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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY'S ROLE IN MENTAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

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03/05/2022

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY'S ROLE IN MENTAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

ABSTRACT

This final degree thesis aims to analyse if and how companies approach mental health within their corporate social responsibility strategies, a topic that is still often taboo for many. We start by contextualising corporate social responsibility within the company's nonmarket strategy. Next, we discuss mental health in the workplace and how it is linked with corporate social responsibility. We explore several good practices of mental health in the workplace, and compare them with others that fail to take the employees' mental well-being or work-life balance, among others, into account. This review is followed by a qualitative analysis that aims to shed further light on the topic. We disseminated a survey and obtained over 300 responses. Our findings suggest that people have a positive opinion about mental health issues but that companies still have more work to do to address their employees' concerns on this matter.

Key words: CSR, mental health, qualitative analysis, workplace, primary data.

LA RESPONSABILIDAD SOCIAL CORPORATIVA Y SU ROL EN LA GESTIÓN DE LA SALUD MENTAL

RESUMEN

Este trabajo de fin de grado busca sí y cómo las empresas tratan el tema de la salud mental dentro de sus estrategias de responsabilidad social corporativa, un tema que es todavía tabú para muchos. Empezamos contextualizando la responsabilidad social corporativa dentro de la estrategia de no mercado de la empresa. A continuación, discutimos la salud mental en el ámbito laboral y cómo se relaciona con la responsabilidad social corporativa. Exploramos diversas buenas prácticas acerca de la salud mental en el trabajo, comparándolas con otras que no tienen en cuenta el bienestar mental o la conciliación, entre otras. Esta revisión es seguida por un análisis cualitativo que pretende aportar más luz al tema. Realizamos a cabo una encuesta y obtuvimos más de 300 respuestas. Nuestros resultados sugieren que la gente tiene una opinión positiva acerca de la salud mental, pero que las empresas todavía tienen trabajo que hacer para responder a las inquietudes de sus empleados a este respecto.

Palabras clave: RSC, salud mental, análisis cualitativo, trabajo, datos primarios.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mental health care has gained much deserved importance since the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Forbes, statistics worldwide show that two thirds of the people that are currently suffering from mental health issues are not getting the care they precise. It is also fair to mention that mental health conditions alone account for a 4% GDP loss, while governments are still spending less than 0.5% of GDP on taking care of this matter (Staglin, 2022). This trend seems to be changing, with mental health issues being now more openly discussed and governments taking more action. One of the most recent examples here in Spain is the creation of the 024, a new 24-hour phoneline for people suffering from suicidal thoughts and their families.

But… are companies taking action in this regard, too? Many companies pride themselves in being socially responsible. However, do their corporate social responsibility initiatives care for the health of their employees? Greenwood and Anas (2021) claim that employers have addressed this issue with work-life balance initiatives or increased counselling options. Still, many have failed to really ingrain mental health care in their companies. In this final degree thesis, we explore the role of corporate social responsibility in managing employees' mental health.

The first part of the project provides a thorough review of the literature. First, we put corporate social responsibility in the context of nonmarket strategies. We also address the shareholder-stakeholder debate and discuss whether companies can create shared value both for themselves and their stakeholders. Next, we investigate how mental health management can play a really important role in corporate social responsibility policies through examples of good managerial practices. We also explore perquisites and bad practices. We conclude this part of the project with a section on work-life balance, which deeply affects workers' mental health.

The second part of the project contains the empirics. We disseminated a survey around mental health and corporate social responsibility through Microsoft Forms in March 2022. We obtained 350 responses. We carried out a qualitative analysis and performed t tests and ANOVA tests to compare our results by gender, age, and respondents' location. Our findings offered interesting insights, like a majority of our respondents having experienced episodes of stress, depression, and anxiety at some point. Besides, most of them were not aware of any mental health corporate social responsibility initiatives at their companies, which suggests that companies still have a long way to go regarding corporate social responsibility and mental health initiatives. We hope that this work opens up new avenues for future research around the intersection of corporate social responsibility and mental health care.

2. AN APPROACH TO NONMARKET STRATEGIES

We shall begin by stating that everything from outside the company is located in what is called "the environment". Here remains everything that turns out not to be in control of the firm. However, if we were to look deeper in the picture, we would find externalities coming from the market (where the company sells its products and services) or from the rest of the environment, the nonmarket, as experts such as Baron (1995), Doh et al. (2012), Dorobantu et al. (2017), Kim (2022), and Mellahi et al. (2016), among others, call it.

The market environment is where the company interacts with their final customers, competitors, suppliers, distributors... In other words, it comprises those agents involved in any kind of economic exchange or transaction. The company will try to create and put into practice some sort of tactics in order to earn the most money possible and maximize profits. Their goal will be to create value in the aforementioned exchanges in order to grow in the market.

Taking only into account this side of the spectrum would be typical for a businessperson back in the day, a time in which the market was the only valuable externality while running a firm. However, in today's changing dynamic world, we can find what experts call the nonmarket, in which management will consider other actors in the company's environment like government agencies, media outlets, regulators, and NGOs, among others, which might also play an important role on the company's performance (e.g., by passing laws or publishing articles that affect the firm).

Every decision made regarding this "nonmarket" will imply general and popular knowledge, it is to say, publicness. Also, actions here can be both discretionary, like some kind of contract with a public entity or involuntary, like when a powerful lobby exercises pressure on the company, maybe ending up in a general boycott of the company's products. Generally speaking, a nonmarket strategy is a set of measures taken in the nonmarket setting whose goal would be to improve the overall performance of a firm.

The firm's movements in the market are, then, influenced by the legal, social, or political aspects of our society. As a result, it is really important to craft an integrated strategy (Baron, 1995; Lawton et al., 2014). We may find different ways of approaching the matter, like forming coalitions with other firms to fight lobbies or considering it the 6th Porter's force (Porter,1979).

However, Baron (1995) argues that, in order to succeed, we should be able to distinguish the four parts of the nonmarket setting:

- **Issue** that intends to be confronted.
- **Institution(s)** in charge of the situation (government, telecommunication agency…).
- **Information** known by both parties.
- **Interests** or intentions of the parties.

Based on Baron's (1995) work, nonmarket scholars understood nonmarket strategies as being composed of two building blocs (Mellahi et al., 2016)—i.e., the corporate political activity of the firm (CPA) and its corporate social responsibility (CSR). More recently, the legal dimension has been added to these two, since companies can also act in the legal arena to obtain benefits (Casarin, 2015; Fernández-Méndez et al., 2021; Hadani, 2021).

In sum, this section highlights that crafting an adequate market strategy is important, but managers should also pay attention to the nonmarket of their firms. Nowadays, actors in this environment are increasingly relevant, like governments, activists, or lobbies that before were not even pictured by the management of a company. They should be responsible for both market and nonmarket settings, trying to merge both responses to the different "stimuli" into one so as to have a greater performance (Lawton et al., 2014). Figure 2.1 summarises how firms divide between the market and nonmarket environments in order to create an integrated strategy so to have a better outcome:
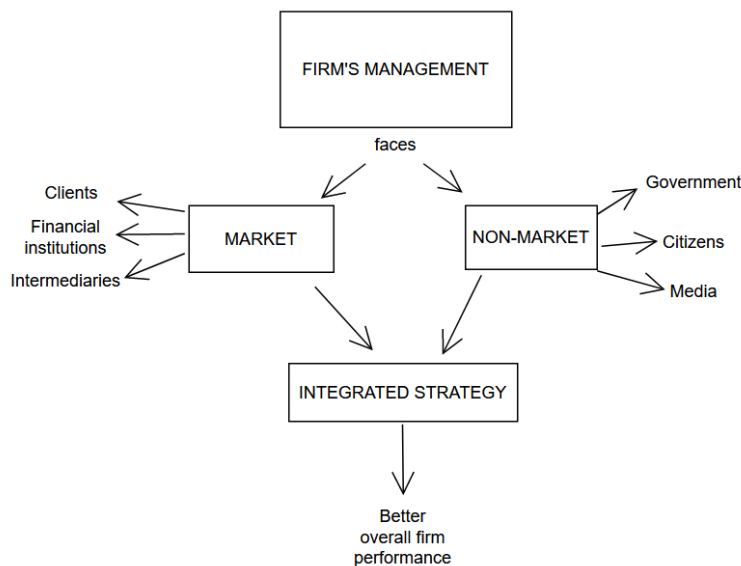

Figure 2.1. Market and nonmarket strategies. (Source: author's own elaboration).

Every one of the nonmarket aspects mentioned in the above paragraphs is important for the company. However, as I advanced in the introduction, in this final degree thesis I will focus entirely on CSR and its role in mental health in the workplace.

2.1. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

After getting to know the concept of nonmarket strategies, the present section discusses the evolution of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) term in the management literature. As reported by Carroll (2021), the term first appeared in 1953 with the following quote "What responsibilities to society may businessmen reasonably be expected to assume?" (Bowen, 1953).

Carroll (1983, p. 604) stated that "CSR involves the conduct of a business so that it is economically profitable, law abiding, ethical and socially supportive. To be socially responsible then means that profitability and obedience to the law are foremost conditions when discussing the firm's ethics and the extent to which it supports the society in which it exists with contributions of money, time, and talent." This definition adds to the one he gave in 1979, which originated the commonly known as "Carroll's pyramid", featured in Figure 2.2 below. We can see every element from the definition. First and foremost, "profits". Right above "law abiding", "ethical" and "socially supportive", in that order.

Philanthropy:
Be a good
corporation
regarding
society

Ethics: Trying to do what is fair and
harmless towards others
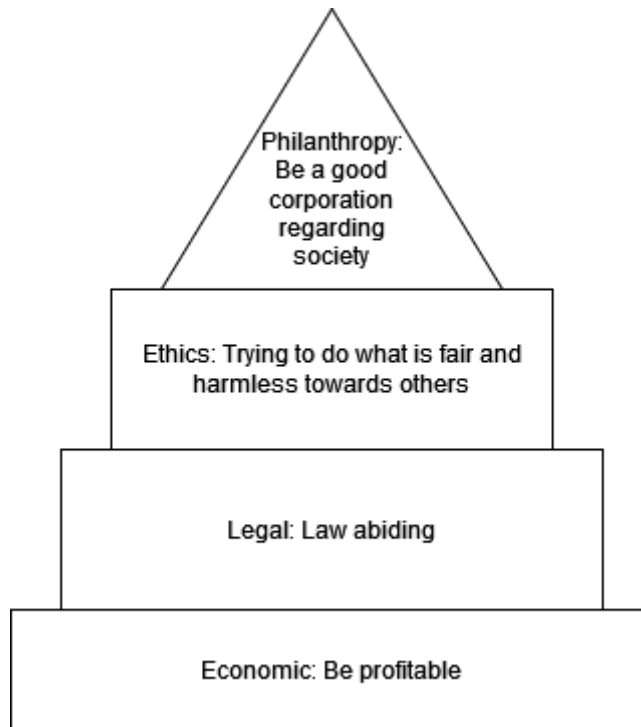
Legal: Law abiding

Economic: Be profitable

Figure 1.2: Carrol's pyramid (Source: adapted from Carroll, 1979).

Continuing with Carroll's thesis, Glavas and Aguinis (2012) did a study on CSR and concluded, among other things, that:

- The main reasons for a company to engage in CSR are both stakeholders and government forces (due to their set of laws and certificates).
- The last-mentioned government forces may prevent the company from making real CSR investments and just be symbolic, in order to keep members of the company "happy".
- Making CSR policies will improve the company's image on the outside.

The last bullet point suggests that a company can create long-lasting relationships with their clients and the general public, and their employees (by creating loyalty because these workers feel good by working for our company) via CSR. In this sense, a company that does good creates a good atmosphere around it, thus increasing popularity and/or sales. Indeed, companies are relying on their CSR initiatives to create their employer brand to engage current potential employees and attract new ones (Carlini et al., 2019).

This loyalty from both consumers and employees would be the perfect scenario for a fast-growing, cutting-edge company. This is only the vision from an enterprise perspective. However, it would also bring benefits to society as a whole. The values that could be reflected on it are as varied as environmental concerns and care (such as carbon offsetting or ecological measures), contributing to the community they are settled in or, the most evident, job creation.

CSR covers many important areas, and the division does not remain clear among all researchers. According to Stobierski (2021), we may find four general types:

- **Environmental.** It does cover both local surroundings, such as a nearby lake, but also the whole world's territory (with the carbon footprint measuring). Many

important and meaningful measures would be to reduce the emissions, ruling policies such as no plastic use in the company or taking care of not polluting nearby waters. A common example nowadays is, for instance, carbon offsetting by planting trees, contributing back to the earth.

- **Ethical.** Making sure the company acts with the best possible manners, complying with the law, being equal in treatment to all employees and stakeholders… An example of this could be to always make sure to buy fair trade or organic products.
- **Philanthropic.** This consists of giving back to the community where the business is settled in. For example, donating a part of the profits to a charity of choice, making employees volunteer to make the community a better place, etc. An example for local restaurants could be to donate the leftovers to food banks or soup kitchens.
- **Economic Responsibility.** This term refers to putting society as maybe not the first priority but with relatively similar importance with making profits. So maybe we can put it as "making profits while taking into account the people and the community".

