to the approaches above, *case studies* aim to search for meaning and understanding of social phenomena (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). What distinguishes case study design from other methodologies is its focus on a specific and bounded case. Yin (2014) notes that a case study "investigates contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). The case of interest therefore can be single or multiple individuals, teams, organizations, programs and events, which are "bounded or described within certain parameters, such as a specific place and time" (Creswell, 2007, p. 98). To provide a rich understanding of the cases of interest, researchers draw on

multiple sources of data, including interviews, observations, documents, and physical

artifacts (Yin, 2014).

As discussed, despite their unique attributes, all qualitative methodologies follow

a common objective to achieve an understanding of human interactions and social

phenomena (Crotty, 1998); as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue, all qualitative research

is *interpretive* with an interest in studying "how meaning is constructed, how people

make sense of their lives and their worlds" (p. 25). Thus, the selection of a particular

methodology in conducting qualitative research should follow the study purpose and

research questions of interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As

such, the decision to employ an interpretive qualitative approach in this dissertation study

is mainly grounded in the study purpose to *understand the subjective experience and*

perspectives of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in

Korea. By relying on in-depth interviews and analysis of documents, this study aims to

examine the role of CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR in the context of Korea,

through the "understanding of how actors intersubjectively create, understand, and

reproduce social situations" (Turnbull, 2002, p. 319).

Sample

Purposeful sampling was used to collect in-depth perspectives of CSR

consultants, across multiple consulting organizations specializing in areas of CSR and

sustainability. Purposeful sampling aims to select individuals and sites that purposefully

inform the research, and allows an 'information-rich' understanding of the central

phenomena (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Based on my own knowledge of

the field and conversations with former colleagues, no public directory was available at

the time that listed contact information of CSR consulting firms and CSR consultants. Therefore, interview participants, determined to provide the most relevant information based on their experience in the field, were purposefully identified and selected through contacts from my previous work, and informal conversations with former work colleagues and clients.

To purposefully sample participants, Marriam and Tisdell (2016) noted the importance of developing a list of selection criteria which clearly reflects "the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information-rich cases" (p. 97). Thus, an initial list of potential contacts was first developed based on a set of selection criteria, informed by conversations with a number of colleagues and consulting leaders. CSR consultants invited to interview had to be: (a) working in a consulting firm/department dedicated to CSR work and with a known track record of CSR projects; (b) ranked at a consultant level or above; and (c) with at least three years of CSR consulting work experience, including non-consulting work in areas of CSR and sustainability.

The decision to include non-consulting work experience in areas of CSR and sustainability was made in discussion with former colleagues and current CSR consultants; it was determined that selecting CSR consultants with prior experience in different CSR-related fields would provide more information-rich cases and insight, to understand the role of CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR in Korea.

Further, to capture a diversity of perspectives and views, a combination of maximum variation sampling and network sampling strategies were used. Maximum variation sampling selects individuals and sites that reflect diverse perspectives to capture a wide variety of instances of the phenomena under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Network sampling, or chain sampling, involves asking participants during interviews to refer to other potential interviewees that sufficiently meet the selection criteria (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Based on the above, participants were mainly recruited from three different types of CSR consulting firms and five to ten participants in each category (with at least five for each type of consulting firm) were chosen to interview. Furthermore, during each formal interview, participants were asked to recommend colleagues and CSR consultants deemed appropriate for this study.

Insert Table 1 about here

Potential participants were first contacted by phone and were sent a formal invitation email which summarized the nature and purpose of this dissertation study (see Appendix E). A total of 25 participants, including 22 CSR consultants and three non-consultants, were interviewed for this study (see Appendix A for Table 1). The CSR consultants interviewed were recruited from three different types of CSR consulting firms located in Korea: (a) global consulting firms (i.e., CSR consulting divisions and/or departments of the 'Big Four' accounting firms); (b) local consulting firms (i.e., independent consulting firms specializing in CSR- and sustainability-related areas); and (c) non-profit organizations (NPO) and research institutions that provide CSR-related consulting services. The three additional informants worked in CSR-related areas in different types of organizations, including an international organization, NPO, and media agency, and were interviewed to verify and triangulate the findings.

Out of 25 participants, 15 were male and 10 were female. Regarding different types of firms, 10 worked in global consulting firms, five in local consulting firms, seven in NPOs and research institutions, and three in non-consulting organizations. Among them, nine were ranked at the upper level (i.e., director and executive), seven were middle level (i.e., manager and senior manager), and eight were at the consultant level (i.e., junior and senior consultant). In all, the average work experience, including both CSR consulting work and other CSR-related non-consulting work, was approximately 8.7 years, ranging from three to 20 years. The majority (19 out of 25) held a master's degree, with three participants holding a PhD degree, in various fields of studies, such as communication, international development, accounting, human resources and economics; interestingly, only three participants held a master's degree in CSR.

Data Collection

Data were collected between May and July of 2018, and primarily through in-depth semi-structured interviews (see Appendix G). Prior to formal interviews, two pilot interviews were conducted. One was conducted face-to-face with a current Korean graduate student at the University of Minnesota, with prior experience in a corporate role and a general understanding of CSR in the context of Korea. The other was carried out online, through video conferencing, with a former colleague that held more than five years of work experience at one of the global CSR consulting firms in Korea. The pilot tests allowed the researcher to determine the appropriate length of time for conducting individual interviews, ensure clarity of questions and sub-questions asked, and test and refine the interview guide (Maxwell, 2013).

All formal interviews were conducted face-to-face, except for two email interviews, and lasted from 45 to 80 minutes. At the beginning of each interview, an informed consent was obtained from each participant (see Appendix F); all interviewees were informed about the purpose and procedures of this study, and that the study was voluntary, and they could withdraw from participation at any time. Further, participants were assured that all answers are confidential and will be handled and stored securely by the researcher.

The interviews aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of CSR consultants and CSR consulting practices within the socio-historical context and organizational fields in the context of Korea. The interviewees thus were asked to provide perspectives on both macro (e.g., CSR in Korea) and micro (e.g., CSR consulting practices and client engagements) phenomena, in regard to the status of CSR and CSR consulting practices in Korea. To this end, the interview guide consisted of three main sections: (a) backgrounds, roles and responsibilities, and motivations of CSR consultants; (b) the status of CSR in Korea, and factors that enable or hinder the diffusion and institutionalization of CSR in Korea; and (c) CSR consulting practices and factors that enable or hinder success in CSR consulting projects. Furthermore, to gain a rich understanding, the interview questions were followed up with several probing questions, such as: Why do you think so? What else happened? Why was it successful or unsuccessful? Can you provide an example?

In addition to the interview data, all participants were asked to fill out a short supplementary survey on basic demographic information during the interviews (see Appendix H). This information included the interviewees' current position, years of experience, age, gender, and educational background and was used to systematically

report on participants' background. Furthermore, additional secondary data sources, such as resumes, project documents and consulting track records, were asked to be provided when possible. These sources provided additional insight in examining the role of CSR consultants and allowed triangulation of the findings.

All interviews were digitally recorded, given permission from each participant prior to conducting the interviews, and were transcribed verbatim. As the interviews were conducted in Korean, all transcripts were translated back to English. All data were compiled and managed using NVivo software, a qualitative analysis software program widely used in qualitative research. An Excel worksheet was utilized, during and after interviews, to keep track of participants' contact information, demographic data, and recorded files. Towards the end of data collection, a summary of emerging themes drawn from the interviews was sent to five participants in different consulting firms, including two consulting leaders and three senior consultants, to verify the findings and solicit feedback. No additional comments were made by the respondents.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed qualitative analysis procedures, developed by Corbin and Strauss (1990), Strauss and Corbin (1998), and Charmaz (2006). As suggested by these authors, the analysis involved a systematic process of identifying emerging codes, categories and themes, until theoretical saturation was met, and no additional code or category emerged from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). During this process, constant comparative method was used, and each coding event and its resulting codes were compared to previous ones, in a continuous and iterative process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Further, during the interviews and analysis phases, theoretical memos and analytic

notes were taken to keep a trail of reflective notes and to support the conceptualization

and formulation of theory during the research process (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Miles &

Huberman, 1994). The overall coding process involved three stages (i.e., open, axial, and

theoretical coding), and multiple iterations of coding, refining and testing codes and

categories.

Open coding. The first stage involved *open coding* to identify emerging concepts

and categories grounded in the interview data, and to compare them for similarities and

differences. In this stage, the aim is to begin making sense of the data, explore and define

meanings of emerging codes, and derive analytic ideas to pursue in later stages of

analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The interview transcripts were first

carefully read through line-by-line, while data segments, meaningful statements, and

emerging concepts were highlighted and noted. During this process, in vivo coding was

primarily used to identify and label emerging codes. In vivo coding takes words and

terminologies used by participants during the interviews to develop and elaborate codes;

this helps to "preserve participants' meanings of their views and actions in the coding

itself" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 55).

As the coding progressed, similar codes and concepts were grouped together into

abstract categories; these categories were then compared across transcripts in an iterative

manner looking for similarities and differences in codes and patterns (Corbin & Strauss,

1990). Further, analytic memos were taken to keep track of the emerging codes and

concepts, and to take note of thoughts and answers to sensitizing questions (e.g., what is

going on here? who are the actors involved? what is its meaning to them?) that facilitated

the analysis process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In all, the open

coding process resulted in a total of 85 initial categories, upon analyzing nine interview transcripts (i.e., three transcripts each for the different types of consulting firms), which were then broken down into properties and dimensions.

Axial coding. In the *axial coding* stage, additional and focused coding was conducted to refine existing codes and categories, link categories to its subcategories, and to identify a resulting set of core categories (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Core categories are abstract categories and concepts that are central to the research project, with the greatest explanatory power relative to other categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Initial codes and categories were first compared within and across interview transcripts, while additional concepts were concurrently coded when identified. During the coding process, categories and subcategories were reassembled and grouped into larger and abstract categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Furthermore, as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998), the categories and subcategories were analyzed by considering the 'contexts' within which conditions (i.e., circumstances in which actions and/or events happen), actions/interactions (i.e., responses to events, issues and situations), and anticipated consequences (i.e., outcomes of actions and interactions) formed casual relationships and interactions. During this process, numerous diagrams, including concept maps and sorting memos, were actively used to organize and conceptualize relationships (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1994). As the interview data consisted of both macro and micro phenomena, to understand the role of CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR, this coding stage was important to gain a comprehensive understanding of the interactions and effects among various levels of analysis (i.e., institutional factors, actors, practices, etc.), and to later

conceptualize the dynamic interactions based on Bourdieu's theory of practice and relational framework.

The above coding process involved analyzing an additional eight transcripts (i.e., two to three transcripts each for the different types of consulting firms) and resulted in a total of 38 core categories, while other categories were discarded as they lacked explanatory power (Corbin & Strauss 1990). For example, in the initial coding stage, *gender bias in CSR consulting practice* was identified as an emerging category, whereby a number of female CSR consultants noted in their interviews that 'female consultants were often treated poorly by clients; and client organizations preferred male consultants over females for certain CSR projects that involved developing and rolling-out strategies'. However, this category was later removed, as subsequent coding did not support the initial categorization (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Theoretical coding. The final stage involved *theoretical coding* to further refine and test codes, categories, and hypotheses until theoretical saturation was reached around the core categories (Corbin and Strauss 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Theoretical coding aims to further specify relationships among core categories and to achieve theoretical integration; Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that researchers ask the following questions to check for internal consistency and logic in their theory, and verify saturation of each category: Are the core categories well differentiated? Are their properties and dimensions clearly defined?

The theoretical coding process involved reviewing and sorting through memos and diagrams, testing emerging hypotheses, creating story lines, and refining and trimming categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The predefined core categories, from open

and axial coding, were tested and verified through examining an additional eight interview transcripts, including five CSR consultants and three from non-consultant participants. When a category lacked explanatory power, earlier analytical memos, diagrams and raw interview data were revisited; some categories were further elaborated and refined, while others were removed or merged into other categories upon testing against data. The process continued until saturation was met for each core category and in which no additional categories emerged from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As a result, a total of 22 core categories were identified as most relevant to understand the role of CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR in the context of Korea. Table 2 summarizes the themes and sub-themes that emerged as a result of the data analysis, including the frequency of interviews that pointed to each sub-theme.

Insert Table 2 about here

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, the notion of validity is relative; it "needs to be assessed in relationship to the purposes and circumstances of the research" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 121). For this study, multiple strategies were employed to increase methodological rigor and ensure trustworthiness (validity) throughout the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Researcher bias. As the idea for this research project was initially developed based on my own professional experience as a CSR consultant in Korea, researcher bias

needed to be addressed throughout the research process. To tackle this, I continuously self-reflected, using journal entries and memos taken during and after interviews, on my own assumptions, beliefs and biases that may influence the research process and the interpretation of findings.

The main assumptions and beliefs that were laid out and bracketed during the interview process and throughout the data analysis stage were my personal views on the meaning of CSR and CSR consulting work. For example, I hold a *normative view of CSR* and believe that *business organizations should be responsible in doing business and towards the broader communities, society and natural environment*. In regard to *CSR consulting*, I view CSR consulting work as *helping and supporting corporate clients to not only understand the importance of CSR and responsible business practices but also adopt a long-term view in doing business and in a more responsible way*. Furthermore, I believe that CSR consulting work is *inherently meaningful* in that it *advocates for a better world* and aims to *change business organizations to create social value beyond economic value and interests*.

Triangulation. The multiple sources of data – interview data, demographic information and other secondary data sources – were compared and cross-checked during the data analysis process, to confirm emerging categories and themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In particular, interviews conducted with the three additional (non-consultant) informants helped verify and triangulate the findings.

Peer reviews. Feedback was provided by several colleagues, faculty members and my dissertation advisor. Earlier in the process, former colleagues from school and work provided valuable feedback, through a pilot test and informal conversations, in

refining and finalizing the interview protocol. Further, the preliminary findings were presented on several occasions, including a class meeting at the University of Minnesota, and I received feedback and comments during these presentations.

