CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN CONTEMPORARY ORGANIZATIONS: EVIDENCE FROM SERBIAN PROCESSING INDUSTRY

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Abstract: Corporate social responsibility (CSR), as a concept that tackles economic, social, and environmental dimensions of business, becomes more and more implemented in companies all around the world. There are different effects that CSR can have on business performance, but it is generally accepted that CSR is related to positive outcomes in business organizations. Also, CSR is a concept that can be understood as a way of reaching sustainable development in the future. This paper aims to investigate the level of the implementation of CSR in Serbia, concerning large companies in the processing industry. The methodology used in the paper obtains exploration of theoretical sources, but also the analysis of primary empirical data gathered in Serbia, in the period from November 2019 until June 2020. The authors designed a questionnaire to explore the state of the art of CSR in Serbia, in business organizations, based on previous successful empirical research. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, Mann-Whitney, and Kruskal Wallis tests were used to investigate the CSR on the sample of 73 large companies in Serbia's processing industry. The analyses were made in SPSS software. The results point to the relatively high level of CSR activities in Serbian processing companies, and to the fact that modern companies understand the need of reaching more diversified goals than just economic ones in their business.

1. Introduction

The concept that allows the balance between economic, social, and environmental goals (as a concept of corporate social responsibility) represents a widely accepted business practice in the developed countries of the world (Berber et al., 2019a). There are numerous definitions of CSR, but most of them point that CSR is reflected in "adoption and realization of discretionary business practice and investments that provide support to the community to improve its well-being and environmental protection" (Sekulić & Pavlović, 2018, p. 61). CSR consists of different dimensions. The most investigated CSR dimensions are economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic (Lee et al., 2013; Saeidi et al., 2015), but other views point also to different dimensions like customers, employees, shareholders, environment, market, community, etc. (Grubor et al., 2020, p. 5). Besides, CSR is the concept that can be understood as a way of reaching sustainable development in the future (Moon, 2007; Liczmańska-Kopcewicz et al., 2019), and therefore, it is important to investigate this concept in a broader sense, its relations to different organizational and environmental performances.

This paper aims to investigate the level of implementation of CSR in Serbia, concerning large companies in the processing industry. The methodology used in the paper obtains exploration of theoretical sources, but also the analysis of primary empirical data gathered in Serbia, in the period from November 2019 until June 2020. The authors designed a questionnaire to explore the state of the art of CSR in Serbia, in business organizations, based on previous successful empirical research. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and ANOVA tests were used to investigate CSR in the sample of 73 large companies in the processing industry of Serbia. The analyses were made in SPSS software.

The paper consists of four parts. In the first part of the paper, the authors presented the main theoretical views on CSR. The second part was dedicated to the presentation of the sample, data processing, and overall methodology. The third part of the paper consists of the main results of the analysis, while the fourth part contains discussion and conclusions, as well as limitations, practical, and theoretical implications of the paper.

2. Theoretical background

In the beginning, the concept emphasized CSR through environmental protection, but today it is obvious that CSR is multidisciplinary and a very complex concept

(Dragičević-Radičević et al., 2020). This is related to the thought that natural resources are used and consumed in one unsustainable way and that the amount of waste has increased to a great extent (Marković et al., 2020) because of the growing trends in the processes like urbanization, globalization, industrialization, tourism expansion, and the like (Gavrilović & Maksimović, 2018; Kostić et al., 2019). CRS is seen as "a chance for the firm to achieve adequate gain through a positive impact on the environment" (Čelić, 2019, p. 22). It is a concept that is related to the model of circular economy (Vukadinović & Ješić, 2019), and it points to the shortcomings of the management concepts that have been focusing exclusively on profit (Sekulić & Pavlović, 2018). According to European Commission (2020), CSR is important for *enterprises*, because it "provides important benefits in terms of risk management, cost savings, access to capital, customer relationships, HR management, the sustainability of operations, ability to innovate and eventually profit, *the EU economy*, because companies become more sustainable and innovative, which contributes to a more sustainable economy and *for society*, because "offers a set of values on which we can build a more cohesive society and on which we can base the transition to a sustainable economic system" (European Commission, 2020).