CSR is important for both large and small or medium-sized companies (Morsing and Perrini, 2009; Murillo and Lozano, 2006). Although smaller in size, the benefits of their actions on society, employees, and the company's general public wellbeing are also noticeable. CSR has gotten to such a level of importance these days that the European Union (EU) has published a set of laws regarding it and also a report with different propositions and ideas.[1] The UN has also created the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, n.d.). They are 17 objectives to be achieved by 2030 that bring up topics such as "Good Health and Wellbeing" or "Climate action". This has much to do with CSR because every objective can be related to the actions of a company. It is not uncommon to see how businesses strategically state on their websites "contributing to the 3rd SDG" or so on. For example, the aforementioned 3rd SDG deals with health and wellbeing, and many companies claim to support mental health NGOs with donations or have a really supportive policy regarding mental health. For instance, one of Danone's reads as follows: "Target 3.4: By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing."[2]. That could be a way of mixing both CSR and health. We should remember though that CSR is not only about the outside of the company, but it also includes the inside as well, it is to say, the workers, from the lowest to C-level.

2.1.2. Creating shared value

According to Friedman (1970) and the shareholder theory advocates (e.g., Jensen and Meckling, 1976; Moore, 1999), a company's ultimate goal would be to make money provided that it abides by the law. Normally, an average firm would create value out of selling goods or services, so as to obtain benefit from it.

The shareholder theory is popularly misbelieved to not allow any kind of CSR investment coming from the company (like donations to a charity project in the community where

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[1] More information about the EU creating laws on CSR can be found on: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/sustainability/corporate-social-responsibility-responsible-business-conduct_en (Last accessed 19 May 2022).

[2] More information about Danone's contribution to SDG 3 can be found on https://www.danone.com/impact/un-sustainable-developement-goals/sdg3-good-health-and-well-being.html (Last accessed 15 May 2022).

they are established or investments in the employee's wellness). However, this is not at all close to reality as the theory supports to invest what would do best for the company, making these examples a possibility.

Contrary to what is stated above, there is another theory, the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), which has a long-standing in the management literature (e.g., Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Dmytriyev et al., 2021; Laplume et al., 2008; Mitchell et al., 1997) and focuses more on how CSR can also play an important role in making a company profit. This research book suggests that a company should focus on the interests of every stakeholder even if it reduces profits a bit. But what falls inside a stakeholder? He believed that they were not only shareholders but employees, customers, suppliers... These ideas are sometimes misbelieved to not pursue profits, which is not at all true. They look for the biggest profits possible, considering not only shareholders but everybody else mentioned before. Benefits may not be the largest possible but, following this theory, companies also look for the well-being of stakeholders other than shareholders.

Companies have tended to focus on themselves and not on the society where they are settled or where they take their resources until recently. Anyone would think "that is a really narrow way of creating value, as the only people benefitting from it are the company, and maybe the buyers", as Porter and Kramer (2011) claimed. According to these authors, firms should try to create the so-called "shared value". Basically, they will create value for both the company and the society where they are established. In other words, companies would be able to link their success to the people's success.

In the end, shared value is a core issue in a company's way of doing business. However, this concept has created quite a controversy in the research world. Specifically, Crane et al. (2014) reflected on the weaknesses of the concept. First and foremost, the term is really innocent towards companies complying with this issue. Most companies would invest more in giving the impression of solving critical social problems while, in reality, not solving society's most critical problems. It also ignores how companies can align with societies in terms of long-term development goals, in order to improve as a whole.

More recently, de los Reyes et al. (2017) tried to reconcile Porter and Kramer (2011) and Crane et al.'s (2014) research by putting forward the concept of CSV+, which prompts managers to assess those social engagements in which one of the parties may end up holding a losing position. Table 2.1, retrieved from de los Reyes et al. (2017) offers a comparison of the three approaches:

	Porter and Kramer	Crane, Palazzo, Spence and Matten	de los Reyes et al.
Framework provided	CSV	None	CSV+
Approach to Porter and Kramer (2011)	Defend	Critical	Constructively critical, building on CSV as a managerial framework
Approach to ethics	Compliance with ethical (and legal) norms is expressly assumed	Compliance with ethical and legal norms is a serious challenge and assuming otherwise is naïve	Ethical frameworks (that make compliance with ethical norms possible) should be integrated with CSV
Integrating societal ends and corporate strategy	Managers should focus on opportunities to create social and economic value	CSV focuses on win-win opportunities (A cases) and ignores the tension between business and society (B cases)	Managers should follow CSV+ norm-taking framework + norm making framework in order to address B-cases

Table 2.1. Comparison among CSV perspectives. (Source: retrieved from de los Reyes et al., 2017)

However, these CSR measures may not pay off as fast as one might imagine. For instance, there is an example of a really risky but strong movement done by the pharmacy company CVS.[3] In 2014, they decided to stop selling tobacco in their stores. This was possibly one of the biggest revenues from the company, but they wanted to both be caring to the society and also keep their stakeholders happy (American Cancer Society and a campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids). Those days were not easy for the company's stocks but made the employees and the stakeholders happier, knowing they worked for a socially concerned enterprise, which is a clear example of how to work with both the social and the economic aspects.

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[3] This example comes from de los Reyes et al. (2017) and Porter and Kramer (2011).

3. MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Before discussing why mental health is important, it is key to define what mental health is. In this regard, there is no single definition of mental health. As reported by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), mental health "includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.".[4] Based on this definition, it is evident that any change in an individual's mental health will alter their reaction to stress, how they socialise, or make any decision.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it "is a state of wellbeing in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."[5]. Compared with the CDC one, this seems more wholesome due to the fact that it mentions "can cope with the normal stresses of life".

Therefore, keeping a good mental health is a matter of vital importance at every single moment of an individual's life. Paraphrasing the Latin proverb "Mens sana in corpore sano", previous research has found a link between physical and mental health (Ohrnberger et al., 2017). Indeed, a poor mental health increases the risk of developing diabetes, and cardiovascular or metabolic diseases, among others (Pratt, 2022; Spiegel, 2022).

As reported by the WHO or McKinsey & Co, mental health can be damaged by the workplace, while affecting workers' performance. The international organization believes that depression and anxiety alone cost globally $1 trillion because of the lost productivity. However, it also suggests that for every dollar spent on treating mental disorders, there is a $4 return for productivity and better general health (which means fewer "sick days" or presenteeism).[6]

So, this is, obviously, a subject to take seriously to obtain better employee performance that also helps achieve a healthier society. According to the information given by many health-related organizations (WHO, Mind or the British Psychological Society, 2017), anxiety problems in the workplace may lead to:

- Seeing both productivity and performance reduced;
- Reduced commitment to one's work;
- Diminished communication skills; and
- Bad general wellbeing.

For instance, some studies reveal that someone experiencing any kind of mental health condition is more prone to suffer from paranoia, which can result in the employee taking criticisms from other co-workers (or even jokes) very seriously, doubting their own work or confidence breakdowns (Lopes et al., 2019).

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[4] This definition can be found here: https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/ (Last accessed 15 May 2022).

[5] This definition can be found here: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response (Last accessed 15 May 2022).

[6] Information retrieved from https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/promotion-prevention/mental-health-in-the-workplace (Last accessed 15 May 2022).

To put all this into perspective, Table 3.1 below offers some data that come from *Mind Share Partners' 2021 Mental Health at Work Report*.[7] This mental health nonprofit carried out an online survey to employees working full time in the US at more-than-11-people firms. In 2021, after the 2020's pandemic, 68% of millennials and 81% of all born from 1995 to 2000 left a job due to a mental health crisis. This percentage goes to 50% in the "overall" age category. These numbers had gone up compared to those of 2019 (a 36%, 8%, and 47% of change). Also, 29% more people reported having experienced at least one mental health symptom compared to 2019 (from 59 to 76%). This means it nearly affects everyone. Particularly, corporate-level employees such as managers and CEOs are more likely to experience them.

These hikes have obviously emphasized the importance of the topic, making a 5% difference from 86% in 2019 to 91% of respondents saying that a company's vision should embrace mental health, which is a key figure.

For those not used to this terminology, Gen Zs are people born from 1995 to 2000, and millennials are people born from 1978 to 1995.

Employee MH Experience	2021	2019	Growth
Increasing burnout			
Left roles for MH reasons (Gen Z)	81%	75%	8%
Left roles for MH reasons (Millennials)	68%	50%	36%
Left roles for MH reasons (overall)	50%	34%	47%
A company's culture should support MH	91%	86%	6%
Reported at least 1 symptom of a MH condition	76%	59%	29%

Table 3.1. Employees' mental health experience. (Source: elaborated based on Mind Share Partners' 2021 Mental Health at Work Report).

According to the research articles of Understood (another mental health non-profit), the data suggest that companies should invest in mental health given its overall benefits, such as:

- **Employee loyalty.** A good manager should always try to make the employees feel valued at a company to create a link between them and the company. Loyalty is also promoted by hiring employees that identify with the values of the company (sustainability, career development…). This also favours:
- **Increased performance.** It is important that employees remain happy and in good mental health. Statistics show that treating depression will help performance in the workplace and reduce both absenteeism and presenteeism (going to work under performance-damaging circumstances like an illness).
- As previously said, treating mental health would **reduce the risks of developing other illnesses** that may affect the company economically with healthcare-related costs and a loss of a valued asset. The National Alliance on Mental Illness[8] has found that cardiovascular illnesses are almost twice more likely to appear in people with mental health problems.

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[7] The full report can be downloaded here: https://www.mindsharepartners.org/mentalhealthatworkreport-2021 (Last accessed 16 May 2022).

[8] Information retrieved from https://www.nami.org/mhstats (Last accessed 16 May 2022).

Although this project focuses on CSR and, therefore, may be associated with SMEs or larger firms, it is also important to stress that mental health issues also affect self-employed people, even if there is scarce research on the subject. For example, Spanish actress Yolanda Ramos discussed the many hurdles she has faced while trying to take care of her mental health throughout her career (she could not have a free day, for instance) (Paredes, 2022).

Related to this, in today's digitalized world, we can find employees that have come to be known as "false self-employed". This is a new perspective that consists of a person being registered to count as self-employed for tax-related issues but actually working for a company. VTC drivers may fall within this category of the "false self-employed". According to different studies like Smith (2015) or LaMagna (2018), these people suffer poor working conditions like:

- Many studies (Bowman, 2019) suggest that they make approximately $7 per hour, after taking into account all the expenses, indeed (before this, the average earnings are around $19 in the US). This is near the minimum wage, so it is not enough to live well in a country with no public health or an affordable real-estate market (worse in the cities Uber or other companies are working in).
- Drivers have to face people for a living, with their racist remarks, bad day's arguments, or pointless, endless conversations.
- Another counterpart would be "evaluations and comments" in which clients value the service. These companies are known for penalising the workers when they do have bad comments. Uber punishes drivers with $60 courses to avoid the deactivation of the account. This not only takes out a day or two of making a living but also, they have to pay what, in the end, is no less than a fine for having bad luck with the customer's selection. This kind of situation can arrive when the driver hits lower than 4.6 stars.

That is why the Independent Driver's Guild (IDG) was founded in 2016. This "union" presents on their website their main achieved milestones, such as obtaining a minimum wage for drivers in some cities ($27.86 per hour), the possibility for users to tip drivers or creating group therapy sessions (MacLellan, 2019) in different languages for drivers to speak and open up about their problems (Driver's Guild, n.d.). This was partly due to 7 VTC drivers committing suicide in New York City in 2018 (Pager and Palmer, 2018).

Another area that deserves attention is mental health in sports. Professional athletes are also bound to suffer from mental health conditions (Ströhle, 2019). In general, this topic is not discussed enough in our society, but among athletes it might be even worse, as the stigma surrounding this issue is even bigger (Bauman, 2016). One of the most common problems would be, for example, eating disorders, which are causing trouble across many sports disciplines (Sundgot-Borgen and Torstveit, 2010).

A recent study by McGraw et al. (2018) found that NFL players perceived many possible sources of depression like:

- Injury related;
- A possible involuntary career termination;
- Performance failure; and
- Disconnection with family or other main supports.

Out of all the 45 players, 43 experienced mental health issues throughout or after their career, such as anger, stress, depression, loneliness, difficulty with social connections, loss of identity after retiring or isolation.

This became such a problem for the NFL that they realized they had to do something. First of all, they created a PowerPoint for the players about mental health and how they could use all the resources available such as the team doctor or the players 24/7 "hotline" to talk with an expert (recently created). As this issue also affected former players that had no access to these resources, they allocated 22 million dollars for programmes and healthcare benefits for former players as well. However, as the study shows, these resources are not enough to cover all the mental health struggling. There is much more that could be done like "group therapies" so players know they are not alone, and listening to other former and non-former players, among others.

