



**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
IN V4 COUNTRIES**

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The Role of HRM in CSR and Sustainable Development: Findings from V4 Countries and Serbia

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Abstract

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a management concept balancing between economic, social and environmental goals. Today, CSR is accepted as an indicator of the success of the company as a whole, and as a possibility for the achievement of sustainable development. CSR is consisted of its external and internal dimensions. Inside the internal dimension, human resource management (HRM) takes very important part, as it refers to the people who are engaged in the organizations, and who are considered as one of the most important resources in each organization. Based on the HRM as the internal dimension of CSR concept, the aim of study was the exploration of the concepts of CSR and sustainable development in countries of V4 and Serbia, in relation with the HRM practice of the organizations. The authors tried to explore the role of HRM in CSR and sustainable business practice of organizations. The subjects of the research were the concept of CSR, sustainable development and HRM, as well as empirical analysis of data from the V4 countries and Serbia, total of 468 organizations, related to the implementation of CSR in organizations. The methodology of the paper included theoretical analysis of the mentioned concept, and the analysis of the empirical data on CSR, sustainable development and HRM based on CRANET database, obtained in the research period from 2008 to 2010.

Keywords: *corporate social responsibility, environmental matters, HR activities, human resource management, sustainable development*

JEL Classification: *J24, M12, M14, Q1*

1. Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is seen as a modern management philosophy and marketing tool to gain success on the market and as a management concept that is balancing between economic, social and environmental goals. It is a type of decision that takes into account the strategic positioning of companies (Vasconcelos, Alves, & Pesqueux, 2012). Also, CSR is increasingly seen as an indicator of the business performance and as an opportunity for achieving sustainable development in business and wider environment (Berber, Štangl Šušnjar, Slavić, & Baošić, 2014). CSR is mainly driven by large companies, even though socially responsible practices exist in all types of enterprises, public and private, including SMEs and co-operatives (Commission of the European Communities, 2001).

CSR is consisted of its external and internal dimensions (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). External dimension is consisted of local communities, wide range of stakeholders like business partners and suppliers, customers, public authorities and NGOs representing local communities, as well as the global environmental concerns. Inside the internal dimension CSR take into account the human resource management (HRM), health and safety at work, adaptability to the changes, and management of environmental impacts and natural resources.

Based on the HRM as the internal dimension of CSR concept, the aim of study was the exploration of the CSR and sustainable development in countries of V4 and Serbia, in relation with the HRM practice in organizations. The authors tried to explore the role of HRM in CSR and sustainable business practice of organizations. The subjects of the research were the concept of CSR, sustainable development and HRM, as well as empirical analysis of data from the V4 countries and Serbia, total of 468 organizations, related to the implementation of CSR in organizations. The methodology of the paper included theoretical analysis of the mentioned concept, and the analysis of the empirical data on CSR, sustainable development and HRM based on CRANET database, obtained in research period from 2008 to 2010.

2. Theoretical Background

Researches on the relations between HRM, CSR and sustainable development are becoming more and more interesting all around the world (Gloet, 2006; Aguilera, Rupp, Williams and Ganapathi, 2007; Jackson et al., 2011; Kim & Scullion, 2011; Buciuniene & Kazlauskaitė, 2012; Celma, Martínez-García, & Coenders, 2012; Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013; Berber et al., 2014; Garg, 2014; Ahmad, 2015). In the next part of the paper we presented several researches used in the process of development of our research hypotheses.

The implementation of CSR policies and practices is highly dependent on employees in terms of cooperation, which also emphasizes the critical role of HRM. The HRM could provide an interesting and dynamic support to CSR strategy design as well as implementation and delivery (Jamali, El Dirani, & Harwood, 2015, p. 125). In order to harmonize the values of the organization, they must select and employ workers with certain moral and environmental principles and values, develop reward systems that will improve the social performance of their employees, reward the employees for the harmonization of the values and provide appropriate training and development for them (Orlitzky & Swanson, 2006). In terms of CSR and HRM it is important to explore the internal dimension of CSR. As stated, the internal dimension is primarily oriented on the workforce of the company, the organizational changes and environmental matters. HRM activities that are socially responsible (Commission of the European Communities, 2001):

- responsible recruitment,
- training and career development,
- flexible management of working time and job rotation,
- communication and information flow,
- better defined training needs,
- profit-sharing and share ownership schemes,
- empowerment of employees,
- look after the health and well-being employees,
- the balance of working and family life and concern for the safety of the workplace.