Member checks. During the initial coding stages, a brief summary of emerging codes and categories were sent out to five interview participants, including two consulting leaders and three consultants, to solicit feedback and ensure credibility of findings. All respondents reviewed and confirmed the preliminary findings, and no additional comments were made. (Maxwell, 2013).

Thick descriptions. Study findings were presented in rich and thick descriptions, often using quotes. This helped to contextualize the findings and provide detailed accounts of the social phenomena under study.

Data visualization. A number of data visualization strategies were used, at multiple stages of the study. This included tables, concept mapping, and conceptual frameworks used to illustrate the relationships among core concepts and the findings of this study (Anfara, Brown & Mangione, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Confidentiality and Protection of Human Subjects

Prior to conducting this study, approval for conducting research was sought through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Minnesota, through which this study was determined as exempt from the IRB's review. Nevertheless, as described in the methodology section, an informed consent was obtained from all interview participants, and the detailed information regarding the risks and benefits of

participation, confidentiality and anonymity, and the voluntary nature of this study was explained to all participants.

To ensure confidentiality of all project documents and interview recordings, all data and related documents were stored and secured safely in the researcher's personal computer and a protected backup device. Furthermore, all identifiable information, including participant names and companies, were replaced with pseudonyms during the analysis stages and when reporting the findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

This study sought to understand *the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in the context of Korea*. To achieve this, a number of aspects, at multiple levels of analysis, were inquired and examined through the perspectives of CSR consultants. This chapter presents the main findings in two sections: the first section provides a detailed and rich description of the findings based on empirical data drawing on interviews and document analysis. The second section further analyzes and interprets the findings based on Bourdieu's theory of practice and its thinking tools, to illustrate the dynamic interactions and power relationships between structures, agents, and practices that shape the field of CSR consulting in Korea.

4.1 Empirical Findings from Interviews

This section presents the empirical findings based on interviews with CSR consultants and other stakeholders, combined with analysis of secondary documents, that address the three main research questions in this study. Table 3 summarizes the main themes and sub-themes identified under each research question. The findings are presented in the following order: (a) the status of CSR in Korea, and factors that enable or hinder the adoption of CSR in Korea; (b) the CSR consulting industry in Korea, and the CSR consulting firms and their practices; and (c) the key contributions of CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR in Korea.

Insert Table 3 about here

The Status of CSR in Korea

The first research question asked, What is the status of CSR in Korea, and what factors influence the adoption of CSR in Korea? To answer this, interview participants, including both consultants and non-consultants, based on their experience in the field, were asked to provide their perspectives on the current status of CSR in Korea and identify factors that enable and hinder the institutionalization of CSR. In the perspectives of CSR consultants, the current status of CSR in Korea was characterized as low, and shaped by complex interactions between numerous institutional factors and the socio-historical context of Korea.

The adoption of CSR by business organizations was primarily driven by socio-political pressures exerted through government policies and initiatives. The majority of interviewees indicated that the government has historically played an influential role in shaping corporate behaviors and promoting CSR and responsible business practices in Korea. Further, others underlined that Korean business organizations were largely attentive to and affected by exogenous factors, such as emerging global CSR trends and pressures from foreign buyers for CSR compliance, in their adoption and institutionalization of CSR practices.

The low status of CSR in Korea was mainly evidenced by low CSR awareness among corporate leaders and CSR managers, and the large gap between organizations in regard to the degree to which CSR is institutionalized. The interview data indicated that the perceived low CSR awareness was in part a result of wide-spread *short-termism* in the broader societal context in Korea, deeply rooted in Korea's historically growth-driven economy and fast economic success. As emphasized by the majority of respondents,

corporate leaders and CSR departments and managers perceived CSR as an add-on, merely philanthropy and marketing strategies to increase their brand image. One consultant emphasized that "while clients [especially corporate leaders] are becoming more interested in CSR, when it comes to implementing actual CSR strategies and programs, most organizations hesitate to invest the adequate time and resources for implementation…".

Furthermore, the study findings pointed to the lack of CSR governance in organizations, and the absence of influential civil society organizations which act as watchdogs and monitor business organizations. While only a small number of large Korean conglomerates were active and invested in CSR activities, most business organizations still lacked strong CSR governance and the capacity to implement CSR. Above all, in these organizations, CSR departments and dedicated managers were often perceived as peripheral and significantly lacked the resources and support to promote CSR practices within their organizations. To this end, as emphasized in most interviews, business organizations in Korea were perceived as conducting *surface-scratching* CSR and overly focusing on short-term approaches and performance outcomes in practicing CSR:

> …CSR is still regarded as philanthropy and communication activities…even though CSR consulting has attracted much attention [in terms of consulting fees and client engagements]…when you look closely into the actual organizational CSR programs and activities…they haven't changed much….it's already been more than ten years since CSR was adopted in Korea…nothing much has changed since…(Director, Global consulting firm)

…it can be very discouraging …CSR managers actively develop CSR strategies and plans to implement a variety of CSR-related programs…I see that some managers, even with relatively less experience in the field, are very passionate about the topic and make the extra effort to learn the tools and approaches through us consulting with us… however, at the end, its always the top management that only approves the less-costly and cost-effective projects…(Senior Consultant, NPO/Research firm)

… there's a huge discrepancy among organizations…it seems like things are getting better for large business organizations…multi-national enterprises (MNEs) and conglomerates nowadays continuously invest in and implement CSR initiatives…yet others don't even understand the need for and importance of investing in CSR…and yet even the majority of large organizations are reactive towards CSR and focus on philanthropic activities and information disclosure at most…(Executive, Local consulting firm)

Enabling Factors.

The interviews revealed three main factors that enabled the diffusion and institutionalization of CSR in Korea; these included: (a) government policies and initiatives; (b) global CSR trends; and (c) global CSR compliance.

Government policies and initiatives. A total consensus was reached among interviewees on the role of government policies and initiatives in enabling the promotion and institutionalization of CSR in Korea (25 out of 25 interviewees). Specifically, interviewees viewed the political climate and voluntary initiatives set forth by the current

administration[1], as major drivers in promoting and institutionalizing CSR. As a number

of respondents noted, there has been increasing demand for CSR and (socially)

responsible business conduct in Korea, prompted by increased pressure from institutional

investors, proposed legislative reforms, and numerous CSR- and sustainability-related

initiatives. Several respondents emphasized that these recent efforts, under the current

administration, have proven effective in incentivizing and driving corporate leaders and

organizations (both private and public) to further commit to CSR and actively join

governmental initiatives:

> …we are seeing a lot of changes under the current administration…the recent
>
> adoption of the stewardship code by the Korean national pension fund has been
>
> particularly effective in moving institutional investors and pressuring and
>
> influencing private sector organizations…we are seeing increased demands from
>
> [existing and potential] clients to develop CSR strategies and evaluate their social
>
> impact…(Senior Manager, Global consulting firm)

Interestingly, interviewees' perspectives on strengthening government policies

and legislations to institutionalize CSR were in sharp opposition: a number of consultants

pointed to the need for mandatory CSR reporting for publicly listed organizations, while

others indicated that organizational actions for CSR should be solely driven by market

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[1] The Moon Jae-in administration, ruled by the Democratic party of Korea, came into power since May 2017. Since taking office, the Moon administration has pushed for a number of governmental policies and initiatives to promote responsible business conduct and reform Chaebols, or family-owned conglomerates in Korea. Notably, the National Pension Service (NPS), the country's state pension and top institutional investor, has recently adopted the stewardship code in which it seeks to actively exercise shareholder rights and increase economic and social value of domestic companies (Shin, 2019).

incentives and not laws and regulations. In the latter case, several interviewees stressed that the enforcement of CSR-related laws in Korea would simply result in: "setting minimum standards for organizations and discouraging further organizational voluntary and/or strategic CSR-related efforts".

Global CSR trends. Another strong enabling factor, highlighted by the majority of interviewees, was global trends in CSR-related best practices, standards and initiatives (18 out of 25 interviewees). As stressed by a strong majority of respondents, corporate leaders and managers in Korea are highly attentive to new and emerging trends in CSR and sustainability; i.e., they are strongly driven to follow and implement the latest CSR trends. In this regard, the interviewees referred to the *CSR bandwagon effect* whereby numerous organizations tend to adopt and implement CSR-related programs just to hop on the bandwagon, without much consideration and simply because their competition has already done so:

> …that is the very first thing our clients [leaders and managers] inquire about…they [leaders and CSR departments] ask us to provide information and updates on recent [CSR-related] standards and initiatives…they need to know who [global benchmarks and industry competitors] does what and how well they do it…then our clients would ask us how their organization could achieve it [fast] and what it would take…(Director, Local consulting firm)

> …most leaders seek to be early adopters and forerunners in their industry, when it comes to adopting and implementing CSR-related standards and initiatives…they hate to be seen as followers or laggards…if a competitor has done it they will

soon do it…and whatever it takes, they will find a way to do it better…(Senior Consultant, NPO/Research firm)

…it all depends on the leader's personal taste and interests…it's not sustainable…my clients [CSR managers] often complain about how they've invested so much time and effort into developing a long-term CSR strategy and promoting it within their organizations…but as soon as there's changes to leadership…they need to start again from zero…(Executive, Local consulting firm)

While most interviewees agreed that attention to global CSR trends helped induce leaders' interest in CSR issues and encouraged organizations to invest in CSR-related programs and activities, a number of respondents also pointed to potential downsides in which such efforts were limited to *short-term fixes* and often not sustained in the long run:

…in the last five to eight years, everybody was crazy about the CSV (creating shared value) concept…now look…only one or two organizations still mention it in their corporate responsibility (CR) reports…these days it's all about SDGs (sustainable development goals)…no one talks about CSV anymore…(Executive, Local consulting firm)

Global CSR compliance. Increasing pressure from foreign buyers and investors to comply with global CSR guidelines was also identified as an important enabling factor (14 out of 25 interviewees); organizations, mostly multinational organizations, were increasingly urged by foreign buyers and investors to report on their social and

environmental impacts. As noted by a majority of interviewees, most large organizations were strongly committed to and were capable of responding to such demands, as the level of compliance directly impacted their exports and business operations. This was regarded by some interviewees as merely being *reactive* and limiting CSR-related activities to a *risk management tool*. A number of interviewees also pointed to the increasing challenges faced by small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in responding to global CSR compliance issues, and that the situation (or readiness) is very different from that of large organizations:

> …large multinational organizations are good at it…most of them have the needed systems and processes in place to respond to these demands…in most cases, they don't even need consulting…large organizations would usually ask us to come in to conduct a brief CSR audit and/or provide assurance services [for CR reports] prior to finalizing and submitting required documents and certifications to foreign buyers…(Manager, Global consulting firm)

> …global CSR compliance issues are now directly impacting SMEs too…especially those who heavily rely on [European] foreign buyers and exports…SMEs are consistently met with challenges to respond to foreign buyers' demands on CSR issues [such as product safety, labor, environmental conservation, etc.]…however, most small enterprises are not even aware of the concept of CSR…they don't have dedicated departments or budget allocated for such activities…when we engage with these clients, we need to act fast and produce outcomes within two to three months…this is hard to do and it's very

different from our engagements with large organizations…(Senior Consultant,

NPO/Research firm)

Hindering Factors.

Three main hindering factors were also identified through the interviews; these

included: (a) low CSR awareness; (b) weak governance structures for CSR; and (c)

absence of civil society organizations. The majority of respondents agreed that these

factors either directly or indirectly hindered the diffusion and institutionalization of CSR

in the context of Korea.

Low CSR awareness. A strong majority of interviewees pointed to low CSR

awareness, among organizational leaders, as a major hindering factor in the diffusion and

institutionalization of CSR in Korea (24 out of 25 interviewees). CSR in Korea, as

stressed by most respondents, was often understood and perceived by leaders as

involving donations and philanthropic activities, risk management, and public relations

and/or marketing tools. In this regard, CSR was often viewed by organizations as a

(extra) cost and not a long-term investment. Corporate leaders therefore often took *a*

short-term approach to CSR and were overly focused on short-term CSR outcomes and

performance.