Although not many professional athletes have openly discussed their mental health struggles, there are some that have done it. In Spain, award-winning gymnasts like Gervasio Defer and Olatz Rodríguez, and boxer Jero García have also recently discussed their struggles with Ángel Martín in his podcast "Por si las voces vuelven".[9]

In the international scene, Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps acknowledged in an interview for the Olympics Committee's website his struggles with mental health issues since the 2004 games (Athens), when he first experienced them (Phelps, 2021). Despite managing to obtain six golds and two bronzes, he suffered from post-Olympic depression. Four years later, in Beijing, he suffered from the same feelings, this time having won eight golds, a world record. He realized he had to deal with it somehow. He had to understand how he truly is and that sometimes "it is not okay to not feel okay", in his own words.

Five-time NBA All-Star Kevin Love has struggled with mental health issues as well. He experienced something that most high-level athletes face when exposed to high pressure. One of his symptoms was that some days he could not get out of bed. After speaking up about his experience and thoughts, he felt much better. From that day on, he started to raise awareness on the media and to bring the conversation to the table. He created a foundation whose goal is to help one billion people in five years (Kole, 2021).

This exemplifies that it is really important to raise awareness about mental health and sports. That is why the English Football League (EFL, so Championship, League One and League Two) partnered with Mind, an organization trying to help people with bad mental health, back in 2019 (Mind, n.d). As a result, every club from those three divisions wears a "squiggle" on the back next to each player's name. Figure 3.1. shows a representation of this T-shirt design.

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[9] Podcast available in online platforms like Spotify: https://open.spotify.com/show/3ZsoveYNKojRyaeWpM3ruo (Last accessed 16 May 2022).

Figure 3.1. Mind association's partnership with EFL shows a "squiggle" on the back of the shirt (Source: EFL).

4. LINKING CSR AND MENTAL HEALTH

CSR offers companies the possibility to take care and improve the mental health of their employees. In this section we review some companies' positive and mindful mental health initiatives. However, before delving into them, we must acknowledge that some companies still have working conditions that negatively impact the mental health of their employees.

As one among many examples, in 2021, 13 Goldman Sachs (GS) junior employees at the NYC branch decided they wanted to reflect on how they were feeling by doing a survey and creating a PowerPoint (later leaked by The New York Times in 2021 and reported by Reuters) with the results and the analysis, just like another GS slideshow would be. They revealed these working conditions:

Hours worked on average (January '21)	98
Hours slept on average (per night)	5
Average time to go to bed	3 am
Likelihood of working at GS in 6 months	3.5
Rate your mental health before and after accepting the job	8.8 to 2.8
Rate your physical health before and after accepting the job	9.0 to 2.3
Rate your satisfaction with your personal life	1.0
Rate your satisfaction with your work life	2.0

Table 4.1. Leaked working conditions at Goldman Sachs. (Source: The New York Times, 2021).

Respondents complained about unrealistic deadlines, being ignored during meetings, being shouted, publicly criticized, excessively monitored… At the end of the PowerPoint presentation, they propose comprehensive measures like working a maximum of 80 hours per week (that would still be a 16-hour workday) in order to have some rest (that would make 8 free hours a day) or not being forced to work on Saturdays or after 9pm on a Friday.

According to press interviews, employees in junior positions (it is to say, those recently graduated) may experience poorer working conditions. However, this is a sometimes-overlooked problem as salaries are quite high. Even at a young age employees might be

getting a 6-figure contract. Plus, after a decade of experience, a 7-digit contract can be achieved.

Reading some interviews (Turits from BBC, 2021), we might perceive that corporate level investment bankers usually think that most employees in this kind of firms know from before what to expect: huge workloads, long hours, not a lot of free time… But they do it even so because "it is what it is" in order to promote and grow in the financial world, because of the fact they can "brag about working at a big important firm", etc.

Goldman Sachs — **Analyst Treatment (1 / 3)** — INVESTMENT BANKING DIVISION

All respondents feel as though work hours have negatively impacted their relationships with friends and/or family. The majority of 1st year analysts feel they have been the victim of workplace abuse and have or considered seeking help due to deteriorating mental health

Question — Percent

Have your work hours negatively impacted relationships with family and/or friends? — No 0% / Yes 100%

Do you feel like you've been a victim of workplace abuse? — No 23% / Yes 77%

Have you sought or considered seeking counseling, therapy or any additional services for your mental health due to the stress of this job? — No 25% / Yes 75%

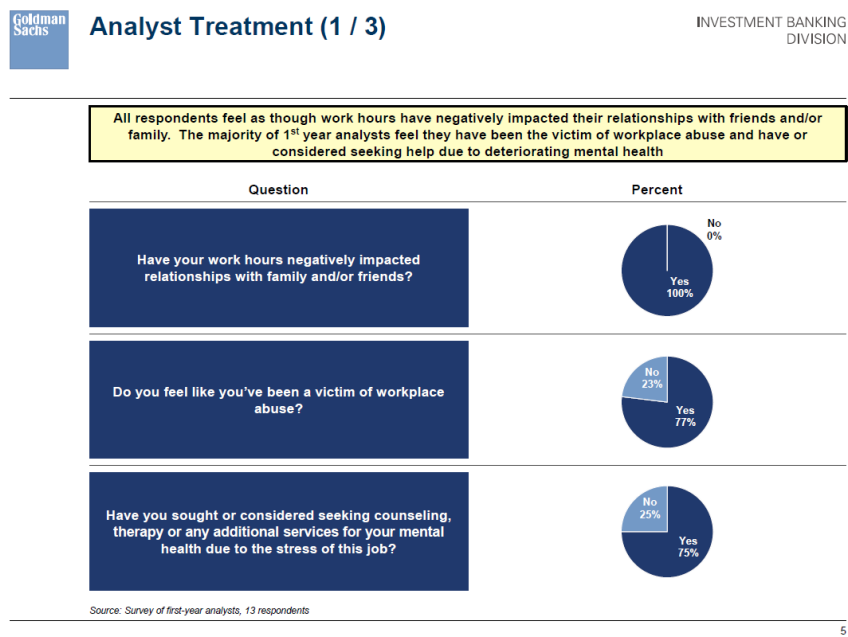Source: Survey of first-year analysts, 13 respondents

5

Figure 4.1. Example of Goldman Sach's slides. (Source: The New York Times, 2021).

Cases like that of Moritz Erhardt, who suffered an epileptic seizure and died later in his London flat, have created large controversies. This 21-year-old intern at the Bank of America Merryll Lynch had dedicated 72 straight hours to work before his passing in 2013. The coroner did not establish a clear link between exhaustion and the epileptic attack but mentioned it as one of the possibilities triggering it (Kennedy, 2013).

In sharp contrast with this example, there are other companies that are trying to roll out CSR initiatives that aim to improve working conditions and their employees' mental health. In the following subsections we mention some of these initiatives, placing a special emphasis in perks and work-life balance policies that aim to provide employees with the possibility to work without having to give up their personal life.

4.1. MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Although there is still a long road to go for companies to address mental health issues in the workplace, there are some examples of companies that are pioneering this kind of initiative to take care of their employees. Microsoft, Google, Apple, Unilever, and Influence and Co. are among them.

Microsoft has implemented a program called *Microsoft Cares* in which they have hired a team of experts in counselling and listening to others to try to help not only employees

but their families as well. These therapists are available day wide through smartphone applications, "wellness workshops" or 1on1 meetings. Also, the firm managers meet regularly with these counsellors to know what employees are experiencing so to improve. This is incontestably an excellent job from the Mountain View firm. However, it is a double-edged sword, too. Without taking Microsoft's goodwill out of the question, this will attract extraordinary talent to the company as workers.

For instance, according to Deloitte's latest report on the subject (2021), 41% of millennials and 46% of Gen Z's feel stressed most of the time. Nowadays, especially those collectives, are looking for companies that seem to care about mental health and their employees' overall happiness.

Apple has been reported several times (Kosoff, 2016 and Business Insider, 2018) as a really caring company towards its employees. According to the mentioned articles:

- Employees there believe their career is developing with the company, considered to be one of the most fast-growing companies in Silicon Valley.
- They perceive they are being useful (not only for the company but for the whole world, as the firm is so influential).
- When starting to work for Apple, management gives them the greatest quality training, so they get the firm's values.
- They believe working for the company gives them a good society status.

Changing industries, **Unilever** is one of the biggest companies to best manage mental health. According to the company's official documents and articles, they offer therapy sessions to C-level employees, hold educational meetings for its workers (regarding important topics such as mental health, sleep, mindfulness, or physical training), and much more. All of this has been related to the improvement of someone's well-being. Most importantly, they are trying to raise awareness and trying to remove the stigma on the subject. As the Chief Learning Officer (CLO), Tim Munden said "If you want a high-performing company, you need resilient, healthy employees. We want our employees to have confidence to have a conversation about mental health. People are very reluctant to speak about it, so we want to give people the space to talk about it." (Unilever, n.d.).

On a smaller scale, Kelsey Meyer, CEO of **Influence and Co.** wrote an article for *Harvard Business Review* (2016) about a substantial change she made in her marketing firm. It all started in a company retreat in which she openly talked with her employees about the mental health conditions that had disturbed her family over the years. That opened the possibility of other fellow employees talking about theirs. Right after coming back, she decided to create her own Mental Health policy for her company but with a twist, involving every single employee. She started by teaming up with his HR director to discuss the important points, and right after that, she invited all the employees to communicate their views and propositions. She managed to create a really positive and relaxed atmosphere among the working force. After every idea had been heard, the Human Resources manager looked for experts online and did some research, also consulting a mental health advocate. It is important to do that as CEOs do not usually have the vision to rule this kind of accommodation and new ideas. The expert also provides modern creative approaches, open chatting techniques, or ideas on proper language to use. When finished, Meyer first showed the policy to the leaders of each department and afterwards to the rest of the employees.

In summary, one may wonder what some easy, positive, and mindful ideas for companies to do to improve the worker's mental health may be. The following bullet points contain some of them.

- Managers meeting and chatting with employees to know what their concerns and worries are, so to try to help (Holmes, 2016)
- Creating a "corporate mental health policy" so every aspect related to mental health issues is taking into account. For doing this, it is important to count on the employees like the marketing firm did.
- Proposing mindfulness, group therapies or counselling workshops
- Making employees feel valued and useful by praising how important their work is

4.2. WORKPLACE PERKS

Concerning perks, it is not easy to find such a level of formality, at least on an average worker level. It is to say, there are many research papers on corporate-level perquisites but not on the rest of the working scale. For instance, we may see papers like Yermack (2006) on CEOs taking advantage of the company's resources or Luo et al. (2010) for the Chinese bank owners and their conflicts of interests.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, *perquisites* or *perks* are "something you receive as well as your wages for doing a particular job". It is to say, experiences or things employees might be gifted with, apart from their regular salary. The word perquisite might not be as common as the informal one "perks". Perks are widespread these days across big and not-so-big corporations. The most obvious reason is that it is a way of rewarding employees differently to get them to be more productive, motivated, satisfied, or happy with the company they work in by seeing they recognize their demanding work.

But also, they can help on shaping the company's culture. Let us imagine a big serious firm that changes hands because of a buyout. If these new managers wanted to change that mentioned tag of seriousness (only among employees), they would allow "casual Fridays" (wearing more casual clothing at the end of the workweek), they would create micro spaces for chats among employees (maybe around a free coffee), etc. This would create a laid-back working environment that might please employees and make them work more efficiently.

Obviously, every perk is designed for a particular business culture. If a manager ever wanted their employees to feel appreciated in the workplace, employees would have paid vacations, paid sick days, or paid courses so to develop their careers and knowledge.

Letting alone the company's goodwill towards their employees, it undeniably has benefits for the business as well. These perks, as said before, motivate and encourage employees to work harder so to improve their performance. It might be due to a variety of factors such as them feeling good because they are working for a company that values their work, because the enterprise is aligned with their vision, in order to get more of that reward… However, companies should not rely solely on perks to create a strong company culture. As Mohammad Anwar argues, "at the end of the day, free ice cream doesn't make up for bad treatment from a boss or colleagues. A yoga studio won't inspire your employees to give their best effort if they don't also feel like their work serves a purpose. Perks and benefits are no substitute for a supportive, positive company culture." (Anwar, 2021).

Some of them might appreciate this kind of stuff, but others might not appreciate it that much. That is why employees should be asked directly what they would like with internal surveys, for example. Perquisites offered by managers should be in line with the company's objectives and culture. They should create a supportive environment, so employees are satisfied with their working life and are most productive. Forbes (2015) made a compilation of some of the top perks among American companies. Among others:

- Costco, the American supermarket, does not open on Thanksgiving as many other competitors do (Rafter, 2014).
- Facebook offers a 4 months' paid leave to new parents and gives away 4000 dollars in baby cash.
- Qualcomm has hobby clubs for their employees, so they can express their passions and be creative.
- Starbucks does benefits for part-time workers such as a 4% contribution to their 401 (k) pension plan.
- J&J have flexible timetables, free gyms, and mindfulness workshops.
- Netflix gives shares to their employees worth 5% of their wage and does not keep track of vacation days.