The concept of CSR means "greater involvement of the corporate sector in social, environmental, institutional issues and conditions, which in turn affects the company's profits, and it is related to the concepts of sustainable development, ethical behaviour of companies, corporate sustainability, corporate citizenship, and strategic philanthropy. It implies voluntary behaviour of the company that is much higher than that which is prescribed by law, i.e. a proactive attitude towards social issues. The goal is to minimize the negative impacts of the company's operations on society" (Jovanović, 2017, p. 94).

Figure 1. Carroll's pyramid of CSR

Source: Carroll, 2016, p. 5.

Dahlsrud (2008) developed five dimensions of CSR through a content analysis of existing CSR definitions: (1) stakeholder dimension, (2) social dimension, (3) economic dimension, (4) voluntariness dimension, and (5) environmental dimensions. Regarding CSR dimension, Fatma et al. (2014) pointed out that there are two most used approaches in contemporary research. The first one is related to the findings of Carroll (2016) who pointed out that CSR consists of four main dimensions: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities. Figure 1 presents an overview of this approach.

The second approach in defining CSR is given by Edwin Epstein, who pointed that CSR is a process of defining, implementing, and evaluating the company's ability to anticipate the expectations of internal and external stakeholders, to adequately respond to these expectations, and to manage them in the long run (Ivanović-Đukić, 2011, p. 28). The second approach in the investigation of CSR dimensions is the stakeholder approach, which was further developed by Turker (2009), Rettab et al. (2009), and Fatma et al. (2014). They proposed several dimensions like customers, local community, environmental responsibility, employees, shareholders, and investors, etc. CSR to the local community presents different financial and non-financial forms of assistance to the local society in which an organization is operating. CSR to the environment represents responsible business in terms of preservation of natural resources and decrease of pollution that companies create during their business. CSR to employees refers to the benefits of corporate social responsibility initiatives and the establishment of conditions that increase employee loyalty, commitment, and motivation, thus creating a more innovative and productive workforce. CSR to investors refers to fair and respectful relations between an organization and its investors. It is found that investors besides business results look at nonfinancial performances of their potential partners, and CSR level, too. CSR towards consumers implies maintaining long-term profitable relationships with consumers through the collection of relevant information about consumers' requirements, anticipating possible problems, and their elimination. Also, it means fair and honest relationship with their main customers. CSR to suppliers means that suppliers expect equal treatment with other suppliers and unused ambiguous tactics in negotiations (Stanković et al., 2007; Simić & Ivanović-Đukić, 2013; Timbate & Park, 2018; Berber et al., 2019b).

For this research, the authors decided to use the second approach and designed a specific questionnaire for empirical research. This approach points that different stakeholders can be affected by an organization's business practices and that companies need to be aware of that potential influence and to develop their business according to a responsibility to a wide range of stakeholders to create a sustainable business.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample

The sample used in the research was created from the respondents to questions in a questionnaire designed for research of CSR index in Serbia. We explored 73 large companies that operate in the processing industry. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2020, p. 197), there are 235 large processing companies in Serbia (according to the number of employees). The sample in this research represents 31.06% of the total population (basic set).

The data in the sample shows that these are companies in private ownership, with more than 250 employees. Table 1 presents an overview of the respondents' characteristics. Most of the respondents were male managers, at top management positions, from 33 to 44 years age range, and with a university degree of first (BSc) and second (MSc) level.