 …there's a strong assumption among corporate leaders in Korea that CSR is

merely a tool for distributing profit and giving back to society…while this is

steadily improving and leaders are increasing acknowledging the importance of

CSR, most leaders are still skeptical about the long-term benefits of CSR and

sustainable management…this is definitely hard to change and will take a long time…(Consultant, NPO/Research firm)

…the [CSR consulting] market has definitely improved a lot these days…however, this doesn't mean that overall CSR awareness [of leaders and their organizations] and/or investment in long-term CSR activities have increased…if you look more closely, even compared to five or six years ago, our [consulting] fees have not increased much and more importantly, the actual CSR programs and activities conducted in client organizations have not improved…most clients still focus on the same routine activities, as they did five years ago…(Director, Global consulting firm)

Weak governance structures for CSR. Another frequently mentioned hindering factor identified by a majority of respondents was the weak CSR governance structures in organizations (18 out of 25 interviewees). Interviewees stressed that, while most (large) organizations nowadays had dedicated CSR departments and managers, most CSR departments were not adequately supported, and CSR managers struggled to communicate their efforts and gain buy-in from upper management and other functions. As noted in the interviews, CSR departments were often treated as *inferior* to other functional departments and were seen to conduct *unique types of public relations* work. In this regard, a number of interviewees underlined the vertical organizational structures and short-term performance-driven cultures, that pressured CSR departments and managers to achieve *fast-fix outcomes* and meet *short-term performance* expectations:

…our clients [CSR departments and managers] are always stressed about how to effectively communicate their efforts to senior management…this is why most

CSR departments seek low cost projects such as developing and publishing CR reports…there is a general belief among clients [CSR managers] that these types of projects are cost-effective ways to showcase their efforts and meet expectations from senior management…(Executive, Local consulting firm)

…it's completely different from working with other departments such as marketing/public relations and strategy departments…CSR departments and managers are not empowered enough to engage in long-term CSR projects…they don't have the resources to support their goals and activities…they seem to barely meet departmental goals and year-end performance objectives…(Manager, Global consulting firm)

Absence of civil society organizations (CSOs). While less emphasized compared to the two factors mentioned above, the absence of CSOs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was also identified as a hindering factor (8 out of 25 interviewees). As noted by several interviewees, CSOs have historically been inactive in Korea, and most NGOs significantly lacked the capacity to act as *watchdogs* to monitor and influence business organizations. In this regard, a number of respondents pointed to the lack of expertise, in regard to CSR and sustainability issues, and limited funding opportunities. NGOs in Korea in general were widely challenged with public skepticism and mistrust, as consequences of past corporate scandals and embezzlement schemes, and thus heavily relied on the private sector for funding rather than donations/charities from the public. As emphasized by the majority of consultants, most Korean NGOs were inevitably in close partnerships with private sector organizations, and were not in the position to monitor and denounce business misconduct:

…the current system in our society, partly rooted in our long history and culture, doesn't allow CSOs and NGOs to act against business organizations…instead NGOs nowadays are heavily relied on the government and the private sector to raise funding and operate…they even lack the capacity to access corporate information [which is also an issue of…]…then all we can rely on are actions from whistleblowers or labor unions…but that never happens either…unfortunately, all this extremely limits the role of NGOs, as watchdogs and activists in the Korean business context…(Executive, Local consulting firm)

CSR Consulting in Korea

The second research question aimed to identify the status and characteristics of the CSR consulting industry and CSR consulting practices in Korea. Accordingly, CSR consulting leaders and consultants were asked to provide their perspectives on the dynamics of the CSR consulting industry and firms in general, and their specific consulting approaches and client engagement practices.

The interviews revealed that the CSR consulting industry in Korea emerged in the early – to mid-2000s; in this period, the market involved only a small number of consulting firms [or sub-divisions of a larger consulting firm], consisting of consultants who had previous experience in sustainability-related work and held an academic degree/certificate in related fields. As evidenced in the interviews, CSR was regarded as a foreign term to most domestic business organizations. At the time, only a small number of [one or two] conglomerates invested in CSR-related activities, such as reporting on environmental issues, in which dedicated CSR governance structures and programs were non-existent. As noted by several consulting leaders, the CSR consulting market was

steadily constructed and expanded through efforts of a small number of CSR consultants, through meeting with corporate leaders and managers, diversifying service offerings, building client networks, and helping organizations and leaders to make sense of CSR issues:

> …the current consulting leaders at various CSR- and sustainability-related consulting firms have made significant contributions to the CSR consulting market as it exists now…when we first started consulting more than ten years ago…a small number of [dedicated] consultants, including myself, had to act as advocates for CSR and literally build everything from scratch…(Director, Global consulting firm)

The current CSR consulting market in Korea is characterized as small and in which consulting firms were under intense competition over similar types of services and a limited number of clients; market competition was primarily driven by pricing strategies rather than service differentiation. As indicated by several consultants, price-cutting inevitably has become a common practice in which consulting firms are increasingly pressured to lower their service fees and provide additional services [extra work] to attract clients and maintain their business practices. Thus, to gain competitive advantage in the market, consulting firms, despite their size and reputation, heavily relied on external sources and accreditations to legitimize their work and practices.

Further, for most CSR consulting firms, the increasing price competition was coupled with organizational level pressures to continuously win projects and maintain their business. Several consulting leaders and consultants indicated that they faced internal pressures within their firms to meet financial goals and performance objectives,

which clearly affected their motivations and rationale for selecting projects and client
engagements:

> …to win projects we often need to lower our pricing and service fees significantly
> and often provide extra services [working hours] beyond the given project
> scope…it's a vicious cycle…this inevitably impacts our consultants [in terms of
> overwork, stress, turnover, etc.] and the overall quality of service we provide to
> our clients…this is not sustainable at all…(Manager, NPO/Research firm)

> …it is impossible to compete with other consulting divisions in our firm [referring
> to those such as strategy and human resources consulting]…the market value and
> pricing of CSR projects are incomparably low…we need to double or triple the
> number of project engagements and work just to meet expectations…if we're not
> making profit…then we ought to at least show them [upper management] how
> hard-working we are…(Director, Global consulting firm)

CSR consulting firms.

The CSR consulting industry consists of three distinct groups of CSR consulting
firms: (a) global consulting firms; (b) local consulting firms; and (c) NPO/research firms.
As noted by interviewees, all three types of firms are identified as *major players* in the
market, and rely on different strengths and resources to legitimize their work and gain
competitive advantage over peer firms.

Global consulting firms, as part of the Big Four accounting firms, were referred to
as the *Giants* in the market and mainly rely on their size and reputation, and extensive
global networks. Global consulting firms had strong reputations built and accumulated

over time from diverse project experiences and track records. Extensive global networks, based on numerous domestic and international partnerships, allowed consultants to actively share and utilize client information, consulting knowledge and data sources (i.e., proposals, track records, case studies, best practices, etc.). Further, consulting knowledge and expertise from internal consulting teams (e.g., strategy, IT and HR consulting) and certified accountants, were leveraged to legitimize their work and strengthen their consulting practices.

Local consulting firms were often referred to as the *small but strong ones* in the market that rely on the experience and strong expertise of a small number of consulting leaders and consultants. As noted by several consulting leaders, local consulting firms' strengths and reputations, relied on the *people* and their extensive experience and specialized expertise in CSR-related areas and fields. A director at one of the local consulting firms emphasized this point by noting that: "…our consultants are all specialists in their own respective fields; each and every one of them bring a lot to the table; their productivity is probably equal to that of a hundred consultants elsewhere".

Further, internal knowledge sharing and learning and development activities were important for local consulting firms to stay competitive in the market; these included: internal seminars, information and data sharing through internal database systems, and coaching juniors on consulting approaches and communication techniques. As noted by an executive consultant, local consulting firms invested in their consultants, through coaching less-experienced consultants, caring for consultants' well-being, and maintaining a healthy and collaborative culture and work environment.

NPO/Research firms were mostly dependent on their reputation, as public organizations and governmental agencies, and leveraged their extensive [domestic and global] membership networks and member organizations to increase their competitiveness in the market. These groups of firms therefore held multiple channels to reach potential clients [both large- and small and mid-sized enterprises] and were readily informed by recent trends and changes in government policies and schemes. As several respondents noted, these extensive networks and channels allowed NPO/Research firms to stay ahead of the game and easily reach potential clients to discuss and engage in CSR projects. Notably, a few NPO/Research firms were also official partners and training organizations of CSR-related standards, indices, and international guidelines, which significantly added legitimacy to their work and status in the field.

Further, interestingly, in contrast to global and local firms, NPO/Research firms heavily relied on a small number of (full-time) senior-level managers and consultants to manage and deliver CSR projects; in most cases, one or two senior consultants acted as project managers while most of the work and services were contracted to a number of part-time consultants. As noted by interviewees, this [system] allowed NPO/Research firms to be cost-effective and simultaneously engage in numerous [mostly small scale] projects.

Client engagement and project success.

The interviewees pointed to three main factors that determined success in CSR projects: (a) aligning CSR issues with business strategies (or making a strong business case for CSR); (b) deep understanding of industry-specific CSR issues; and (c) top management support in the client organization. The first two factors heavily relied on the

experience and expertise of consulting leaders and consultants; as emphasized by several respondents, the success of CSR projects was largely dependent on the capacity of CSR consultants to understand and link different industry needs and business strategies to future business opportunities [to create positive social and environmental impact]. Top management support was seen as critical for gaining support [buy-in] from various functional leaders and embedding CSR [strategies, structures, key performance indicators, etc.] in the organization:

> …we can't just evaluate CSR projects and engagements based on their social value or impact…at the end, it's all about whether it's profitable or not and that we can continue a long-term relationship with the clients…we need to consider whether there's an opportunity for follow-up work…(Manager, NPO/Research firm)

> …we had strong support from the CEO and top management…this enabled us to take a top down approach and implement everything successfully and in a timely manner…CSR is now part of the organization's mid- to long-term strategy and strategic objectives, and all central functions now have KPIs linked to CSR-related performance…(Manager, NPO/Research firm)

However, as noted by several respondents, the profit-driven nature of CSR consulting firms often resulted in providing *lip service* to clients and satisfying the immediate needs of CSR departments and organizations. In some cases, CSR consultants were seen to support clients and CSR managers, through fast-fix and less-costly projects, to impress organizational leaders and increase their status in organizations.

…managers are overly focused on showing off their work and achievements…such as CR report development projects and both CSR managers and consultants know these types of projects are only scratching the surface…but we often have no other choice…at least our clients are willing to pay us to work on such projects which in turn benefits both of us (Manager, Global consulting firm)

Tensions.

The interviews also revealed inherent tensions existing at the organizational and individual level. At the organizational level, in contrast to how the majority of consultants viewed and defined current and future success in economic terms and with financial motivations, a number of consulting leaders underlined the current shortage in CSR consultants equipped with the knowledge and expertise needed to identify business opportunities and align CSR approaches to clients' immediate business needs. For CSR consulting leaders, the urgent need to deliver immediate results and meet performance objectives, therefore conflicted with the current lack of qualified CSR consultants to do the job. Interviewees also noted the difficulties in attracting and recruiting consultants with expertise in both fields of strategy and CSR, and that the best way to deal with the current shortage is to contract out strategy-related work to internal or external strategy consultants. In this regard, two informants stressed that the urgent need to develop the capacity and expertise of [current and future] CSR consultants:

Most consultants are overly mission-driven…this is not bad…but we [CSR consultants] are not NGOs…without stronger analytical expertise and strategic thinking, clients will not buy-in to the services we offer…consultants need to be

able to clearly establish a 'business case for CSR' and connect CSR issues with corporate strategies and key performance indicators…(Director, Global consulting firm)

…most CSR consultants lack an understanding of different industries and business need …this is why most consulting firms narrowly focus on CR report development projects and rely on external partnerships [with international organizations and agencies such as the GRI and the ISO; referring to ISO26000] to increase their status and reputation…(Senior Consultant, Local consulting firm)

Furthermore, at the individual level, several consultants expressed tensions between the pre-dominantly economic-driven nature of CSR consulting practices and their individual motivations and values. Such dominant views in the consulting market were in stark contrast to the motivations by which CSR consultants were driven to work in the field. The consultants noted that they were primarily driven by altruistic motivations, and a higher social purpose to change business organizations and promote social and environmental impact, while others pointed to different and mixed motivations:

…I want to guide business leaders and organizations to do well by doing good…CSR has become part of my personal goals and professional mission to advance responsible business practices and make positive social impact…(Senior Consultant, NPO/Research firm)

…this all started from thinking about the role of business in our society…CSR programs and activities in Korea seemed fragmented and 'surface-scratching' at

most…there's definitely a need to develop new forms and approaches to CSR in

Korea…it needs to be better tailored to the changing demands and business needs

of domestic organizations…(Executive, Local consulting firm)

…I was first attracted to this market and the topics of CSR and

sustainability…not only because it was socially meaningful but also because it

was at the time a blue ocean and niche market…there were not many experts in

the field and it seemed like a great business opportunity and a way to advance my

career…(Senior Consultant, Global consulting firm)

Key Roles of CSR Consultants in Korea

The third and final research question was concerned with the key roles and

contributions of CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR in Korea. CSR consulting

leaders and consultants were therefore asked to identify the main contributions made by

CSR consulting in institutionalizing CSR in Korea. Further, they were asked, based on

their experience in the field, to provide specific examples and cases of CSR project

engagements through which they supported and made an impact on client organizations

and the business community as a whole.

Overall, the interviews revealed that the role of CSR consultants was somewhat

limited; however, the interviewees pointed to primarily three ways in which CSR

consultants influenced and shaped corporate CSR practices and institutionalization of

CSR in Korea. These include: (a) raising CSR awareness among corporate leaders,

managers and other stakeholders; (b) localizing and implementing global CSR standards

and international guidelines; and (c) organizing and disclosing CSR-related corporate non-financial data and information.

Raising CSR awareness.

All interviewees strongly agreed that CSR consultants have continuously played a prominent role in raising CSR awareness among various stakeholders, including diverse types of organizations, corporate leaders, CSR departments and managers, and government officials. Specifically, the interviews revealed that CSR consultants mainly contributed to raising CSR awareness, through client engagements and CSR projects, annual marketing events and client seminars, and continuous dialogue and knowledge sharing outside of work.