Google often stands as the epitome of a company offering perks. They provide employees with free snacks, a nap room, free coffee, and office entertainment like a ping pong table (Burkus, 2015). This is an illustration of what (normally) tech companies do so to attract new young talents and retain them. By giving them free food like snacks (sugar, so the brain works better) or building a nap room, they create the best conditions in order to maximize productivity and efficiency, as well as having happy employees that do not mind working for one more hour.

One of Google's founders, Sergei Brin decided to place either a free of charge coffee machine or a micro kitchen for every two working areas. One may wonder about why that particular spacing. These spaces (with tables and chairs) favour chats between employees from different departments so they can share their ideas and come up with creative solutions to problems the company is facing or an exciting invention. Google's founder also said that in case they failed to come up with something new, at least they got a good conversation.

Nonetheless, there are instances in which these free perks come at a cost. For instance, some tech companies all along the US but mostly in the San Francisco Bay Area such as Tesla, Apple or Google provide their employees with a shuttle service that runs every day from 5 am until 10 pm at night (Miller, 2015; Helft, 2007). Some might even start earlier for the sunrise shift (Helpler, 2020). People might live more than one hour away by car, so this shuttle comes in handy. However, they come with a twist, as most of them have Wi-Fi so that workers are free to get some work done before arriving at the office and take advantage of that time. This might be considered as the company provoking employees to work more as, in the end, they might just go out at their regular time or even later. These services are estimated to cost, for example, Apple, around 35 million dollars every year (there are more than 80 routes each day, some of them going as far as one hour and a half away). These long distances are a result of the really expensive house market in the SF Bay Area with rents still hiking (from maybe 2500$ a month), being salaries 3500$. That is why many companies are thinking of building themselves affordable housing on campus for their employees. Initially, this does not sound like a bad idea but may raise a lot of questions: What about employees? Is it worth it to live

near work and your workmates, not being able to disconnect? Or in an area with no parks or bars?

Last but not least, there are other initiatives that are subject to a double interpretation. For instance, the common "bring-your-dog/kids-to-work day"? Normally, workers with kids or dogs might leave early (it is to say, at their established time) so to take care of them. With your dog or kid at your office, there is no excuse for doing so as they are there with them so they can remain at work much more time, as they are not in a rush. This links well with the next sub-section, which explores work-life balance, which can act as a stressor in employees' lives.

4.3. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

According to Greenhaus and Allen (2011), work-life balance remains one of the least discussed topics in work-life research, however heavily determining everybody's life. Marks and MacDermid (1996) provided one of the first definitions given of work-life balance. They defined it as the equal division of time and attention amongst the several roles that compose an individual's life system. Nonetheless,

Nonetheless, it is a complex task to provide a wholesome definition of what work-life balance is. Based on a thorough review of the literature, Sirgy and Lee (2018) figured that it involves two key dimensions: engagement in both work and nonwork life, as well as minimal conflict between the social role in both aspects of someone's life.

According to the Mental Health Foundation, it would be more about being satisfied with the amount of time dedicated to work and to leisure. Having a healthy work-life balance would set the perfect conditions for living a better, happy life and avoiding any job burnout. According to the organization's guidelines, it would look like this: [10]

- Having sensible deadlines at work, that allow us to spend time with our friends, family or doing our hobbies.
- Having enough time to adequately rest and eat.
- Not worrying about work when we are at home.

Most modern definitions try to focus more on personal development and happiness, while traditional ones are more prone to work and house tasks and chores. One important aspect that should be taken into account while discussing work-life balance is the country's culture. That is why the OECD does a yearly analysis on this among other topics.[11] Table 4.2 displays some figures about the percentage of employees that overworks in each of the countries analysed, as well as their time for leisure and personal care.

We may see a similarity in both Korea and Japan, as they share a similar past. The time allocated to leisure is significantly lower in Japan, however, I do think it might be because of the difficulty that commuting represents in most of the big cities. However, only in Korea we can find gender inequality in both overworking and leisure time. That is why the Government is working on programmes to increase fertility rates and to avoid compromising the careers of parents (especially mothers) when having a child.

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[10] Guidelines can be found here: https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/w/work-life-balance (Last accessed 16 May 2022).
[11] Data available at: https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/work-life-balance/ (Last accessed 16 May 2022).

Mexico and Turkey are among the top over workers in the OECD, with 25% or more of the total workforce. However, it should be said that the Eurasian country has made incredible improvements since 2011 when nearly 46% of workers were overworked. Nevertheless, many workers are still told to come to work on weekends or outside working hours so to make the company grow.

	Overworking	Time for leisure and personal care	Gender Inequality
OECD Average	10% of employees	15 hours	
France	7.7% of employees	16.2 hours	1.96
Germany	3.9% of employees	15.6 hours	3.11
Italy	3.3% of employees	16.5 hours	2.00
Japan	15.7% of employees	14.1 hours	1.02
Korea	19.7% of employees	14.8 hours	1.04
Spain	2.5% of employees	15.7 hours	1.06
Turkey	25% of employees	14.6 hours	1.35
United Kingdom	10.8% of employees	14.9 hours	2.43
United States	10.4% of employees	14.6 hours	2.09
Switzerland	0.4% of employees	15 hours	1.61
Mexico	27% of employees	13.5 hours	1.90

Table 4.2. OECD's work-life balance data. (Source: OECD's Better Life Index (report on Work-Life Balance)).

Mediterranean countries share similar values and cultures so it makes sense that those have similar numbers as well. In Spain, the percentage of employees "working very long hours" is 4% and time devoted to leisure is among the highest in the OECD area, 15.9 hours, only after Italy, France, and the Netherlands. We find a wide gender inequality gap in terms of overworking, meaning that many mothers take care of more household issues and errands in comparison to men. Female employment after having a child is, nevertheless, rising but at a slower pace than the average OECD country. This should be fixed by creating measures that make it easier for families to combine work and personal life and also more policies regarding fertility as Spain is way behind in fertility rates.

Figures in Italy look even better. Fewer people work for longer than in Spain, and they allocate more time for personal issues. However, like in our country, we can find low fertility rates, which should be worked on as well. In the case of France, nearly 8% of the workers "work very long hours" but remains as the second in leisure time with 16.4 hours a day. In terms of gender equality, fertility is above the OECD average and among employed women from 25 to 54, 78% work full-time. Even though there are a few policies that could be improved, France is a pretty good example of a country that takes care of this issue seriously.

Switzerland stands as one of the countries achieving a better work-life balance, with only 0.4% of employees overworking and 15 hours dedicated to themselves. According to Cerini (2022) and Quora (2020), it might be all due to different reasons:

- Work-life balance is taken very seriously, having institutional lunch breaks that no one dares to challenge and stunning job conditions (4 paid weeks of holidays)
- A strong and efficient job market.
- Their planning ahead mentality. In order to not be in a rush, they plan everything way before. If something suddenly changes, they have time to adapt their schedule so they don't need to feel like they should rush.
- Their extreme punctuality is also a very important factor.

In academic research, Haar et al. (2014) conducted a study about WLB satisfaction, finding interesting sociological results. He compared this aspect of life in seven societies (NZ Maoris, NZ Europeans, French, Spaniards, Italians, Malaysians or Chinese), creating a summary on a chart like the one featured in Table 4.3:

WLB	Satisfied with both roles	Enjoy every part of my life equally well	Resist the demands of both my job and my personal life	Cronbach's alpha
NEW ZEALAND	.847	.866	.821	.80
MAORI	.906	.904	.883	.88
FRANCE	.875	.842	.910	.85
ITALY	.873	.870	.800	.80
SPAIN	.801	.841	.886	.80
MALAYSIA	.912	.882	.916	.89
CHINA	.907	.809	.867	.83
COMBINED	.874	.875	.860	.84

Table 1.3: Work-life balance across cultures. (Source: adapted from Haar et al., 20114).

One interesting conclusion of this research is that the more communal societies are (like those of China, Malaysia or Maoris), the better their punctuations on work-life balance because they worry more about their people and the country's wellbeing, not being as individualistic as Europeans and figuring their jobs as a mean of transforming and improving their nation. He also concluded that work-life balance has a positive effect on satisfaction in both work and personal life while having a negative relation with anxiety and depression.

4.3.1. Maternity and paternity leaves

One of the most important aspects within the larger area of work-life balance is having a baby and taking care of them while working. There is an argument that parents having the same paid leave weeks makes our societies fairer, so they realise they both have the responsibility of taking care of the child, and not only the mother.

As reported by Axbe and Cardenas (2021), paternity leave, in particular, has tremendous benefits such as creating a more powerful bond between fathers and their children, helping relationships grow substantially or, most important for the company, fathers experiencing a stronger comeback with much more energy and focus on the workplace. The consulting firm McKinsey conducted a study in 2021 in which they reported that "Men who took paternity leave viewed it overwhelmingly as a positive experience". They obtained really positive results, showing that out of 126 men, 100% were happy with

doing so and would take it again, 90% realized that their relationship improved, and 20% thought that even though it might be a setback in their career, the experience had been greater than this concern.[12]

Unfortunately, maternity and paternity leave periods and policies are very much uneven across countries. For instance, employees in the US have a 12-weeks unpaid leave, which is not really encouraging to take. That is why many companies offer paid leaves as a perk to offer better working conditions. Table 4.4 offers information about the duration of maternity and paternity leaves in different parts of the world:

Country	Maternity	Paternity
Spain	16 weeks	16 weeks
France	10 weeks	25 days
Turkey	16 weeks	5 days
Korea	12.8 weeks	10 days
Italy	20 weeks	10 days
Iceland	24 weeks	24 weeks

Table 4.4. Maternity and paternity leaves across countries. (Source: Author's own elaboration with information from governmental or press websites).

It should also be discussed how companies can act in order to support maternity and paternity leaves. We argue that they should not only offer but encourage the possibility of taking it, seeking an image of modern firm that wants the best for their workers and their families (it is a positive external image). Also, if the employee is doubtful about the career obstacle it could create, managers should be clear about the fact that taking weeks off is not going to slow their career progression and that it would only bring benefits. Finally, when coming back to work, being helpful with the worker (flexibility in terms of timetable and absences) would also help their ability to balance work and their new parental duties.

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[12] For more information about this research, please visit https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/a-fresh-look-at-paternity-leave-why-the-benefits-extend-beyond-the-personal (Last accessed 16 May 2022).

5. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

5.1. METHODOLOGY

The empirical part of this final degree thesis has the aim of providing further insights into the relationship between CSR and mental health in the workplace. To that end, I conducted a survey during March 2022. The first step towards building this survey was writing down the questions I wanted to ask. After that, I sent them to my supervisor, who helped me all the way through the process. I also decided to translate the questions to English, so as to allow for the possibility of non-Spanish speaking respondents filling it. After all that was done, I used Microsoft Forms to implement the survey and share it. It had 15 questions concerning mental health in the workplace and demographics. The different questions posed appear in Appendix 1 (Spanish version) and Appendix 2 (English version). I uploaded it online, leaving it active for around four weeks. I received the bulk of answers in the first two weeks. I published it on multiple social networks like Instagram and Whatsapp. A couple of friends also helped me out by sharing it in large WhatsApp groups and mentioning it on Instagram.

I got 354 responses. It is interesting to add that the algorithm predicted to consume 4 minutes to fill the form and, on average, respondents took 7 minutes. The following subsections offer a summary of the most interesting insights that I got from the responses received.

5.2. DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 5.1. shows that most of the responses (around 65%) come from Asturias (the Spanish region where this research was carried out). However, there were also responses from other Spanish regions, as well as from other countries like Belgium, USA, France, India, Italy, UK, or Turkey.
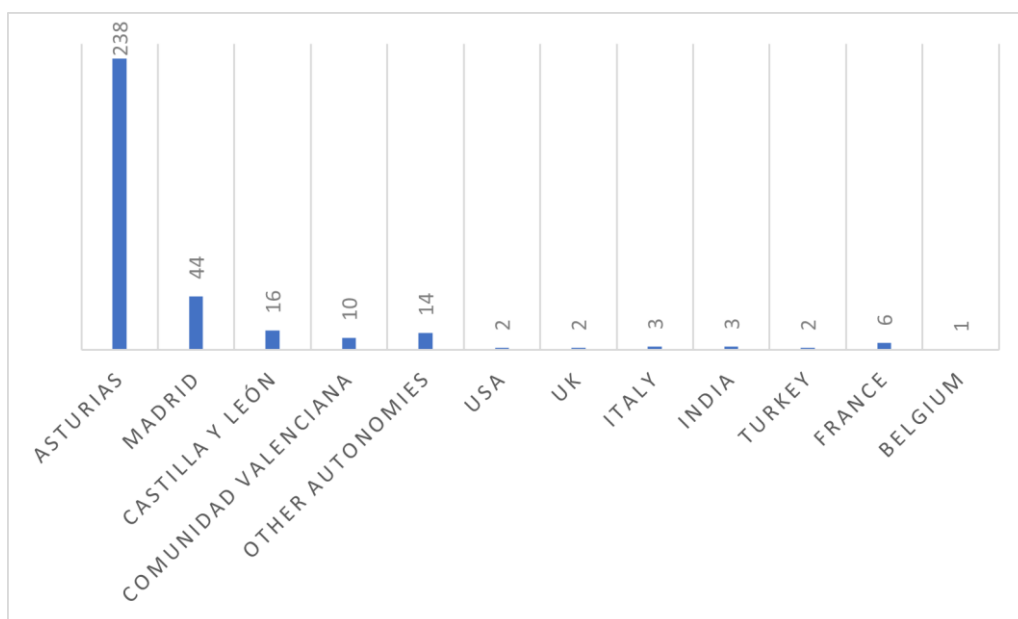
Figure 5.1. Distribution of the sample by origin. (Source: author's own elaboration).