Lis (2012) states that the perception of people applied for the job and current employees in one company, on the CSR practices, determines the attractiveness of the company. Aguilera et al. (2007) investigated the relationship between communication, HRM practices and CSR since CSR requires the employees' ability to judge the social concerns of their managers and the quality of their relationship with them. They found that the multiple levels exerting pressure on firms to engage in CSR are: transnational (OECD, UN and EU), country-level (non-governmental organizations, corporate interest groups, and governments), organizational level (shareholders, top management, and consumers), and individual-level (employees). Sharma, Sharma, and Devi (2009) explored the involvement of HRM professionals in the implementation of the CSR in organizations and they suggest that human resources should take a leading role in promoting CSR activities at all levels. The authors from Lithuania performed the analysis HRM and CSR in terms of exploring the relationships between HRM,

CSR and corporate performances and found that companies with a more developed HRM and better position of HRM managers in the company have a more developed and more successfully implemented CSR (Buciuniene & Kazlauskaitė, 2012). The authors from Finland explored the relations between HRM, human capital management (HCM) and CSR. They found the existence of the strong relationship between mentioned concepts. Two management approaches, HRM and HCM can support each other in improving CSR in corporations (Maksimainen & Saariluoma, 2010).

In relation with sustainable development, the HRM is seen as the key driving force in the development of sustainability of modern organizations. Human resource management should incorporate organizational culture within sustainable business strategy, but also they need to shape organizational system in a way to enable the impact on employees, society and other stakeholders, in line with the vision of sustainable society (Garg, 2014). Gloet (2006) investigated the interrelationships between knowledge management and the HRM in terms of the development of leadership and managerial skills in function of operational sustainability. They noted the importance of knowledge and information in contemporary business, where profit cannot be understood as the only business goal, and where the issues of sustainability and environmental protection are also seen as the goals of business organizations. The knowledge in the function of sustainability involves the development of new skills, acquisition of new information, the development and application of new methods and ways for knowledge management, and as particularly significant, the development of new ways of working to support the entire business process. Knowledge management and HRM in terms of the application of new knowledge and ways of working can be understood as resources to support sustainable development (Gloet, 2006). In the context of human resource management the support for sustainability can be reached through the identification of capabilities specific to sustainability and by seeking to align recruitment and selection practices to these capabilities. "Through supportive development programs and learning support these capabilities can be further developed by identifying key individuals to be fast-tracked into sustainability roles, normally on the basis of their personal values and extensive networks and relationships" (Gloet, 2006, p. 411). Ahmad (2015) points out that the Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has become one of the key strategies for success and that HR departments play an important role in the "greening" of the workplace in modern organizations. GHRM is "directly responsible in creating green workforce that understands, appreciates, and practices green initiative and maintains its green objectives all throughout the HRM process of recruiting, hiring, training, compensating, developing, and advancing the firms human capital and it refers to the policies, practices, and systems that make employees of the organization green for the benefit of the individual, society, natural environment, and the business" (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014; Mathapati, 2013, in: Ahmad, 2015, p. 3).

Jackson et al. (2011) pointed out the importance of the "greening" of all HRM functions, from recruitment and selection, performance management, and remuneration of employees, to career development, training and the like. Recruitment in accordance with the Green HRM means that candidates for potential workplaces realize strategic commitment of the organization for protecting the environment and possess similar values and attitudes regarding the environmental protection. Green performance management obtain a development and application of different methods and techniques for measuring environmental performance as an information system for tracking waste, recycling of waste materials, reduction of the waste generated by the organization, the development of the "green audit" and the like. From the aspect of training and development, it is important to create programs that would influence the awareness and knowledge regarding the protection of the environment and engagements in eco-initiatives in order to attain the environmental objectives. In the case of compensation, it is necessary to link rewards (base pay, incentives, and benefits) with the organizational results

especially in terms of environmental sustainability and environmental protection. Since the payment based on performance (pay for performance) is an often used approach in stimulating employees, the connection of incentive earnings with environmental objectives and performances is certainly one of the possible ways for building green human resource management. Paillé, Chen, Boiral, and Jin (2014) investigated the relationship between strategic human resource management, internal environmental concern, organizational citizenship behavior for the environment, and environmental performances. They found that organizational citizenship behavior for the environment fully mediates the relationship between strategic human resource management and environmental performance, and that internal environmental concern moderates the effect of strategic human resource management on organizational citizenship behavior for the environment. Paillé et al. (2014) points that HRM should be focused more on selection, training, and rewarding employees for their environmental friendly practices in order to generate an environmental protection culture beneficial to a firm's environmental performance.