The majority of informants stressed the importance of raising CSR awareness through CSR projects and client engagements (22 out of 25 interviewees); in particular, through the process of interacting with clients through project-related discussions, interviews, and CSR training and workshops. A number of consultants emphasized that interacting with leaders and conducting internal CSR training were effective ways to 'kick-start' a CSR project, and to better engage clients and gain buy-in from leaders and functions in client organizations. In the course of these activities, as several interviewees noted, leaders and managers were informed not only about the project scope but also the meaning [what] and importance [why] of CSR issues. One of the executives and lead consultants at a local consulting firm noted that these activities were particularly important for engaging leaders:

One of the first things we always try to do, when we start a CSR project, is to

interview leaders, individually or as a group, from various functions and

departments at our client organization…most leaders are at first very skeptical

about the concepts and issues in CSR…however, as we gain their attention

through lectures, case studies and discussions, most leaders become more

interested in the topic and committed to our project…Most often leaders are

interested in global CSR trends and what their [domestic and global] competitions

actually do as part of the CSR and sustainability agenda…they seem to feel the

urgency and ask us for possible solutions…(Executive, Local consulting firm)

In addition to client engagements and CSR projects, many of the interviewees

stressed the importance of gaining attention and raising awareness through marketing

events and client seminars (18 out of 25 interviewees). Large scale marketing events were

mostly planned and offered annually by consulting firms as a means to introduce recent

CSR trends and showcase their work and service offerings; in other cases, CSR

consultants [individually] voluntarily sought opportunities for guest lectures and other

external activities. As several consultants noted, these events were effective in attracting

attention from [current and potential] client organizations and raising awareness among

various stakeholders:

…it usually takes a lot to prepare but it does seem to pay off…we usually invite

hundreds of leaders, managers and government officials from various [existing

and potential] client organizations…these people are mostly interested in the

latest trends and issues in CSR, and use the opportunity to actively network with

others as well…we tend to receive a lot of positive feedback from participants on

how much they learned at the end of the day…we also receive calls asking to provide internal workshops and discuss future potential projects…(Senior Consultant, Global consulting firm)

Our team members, including myself, are often invited to give guest lectures and conduct seminars on CSR- and sustainability-related topics at various types of organizations including universities, government institutions, and others…I was also recently asked to write 'issue briefs' and sit on panels at a number of symposiums in my area of expertise…these types of external activities not only help to market our consulting services but also contribute to raising awareness on CSR-related issues and global trends…(Manager, Global consulting firm)

A few interviewees also pointed to the importance of engaging in continuous dialogue and knowledge sharing with various stakeholders outside of work (9 out of 25 interviewees), mainly through informal groups and/or communities of practice (CoP). These informal meetings and activities, when continued on a regular basis, were believed to contribute to raising CSR awareness not only among CSR managers and practitioners but also in the broader society:

Our team regularly meets and studies as a group with CSR managers from various organizations…we've been doing this for quite a long time…CSR is a topic that is met with fast-past changes in global trends, regulations and issues…we need to continuously monitor and study these changes…collectively discussing and sharing information with CSR managers is mutually beneficial…I also find it interesting that CSR practitioners, compared to other functional managers, seem to enjoy discussions and study groups…(Senior Consultant, NPO/Research firm)

…there is an urgent need for more open dialogue and informal group meetings among various stakeholders, including students, consultants and managers, interested in topics of CSR and social responsibility…these groups form small but important movements in our society that support raising awareness on CSR issues…(Executive, Local consulting firm)

Localization of global CSR standards.

As a number of respondents noted, transferring and localizing global CSR standards and international guidelines to domestic businesses were prominent roles played by CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR in Korea. The majority of interviewees emphasized the important 'intermediary role' played by CSR consultants in supporting the adoption of global CSR standards and guidelines, and localizing and tailoring them to the specific needs of domestic businesses (23 out of 25 interviewees). These included: analyzing and benchmarking global best practices, translating and localizing CSR standards and guidelines, and providing organizations with specific guidelines to implement global initiatives and tailoring them to their needs.

These standards and guidelines [such as the GRI reporting guidelines, ISO26000, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)] are often broad and complex…CSR managers tend to have a hard time making sense of the data and standards…they also change quite frequently and are updated on a regular basis…one of our main jobs, as CSR consultants, is to continuously monitor and analyze these standards and guidelines…and provide clients and organizations with specific directions and guidelines for effective adoption and implementation…(Senior Consultant, Global consulting firm)

Other interviewees pointed to the role of CSR consultants in partnering and working with government agencies and public institutions, to localize global CSR standards and develop CSR-related codes and guidelines to support organizations in implementing and institutionalizing CSR (8 out of 25 interviewees). While relatively less emphasized by CSR consultants, some consultants emphasized the emerging role of CSR consulting in supporting government efforts and public policies in effectively driving the institutionalization of CSR in Korea:

> When it comes to CSR, in my opinion, business organizations and leaders [in Korea] are most often influenced by government policies and initiatives…organizations will not always engage in CSR voluntarily; these efforts need to be coupled with strong policies and incentives…we are increasingly working with municipal governments and different public institutions and agencies to develop CSR guidelines and programs [tailored to domestic business organizations and environments] to guide them in their CSR efforts…our consultants play a key role in these projects by gaining input from the private sectors and developing 'platforms' that will effectively link public policies and guidelines with private sector organizations…(Director, Local consulting firm)

Disclosure of non-financial data.

The interviews revealed that CSR consultants played a significant role in organizing and disclosing corporate non-financial data and information. All respondents agreed that an important aspect [also referred to as expertise and/or competency by several interviewees] of CSR consulting work was to identify, collect, and organize CSR-related non-financial data, aligned with industry norms and in compliance with global

CSR standards and guidelines, and support clients to effectively disclose and communicate their CSR efforts. Common areas emphasized during the interviews, included: (a) planning and developing Corporate Responsibility (CR) reports; and (b) preparing clients for inclusion in CSR awards and Global CSR-related indices and ratings.

As noted by the interviewees, one of the most common and initial CSR activities, pursued by the majority of organizations [committed to CSR], was communicating their CSR programs and efforts, through publishing CR reports. CSR consultants played a significant role in the overall planning and development process of CR reports; these included, identifying and prioritizing key areas and information for the given industry and client organization [frequently referred to as materiality analysis], collecting data from multiple departments, functions and external stakeholders, organizing and prioritizing data based on global CR reporting guidelines, and often designing and writing sections of the report (22 out of 25 interviewees).

Some interviewees, on the other hand, also pointed to [realistic] challenges involved in such projects and roles; while an important criterion for CR reporting is to disclose balanced information [both positive and negative] on all aspects of the triple-bottom line, as emphasized by several consultants, most clients withheld from disclosing information on negative information, such as poor performance or business [ethical] misconduct, that may hurt their image and/or reputation:

> …one of our clients was dealing with issues of business misconduct, related to topics of human rights and discrimination, which was already widely publicized by the media…in response, our team, upon agreement with the CSR department

and manager, decided to disclose this case in their CR report and state what types of preventive measures were in place…despite support from the CSR department, the whole section was eventually removed after being reviewed by the upper senior management and the report was distributed without mentioning any information in relation to the case…this was very discouraging…but that's how it is…(Senior Consultant, NPO/Research firm)

Interestingly, a number of respondents noted the high demand from clients for achievement of annual CSR awards and recognitions, and inclusion in global CSR- and sustainability-related indices and ratings (17 out of 25 interviewees). In this regard, CSR consultants played an important role in identifying and organizing key non-financial data and information, and supporting clients to apply for inclusion in domestic and global CSR-related awards and ratings. Several respondents agreed that such annual achievements and recognitions were very important for clients [CSR departments] to maintain and/or increase their status in their respective organizations and publicize their organization-wide CSR efforts; some respondents, on the other hand, characterized such activities as 'surface-scratching' and as a 'thing in the past'.

… it is definitely a good way for them to communicate their achievements and get acknowledged for their CSR efforts [both inside and outside the organization]…we also promote their own CSR index and rating system to [existing and potential] clients…we've been helping clients this way for over ten years…(Manager, NPO/Research firm)

… they used to be in popular demand…but we don't focus on such services anymore… most CSR departments and managers, due to their [relatively] less

power and low status in their organizations, tend to rely on such external

recognitions…but at the end, it doesn't do much for them…it's not sustainable

anymore, not only for our clients but also for us…we need to focus our time and

resources on larger-scale projects…not the small ones that don't pay…(Senior

Consultant, Global consulting firm)

4.2 CSR Consulting as a Social Practice

In this section, the findings presented earlier (in section 4.1) are further analyzed

and interpreted using Bourdieu's theory of social practice. By analyzing the field of CSR

consulting in Korea through the theoretical lens of Bourdieu, it allows for a

comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interactions between structures and fields,

the distribution of capital, and the relational positions of agents in the fields; that is, the

CSR consulting field in Korea can be viewed as "…social conditions under which inter-

and intraorganizational power relations are produced, reproduced, and contested"

(Emirbayer & Williams, 2008, p. 1).

For Bourdieu, social practice is a result of the ongoing and dynamic relationship

between field structures, the habitus (a set of dispositions) of agents, and their positions

in the field in relation to their capital endowment (Bourdieu, 1984). The field is a social

space structured by its historical context, interrelated fields and subfields, and its distinct

internal logic or doxa (Bourdieu, 1990). Doxa encompasses the shared values, norms,

practices, and language in a given field; through doxa, agents understand and play by the

taken-for-granted rules and assumptions of the field. While fields provide structures that

influence and govern action, habitus acts as a mechanism through which agents interpret

and navigate the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). As a set of durable dispositions, habitus is a cumulation of individual past experience and social interaction, including socialization through professional roles and work experience. Individual and shared habitus therefore allow agents to play by the taken-for-granted rules of the field, or doxa, and manifests as "a strategy generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72).

In a given field, agents accumulate, exchange and compete over different types and forms of capital (i.e., economic, social and cultural capital) that "function both as weapons and as stakes in the struggle to gain ascendancy within fields" (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005, p. 691). For Bourdieu, the most powerful form of capital is symbolic capital. It is the accumulation of different forms of capital which is given "positive recognition, esteem, or honor by relevant actors within the field" (Emirbayer & Williams, 2008, p. 12). Capital in its symbolic form produces the legitimate basis of power and authority in a given field. By virtue of their symbolic capital and authority, dominant members exert control and power over the field to maintain their positions and preserve the unequal distribution of capital. Symbolic violence, a silent mechanism of social control and domination, hence, occurs when the rules of the game are unquestioned, and to which dominated groups and individuals are complicit (Bourdieu, 1977).

Figure 1 provides a conceptual framework which illustrates the complex interactions that shape the field of CSR consulting in Korea using Bourdieu's theory of practice and thinking tools: field, capital and habitus.

Insert Figure 1 about here

From a Bourdieusian perspective, *the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in Korea* can be viewed as an ongoing power struggle and contestation over symbolic capital, legitimate power, and positions in the field. As illustrated in Figure 1, the CSR consulting field is constantly shaped by complex interactions between forces in different interrelated fields (i.e., the social and historical context of Korea, the economic field, the government, and broader international fields), dominant members of the field (i.e., corporate clients) and their symbolic power and authority, the individual and shared habitus of CSR consulting leaders and consultants, and their possession of capital and positions in the field.

In the current state, the dominated position of CSR consultants in the field appears to limit their overall roles and contributions; as further illustrated in the following subsections, CSR consultants are constrained by their lack of symbolic capital, the field's dominant economic logic and their complicity to the taken-for-granted rules and doxa in the field, and the symbolic violence exerted by dominant members, corporate clients. The resulting roles and practices of CSR consultants therefore can be understood as mainly *reinforcing* the existing structures, dominant positions and hierarchy, and the power and authority in the field.

The Field of CSR consulting in Korea

Following Bourdieu, the CSR consulting industry is viewed as a social field, with its own distinct rules and laws of functioning. For Bourdieu, specific fields can "never be understood in isolation from their broader historical context, which includes such macrolevel spaces as the economic field, the field of bureaucratic powers, and the societal field of power (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005, p. 716). It appears that the field of CSR consulting is deeply embedded in the socio-historical context of Korea, and influenced by wider social and institutional fields. The currently perceived *low status of CSR*, as acknowledged by all interview participants, therefore is a combined product of Korea's social and historical context, the role of government, and institutional pressures from broader fields.

Regarding the societal and historical context, the findings pointed to a number of closely interrelated factors that more or less hinder the adoption and institutionalization of CSR in Korea. It seems that the broader societal fields, in particular the economic field, are driven by *short-termism*, and shaped by dominant holders of economic capital, business organizations and corporate leaders. Therefore, the current taken-for-granted assumptions, or doxa, in the boarder societal and economic fields in Korea, within which the CSR consulting field exists, reflect a strong economic logic, rooted in the nation's historically growth-driven economy and fast economic success. The majority of interviewees pointed to the *low CSR awareness* of corporate leaders and CSR managers as the most apparent factor hindering the institutionalization of CSR in the field – corporate leaders and managers in Korea view CSR as a cost and not a valued

investment, thus mere "*donations and philanthropic activities*" and "*public relations and marketing tools*".

> …corporate leaders and clients have very limited CSR awareness and tend to under-value expert advice in this field…our products and services are not valued…we provide CSR seminars and training to various leaders and departments every year…but that doesn't make a big difference…it's always about short-term results and performance…(Manager, NPO/Research firm)

It seems that the dominantly economic logic of the field and the low CSR awareness of corporate agents, has resulted in *weak CSR governance structures* in business organizations. To Bourdieu, organizations, like social fields, are also fields in and of themselves, within which organizational members struggle to compete for greater capital and power (Bourdieu, 2005). As indicated in the interviews, CSR departments and managers seem to severely lack symbolic capital and authority in most organizations. They struggle to position themselves against the performance driven cultures and hierarchical structures within organizations. As emphasized by several interviewees, CSR departments and managers are often seen as "*inferior*" and conducting "*unique types of public relations*" work.

Furthermore, it is evident from the findings that the *government* plays an important role in incentivizing and promoting CSR in Korea. The state or government bureaucracy is a field, a concentration of different sources of capital and symbolic power that can "…exercise power over the different fields and over the different particular species of capital…" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 42). As shown in the interviews, the adoption and institutionalization of CSR in Korea has historically been driven by socio-political

pressures, primarily by government-led policies and initiatives. Notably, the current administration's *CSR-related initiatives and legislative reforms* are perceived as increasingly promoting changes in the field, through institutional pressures, initiatives, and incentives, and thereby affecting the relative positions of agents and the distribution of power and authority in the field.

Indeed, the interviewees noted the increasing demand by corporate clients for *"CSR project engagements"* and the need to "*create social value*" and "*evaluate social impact of business operations*". These events are perceived by most CSR consultants in a positive light, through which they are able to accumulate capital and thus symbolic power in the field. However, despite such changes, others emphasized the need for stronger "*market incentives*" and "*less laws and regulations*" to strengthen their positions in the field.