Table 1. Characteristics of the sample

Gender			Market		
	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Female	23	31.5	Global	9	12.3
Male	50	68.5	International	18	24.7
Total	**73**	**100.0**	National	30	41.1
Age			Regional	16	21.9
	Frequency	%	**Total**	**73**	**100.0**
25-34	24	32.9	**Headquarter location**		
35-44	33	45.2		Frequency	%
45-54	15	20.5	EU	17	23.3
less than 25	1	1.4	Europe non-EU	1	1.4
Total	**73**	**100.0**	Other	2	2.7
Education			Serbia	53	72.6
	Frequency	%	**Total**	**73**	**100.0**
Mr	5	6.8	**Type of organization**		
MSc	23	31.5		Frequency	%
BSc 6/2	3	4.1	International company	8	11.0
BSc 7/1	42	57.5			
Total	**73**	**100.0**	Domestic company	53	72.6
Management level					
	Frequency	%	A subsidiary of an international company	9	12.3
Line management	2	2.7			
Middle management	34	46.6	A subsidiary of a domestic company	3	4.1
Top management	37	50.7			
			Total	**73**	**100.0**
Total	**73**	**100.0**			

Source: Authors

The sample in this research obtain companies that work mostly on national and international markets (about 65% out of 73 companies). Also, most of them have their headquarters in Serbia, almost 73% of them are national companies, while 23.3% are companies from the EU, and only 4.1% are companies from non-EU European countries. The average number of employees in the sample organizations is 596.

3.2. Variables

The variables used in the research were made based on the previous research of Rettab, Brik, and Mellahi (2009) who created a questionnaire which they tested in a developing country (Dubai). We used the adapted version of it, implemented for the domestic market, and translated into Serbian language. There are 26 statements in the questionnaire, to which respondents had to give answers on a Likert scale from 1- not at all to 5- to a great extent. These 26 questions are divided into 6 factors: *community responsibilities* (with a specific question like "Does your organization give money to charities in the communities where it operates?"), *environmental responsibilities* (i.e. "Does your organization voluntarily exceed government environmental regulations?"), *employee responsibilities* (i.e. "Does your organization provide all employees with salaries that properly and fairly reward them for their work?"), *investor responsibilities* (i.e. "Does your organization incorporate the interests of all our investors into business decisions?"), *customer responsibilities* (i.e. "Does your organization provide all customers with very high-quality service?"), and *supplier responsibilities* (i.e. "Does your organization inform all suppliers of products and services about organizational changes affecting purchasing decisions?"). The questionnaire was filled out by only one person in an organization (single-respondent), usually by managers at the top management level.

3.3. Data processing

The authors used factor analysis to investigate which variables from the questionnaire create unique CSR factors that can be further explored. For the presentation of CSR factors, descriptive statistics were used. Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests were used to explore the differences between factors of CSR and variables such as: the type of a company, the market on which they operate, and the location of a headquarter of a company.

4. Results of the analysis

The value of Cronbach Alpha for originally set statements describing CSR index is 0.929, while in the statements describing the newly formed factors that are in our research brought in connection with CSR index this value is 0.814, which is considered as satisfactory and surpasses the lowest limit of acceptability that is 0.6

(Dakduk et al., 2019). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett spherical tests were implemented to check if the sample is adequate. Bartlett's spherical test should be significant (p <0.000) for the application of factor analysis to be justified. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin KMO indicator takes the values between 0 and 1; and 0.6 is recommended as the least acceptable (Marzouk & Elkadi, 2016). In this analysis, KMO is 0.765, and Bartlett's test of sphericity is 1612.225 (p<0.000). Tests have confirmed that data are suitable for factor analysis. Table 2 presents the results of the factor analysis (rotated matrix).

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix

Variables	Factors						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
HR4	.855						
HR5	.834						
HR3	.694						
HR2	.686						
Envi1	.503						
Invest1		.868					
Invest2		.842					
Invest3		.835					
Invest4		.798					
Consumer4			.898				
Consumer2			.866				
Consumer3			.827				
Consumer1			.671				
Supp3				.792			
Supp4				.726			
Supp2				.724			
Supp5				.722			
Supp1				.700			
Envi4					.829		
Envi3					.802		
Envi2					.729		
Soc1						.866	
Soc4						.764	
Soc2						.683	
Soc3						.679	
HR1							.918
Eigenvalues	9.769	3.209	2.083	1.768	1.430	1.286	1.057
Explained var.	37.572	12.341	8.013	6.799	5.499	4.946	4.066
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.							