Although there are various options that could be integrated into a system of human resource management there are several restrictions regarding the implementation of these options. According to Renwick et al. (2013) organizations did not provide sufficient support to the implementation of green human resource management, and this fact can be a limiting factor in improving effectiveness and efficiency of environmental performances.

From the above mentioned concepts, ideas and past researches, we proposed our research hypotheses:

H0: *There are positive correlations between the existence of HR strategy and CSR practice in organizations.*

H1: *There are positive correlations between the existence of socially responsible HRM practice and environmental performances in organizations.*

2. Data and Methods

In this paper Cranet methodology (www.cranet.org) has been used to identify the level of CSR practice in companies from countries of V4 and Serbia. Cranet, as an international research network organizes comparative researches on the policies and practices of human resource management, using a standardized questionnaire. The purpose of the research is to provide high quality data for academics, public and private sector organizations, as well as HRM students, and to create new knowledge about human resource management practice in different countries of the world (Slavic & Berber, 2013). In Cranet research period from 2008 until 2010 there were involved 32 countries, but for this analysis authors decided to explore only 4 countries, where three of them are countries of V4 (Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary) and Serbia. Poland, as fourth country of V4, did not participate in the Cranet, so there were no data on dependent and independent variables. Table 1 presents the sample of countries used in the research.

Table 1: The sample of countries participating in the research

Countries	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Czech Republic	54	11,5	11,5
Hungary	139	29,7	29,7
Slovakia	225	48,1	48,1
Serbia	50	10,7	10,7
Total	468	100,0	100,0

Source: Authors' calculation based on Cranet database

As the dependent variables those HRM activities were used which are seen as socially responsible (based on the EU Green Paper): *recruitment, training and career programs for*

minority ethnics, older workers, people with disabilities, women and women returners, low skilled labor, and for younger workers (from 0 (if none category of workers is include in the program) to 7 (if all categories of workers are included in the program)); information flow on strategy, financial results, and organization of work for managers, professional workers, clericals, and manual workers (from 0 (if none category of workers are informed) to 4 (if all categories of workers are informed)); the extent of the usage of flexi-time (percentage of employees), job rotation (from 0 to 4), profit sharing, share plans, and flexible benefits – different forms of benefits, possibilities for workers to use these benefits according their own plans and wishes (from 0 (if none category of workers are informed) to 4 (if all categories of workers are informed)); and the percentage of annual payroll costs spent on training; and the level of environmental performances (from 1 to 5).

As the independent variables we used *the existence of CSR statement, HRM strategy, and business strategy* in the organization (values: 0=no; 1=yes unwritten; 2=yes written).

3. Results of the Analysis

The analysis of the role of HRM in CSR and SD has been performed on two levels. On the first level we explored the existence of the CSR statement in organizations in the specific context. On the second level we explored the relations between CSR HRM practices and environmental performances.

Table 2: The existence of a CSR statement in organizations

Country	The existence of a CSR statement (%)			Total
	No	Yes, unwritten	Yes written	
Hungary	57.6	22.7	19.7	100.0
Slovakia	50.5	20.6	28.9	100.0
Serbia	53.8	28.2	17.9	100.0
Total	53.2	22.1	24.7	100.0

Source: Authors' calculation based on Cranet database

From the table 2 we can conclude that from the total sample about 47% of organizations possess a CSR statmetn, while 53% of organizations do not possess these statements. 22% of organizations have these statements but only in unwritten form. Only one quarter of organizations, 25% of them, possess a CSR statement in written from. Only in Slovakia the percentage of organizations with a written CSR statement is 29%, higher than the average. According to Berber, Štangel Šušnjar, Slavić, and Baošić (2014) these results can be explained by the fact that although CSR was explained as the approach focusing the balance between economic, social and environmental goals, the implementation of CSR concept has some limitations because usually it is not well understood and supported business concept. Mentioned authors claim that “while promoting values like social welfare and environmental protection, many companies are afraid that the orientation on the social and environmental objectives will divert their attention from the main economic goal – the profit” (Berber et al., 2014, p. 363).