The effects of exogenous factors and changes in wider institutional fields are also apparent from the findings. The interviews indicate that Korean business organizations and their corporate leaders are heavily affected by changes to *global and national trends in CSR* and are increasingly pressured by *demands from foreign buyers for compliance to CSR standards and initiatives*. Korean business organizations are therefore seen to be highly responsive to changes to global CSR trends, and are often seen to mimic behaviors of domestic and global competitors in adopting their CSR agendas. As the majority of interviewees noted, corporate leaders and CSR managers, despite their low level of CSR awareness, do not want to be seen as falling behind the "*CSR bandwagon*". While these behaviors are understood, to some extent, as enabling changes in the field, several CSR

consultants also expressed doubt and viewed such events as not substantive or effective in shifting the status quo: "*short-term fixes*" and "*not sustained in the long run*".

Furthermore, it appears that Korean businesses, both large corporations and SMEs, are increasingly adopting CSR standards and principles to meet the *increasing demands for CSR compliance from foreign buyers and investors*. These exogenous pressures from international business communities and inter-connected fields appear to be coercive measures to which Korean businesses respond more or less effectively to conserve their positions in these fields. The responses and compliance to international CSR standards by large corporations are perceived by several CSR consultants as mainly a means to accumulate economic capital. Indeed, several interviewees viewed such responses and behaviors as merely "*reactive*" and "*risk managing*". On the other hand, CSR consultants perceived the increasing challenges for SMEs to comply with such pressures, as both *a challenge and an opportunity* for them to accrue symbolic capital and differentiate their positions in the field.

As illustrated above, the field of CSR consulting in Korea is shaped by its own socio-historical context and influenced by broader structures and fields. For Bourdieu, fields are also contested spaces: "terrain of contestation between occupants of positions differentially endowed with the resources necessary for gaining and safeguarding an ascendant position within that terrain" (Emirbayer & Williams, 2008, p. 6). It appears that the CSR consulting field is embedded within the societal and economic fields, among others, dominantly structured by a strong economic logic, a product of the socio-historical context and dominant corporate agents (corporate leaders and managers) in the fields. This particular positioning of the CSR consulting field is important in that, as will

be further demonstrated below, CSR consultants appear to be in a dominated or subordinate position, constantly struggling to accumulate symbolic power in the field, due to their lack of capital, doxa and the symbolic violence exerted upon them.

Power and distinction within the field

Fields are not stable but constantly in flux; changes to agents' positions and their relative possession of capital may produce changes in field structures (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In a given field, agents occupy dominant and subordinate positions, which is determined by the relative amount of capital they possess. Agents, situated in different positions and endowed with different forms of capital, engage in ongoing struggles for power, authority, and domination (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). For Bourdieu, the distribution of capital is important to understand the means of division and reproduction in the field; thus, "in order to construct the field, one must identify the forms of specific capital that operate within it…" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 108).

In the field of CSR consulting, there appears to be two major dominant and dominated agents engaged in ongoing power struggles and contests over symbolic capital. At the dominant poles of the field are corporate clients, including business leaders and CSR managers in various types of organizations. These dominant agents, endowed with relatively greater amounts of economic capital and symbolic power, are seen to continuously exert control over the field and the agents within it, that includes CSR consulting firms and individual consultants, and determine the distribution and value of capital and thereby the rules of the game.

To preserve the hierarchical structure, members of the dominant groups use their symbolic authority and strategies to safeguard their capital and positions (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005). Notably, it is apparent from the findings that CSR consulting firms are increasingly pressured by corporate clients and competitors in the field to lower their consulting service fees and increase their input and workload. Corporate clients, given their greater symbolic power in the client-consultant relationships and in the field as a whole, primarily pressure CSR consulting firms through price-cutting strategies and control the outcomes and deliverables of consulting work. CSR consultants thus deal with negative consequences (e.g., burnout, job stress, etc.) which ultimately impacts the quality and output of their work. As emphasized in the interviews, these engagements are perceived by CSR consultants as "*a vicious cycle*", "*too much*", and "*not sustainable*".

Positioned at the dominated pole of the field are CSR consulting firms and its consultants. As opposed to the dominants, these groups of agents, with relatively less power and economic capital, rely on alternative forms of capital to accumulate symbolic power, and to transform the field and the rules of the game (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005). The findings identified three distinct groups of CSR consulting firms – *global consulting firms, local consulting firms, and NPO/research firms* – as key players in the field. These consulting firms rely on different types and volumes of capital to distinguish themselves from competitors and to position themselves in the field. As indicated in the findings, *global consulting firms* rely on their size, reputation, and networks, the extensive social and cultural capital accumulated over time; *local consulting firms* rely mainly upon their people and consulting expertise, gained through field experience and

embodied forms of cultural capital; *NPO/research firms* are dependent on their reputation and accreditations, thus institutionalized forms of cultural capital.

In the struggle to accumulate symbolic capital and power, CSR consulting firms, despite their size and reputation, seem to heavily rely on external resources and symbolic capital to legitimize their work and practices. As indicated in the interview data, *global consulting firms*, for instance, utilize their strong social capital, numerous global partners and network organizations, to accrue symbolic power. *NPO/Research firms*, on the other hand, relied on different forms of cultural capital, such as external consultants and CSR-related accreditations, to engage with clients and differentiate their positions in the field:

> …our team recently worked on a CSR project in China…we immediately needed a CSR expert who also well understood the local business and culture…one of the directors at our partnering firm in China joined our team and successfully engaged with our client (Senior Consultant, Global consulting firm)

> …our firm is the official training partner of several influential CSR standardization institutions…this status and our networks together clearly communicate the expertise and trust we bring to our clients…not many consulting firms in the current market have this luxury…(Senior Manager, NPO/Research firm)

Habitus, doxa and symbolic violence

To function more or less effectively in the field, agents internalize the field's structures and taken-for-granted rules or doxa into their habitus. This allows individuals to understand the structures of the field and to behave according to the rules of the game.

Whilst habitus provides an important mechanism for agents to understand and navigate the field, it also acts as a constraint that limits their actions, positions, and practices (Bourdieu, 1977). By internalizing the field structures and doxa, the agents' dispositions in habitus are structured according to the rules and norms of the field, thereby imposing a set of limits to their actions and practices within the field.

It appears that the subordinate position, the lack of symbolic capital, and doxa in the field, all together influence and shape the individual and shared habitus of CSR consulting leaders and consultants, thereby constraining their perceptions, roles and actions in the field. The findings indicate that the majority of CSR consulting leaders and consultants incorporated the dominant logic or doxa of the field into their habitus, to understand and act in accordance to the rules of the field (Bourdieu, 1988). Doxa, the taken-for-granted rules in the current field reflects a strong economic logic, structured by the dominant members, corporate clients, in the field, and reinforced by the shared professional habitus in CSR consulting firms. Corporate clients, by virtue of their symbolic capital and authority, exerted power over CSR consultants and shaped CSR consulting projects and its outcomes to meet their financial best interests. Further, by accepting the field's doxa, CSR consulting leaders and consultants complied to the current rules of the game and failed to question the values and assumptions of their practices, thus perpetuating the power relations and doxa in the field.

The interview data revealed that CSR consulting projects and client engagements were primarily driven by considerations of *profitability* and opportunity to *cultivate long-term client relationships* to further financial gains. Indeed, the majority of interviewees were silent about the underlying values and assumptions of the current practices in the

field, and emphasized *economic value over social value* when selecting projects and engaging with corporate clients. However, it is noteworthy that this was not always the case. As noted by several consulting leaders, in the early periods and emergent stages of the CSR consulting field in Korea, a small number of consultants acted as "*advocates for CSR*" and helped corporate leaders to "*make sense of CSR issues*". And, as further illustrated below, several CSR consultants first entered the field driven by "*altruistic motivations*" and to "*make positive social change*". As further discussed below, this illuminates the power of symbolic violence, as an unrecognizable and invisible mechanism of social control and domination (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

For Bourdieu, domination is "…the indirect effect of a complex set of actions engendered within the network of intersecting constraints which each of the dominants, thus dominated by the structure of the field through which domination is exerted, endures on behalf of all the others" (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 34). In a state of domination, the values and norms shared among agents and the way in which success is determined in the subordinate field may change; in such a field: "…economic capital becomes more important, and cultural capital remains valued to the extent that it can be transformed into economic capital" (Oakes et al., 1998, p. 271).

It therefore appears that the success of CSR consulting projects, as emphasized by the majority of consultants, is evaluated by the extent to which CSR strategies and programs align with *industry-specific issues* and result in *new business opportunities* for clients. As such, the interview data indicated a predominant economic discourse in which CSR consulting leaders and consultants highlighted the importance of delivering '*a*

business case for CSR', '*link to key performance indicators*', and '*CSR-related performance*'.

Further, dominant members of the field, with greater capital and symbolic power, exert symbolic violence by shaping the structures, doxa, and the perceptions of less dominant members. Given the power structure and doxa in the field, symbolic violence was evident from the inherent tensions and conflicts expressed by members of the dominated groups, CSR consulting leaders and consultants. For CSR consulting leaders, tensions arose between pressures from senior management within their own firms to deliver results, coupled with increasing price-cutting practices of corporate clients, and their lack of symbolic power and cultural capital. Several consulting leaders emphasized the *lack of qualified CSR consultants* with strategic expertise and business acumen, forms of embodied and institutionalized cultural capital. As shown in the interviews, a number of consulting leaders struggled to fill this gap through hiring and socialization practices, and relied on *external sources of capital* to accrue symbolic capital and more or less competitively position themselves in the field.

Individual CSR consultants experienced tensions in balancing between the economic logic of the field and their individual habitus, motivations and values. The dominant economic logic and profit motivations reflected in the organizational doxa and in the field, to which the majority of consulting leaders and consultants are complicit, seem to be in sharp contrast to the social and altruistic motivations of several CSR consultants. As indicated in the interviews, these consultants emphasized their work motivations and roles, as "*guiding businesses to do well by doing good*", "*achieving a higher purpose*", and "*making a positive impact*".

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study sought to understand the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in the context of Korea. The findings of this study were presented in two respects – empirical findings based on interview data and further analysis through the lens of Bourdieu's theory of practice – to provide a comprehensive and contextually rich understanding of the role of CSR consultants in Korea. This chapter outlines several important contributions this study makes and implications for research in CSR consulting, the study of institutional theory and CSR institutionalization, and HRD scholarship. This is followed by practical implications and guidance offered to governments and policy makers, CSR consulting firms and their leaders, and HRD practitioners. The chapter concludes by addressing the limitations of this study.

To reiterate, the overarching research question that guided this study was: *What is the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in Korea?* To achieve this, three research questions were investigated: (a) What is the status of CSR in Korea, and what factors influence the adoption of CSR in Korea?; (b) What is the status of the CSR consulting industry and CSR consulting practices in Korea?; (c) How do CSR consultants perceive their role in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in Korea?

In addressing these research questions, a qualitative research design and grounded theory analysis were employed, and a total of 25 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with CSR consultants and other stakeholders dedicated to CSR work in various organizations in Korea. The interview findings, combined with document

analysis, provided a rich understanding of the current status of CSR in Korea, the nature

of the CSR consulting industry, and the role and contributions of CSR consultants in

institutionalizing CSR. Further, Bourdieu's theory of practice and its thinking tools of

fields, capital and habitus, provided a relational view of the CSR consulting field in

Korea by illustrating the dynamic interactions and power struggles between institutional

structures and fields, capital, CSR consultants, and their positions within the socio-

historical context of Korea.

CSR Consulting Research

This study makes several contributions to the literature and provides important

implications for research. The study extends and contributes to *the emerging body of*

research on CSR consulting and CSR consultants by illustrating the dynamics of the CSR

consulting field and the role of CSR consultants in the context of Korea. Past studies have

dominantly researched this topic in the western context (Matten & Moon, 2008), and this

study therefore serves as the first to shed light on CSR consulting in the non-western

context of Korea.

With regard to the findings, this study shares several similar themes with previous

research conducted in other national contexts. Consistent with Young et al.'s (2003) and

Skouloudis and Evangelinos's (2014) study of CSR consulting in the U.K. and in Greece,

the CSR consulting field in Korea was characterized as having an oligopolistic structure,

within which a small number of consulting firms compete over similar services and

pricing strategies. Further, the study findings underlined the limited role and

contributions of CSR consultants. The role played by CSR consultants in Korea, at

present, is hampered by multiple institutional pressures, power dynamics in the field, and

the predominantly economic nature of the field. Although CSR consultants in Korea were perceived to significantly contribute to raising CSR awareness and drawing corporate attention to social and environmental issues, their overall roles however reflected a strong economic logic and a tendency to reinforce the profit-driven nature of their clients.

Similar results were found in Molina's (2008) study of Mexico's CSR consulting market, which pointed to the limited impact of CSR consultants on local businesses and to practices being driven by commercialization of CSR services. Windell (2009) found that Swedish CSR consultants primarily built on economic logics and the business case for CSR. Bres and Gond's (2014) study also underscored this point by demonstrating the roles played by CSR consultants in the commodification of CSR in the Quebec CSR consulting market. Taken together, the comparison of these findings suggests convergence in patterns of institutional structures and organizational fields in which the influence of CSR consultants is perceived as limited. Despite different national contexts, the role and contributions of CSR consultants are inhibited by economic logics and are confined to the commodification of CSR services (Vogel, 2005).

Any comparison or generalization in findings however should be made with caution. As shown in the comparative CSR literature, the specific forms and patterns of CSR practices, in any given context, need to be understood by considering influences of global institutional pressures, socio-cultural environments, and national business systems (Campbell, 2007; Matten & Moon, 2008). Therefore, further research is needed to examine the role of CSR consultants in different contexts and confirm these findings. Future research could draw on more systematic frameworks and approaches, and quantitatively compare these findings at the institutional and national levels (Jackson &

Apostolakou, 2010; Matten & Moon, 2008). One example of such an approach is provided by Matten and Moon (2008), in which they presented a framework to compare implicit and explicit forms of CSR practice in different national business systems and institutional contexts. Their framework demonstrates that implicit forms of CSR practice are adopted mainly by European countries and are based on normative responses to government regulations and rules, whereas explicit CSR is widely accepted in North America and is driven by voluntary and strategic forms of CSR.