Figures 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 display the distribution of the sample by gender, age, and level of education, respectively. The average respondent was a 50-year-old woman with an undergraduate degree and currently working in Asturias. Almost two thirds of the respondents identified as female. In addition, although there are respondents across all age categories, those in the 21-29 and 50-59 bands stand over the others. Therefore, most respondents qualify as active population, which is of interest for this study. We shall also note that the bulk of respondents is in possession of either an ungraduate or graduate degree.
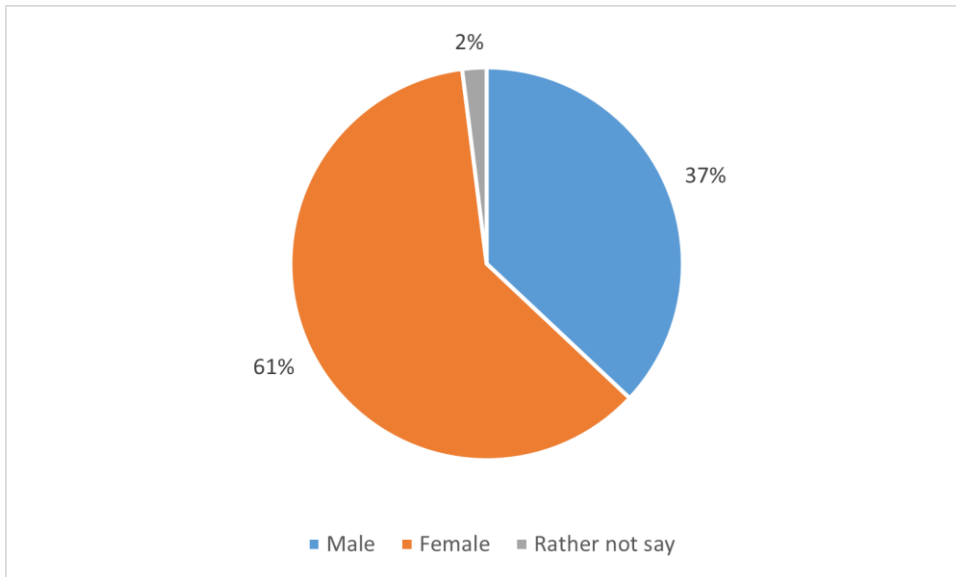
Figure 5.2. Distribution of the sample by gender. (Source: author's own elaboration).
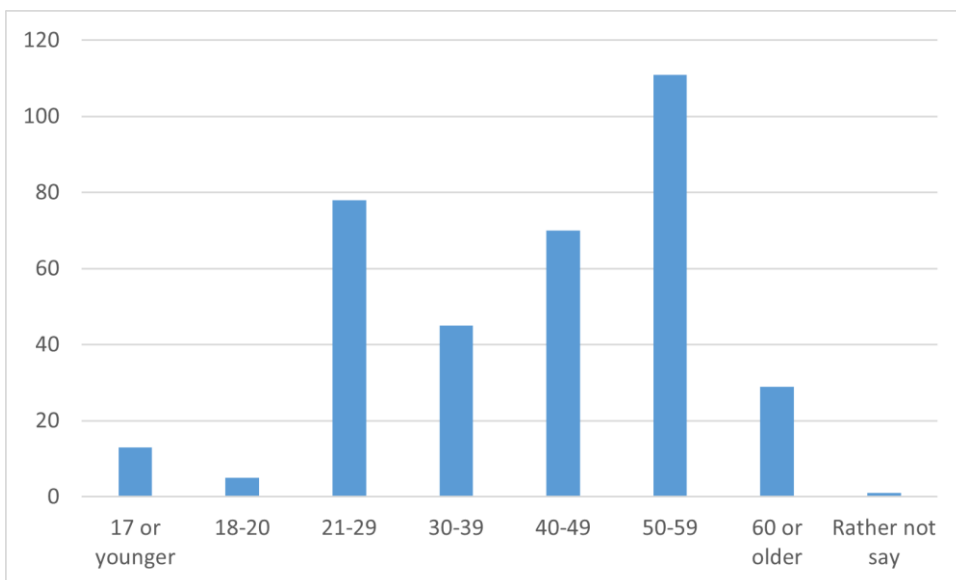
Figure 5.3. Distribution of the sample by age. (Source: author's own elaboration).
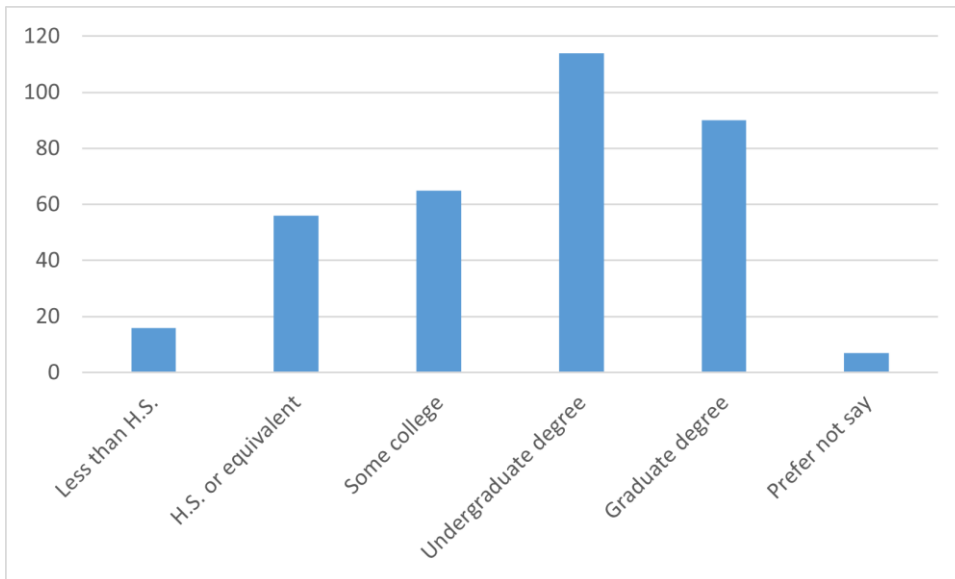
Figure 5.4. Distribution of the sample by education level. (Source: author's own elaboration).

5.3. MENTAL HEALTH

Once demographics have been presented, I shall start with the "body" of the analysis. This research project discusses mental health in the workplace. Therefore, we asked whether mental health is important for the managers. Surprisingly, more than 75% of respondents said "Yes" (Figure 5.5). It is fair to say that among all the respondents (354), 241 are currently working either part-time or full-time (nearly 70%), so not all the respondents can relate to currently having a manager. A rather positive impression can be extracted out of this first question as it reflects that employees think their health is valued (even though there was no follow-up question on the reasons behind it).
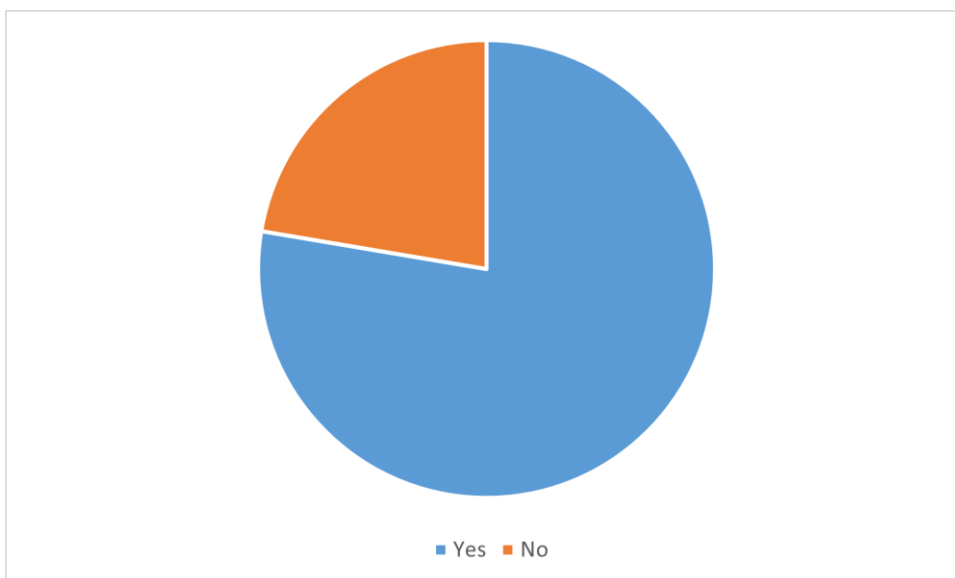
Figure 5.5. Is mental health important for managers? (Source: author's own elaboration).

The second question consisted of a 5-point Likert scale where respondents had to note their degree of agreement with six items (being 1 "completely disagree" and 5 "completely agree"). As the first two instances were similar, I have decided to analyse

them together in Figure 5.6. On the left we can see the numbers for the bars, which represent the importance given to mental health. Only 10% of the replies were different from a 5 out of 5 score (i.e., definitely agree). However, when compared to the second question, whether or not mental and physical health share the same importance, we got an 84%, it is to say, 6% less than in the precedent question (even if only a few people said it was not important). Although these figures confirm the importance of mental health to people, we can see how mental health is still a little bit ignored compared to physical health. Let us remember that having a good mental health can prevent lots of different physical illnesses.
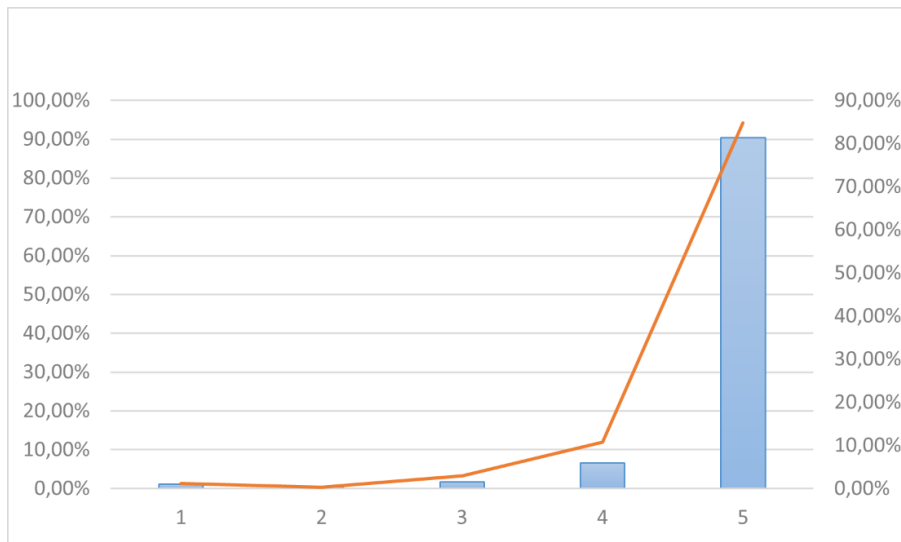
Figure 5.6. Is mental health important (blue bars) and is it as important as physical health? (orange line) (Source: author's own elaboration).