Table 3: The Spearman's correlation test
 Source: Authors' calculation based on Cranet database

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Existence of business strategy (1)	1.57	.639	1.000															
Existence of HR strategy (2)	1.20	.798	.528**	1.000														
Existence of CSR statement (3)	.77	.854	.298**	.304**	1.000													
CSR recruitment (4)	.86	1.53	.068	.099	.229**	1.000												
CSR training (5)	.8683	1.50	.057	.164*	.185*	.553**	1.000											
CSR development (6)	.6543	1.26	.105	.162*	.232**	.525**	.620**	1.000										
Strategy info (7)	2.6438	1.28	.093	.110	.166*	.025	-.017	.031	1.000									
Financial info (8)	2.5455	1.33	.092	.174*	-.044	-.062	-.024	-.045	.414**	1.000								
Organizational info (9)	3.2212	1.16	.118	.202**	-.058	-.034	.028	.071	.382**	.234**	1.000							
Profit sharing (10)	.4576	1.11	.133*	.036	-.016	.060	.001	.034	.107	-.021	-.019	1.000						
Share plans (11)	.5294	1.25	.236**	.290**	.248**	.059	.066	.123	.138*	.047	.044	.247**	1.000					
Flexible benefits (12)	1.2585	1.69	.081	.186**	.284**	.035	-.018	.086	.117	.051	.097	.036	.101	1.000				
Usage of job rotation (13)	.78	1.01	.012	.136*	.251**	.169*	.239**	.222**	.052	.025	.034	-.085	.052	.117	1.000			
Percentage of annual payroll costs spent on training (14)	3.89	5.61	.179**	.177**	.177*	.144*	.115	.015	-.001	-.146*	-.142*	.089	.130*	.104	.149*	1.000		
Usage of flexi-time (15)	1.76	1.92	-.075	.004	.116	.103	.130*	.029	.056	-.008	-.194**	.033	.055	.231**	.088	.096	1.000	
Level of environmental performances (16)	3.53	.97	.089	.200**	.256**	-.026	-.039	.024	.059	.143*	.041	-.030	-.070	.139*	.162*	.048	.026	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table 3 presents the results of the Spearman's correlation test. We have used this test since we found that there was no normal distribution in the sample, so the non-parametric test was used to find out the relations between variables. According the data, there are positive correlations between the existence of business strategy, HR strategy, and CSR statements. Positive, statistically significant correlations were found also between CSR statements and recruitment, development, and training plans for special categories of workers (minority ethnics, older workers, people with disabilities, women and women returners, low skilled labor, and for younger workers). More developed CSR statements have positive correlations with the flow of information about strategic issues in the organizations, share plans for employees, the usage of flexible benefits for employees, the usage of job rotation, the percentage of costs spent on training of employees, and the level of environmental performances. We can conclude that the acceptance of CSR in organizations and defining that concept in form of statement in written form has a positive correlation with HRM activities.

The table 3 presents also the results of the Spearman's correlation test for testing the relations between the socially responsible HRM activities and environmental performances. According the data, there are positive correlations between the existence of HR strategy and CSR statements with the level of environmental performances. Positive, statistically significant, correlations were found also between the level of environmental performances and the flow of information on financial results, the usage of flexible benefits, and the usage of job rotation as a method for career development.

Beside these main correlations found, we also pointed to some more interesting results. One of it is the positive correlations between the existence of HR strategy and almost all HR activities in the analysis (CSR training and development plans, flow of organizational and financial information, the usage of share plans and flexible benefits, job rotation, training costs, and the environmental performances). These results are in the line with the past researches, where the SHRM is found as a driving force for the implementation of the CSR in organizations.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The concept of CSR is modern management approach for organizations which stream to the long-term sustainable development. Based on the results of the analysis performed in this research, we can conclude that more formal and strategic approach to the CSR can contribute to the acceptance of this concept trough the main HR activities, and also to the level of environmental performances. Both research hypotheses are confirmed, and we found that there are positive correlations between the existence of HR strategy and CSR practice in organizations, and between the existence of socially responsible HRM practice and environmental performances in organizations.

Several HRM activities are found to be correlated with the existence of a CSR statement. If organizations possess more developed CSR statement then more specific categories of workers will be include in action plans for training and career development, information about business strategy will be presented to the broader range of employees (managers, professionals, clericals, and manuals), specific incentive compensation such as share plans and flexible benefits will be offered to the broader range of employees. Also, if organizations possess more developed CSR statement then more people will be include in job rotation program and higher percentage of annual payroll cost will be used for training of employees.

One more interesting result was the positive correlation between the level of environmental performances and the existence of CSR statement and other HRM activities. If there are more formalized HR strategy and CSR statement, higher usage of flexible benefits and job rotation, and broader informing of employees on financial performance, organizations will have higher level of environmental performances.

From the past researches, theoretical sources and present research result presented in this paper, the final conclusion is that the HRM is connected with the CSR practice. The elements of compensation, training, and career development are very important HRM functions in relation with the CSR concept. Future researches should explore these, but also some others HRM function, in terms of their correlations and influences on other CSR areas, not only environmental performances.

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