Another important theme that emerged in the study was the *intrinsic tensions experienced by CSR consultants*. The findings showed that individual CSR consultants experienced tensions between individual values and the profit-driven nature of the field: several CSR consultants were primarily motivated by the altruistic values and social purposes attached to CSR consulting work, which conflicted with the dominant economic nature of the field and performance-driven demands of their clients. The interviews however did not reveal the ways in which individual consultants reconciled their tensions and conflicts.

Paradoxes and their underlying tensions in managing CSR and sustainability have received increased attention in recent years. Most notably, Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse and Figge (2014) advanced a paradox framework in which the authors argue that managers adopting a paradoxical cognitive frame can better manage issues of corporate sustainability, than those who hold a narrow business case frame. According to them, the paradoxical cognitive frame allows individual managers to, rather than eliminate the tensions, "accept tensions and accommodate conflicting yet interrelated economic, environmental, and social concerns…" (Hahn et al., 2014, p. 466). Other studies, based

on paradox theory and the identity work literature, have also examined tensions experienced by corporate managers and practitioners dedicated to CSR and sustainability work (e.g., Carollo & Guerci, 2017; Mitra and Buzzanell, 2017). However, little research has specifically focused on the ways in which tensions are managed and reconciled in the context of CSR consulting.

The only notable study identified in the literature was conducted by Ghadiri et al., (2015), which illustrated how CSR consultants made sense of and managed tensions between profit and social responsibility. Consistent with arguments made under paradox theory, the study found that CSR consultants managed tensions by engaging in linguistical tactics through which they simultaneously embraced and distanced their identities. Thus, there is still a need to further investigate how CSR consultants may effectively manage and reconcile tensions and conflicts in everyday work. Future research may draw on paradox theories and frameworks, combined with other theoretical perspectives to extend this line of inquiry.

CSR Research in Korea

The findings of this study add to *the literature and body of knowledge on the dynamics of CSR in Korea*, and extend the current understanding of the institutional pressures and forces through which CSR practices are shaped in this context by offering the perspectives of consultants – agents at the forefront of CSR institutionalization in Korea.

The study findings confirm previous research results that underline the influence of multiple intuitional pressures, at the national and global level, on the adoption of CSR practices in the context of Korea (Kim et al., 2013). Consistent with the literature, in the

perspectives of CSR consultants, the status of CSR and the degree to which CSR is institutionalized in Korea were reported as low, shaped by complex interactions of multiple institutional fields and isomorphic pressures (Lee & Kim, 2014; Nam & Jun, 2011).

By relying on DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) categories of institutional isomorphism, the findings in this study suggest that CSR in Korea is mainly driven by *coercive* pressures, exerted by government policies and initiatives to promote CSR and responsible business conduct, and increasing demands from foreign buyers and investors to adopt CSR standards and initiatives; *mimetic* pressures, evidenced by corporate leaders and CSR managers being highly sensitive to global and domestic CSR trends, and thereby mimicking behaviors of competitors to join the CSR bandwagon; and *normative* pressures, in which social norms and short-termism prevalent in the society resulted in businesses focusing mainly on volunteering and philanthropic CSR activities.

Most notably, the findings in this study support and extend Kim et al.'s (2013) research which presented a comprehensive analysis on the dynamics and institutional pressures that shape CSR practice in Korea. By drawing on institutional theory and rich qualitative data, the study insightfully demonstrated that the adoption of CSR practices in Korea is a result of complex interactions of institutional pressures and dynamic forces. Specifically, their findings showed that organizational CSR practices in Korea are predominantly short-term focused, reflect a normative orientation, and are at the crossing of implicit and explicit CSR behaviors.

The findings reported in this study supported several of these aspects. The interview data revealed that corporate leaders and CSR managers, influenced by wide-

spread short-termism, dominantly focused on short-term CSR activities and outcomes, while being skeptical about the long-term benefits of CSR implementation. The interviews further showed that, consistent with the normative CSR orientation found in Kim et al.'s study, Korean business organizations heavily invested in public donations and philanthropic activities, as a significant aspect of their CSR agenda.

Furthermore, Kim et al. demonstrated that CSR in Korea is at a crossroads between implicit and explicit CSR behaviors: social and cultural norms pressured CSR managers to engage in implicit CSR, whereas international pressures led them towards strategic and explicit CSR behaviors. The findings reported in this dissertation study also underlined the strategic focus of CSR projects and the strong economic discourse of CSR consultants in underlining the business case for CSR. This may suggest that CSR consultants, despite their overall limited role in the field, are at the forefront of promoting explicit CSR behaviors of business organizations in Korea, one of which is their role in translating and localizing international standards and global CSR trends.

CSR Institutionalization

This study *contributes more broadly to the growing research on the micro-level processes and mechanisms in CSR institutionalization* (Dejean et al., 2004; Slager & Chapple, 2016), by demonstrating the role of CSR consultants as focal institutional agents in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in the context of Korea. Prior research on CSR institutionalization has tended to neglect the important role of institutional actors and the micro-level dynamics, and predominantly focused on institutional determinants of CSR and cross-national comparisons of CSR adoption and practices (Matten & Moon, 2008; Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010).

Further, studies that increasingly examine the role of actors and micro-level processes of CSR institutionalization have focused on a small group of actors, namely SRI funds and security analysts (Gond & Boxenbaum, 2013). Therefore, this study adds to this line of research by highlighting the role and contributions of CSR consultants as focal actors in institutionalizing and socially constructing CSR (Sahlin-Andersson, 2006; Young et al., 2003), and by demonstrating the complex processes and socio-cognitive aspects that underlie the process of CSR institutionalization (Philips et al., 2004).

By using Bourdieu's theory of practice as a framework, this study further contributes to addressing the gap in institutional theory research, by focusing on the complex interplay between macro-level structures and micro-level actions in the field CSR consulting (Lounsbury & Ventresca, 2003). Neo-institutional theory has long been criticized for overly emphasizing the role of institutions and structures in constraining behavior (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991), thereby ignoring the role of agency and strategic actions in organizational fields (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). This study moves towards closing this gap by adopting Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital, and habitus to demonstrate the complex interactions between macro institutional structures (i.e., enabling and hindering institutional pressures), organizational fields (i.e., international, economic, governmental, and consulting fields), and the collective actions of agents in the field of CSR consulting in Korea.

More significantly, Bourdieu's theory and its relational approach allowed the author of this study to go beyond addressing the duality of structure and agency (Battilana, 2006), and illuminate the role of power and domination in social fields (Oakes et al., 1998; Özbilgin & Tatli, 2005). In this regard, the concept of habitus is crucial as it

provides a means to connect the objective structures of fields with the subjectivity of agents and their dispositions (Emirbayer & Williams, 2008). For example, this study showed that CSR consulting leaders and consultants internalized the structure and taken-for-granted rules of the field, and shaped their individual and collective habitus accordingly. The submission to economic logics of the field resulted in conflicts and tensions for consulting leaders and individual consultants.

Further, by using the concept of capital and symbolic violence, the study demonstrated the power struggles between dominant (i.e., clients) and dominated actors (i.e., CSR consultants) in the field, and the way in which dominant groups exerted power over the field and shaped the taken-for-granted rules to conserve the hierarchy and authority within it (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005). Further illustrated in the findings was the ongoing contestation over different types and forms of capital in the field, and the competition and position-takings of collective agents relative to their capital endowments (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). While Bourdieu's theory has gained significant attention from organizational researchers and institutional theorists, Emirbayer and Johnson (2008) note that "organizational analysis has yet to exploit fully the theoretical and empirical possibilities inherent in the writings of Pierre Bourdieu" (p. 43).

This study therefore underscores the need to further apply a relational view and Bourdieu's core concepts to organizational research, and in particular to the study of CSR and CSR institutionalization. For example, Aaken, Splitter and Seidl (2013) highlighted the importance of Bourdieu's approach to better explore and understand the motivations of actors in the context of CSR. By drawing on Bourdieu's concepts, they conceptualize pro-social behaviors as social practices aimed to gain power and authority in a given

field, and demonstrate that the motivations of corporate actors to engage in pro-social behavior depends on the characteristics of the field, their individual dispositions (habitus), and their positions and capital in the field.

More recently, Zigan and Le Grys (2018) provided a comprehensive analysis and empirical examination of the social responsibility practices in the Church context of England. By relying on Bourdieu's theory and the institutional work literature, their study illustrates the complex interactions between institutional structures and agents, and the tensions raised between competing values and belief systems in the Church. More interestingly, their findings highlighted the limited isomorphic convergence in this context; instead, they found a diversity of ad hoc practices led by opportunistic behaviors of social responsibility officers, thereby highlighting the role of individual agency in shaping the field and practices.

As illustrated, adopting a relational view and Bourdieu's theory may further open up opportunities to comprehensively examine and reveal the interactions of structures, actors, and power relations in the context of CSR, thereby better illuminating the underlying processes and dynamics of CSR institutionalization (Philips et al., 2004).

HRD Research

This study provides important implications for HRD scholarship. Professional service firms, including management consulting firms, heavily rely on attracting and retaining competent professionals, and therefore require high levels of learning and development for their employees (Broderick, 2010). An important finding in this study highlighted the lack of qualified CSR consultants in the field: consulting leaders

underlined the current shortage of CSR consultants equipped with the knowledge and

expertise in both fields of CSR and strategy, with which they can identify business

opportunities and align CSR programs to meet the immediate needs of clients. The

interviews indicated that this shortage conflicted with the CSR consulting leaders' need

to deliver results and meet performance objectives, and therefore resulted in contracting

out CSR projects at an extra cost. Thus, a number of consulting leaders underlined the

urgent need to further train and develop CSR consultants to successfully deliver CSR

projects and meet the needs of their clients.

This is an important area in which HRD can make an important contribution.

HRD functions play a central role in stimulating and facilitating learning and

development in organizations (Werner, 2014); increasingly, HRD scholars have

underlined the importance of learning and development in raising CSR awareness and

promoting CSR in organizations (Ardichvili, 2013; Sheehan, Garavan, & Carbery, 2014).

Leaning and development approaches, such as global service learning, experiential

learning, and knowledge sharing, are shown to be effective in developing and raising

CSR awareness of employees (Haugh & Talwar, 2010). For example, Pless and Maak

(2011) found that service-learning programs, through partnering with NGOs, social

entrepreneurs, or international organizations, were effective in developing responsible

mind-sets of employees through learning at the cognitive, affective, and behavioral

levels. Gitsham (2012) reported that experiential learning programs helped develop

greater commitment towards global and sustainability-related issues and gain further

confidence in advocating change in the workplace.

However, more research is needed to understand the specific role of HRD functions and the effectiveness of learning and development approaches in facilitating the development of professional service firm employees, particularly in the context of CSR. From an HRD perspective, future research in this area may contribute to the further understanding of the effectiveness and business impact of learning and development interventions in professional service firms (van Rooji & Merkebu, 2015), and the ways in which learning and development may play an important role in sensitizing, developing, and educating employees on CSR issues (Mirvis, 2008).

Furthermore, this study underscores the need to apply institutional theories and sociological perspectives in HRD research (Kuchinke, 2000). This study and its findings highlight the utility of Bourdieu's theory of practice and its core concepts in providing a rich and comprehensive understanding of social phenomenon, CSR consulting in Korea as a field. As discussed above, the theoretical lens of Bourdieu allows for relational analysis of complex interactions in social fields and helps illuminate power dynamics that underlie and shape structures and actions in a given field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Several HRD researchers have highlighted the importance and usefulness of institutional and sociological theories for investigating HRD phenomena (Korte, 2012; Kuchinke, 2000); however, to date, such theoretical approaches have received scant attention from HRD scholars and are rarely applied to HRD research. Only few notable exceptions are found, that explicitly draw on institutional theories and frameworks: Fogarty and Dirsmith's (2001) study relied on DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) categories of institutional isomorphism to investigate the symbolic representations and institutionalization of socialization practices in organizations, and Alagaraja and Li's

(2014) study investigated institutional structures and forces that shaped the history and evolution corporate universities. More recent work by Korte and Mercurio (2017) and Tkachenko and Ardichvili (2017) provide insightful reviews of sociological theories and perspectives to advance HRD scholarship.

Adopting institutional theories and sociological perspectives will allow for a more holistic approach to investigate institutional structures and organizational fields that shape HRD phenomena (Kuchinke, 2000), and to reveal the "the norms, rules, and expectations of the larger environment as well as the goals of the larger organizational system and stakeholder groups for HRD" (p. 282). In particular, critical HRD researchers may find Bourdieu's theory and its concepts (e.g., doxa, symbolic violence, etc.) to be a useful framework to explore potential tensions, power dynamics, and assumptions within organizations and in social fields.

Limitations

Although the findings in this study provide several insights into the role of CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR, it is not without limitations. One potential limitation is that the study findings are mainly based on the interview data and the subjective viewpoints of participants. While some corporate data (i.e., consulting frameworks and project track records) and demographic information (i.e., years of experience, age, gender, and educational background) was collected, and additional data was obtained during the interview process (e.g., CSR project reports and the CVs of several CSR consultants and leaders), the majority of interviewees were reluctant to disclose or share corporate or team-related information and project-related documents mainly for reasons of confidentiality.

Furthermore, there were no publicly accessible data available that provide detailed information the CSR consulting industry and individual consulting firms in Korea. Nonetheless, the in-depth interviews, face-to-face and through email, combined with document analysis, allowed to contextualize the findings and provide a rich and detailed account of the CSR consulting field and the role and perspectives of CSR consultants in Korea. Future researchers therefore may benefit from access to a variety of corporate data, including historical records and detailed project documents, in addition to interviews, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the social conditions and historical context under study.