The following was a statement concerning having experienced episodes of stress, depression, anxiety… Most of the respondents gave this item a score of 4 out of 5 (64%), which means they agree with the statement (Figure 5.7). The pandemic, as well as our studies and work commitments may be behind this result. Only 15% gave a score of 1 or 2, seemingly meaning that they have not experienced this kind of feelings.
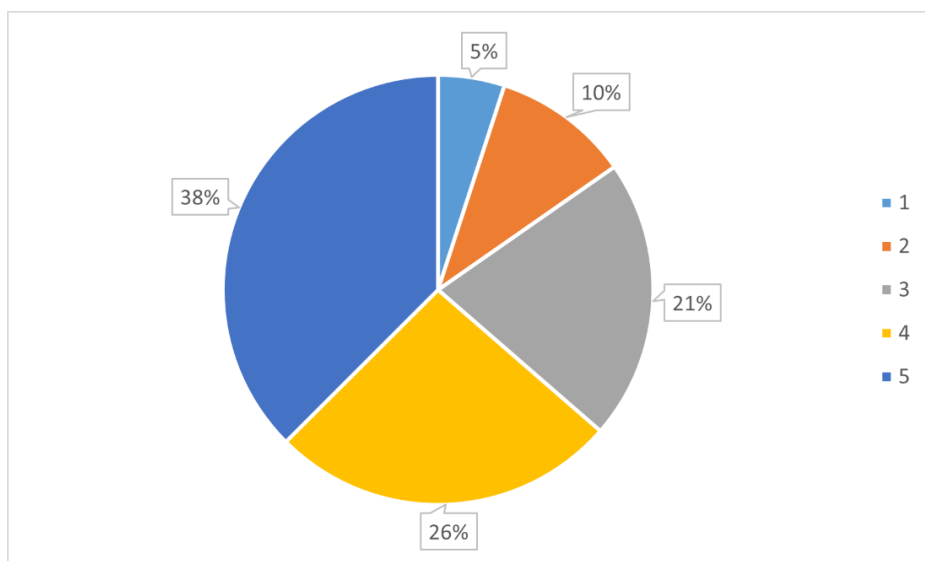
Figure 5.7. Have you ever experienced stress, depression, anxiety…? (Source: author's own elaboration).

A question I found particularly interesting was whether or not the respondent felt capable of managing their mental health on their own (Figure 5.8). The results were really interesting. Only 4% said they completely disagree with that sentence; it is to say, they did not think they could manage their mental health without asking for professional help. However, a stunning 20% said they could perfectly manage it on their own.

If we presented the results by joining together the agreement categories (4 and 5), disagreement categories (1 and 2) and neutrality (3), a total of 47,10% of respondents said they were able to manage their mental health on their own. Meanwhile, 18,9% said they were not. Neutrality remained by a 34%, which might be partly due to the fact that some people replied that they had never experienced this kind of issues.
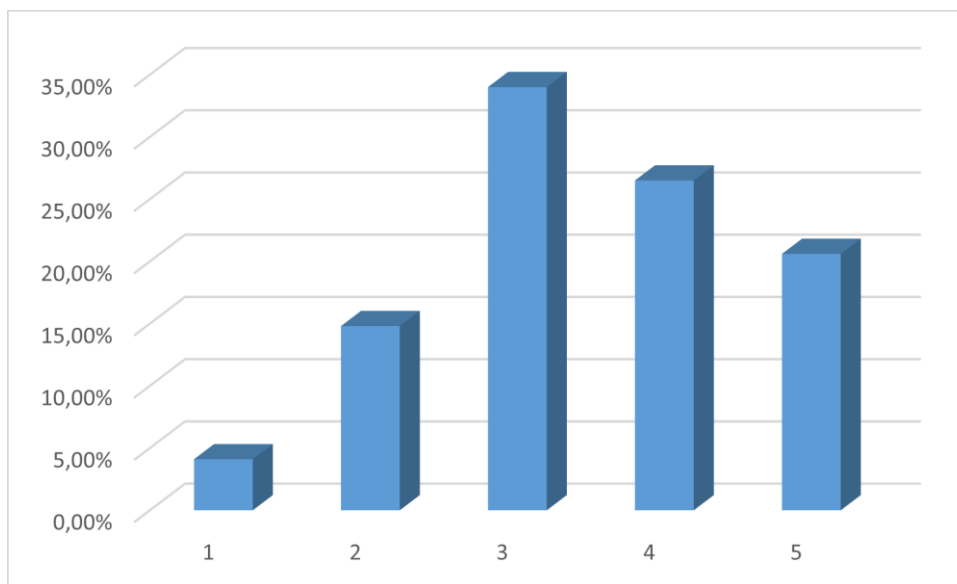
Figure 5.8. Are you capable of self-managing your mental health? (Source: author's own elaboration).

I analysed whether there were any significant differences in the scores by age (0 = younger generations; 1 = older generations)[13], gender (0 = female; 1 = male), and location (i.e., 0 = Asturias; 1 = rest of Spain; 2 = other countries). I did so by running an independent samples t test (for the age and gender variables) and a oneway ANOVA (for the location variable) in SPSS. The findings reported in Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3. suggest that there are no significant differences in the capability of respondents managing their own mental health across age and location. However, there are in the case of gender (female respondents have a better ability to manage their own mental health).

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[13] Younger generations comprise gen z and millenialls; that is, respondents up to 39 years old. Older generations are formed by the rest of the sample. We have decided to make this distinction given the evidence that we found in the theoretical part of the study on the approach of gen z and millennials to mental health issues.

Levene test for equal variances[14]		t-test			
F	Sig.	t	df	p-value	CI (95%)
8.888	0.003	-1.507	309.452	0.133	[-0.414; 0.055]

Table 5.1. Independent samples t test for the respondents' self-management of their mental health by age (Source: author's own elaboration).

Levene test for equal variances		t-test			
F	Sig.	t	df	p-value	CI (95%)
1.127	0.289	-2.393	320	0.017	[-0.546; 0.053]

Table 5.2. Independent samples t test for the respondents' self-management of their mental health by gender (Source: author's own elaboration).

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	1.953	2	0.977	0.810	0.446
Within groups	389.629	323	1.206		
Total	391.583	325			

Table 5.3. Oneway ANOVA for the respondents' self-management of their mental health by location (Source: author's own elaboration).

The following question was about mental health being more openly discussed. More than 75% of respondents answered a 5 out of 5 on this question, while 15% more answered a 4, making it a total of 90%. The rest, about 10% rated it between 1 and 3. I think that it is a very important question, maybe not so related to the corporate world, but more into how people think of mental health. It has similar percentages with "Mental health is important" and "Mental health is as important as physical health".

The last question in this first rating section was whether or not they had ever asked for professional help (Figure 5.9).

[14] Levene's test assesses whether the two groups analyzed have equal variances. In this case, variances are not equal, so we display the results for the t test with unequal variances.
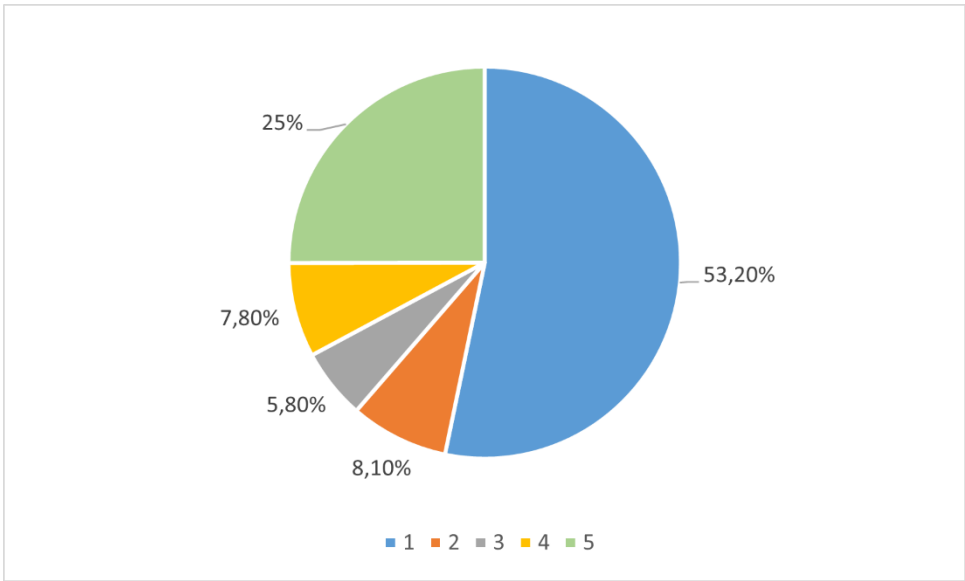
Figure 5.9. Have you ever looked for professional help? (Source: author's own elaboration).

On this question, most of the respondents gave a score of "1", so it means they had not. On the contrary, 25% said they had, by replying a 5. I once again compared it by age, gender, and location. Nonetheless, I shall note that I do not report the findings across locations since the Levene's test suggested that the condition of equal variances was violated (F = 2.545; p-value = 0.080). Similar to the previous case, the only significant difference was by gender. On average, female respondents have sought more professional help than male ones. This is interesting since female respondents said they were good at self-managing their own mental health. Therefore, the result may be conditioned by those who gave a lower rate in the previous question.

Levene test for equal variances		t-test			
F	Sig.	t	df	p-value	CI (95%)
0.053	0.817	0.613	324	0.270	[-0.265; 0.505]

Table 5.4. Independent samples t test for the respondents' professional help requirements by age (Source: author's own elaboration).

Levene test for equal variances		t-test			
F	Sig.	t	df	p-value	CI (95%)
18.708	< 0.001	3.998	273.663	< 0.001	[0.385; 1.133]

Table 5.5. Independent samples t test for the respondents' professional help requirements by gender (Source: author's own elaboration).

Finally, asking respondents to rate their mental health in the last weeks gave us the following results. The average rate was a 6.55 for people under 30, being the score up to 7.23 points for people over this age. Although the difference is not that large, it makes sense since people in their 20s nowadays do not seem to predict a good future (instability, changing jobs, dynamic world…), while adults are more settled in life (even

though there might be cases exactly the other way around). The average for all respondents was 7,04 and the variance equalled 2,82.

5.4. MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Figure 5.10 shows the responses we got to the following question: *Who would you rather talk about your mental health?* Responses are rather varied, but the majority would prefer talking about their mental health with an expert hired by the company (44% or 140 people) or would not feel comfortable at all discussing it. The most surprising finding is that only a small percentage would talk about it with friends or family (including love partner).
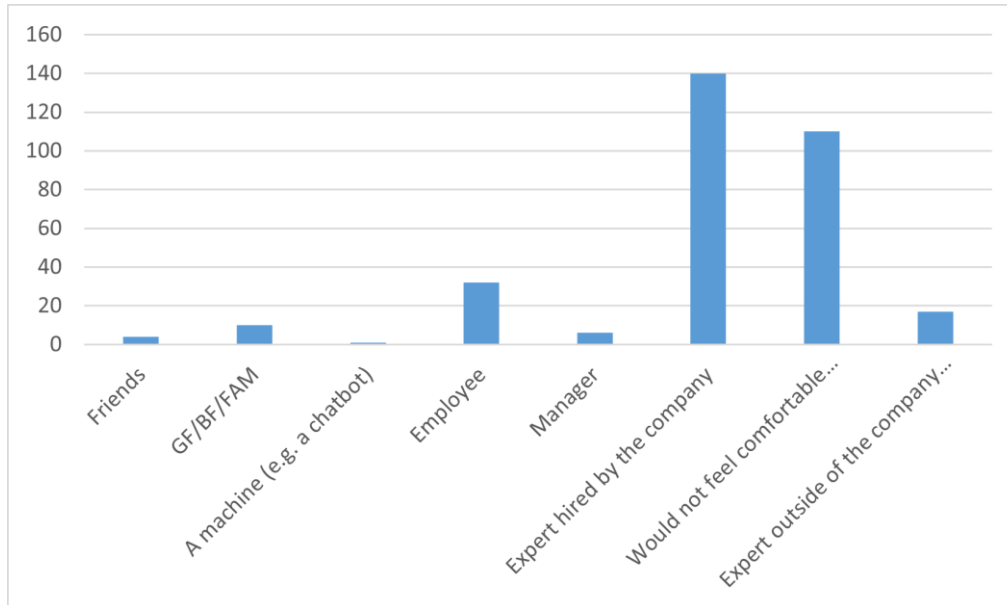
Figure 5.10. Who would you rather talk about your mental health? (Source: author's own elaboration).

The results to the next question give a glimpse to potential solutions peers may give if a partner told them about them experiencing mental health issues (Figure 5.11). Only 2 people replied, "I would tell their superior". The majority of respondents replied, "I would listen carefully but not tell their superior". Respondents probably thought that telling the superior might only cause problems by personalizing the conflict to that particular worker. Nonetheless, it could also serve as a first step to them getting some kind of help.

