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## **Core values in Post-Secondary Business Students:**

**Exploring a Predisposition to Socially Responsible Business**



## Abstract

Business and society have been inextricably linked for over 250 years, cumulating in the modern view of socially responsible business, as expressed in the theory of Corporate Social Responsibility; which became a major force in business starting with the 2001 collapse of Enron and the subsequent world financial crisis of 2007. Tied to the concept of social responsibility are values – as held by people and businesses. People make decisions for the business that they work for and those decisions are motivated by their values. As a result, institutional and stakeholder theory states that without employees with supporting values, a business's CSR initiatives will fail. Many researchers believe that it is impossible to instill a set of values into someone so businesses must, based on person environment fit theory, seek to hire employees whose core values already support the organization's CSR-initiatives. Starting from this idea, this quantitative study looked at data from 1395 post-secondary business students from around the world to see if any of seven identified CSR-related values were present within the their eight most important core values; and to explore if that information could be used to screen potential employees. Results showed that a significant percentage possessed least one of the values and that companies can use the possession of such values as a screening tool; however, the possessing of those specific values could not be associated with any demographically defined group. Worryingly, evidence also suggested that the next generation of business professionals may be even less socially-responsible then the current one.