Another limitation lies in the fact that the CSR consulting leaders and consultants who participated in this study represented only three types of CSR consulting firms, identified as major players in the field. As described in chapter 3, purposeful sampling was used to select and recruit participants determined to offer the most relevant information based on their experience in the field, and to allow an 'information-rich' understanding of the phenomena under study (Patton, 2015). The decision to include participants from the three major CSR consulting firms therefore was based on a clear set of selection criteria and carefully informed by former colleagues and clients currently working in the field. However, it is possible that additional information and insight on the field and dynamics of CSR consulting in Korea may be provided by smaller boutique consulting firms and independent consultants in the field, not identified in this study.

Further, this study only considered the viewpoints of three non-consultant participants. In addition to the 22 consulting leaders and consultants, three other informants were recruited to participate in the interviews from various organizations and

job positions related to CSR work; these included informants from an international

organization, a NPO, and a domestic news/media agency. While these outside

perspectives were invaluable, future research could include a more diverse range of non-

consultant participants and stakeholders, including, for example, government officials,

CSR managers, and NGOs dedicated to CSR-related work, to gain a more comprehensive

view on the field dynamics and interactions among various stakeholders in the field

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967). By doing this, it may support the triangulation of results and

add to the overall validity of findings in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Implications for Practice

A number of practical implications can be offered based on the study findings.

The findings of this study, combined with the literature reviewed, provide important

implications and recommendations for government officials and policy makers, CSR

consulting firms and their leaders, and to HRD professionals.

Government officials and policy makers.

The findings in this study may assist *government officials and policy makers* with

future efforts in refining and developing CSR-related policies and initiatives at the

national level. Consistent with the literature, this study pinpointed the importance of

government policies and initiatives as strong institutional drivers and enablers for the

adaptation and institutionalization of CSR (Brammer et al., 2012; Campbell, 2007). In

particular, the interviewees agreed upon and reached a total consensus on the vital role of

government in currently promoting and institutionalizing CSR in Korea. The majority of

respondents emphasized the changes recently being made, through moving large

institutional investors (i.e., the national pension service of Korea), legislative reforms, and initiatives targeting the adaptation of diverse CSR and sustainability agendas.

While the role of government was widely acknowledged, however, the interviewees expressed contradicting views on further strengthening government policies and initiatives in promoting CSR for the foreseeable future: some interviewees emphasized the need to regulate and mandate certain CSR-related organizational activities for public organizations, such as reporting on CSR-related information and disclosing performance on social and environmental issues, while others on the other hand underlined the need to minimize the government's role and strengthen market incentives for CSR adaption and institutionalization.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that government officials and policy makers, while continuing their efforts to promote CSR through public institutions, soft laws and voluntary initiatives, should further consider ways to mobilize the private sector and provide effective market incentives for CSR institutionalization. Notably, the CSR literature highlights the important role of financial institutions, such as socially responsible investment funds and rating agencies, in legitimizing and institutionalizing CSR measures and standards (Avetisyan & Ferrary, 2013; Ioannou & Serafeim, 2015). Thus, working in partnership with financial institutions and other stakeholders may be an important initial step for government officials and policy makers to legitimize CSR-related measures and standards, and further provide incentives to business organizations for the adoption and institutionalization of CSR.

Furthermore, an interesting theme identified in this study was the emerging role of CSR consultants in closely partnering with government agencies to develop CSR

standards and guidelines, tailored explicitly to domestic organizations. As several

interviewees noted, these consultants were increasingly playing an important

intermediary role in engaging the private sector and developing CSR-related platforms

and programs, to closely link government policies with the needs of domestic

organizations. As such, it may be beneficial to utilize the expertise and role of CSR

consultants as intermediaries in engaging private sector organizations, and to better align

CSR-related standards and frameworks to the needs and characteristics of domestic

businesses. In doing so, government officials and policy makers should pay close

attention to the influences of the socio-historical context and broader institutional

pressures (Matten & Moon, 2008).

CSR consulting firms and consulting leaders.

The findings provide important implications for CSR consulting firms and their

leaders. This study highlighted that, to be effective, CSR consulting firms and consultants

need to better position themselves and their service offerings in the market. Using

Bourdieu's theory, the findings underlined the importance of the amount and value of

different capital, to accrue symbolic power and to position oneself more or less

competitively in the field. All three consulting firms in this study appeared to

differentiate themselves from competitors, and utilize different types and forms of capital

to legitimize their work. However, their overall roles and practices seemed to be limited

and constrained by their lack of capital and power, and their subordinate position (in

relation to clients) in the field.

In particular, several consulting leaders underlined the current lack of qualified

consultants with the needed strategic expertise and business acumen, and the urgent need

to recruit and develop consultants to better meet client needs. Indeed, the success of CSR projects was determined by the degree to which consultants were able to identify business opportunities and link CSR programs to the bottom line. Whilst the consulting firms appeared to already provide various learning opportunities and engage in internal knowledge sharing, to further strengthen their positions in the market, it will be vital for CSR consulting firms and leaders to focus their learning and development efforts on developing the strategic expertise, analytical skills and business acumen of their existing and new consultants.

In addition, an interesting finding was that a number of consultants engaged in informal learning opportunities outside of work. Some consultants led and participated in informal study meetings and/or communities of practice (CoP) to share consulting knowledge and learn about latest trends in CSR, while others formed informal groups in which various stakeholders engaged in continuous dialogue on topics of CSR and social responsibility. Thus, in addition to the training and formal learning provided within consulting firms, these informal learning opportunities should also be encouraged and supported to promote the professional development and ongoing learning of consultants.

Furthermore, it is recommended that consulting leaders pay close attention to the individual needs and well-being of CSR consultants, in particular to any potential tensions or conflicts they may experience in their work roles. An important finding in this study showed that a number of consultants experienced tensions between the economically driven nature of the field and practices, and their individual values and motivations. Such tensions were seen to affect their well-being, and in some cases, the quality of their client engagements and project outcomes as well. Therefore, as discussed

in the research implications, it is recommended that consulting leaders further provide adequate resources and measures for individual consultants to manage and reconcile any tensions and conflicts that may arise in their work (Hahn et al., 2014).

On a related note, during the interview process, a number of interviewees, including consulting leaders and consultants, mentioned that the interview itself allowed them to look back and reflect on their own values, practices, and professional goals, in regards to CSR consulting work. Thus, consulting leaders could provide more opportunities for reflection and foster an open climate in which consultants can collectively reflect on their practices and learn from their daily work experiences (Cramer, 2005; Vince, 1998).

HRD professionals.

Important implications are provided for the emerging role of HRD in supporting the CSR agenda in organizations. One of the key roles of CSR consultants identified in this study was raising CSR awareness of corporate leaders and managers, through CSR project engagements, and CSR-related workshops and training and development activities. Indeed, several interviewees noted that such activities not only better engaged clients in CSR projects but also helped them understand the meaning and importance of CSR issues. The findings however indicated that corporate leaders and managers were dominantly driven by economic motives and narrowly focused on short-term financial goals. In most cases, the implementation of CSR programs in client organizations were seen, at best, as surface-scratching, short-term driven, and mere strategies to increase their brand image. To this end, the role of CSR consultants, in raising CSR awareness of

corporate clients, is therefore hampered and diminished by performance-driven cultures, short-termism, and the economic logic of the field.

From an HRD perspective, when utilizing learning and development to support the organizational CSR agenda, HRD professionals will need to make sure that learning and development interventions not only aim at raising CSR awareness of organizational members but also aim to deeply embed CSR values and principles into the everyday practice and culture of the organization (Collier & Esteban, 2007). In this regard, the CSR literature demonstrates that learning and development interventions, such as experiential learning and service-learning programs, may help sensitize organizational members to broader social and environmental issues (Blakeley & Higgs, 2014; Pless & Maak, 2011). Furthermore, HRD professionals can contribute by playing a key role in culture change efforts to foster organizational cultures that align with organizations' CSR and sustainability principles and goals (Ardichvili, 2013).

Further, an interesting finding was that several consultants were engaged in informal learning activities outside of work. Some were engaged in informal study meetings and/or communities of practice (CoP) to share consulting knowledge and learn about latest trends in CSR, while others formed informal groups in which various stakeholders engaged in continuous dialogue on topics of CSR and social responsibility. As indicated by the interviewees, these informal learning opportunities were seen to raise CSR awareness among various stakeholders and in the broader society. As such, HRD professionals, to make a significant contribution, should utilize both formal and informal learning and development opportunities to promote CSR in organizations and support the ongoing development of organizational members.

More importantly, to demonstrate the need for HRD's involvement in CSR, it is recommended that HRD functions and professionals effectively position themselves within organizations. For Bourdieu, organizations are fields in and of themselves in which organizational members compete over capital and authority (Bourdieu, 2005). The findings showed that CSR managers struggled to position themselves and promote CSR in organizations, mainly due to their lack of capital, resources, and power. From an HRD perspective, CSR work in organizations is usually led by dedicated functions, such as CSR, ethics, and public relations departments, and may not be under HRD's purview (Fenwick & Bierema, 2008). Thus, to be effective, it would be vital for HRD professionals to clearly articulate and communicate the importance of learning and development to support the organizational CSR agenda. This may require HRD professionals to leverage key stakeholders and functional leaders to build consensus on important HRD and CSR issues, and to strategically align HRD interventions and strategies with the organizational CSR agenda (Ardichvili, 2013; Garavan & McGuire, 2010).

Further, based on the study findings, it is recommended that HRD professionals, including independent HRD consultants, adopt a holistic approach and consider multiple levels of analysis, when tackling complex problems and providing solutions to organizations. By using Bourdieu's theory, this study underlined the importance of taking a relational view and analyzing multiple institutional structures, organizational fields and sub-fields, power relations, and collective action. In particular, the concept of habitus, as a set of durable dispositions, illuminates the importance to consider not only external influences or the socialization of organizational members but also their past experience,

personal characteristics, and educational backgrounds (Hallett, 2003). In this study, the CSR consultants appeared to have diverse work experiences and held various educational degrees from different fields of studies (e.g., communication, accounting, and human resources), while only three participants held a degree in CSR. While further investigation is needed, it can be assumed that their diverse background and past experiences may have significantly shaped their behaviors and impacted their views of the field and CSR consulting work.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study sought to explore and understand the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in the context of Korea. By employing a qualitative approach and based on interviews with 25 CSR consultants and relevant stakeholders dedicated to CSR work, this study is the first to present a comprehensive understanding of the field of CSR consulting and the role played by CSR consultants in the context of Korea. Further, by using Bourdieu's theory of practice as a theoretical lens, the study findings shed light on the dynamic interactions and power struggles between structures, agents, capital and position-takings, through which the field of CSR consulting in Korea is constantly shaped and reproduced.

Several important contributions and implications for the emerging research in CSR consulting, the study of institutional theory and CSR institutionalization, and HRD scholarship were outlined. The findings presented in this study answer increasing calls to further conduct research on the dynamics and institutionalization of CSR in non-western contexts (Matten & Moon, 2008), and adopted a relational view to illustrate the dynamic interplay between institutions and actors (Lounsbury & Ventresca, 2003). This study also

underscores the need to further investigate the role of HRD functions and learning and development approaches in professional service firms and in the context of CSR. Furthermore, the findings provided practical implications and recommendations for government officials and policy makers, CSR consulting leaders and consultants, and HRD practitioners in organizations.

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Appendix A.

Table 1

List of interviewees

No	Type of Organization	Position/Title	Gender	Years of Experience*	Interview Time (mins)
1	Global	Consultant	F	3	47:03
2	Global	Director	M	11	50:06
3	Global	Director	M	15	62:03
4	Global	Director	M	20	52:43
5	Global	Manager	M	5	58:43
6	Global	Manager	M	8	65:03
7	Global	Senior Consultant	F	7	52:34
8	Global	Senior Consultant	F	4.5	46:01
9	Global	Senior Consultant	F	4	62:03
10	Global	Senior Consultant	F	5	Email
11	Local	Director	F	13	53:25
12	Local	Executive	M	10	75:00
13	Local	Executive	M	10	45:38
14	Local	Senior Consultant	M	3	46:42
15	Local	Senior Consultant	M	4	48:23
16	NPO / Research	Consultant	F	7.5	48:34
17	NPO / Research	Director	M	16	65:00
18	NPO / Research	Manager	F	5	54:19
19	NPO / Research	Manager	M	10	45:27
20	NPO / Research	Manager	M	12	46:50
21	NPO / Research	Senior Consultant	F	8	71:35
22	NPO / Research	Senior Manager	M	12	60:39
Additional Informants					
23	International Organization	Director	F	11	77:14
24	NPO	Manager	M	5	Email
25	News/Media Agency	Director	M	10	68:38

* Years of experience is inclusive of both CSR consulting work and non-consulting work in the fields of CSR and sustainability.

Appendix B.

Table 2

Frequency of themes and sub-themes by interviews

Theme	Sub-theme	Interviews*
CSR in Korea		
Status of CSR in Korea	Low CSR status	25
	Large gap among organizations	20
Enabling factors	Government policies and initiatives	25
	Global CSR trends	18
	Global CSR compliance	14
Hindering factors	Low CSR awareness	24
	Weak CSR governance structures	18
	Absence of civil society organizations	8
CSR Consulting Industry		
Consulting industry	Similar types of services	22
	Intense price competition	17
Consulting firms	Small number of firms rely on different resources and practices to legitimize consulting work	22
Client engagements	Dominantly profit-driven	20
	Long-term client relationships	14
Project success Factors	Alignment with business strategy	18
	In-depth understanding of industry	15
	Top management support	11
Tensions	Tension between project success and lack of CSR consultants with strategic expertise	10
	Tensions between consulting practices and individual motivations	20
Key Contributions of CSR Consultants		
Raising CSR awareness	Client engagement and CSR training	22
	Client seminars and events	18
	Dialogue and knowledge sharing	9
Localization of global CSR standards	Support adoption of global CSR standards and guidelines	23
	Support government and public policies	8
Disclosure of non-financial data	Planning and developing CR reports	22
	Support inclusion in CSR awards and indices	17

* Interviews denote the number of interviewees (out of 25) who mentioned each sub-theme

Appendix C.