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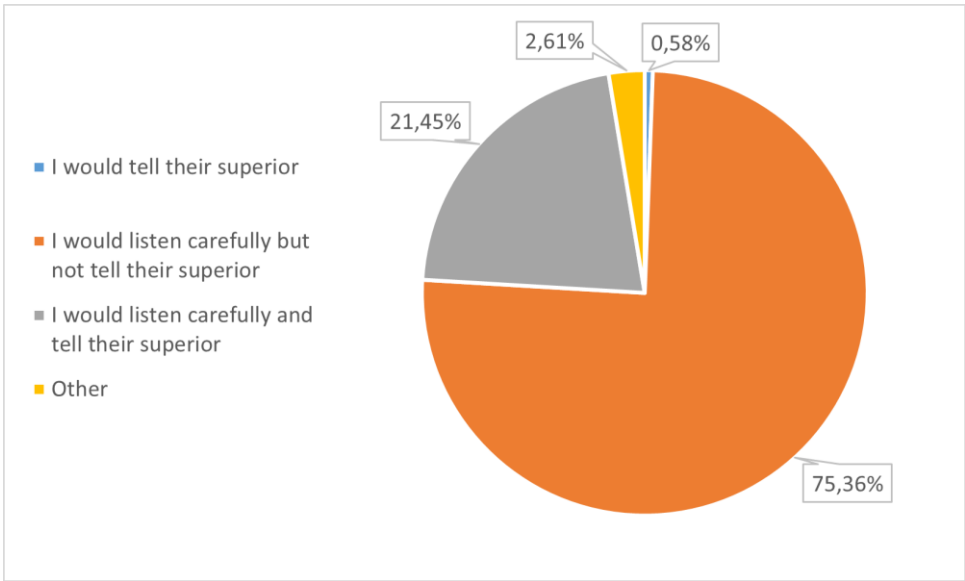
Figure 5.11. How would you react if a peer told you about their mental health struggle? (Source: author's own elaboration).

Once knowing about how people would react if a peer told them about a mental health struggle, we shall analyse the mental health initiatives offered by companies, beginning with the importance that respondents give them. This question could have been paired with "Have you ever experienced stress or anxiety?" because by analysing the data we might find slightly similar percentages. Also, it would be reasonable to assume that those who experience stress or anxiety are also the ones that are is going to ask for more mental health initiatives. Figure 5.12 shows that the sum of 4 and 5 on this one (agreement with the statement) is 70.90% while on the other side of the opinion spectrum (disagreement with the item) we can see a 12.2%.
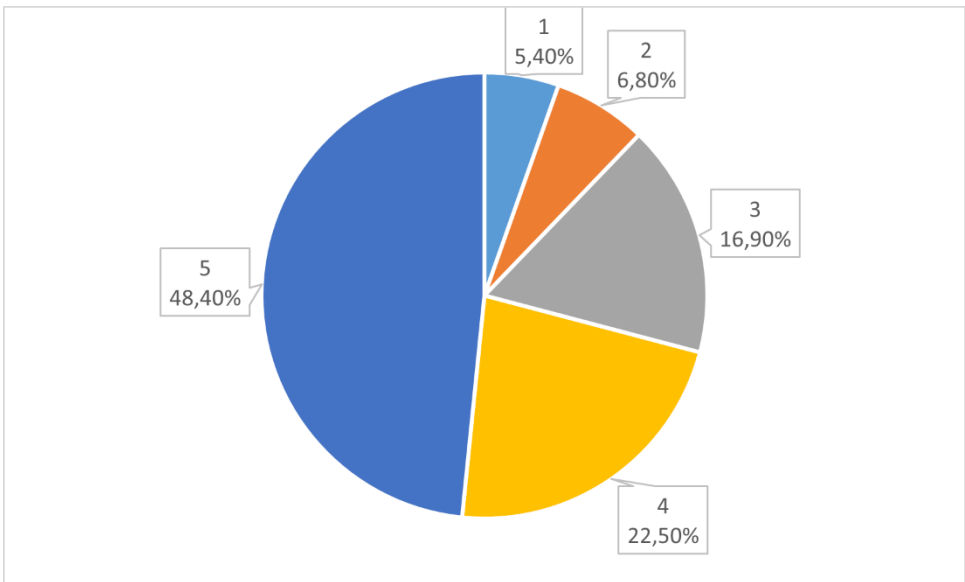
Figure 5.12. Are mental health programmes or initiatives funded by your company important to you? (Source: author's own elaboration).

We also asked respondents about whether all companies should have a mental health expert among their hires. This question is a little bit conflictive as it is clear that not every company may be able to afford to hire one. However, over 75% of the respondents replied positively (Figure 5.13). Although some stated that this would be a waste of the company's funds, there is also the counterargument that the worker's wellness is key on job performance, so the expense would be fairly justified. Besides, a human resources manager could also qualify as "a mental health expert", being one of their functions listening to employees and tending to their mental health needs.
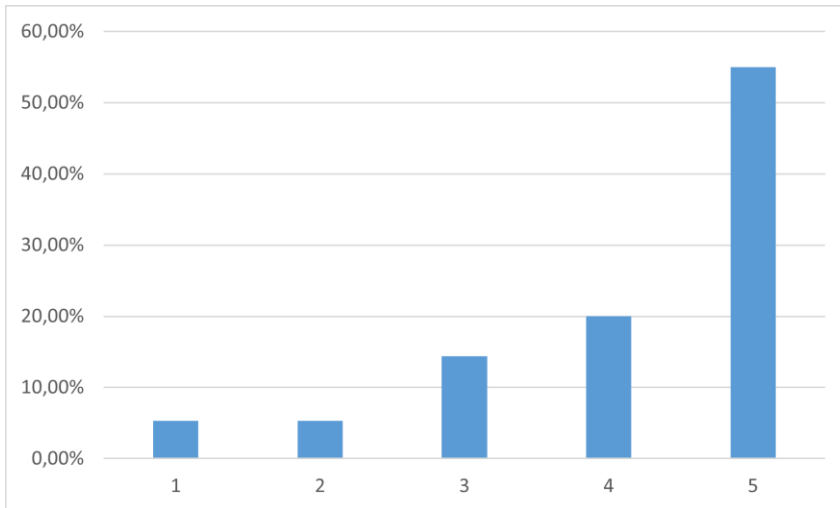
Figure 5.13. Should every company have a mental health expert hired? (Source: author's own elaboration).

Figure 5.14 summarizes how people consider some relaxing activities like meditation or yoga. 53% of respondents considered those practices to be interesting in order to release stress. 26% of respondents chose to rate it as a "3", which, as previously said, means neutrality. This is probably due to the fact that they have never tried them, and they did not want to say something about a discipline they have never experienced. A stunning 21% of people replied that they are useless. This may be due to the fact that they did not help them in a time or need or that they have that perception (even if they have not practised them first-hand).
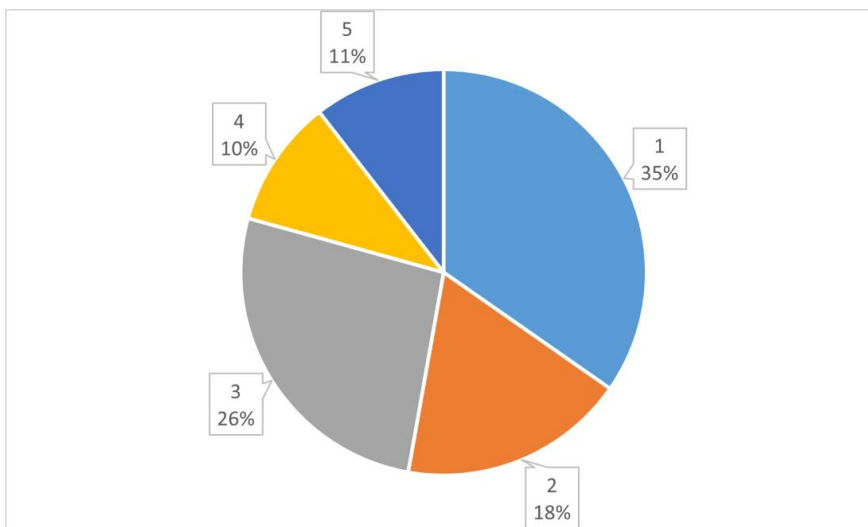

Figure 5.14. Do you think yoga, meditation or mindfulness are useless? (Source: author's own elaboration).

We also asked respondents about *mental health days* (similar to a regular sick day but with the focus on healing mental health-related problems). We included two questions on this topic. The first one was whether or not they were useless. More than 55% of respondents said they were (really) useful. 28% of people replied they did not know, or they were not sure (rating of 3), and the rest (15%) said they were useless. Negative responses may stem from people thinking mental health is rather subjective and cannot be examined properly, so employees could just see them as an opportunity to stay home.

The follow-up question asked whether respondents would be comfortable asking for mental health days. I followed the same logic as in two of the previous questions and analysed whether there were any differences according to age, gender, and location (Tables 5.6, 5.7, and 5.8). The results suggest there are none.

Levene test for equal variances		t-test			
F	Sig.	t	df	p-value	CI (95%)
0.005	0.946	-0.349	324	0.728	[-0.359; 0.251]

Table 5.6. Independent samples t test for the respondents' promptness to ask for mental health days by age (Source: author's own elaboration).

Levene test for equal variances		t-test			
F	Sig.	t	df	p-value	CI (95%)
0.246	0.620	-1.221	320	0.223	[-0.501; 0.117]

Table 5.7. Independent samples t test for the respondents' promptness to ask for mental health days by gender (Source: author's own elaboration).

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	0.662	2	0.331	0.176	0.839
Within groups	607.451	323	1.881		
Total	608.113	325			

Table 5.8. Oneway ANOVA for the respondents' promptness to ask for mental health days by location (Source: author's own elaboration).

Another question asked about mental health policies was if the company respondents (wished to) work for has mental health policies on their CSR report (Figure 5.15). Most of them were not aware of companies doing that, 18% said "Yes", and 47% of respondents replied "No" or "We don't have a CSR policy". These results suggest that companies still have a long way to go regarding CSR and mental health initiatives. As mentioned earlier, addressing mental health in the office could have really positive effects, and it is a worthy investment for both large companies and SMEs.
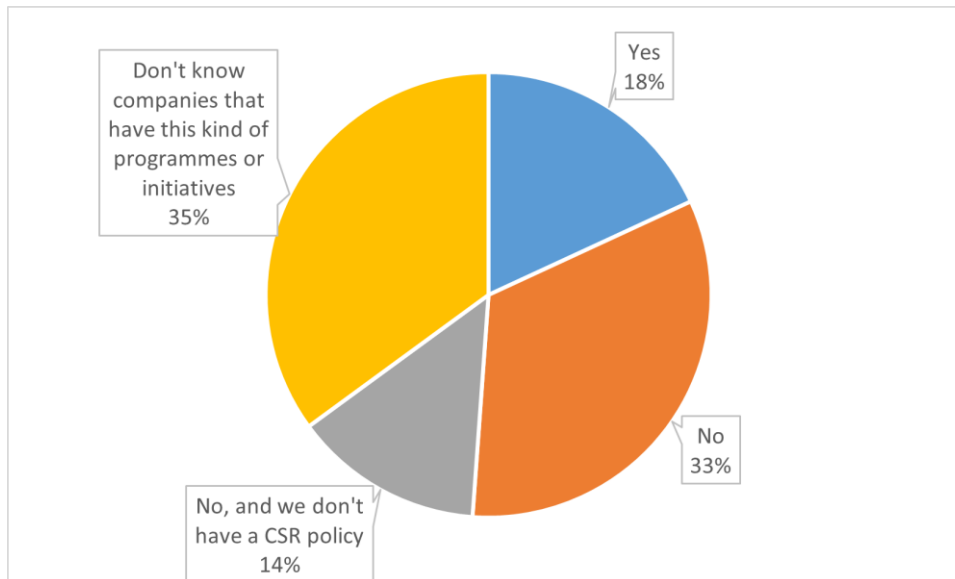
Figure 5.15. Does the company you (wish to) work for have a CSR policy that addresses mental health? (Source: author's own elaboration).

Finally, we asked respondents for any recommendations that they wanted to give to managers on mental health in the workplace. I have decided to summarize the findings to this open-ended question by age group. I shall note that not everybody replied to it as this might be a tricky question not everybody has ideas for.

- **17 to 20.** What worries most young teens is having some kind of external support for employees, like a professional therapist or specialized HR employees, apart from workshops or more information about this really important issue. Also, many ask for flexibility and will to help, something key for creating a good working environment in my view.

- **21 to 29.** As the working age comes, we can see respondents asking for more credit for the work being done. It is something that many "Generation Z" and millennials are complaining about. This generation is one of the worst in terms of mental health issues, thanks maybe to how society is being shaped. They also ask for polls about how employees feel so that managers can know where or who to help by asking questions like "how your workload is" or "how are you feeling". These simple questions go a long way. Again, we can see a common word for both generations, and it is a healthy and distressed working environment. However, the most repeated answer was something related to managers acknowledging the work of employees and being open to help, talk, and listen. Only one among all complained about work-life balance.

- **30 to 59.** In this age range we can see many different replies. For instance, one states that companies should not focus on caring about their employee's mental health, as it is the responsibility of governments to do that. According to this person, firms should be allowed to "fire whoever if the individual is sick". Either written or implied, we also see a lot of work-life balance (might be because it is the average age of having kids and settling on family life). Related to this, stress portrays a big role in our everyday working life, and many of them ask for some kind of practice to reduce it, like managers taking into account the employees' circumstances when assigning the workload or more physical practices like meditation before starting to work or yoga.

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- **60 or more.** Their most popular reply (even though there were not many) was to hire an outside mental health expert, which may make sense if we think that older people might have more mental health issues.

One particular reply left an interesting debate on whether or not the company should hire this external help, or it should be arranged by the employee. Everything has its own advantages or disadvantages. Normally therapists have their professional secrecy but being the company so near them, it might raise trust concerns among employees.