Table 3

Summary of findings by research question

Research Question	Main Findings	Themes and Sub-themes		
1. What is the status of CSR in Korea, and what factors influence the adoption of CSR in Korea?	Low CSR status; large gap among organizations; shaped by multiple enabling and hindering factors	*Enabling factors:* government policies and initiatives; global CSR trends; and foreign pressure for CSR compliance	*Hindering factors:* low CSR awareness among corporate leaders and CSR managers; weak CSR governance; and absence of civil society organizations	
2. What is the status of the CSR consulting industry and CSR consulting practices in Korea?	Dominantly profit-driven; under intense price competition over similar types of services	*Consulting firms:* a small number of consulting firms relying on different resources and practices to legitimize CSR consulting work *Tensions*: organizational tensions between pressure to deliver results and lack of qualified CSR consultants with strategic expertise; Individual tension between economic-driven nature of consulting practices and individual motivations and values	*Client engagement and project success:* client engagement and project selection driven by profitability and opportunities for long-term client relationships Project success dependent on alignment with business strategy, in-depth understanding of industry, and top management support	
3. How do CSR consultants perceive their role in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in Korea?	Limited role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR	*Raising CSR awareness*: project engagement; CSR training; client seminars; and knowledge sharing	*Localization of global CSR standards*: adoption of global CSR standards and guidelines; develop domestic policies and guidelines	*Disclosure of non-financial data*: develop CR reports and support inclusion in CSR awards and indices

Appendix D.

ENABLING FACTORS	SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT	HINDERING FACTORS
Government policies and initiatives Global CSR trends Global CSR compliance	Growth-driven economy Low CSR status	Low CSR awareness Weak CSR governance structures Absence of civil society organizations

CSR CONSULTING FIELD

CORPORATE CLIENTS
(Economic capital)

Profit centered client engagement & project success criteria

Symbolic power and authority

Profit motives & economic motivations

Constant power struggles over capital and positions in the field

Symbolic Violence

Taken-for-granted rules (doxa)

Individual tension between economic-driven nature of consulting practices and individual motivations and values

Individual & Shared Habitus

Organizational tension between pressure to deliver results and lack of qualified CSR consultants
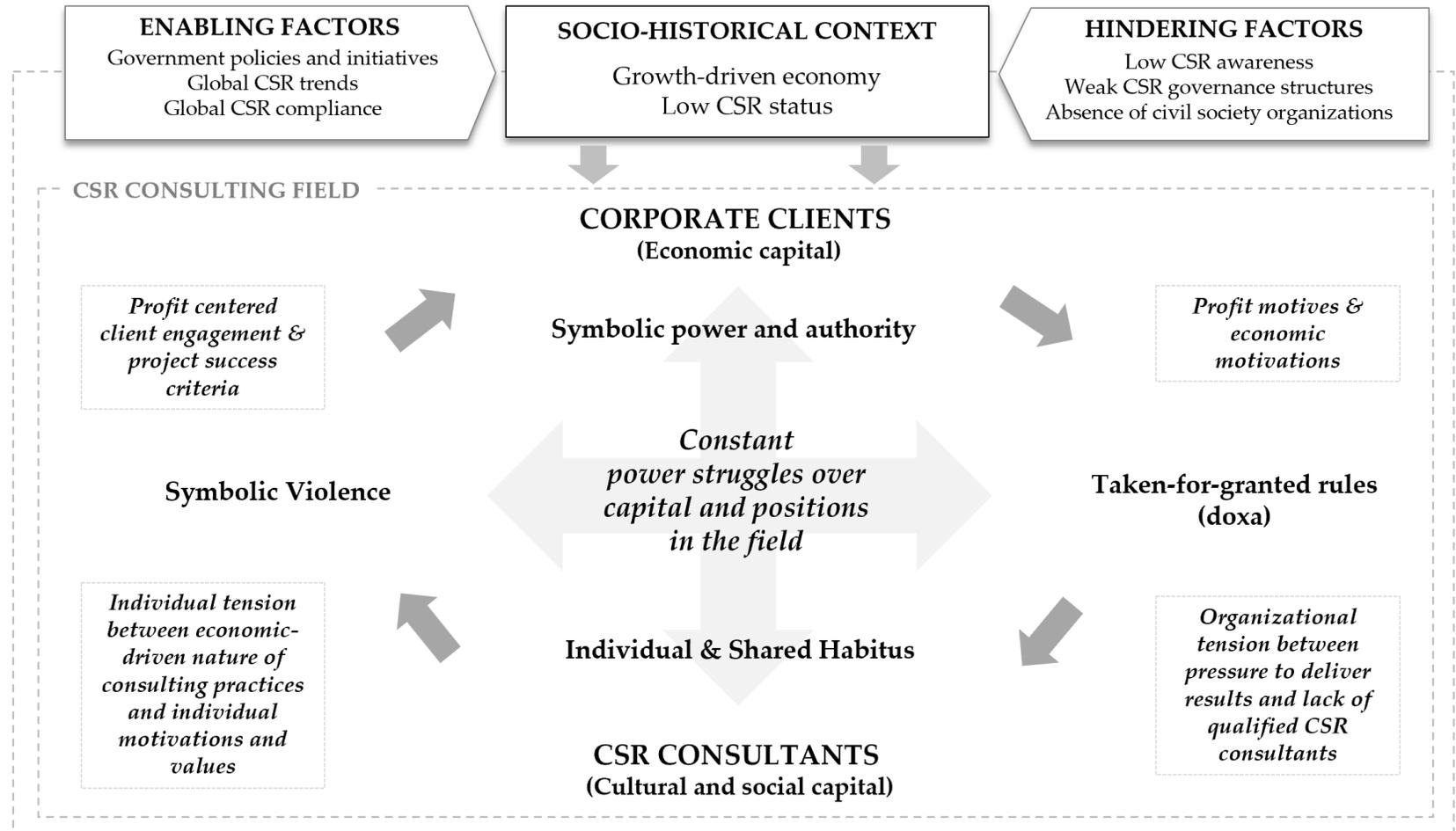
CSR CONSULTANTS
(Cultural and social capital)

Figure 1. *A conceptual framework of the field of CSR consulting in Korea*

Appendix E.

Text of invitation email

Subject: request for participation in a study on the role of CSR consultants in institutionalizing CSR in South Korea

Dear XYZ,

My name is Soebin Jang. I am a PhD Candidate in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development, University of Minnesota.

I would like to invite you to be a participant in my dissertation research that explores factors influencing the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in the South Korean context.

I am requesting your participation in a 60-minute interview, as you were referred to by *<insert as appropriate>*, as an important candidate for this inquiry. The purpose of this interview is to learn additional information about:

      a) Your perception and role as a consultant in socially constructing CSR in Korea;

      b) What factors enhance your role in socially constructing CSR;

      c) What factors inhibit your role in socially constructing CSR

For your convenience, I am enclosing two files with more information on the study (Consent Form and Interview Protocol).

The research is being supervised by Dr. Alexandre Ardichvili, Professor, Human Resources Development.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the research.

Thank you for your consideration,

Soebin Jang

Appendix F.

Consent form

The Social Construction of CSR:
A Relational View on The Role of CSR Consultants in South Korea

You are invited to participate in a research study that explores the role of CSR consultants in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR and the [enhancing/inhibiting] factors that influence their roles.

I am asking you to take part in this research study because you were personally recommended by one of my contacts, as a potential candidate with the knowledge and experience in CSR consulting work. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

This study is conducted by: *Soebin Jang, Ph.D Candidate in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota*. IRB study number: <INSERT AS APPROPRIATE>.

The following is a brief summary to help you decide whether or not to be a part of this research study.

Purpose of this study:

The purpose of this study is to examine how CSR consultants contribute to the social construction and institutionalization of CSR in the context of South Korea. Specifically, this study will explore how CSR consultants perceive their role in socially constructing CSR, what factors enhance or hinder their role, and how CSR consultants respond to these factors. Study findings will provide valuable insight for consulting agencies, professional organizations and policy makers on the [enabling and/or hindering] conditions and practices that underlie CSR and sustainability consulting work in the context of South Korea.

Study procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to participate in a *formal one-on-one interview*. The interview aims to understand your experience and perception on various aspects of CSR consulting work in South Korea. The interview will take no longer than 60 mins, and all conversations will be recorded to be transcribed later for data analysis purposes. The following are some issues to be addressed:

(a) your background and motivation as a CSR consultant

(b) your thoughts on the current status of CSR in South Korea

(c) factors that influence the adoption and diffusion of CSR in South Korea

(d) contributions of CSR consulting organizations/consultants in South Korea

(e) your organization's CSR consulting strategies and practice

(f) factors that influence your organization's CSR consulting work

In addition to the formal interview, I will ask you to fill out a *short survey* to collect your demographic information (e.g., current position, tenure, age, gender, etc.) and CSR-related consulting project records. This information will be included in the data analysis along with the interview data. All identifying information such as names will be replaced by pseudonyms.

After the first interview, you may be contacted to participate in a *follow-up interview*. If contacted, you will be able to accept or decline. If accepted, I will follow-up with you on a few topics discussed in the first interview to further understand your view and thoughts.

Risks and Benefits of Participation:

By participating in this study, you may be asked during interviews about information that may make you feel uncomfortable, or that may put you at risk of revealing confidential or sensitive information regarding your consulting practice or organization. All precautions will be taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of information disclosed during interviews. You may choose not to answer a question at any time throughout the interview process.

The potential benefits for participating in this study will be the satisfaction that you are contributing to research and practice of CSR consulting work and adding to the deeper understanding of factors that enhance or inhibit CSR consultants' roles in socially constructing and institutionalizing CSR in the context of South Korea.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

All records and information from this study will be kept private. In any publishable report as a result of this study, all identifiable information will be erased and replaced by pseudonyms. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. All original audio recordings, transcripts and documents will be kept on a private computer and a protected back-up device.

Any identifying information such as names in the transcriptions of the audio recordings will be replaced by pseudonyms or identifies, such as organization A: consultant A1, consultant A2; organization B: consultant B1, consultant B2, etc.), in compliance with the University of Minnesota's Safe Computing Recommendations. All original digital audio recordings will be erased after two years from the time of interview.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to withdraw at any time and is free to not answer any questions during the interview process.
Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: *Soebin Jang, Ph.D Candidate in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota*. You may ask me any questions you have any at this stage. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact me at: 205 Burton Hall, 178 Pillsbury Drive SE. Minneapolis, MN, 55455. My mobile is: 1-612-868-6631, e-mail: jangx242@umn.edu. My adviser's contact information is the following: Dr. Alexandre Ardichvili; 1-612-626-4529; ardic001@umn.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Research Participants' Advocate Line at 1-612-625-1650 or go to https://research.umn.edu/units/hrpp/research-participants/questions-concerns.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Appendix G.

Interview questions

1. Background information and warm-up questions

I'd like to start with some general questions regarding your current job and work you do.

a. What are your main roles and responsibilities in your current job?

b. Why (and how) did you start working as a CSR consultant? What did you do prior to working here?

c. What does CSR mean to you? And, what does your current job mean to you?

[If time permits]

And, what aspects of your job are most important to you? And, why?

2. CSR in Korea

Now I'd like to ask some questions about CSR in the context of Korea.

a. What are your thoughts about the status of CSR in Korea, in terms of its development and/or maturity at this moment?

b. What are some major factors that *drive* the adoption and diffusion of CSR in Korea? And, why? Who plays a significant role in this?

c. What are some major factors that *inhibit* the adoption and diffusion of CSR in Korea? And, why? Who plays a significant role in this?

d. How do you think the CSR consulting industry contributes to the adoption and diffusion of CSR in Korea?

 Please provide some specific examples.

 - Why do you think [X, Y, Z] is contributing?

[If time permits]

e. How do think the drivers and inhibitors described above impact the CSR consulting industry in Korea?

3. CSR consulting practice

Now I'd like to ask more specific questions about CSR consulting in Korea.

a. How would you describe your organization's position in the CSR consulting industry? And, how is it district from other CSR consulting organizations?

b. What do you think is the biggest *strength* of your organization/team, compared to your competitors? And, why?

c. What do you think are some *weaknesses* of your organization/team, compared to your competitors? And, why?

b. Can you briefly describe your organization/team's strategy/approach, in a typical CSR consulting project?

 - What is considered most important in choosing a project? And, why?

 - What are the typical steps in accomplishing the project's goals? And, why?

c. What are some critical factors that *enable* success in a CSR consulting project? And, why?

- Then, what does your organization/team do to increase these success factors?

Please provide some specific examples.

- What is the purpose of [X, Y, Z]?

- How do [X, Y, Z] benefit you and your organization/team?

e. What are some critical factors that *hinder* success in a CSR consulting project? And, why?

- Then, what does your organization/team do to overcome these factors?

Please provide some specific examples.

- What is the purpose of [X, Y, Z]?

- How do [X, Y, Z] benefit you and your organization/team?

[If time permits]

f. What does your organization/team typically do, other than engaging in CSR projects?

Please provide some specific examples.

- What is the purpose of [X, Y, Z]?

- How do [X, Y, Z] benefit you and your organization/team?

4. Closing questions and additional information

Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts today.

a. Do you have any other thoughts or ideas you would like to share?

b. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview?

　　　- If not, would you be willing to provide feedback on some preliminary findings?

Appendix H.

Demographic information questionnaire

1. How would you describe your current position? (Please circle one)

a. Junior consultant   b. Senior consultant   c. Manager   d. Senior manager   e. Director or
above

2. How long have you worked in your current position? _____ years _____
months

3. Age _____

4. Gender (Please circle one):   a. Male   b. Female c. I do not want to answer this
question

5. Which best describes the highest level of education you've completed: (Please circle
one)

a. High school   b. Bachelor's degree   c. Master's degree   d. Ph. D   e.
Other_____