Before finishing the survey, I added a space in which respondents were allowed to write freely whether or not they had something to say that had not been previously discussed or they wanted to make a remark on.

The most repeated comment among all was that mental health is not discussed enough—they stressed the necessity that we have to raise awareness. One of the first steps towards getting there would be to eliminate the stigma that surrounds this issue, as many people still think that the cure to depression is "smiling more" or "being happy", which are obviously not.

The two most important thesis I reckon should be said of the replies are two. First and foremost, it is clear that changing the company's and the manager's mentality is key. We are living a time in which performance is sometimes based on objectives to be achieved in the least amount of time possible. However, this is not good either for the employee or for the company, as stress appears, and quality disappears. Having a more relaxed atmosphere will help create quality work and favour the feeling of belonging to a company. However, managers should not make this personal because this could be used against employees by making them overwork because they "owe it to the company". One example of the performance-based environment we live in is the programs that record the employees' activity, something that stresses every worker that has to cope with it.

Secondly, many argued that governments play an important role here in guaranteeing better life conditions to the younger generations and providing education on the topic. These days, millennials are living under much worse conditions when compared to their parents, being the first time in human history that this happens. This might lead them to suffer from depression or other mental issues that could destabilize them. Apart from that, there is little to no education on this topic (school level-wise). It is necessary to know how mental health issues can develop, how to fight against them, how to help someone experiencing these… This would raise awareness and help mental health issues like physical illnesses.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This final degree thesis investigates the role of CSR in managing employees' mental health. After a brief introduction, the first chapter contextualises CSR in the nonmarket domain. The second one introduces the main object of the work; that is, mental health. The third one links this concept with CSR. The fourth contains the empirics of the project, where we conducted a survey during March 2022 to obtain information about people's perception of mental health both in general and in the workplace.

First, we distinguished between market and nonmarket strategies, focusing on how important it is to combine both into what is commonly known as "an integrated strategy". Managers traditionally overlooked nonmarket strategies. However, nowadays, they are gaining greater importance as they portray a really important role in the daily operations of companies. Next, we reviewed the CSR and shared value concepts, as well as the shareholder-stakeholder debate.

Next, we focused on mental health, another key part of my research. The literature review performed suggests that more work is needed in the area, especially within management research. We explored how it can deeply affect the employee's performance, causing presenteeism or reducing many of the worker's skills like communication. We also discussed how it affects different groups of workers, like athletes, actors, or self-employed people and how this mental health pandemic has especially impacted millennials and Gen Zs.

Then, we linked CSR and mental health. We reviewed the way in which different companies have integrated mental health into their policies or how other companies have failed to do so. Many proposed policies are managers being keener on asking how their employees are feeling or how they can improve the company or convince an employee to ask for the parental leave, guaranteeing it would not be a setback on their career. Another important issue is overwork. Working a fair and healthy timetable should be controlled and also favoured. It contributes to having a better physical and mental health (avoiding sick days) while also boosting performance (avoiding presenteeism), which is key for companies. In this regard, we also investigated work-life balance and parental leave, highlighting cross-country differences.

Finally, we described the methodology of this project (i.e., a survey) and described the key findings obtained. Our results point to a positive attitude toward mental health, with a lot of engagement and concern about it. However, there are some people that still perceive mental health as having lesser importance compared to physical health, maybe due to the fact that they have never experienced this kind of feelings (anxiety, stress…) themselves. The lack of education on this topic and a sort of stigma around it may also have something to do with this finding. For this reason, it is important that governments and other institutions provide appropriate forums to openly discuss it.

As a final conclusion, mental health is the coming revolution in the workplace, with an increasing number of companies focusing on taking care of their employees or trying to improve their working conditions. Nonetheless, the responsibility to care for the population's mental health should not rely on companies solely. Governments also have a key role to play. This project aims to shed light on this rather unspoken topic by defining key concepts and proposing different measures companies do in order to tackle this challenge.

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APPENDIX 1

La salud mental y el trabajo

Mi nombre es Ángel Tosal Maradona. Actualmente me encuentro realizando mi Trabajo de Fin de Grado en Administración de Empresas acerca de la salud mental en el ámbito laboral y su relación con la estrategia de Responsabilidad Social Corporativa de las empresas. Me interesaría obtener datos desde el punto de vista tanto de personas con experiencia laboral como de aquellas que aún no se han incorporado al mercado de trabajo.

A continuación aparece la encuesta que he elaborado para recabar información al respecto, la cual puede ser cumplimentada en aproximadamente 5 minutos. La participación es voluntaria y las respuestas son totalmente anónimas.

...

1. ¿Crees que la salud mental es importante para los empresarios/la empresa para la que trabajas?

○ Si

○ No

2. En una escala de 1 (muy en desacuerdo) a 5 (muy de acuerdo), califica tu grado de acuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones:

	1	2	3	4	5
La salud mental es muy importante	○	○	○	○	○
La salud mental es tan importante como la física	○	○	○	○	○
Alguna vez he experimentado estrés, ansiedad, depresión...	○	○	○	○	○
Soy capaz de gestionar mi salud mental sin ayuda externa	○	○	○	○	○
He recurrido a ayuda profesional para gestionar mi salud mental	○	○	○	○	○
Se debe hablar abiertamente de la salud mental	○	○	○	○	○

3. En una escala de 0 (pésima) a 10 (excelente) ¿Cómo calificarías tu salud mental?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Pésima   Excelente

4. ¿Con quién te sentirías más cómodo para hablar de tu salud mental?

○ Una máquina (Ej. un chatbot)

○ Mi jefe/a

○ Un/a empleado/a de mi mismo rango

○ Un experto/a contratado/a por mi empresa

○ No me sentiría cómodo/a hablando de mi salud mental con alguien de mi entorno laboral

○ [Otras]

5. ¿Cómo reaccionarías si un/a compañero/a te comentara que está sufriendo una crisis mental?

○ Se lo diría a su superior

○ Le escucharía abiertamente y le recomendaría recurrir a ayuda externa, pero no se lo diría a su superior

○ Le escucharía abiertamente y le recomendaría recurrir a ayuda externa, comentándoselo también a su superic

○ [Otras]

6. En una escala de 1 (muy en desacuerdo) a 5 (muy de acuerdo), califica tu grado de acuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones:

	1	2	3	4	5
Valoro positivamente las iniciativas o programas de salud mental que ofrece una empresa a la hora de buscar trabajo	○	○	○	○	○
Todas las empresas deberían contar con un/a experto/a en asistencia psicológica	○	○	○	○	○
La meditación, yoga o mindfulness son inútiles	○	○	○	○	○
Los "días de salud mental" (días que cuentan como que el trabajador está enfermo, pero mentalmente) son inútiles	○	○	○	○	○
Me sentiría cómodo/a pidiendo días libres en el trabajo para cuidar de mi salud mental	○	○	○	○	○

7. ¿Conoces si la empresa en la que trabajas o deseas trabajar tiene programas o iniciativas específicas relacionadas con la salud mental dentro de su estrategia de Responsabilidad Social Corporativa?

○ Sí

○ No

○ No, y no contamos con una estrategia de Responsabilidad Social Corporativa

○ No conozco empresas que lleven a cabo este tipo de programas o iniciativas

8. ¿Qué recomendaciones darías a tu empresa (o aquella para la que fueras a trabajar) para mejorar en materia de cuidado de la salud mental de sus trabajadores/as?

Escriba su respuesta

Sección demográfica

9. ¿Cuál de las siguientes categorías incluye tu edad?

○ 17 años o menor

○ De 18 a 20 años

○ De 21 a 29 años

○ De 30 a 39 años

○ De 40 a 49 años

○ De 50 a 59 años

○ Mayor de 60 años

○ Prefiero no especificar

10. ¿Con qué género te identificas?

○ Femenino

○ Masculino

○ Prefiero no contestar

○ Otras

11. ¿En qué Comunidad Autónoma resides actualmente? En caso de residir fuera de España, por favor indica el país de residencia.

Escriba su respuesta

12. ¿Cuál es el nivel máximo de estudios que has completado o el título más alto que has obtenido?

○ Menos que un diploma de bachillerato

○ Título de bachillerato o equivalente

○ Estudios universitarios (sin título)

○ Grado o equivalente

○ Postgrado

○ Prefiero no especificar

13. ¿Cuál de las siguientes categorías describe mejor tu situación laboral?

○ Empleado/a (trabajo entre 1 y 39 horas a la semana)

○ Empleado/a (trabajo 40 horas o más a la semana)

○ Sin empleo (busco trabajo)

○ Sin empleo (NO busco trabajo)

○ Estudiante (busco trabajo)

○ Estudiante (NO busco trabajo)

○ Jubilado/a

14. ¿En qué sector se encuentra la actividad que desempeñas o planeas desempeñar?

○ Agricultura, ganadería y pesca   ○ Comercio

○ Minería   ○ Hostelería

○ Fabricación   ○ Salud

○ Construcción   ○ Turismo

○ Energía   ○ Transporte

○ Telecomunicaciones   ○ Otras

○ Investigación y tecnología

○ Finanzas

○ Educación

15. Antes de concluir la encuesta, ¿te gustaría añadir algún aspecto que no haya sido previamente abordado?

Escriba su respuesta

APPENDIX 2

Mental health at work

My name is Ángel Tosal Maradona. I am currently writing my Final Degree Thesis to complete my BA in Business Managmenet. This project revolves around mental health in the workplace and its relationship with CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). I would like to obtain data about people with or without working experience.

You can find the survey that I have elaborated below. Completing it will take approximately 5minutes of your time. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. Should you wish to participate, your responses will be anonymous.

...

1. Do you believe that your mental health is important to employers/the company you work for?

○ Yes

○ No

2. On a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree), rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	1	2	3	4	5
Mental health is important	○	○	○	○	○
Mental health is as important as the physical one	○	○	○	○	○
I have sometimes experienced stress, anxiety, depression...	○	○	○	○	○
I am perfectly capable of managing by myself my mental health	○	○	○	○	○
I have sought for professional help to manage my mental health	○	○	○	○	○
People should openly speak about mental health	○	○	○	○	○

3. On a scale from 0 (horrible) to 10 (excellent), how would you rate your mental health?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Horrible   Excellent

4. Who would you rather speak about your mental health?

   ○ A machine (eg. a chatbot)

   ○ My boss

   ○ A colleague

   ○ An expert hired by the company

   ○ I would not feel comfortable talking about my mental health with someone from my working environment

   ○ | Other |

5. How would you react if a peer told you about him/her suffering from a mental breakdown?

   ○ I would tell their boss

   ○ I would listen carefully, recommend that they seek professional help, but would not tell their superior

   ○ I would listen carefully, would recommend that they seek professional help, but would tell their boss

   ○ | Other |

6. On a scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree), rank your level of agreement with the following statements:

	1	2	3	4	5
I would positively value the initiatives and/or mental health programs that companies offer when looking for a job	○	○	○	○	○
Every company should have a mental health expert	○	○	○	○	○
Meditating, yoga or mindfulness are useless	○	○	○	○	○
"Mental health" days (taking a sick day at work, but for mental health issues) are useless	○	○	○	○	○
I would feel comfortable taking "mental health" days	○	○	○	○	○

7. Do you know if your company (or the one one you wish to work for) have any specific programs or initiatives regarding theeir employees' mental health inside or outside their Corporate Social Resposibility policies?

○ Yes

○ No

○ No, and we do not have a CSR policy either

○ I do not have any companies in mind that have this kind of practices in place

8. Which recommendations would you give to your company (or the one you wish to work for) to improve their practices around mental health-related issues?

Enter your answer

9. Select your age range

○ 17 or younger

○ 18-20

○ 21-29

○ 30-39

○ 40-49

○ 50-59

○ 60 or older

○ Prefer not to say

10. Which gender do you identify yourself with?

○ Female

○ Male

○ Prefer not to say

○ Other

11. In which Spanish region (Comunidad Autónoma) do you currently live? If you live outside of Spain, please specify your country of residence

Enter your answer

12. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

○ Less than High School degree

○ High School degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)

○ Some college but no degree

○ Undergraduate degree

○ Graduate degree

○ Prefer not to say

13. Which of the following categories best describes your working situation?

○ Employed (working between 1 and 39 hours a week)

○ Employed (working more than 40 hours a week)

○ Unemployed (looking for a job)

○ Unemployed (NOT looking for a job)

○ Student (looking for a job)

○ Student (NOT looking for a job)

○ Retired

14. In which sector is the activity you work in or you wish to work?

○ Agriculture, fishing or livestock   ○ Finance

○ Mining   ○ Education

○ Manufacturing   ○ Trade

○ Construction   ○ Hospitality

○ Energy   ○ Health

○ Telecom   ○ Tourism

○ Research and technology   ○ Transport

                                         ○ Other

15. Before concluding the poll, would you like to add something that has not been previously said?

Enter your answer