Source: Authors

Conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) has identified seven factors with a higher significance than 1, which describe 79.23% of the total variance. Similar to the original factors created in the original questionnaire (Rettab et al., 2009), the authors identified six factors in the Serbian case, but also, one more is recognized, with a single question (variable).

The first factor, FHRM is related to *employee responsibilities*, with an eigenvalue of 9.769 and 37.57% of variance explained. The second factor FINVEST represents *investor responsibilities*, with an eigenvalue of 3.209 and 12.34% of explained variance. The third factor FCONSUM represents *customer responsibilities* with an eigenvalue of 2.083 and 8% of explained variance. The fourth factor FSUPPL is *supplier responsibilities*, with an eigenvalue of 1.768 and 6.8% of explained variance. The fifth factor FENVI is *environmental responsibilities*, with an eigenvalue of 1.430 and 5.49% of explained variance. The sixth factor FCOMMUN is *community responsibilities*, with an eigenvalue of 1.286 and 4.95 % of explained variance. The seventh factor with a single variable: "Does your organization treat all employees fairly and respectfully, regardless of gender or ethnic background" is related to the *discriminatory behaviour regarding employees*, and we decided to name it as FUNDISC, with an eigenvalue of 1.057 and 4.07% of explained variance.

The second part of the investigation is the analysis of the factors regarding their arithmetic means and standard deviations, intending to present the main features of achieved CSR in processing companies in Serbia.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of CSR factors

	FCOMMUN	FHRM	FENVI	FSUPPL	FCONSUM	FINVEST	FUNDISC
Mean	4.476	4.702	4.739	4.693	4.729	4.469	4.93
SD	0.591	0.410	0.411	0.423	0.454	0.589	0.254
MIN	2.75	3.50	3.25	3.40	3.00	3.00	4
MAX	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5
Range	2.25	1.50	1.75	1.60	2.00	2.00	1

Source: Authors

According to the data presented in Table 3, all factors got high grades, above 4. The highest rate has been given to the factor FENVI that represents environmental responsibility, and FUNDISC that represents fair treatment for all employees, without discrimination. This was expected since CSR is usually considered as environmentally friendly activities and it is also related to the discriminatory behaviour of employers. Concerning the discriminatory behaviour of employers, this issue is recognized as very sensitive and it is regulated by law, but still, there are differences between, for example, different gender and career promotion possibilities (Đorđević et al., 2017), so successful companies have to create policies and practices that will be indiscriminatory. The lowest rate was given to

the FINVEST, as responsibilities to investors. This is also important to note since although it is highly rated, this means that companies need to put more attention to their relationships with their investors and create more respectful relations and trust between each other.

The final part of the analysis was the application of the Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney test to explore the differences between different companies regarding their CSR activities. The authors used this non-parametric test because there was no evidence of the normality of distribution in the research sample (according to the values of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($p \neq 0.200$) and the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p < 0.05$)). The sig. value of the Shapiro-Wilk test was below 0.05, which means that the data significantly deviate from a normal distribution. Table 4 gives an overview of the results of the Kruskal Wallis test based on different markets in which companies operate.

Table 4. Kruskal Wallis test for differences in CSR factors
regarding the market on which organization operates

	FCOMMUN	FHRM	FENVI	FSUPPL	FCONSUM	FINVEST	FUNDISC
Kruskal-Wallis H	12.275	4.438	6.149	5.439	5.358	4.475	3.208
df	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sig.	.006	.218	.105	.142	.147	.215	.361

Source: Authors

According to the data shown in Table 4, it is obvious that statistically significant differences have been found related to CSR factors only in the case of FCOMMUN, since the Sig. value is below 0.05. In the case of other factors, statistically, significant differences have not been found. The differences are presented in the case of FCOMMUN between organizations that operate on the global, international, national, and regional markets. The highest rank of this factor is found regarding the companies that operate on global (mean rank 54.06) and regional markets (mean rank 41.41), but the lowest is found in companies that operate on the national market of Serbia (28.55). This means that companies that operate only on the national market pay less attention to the responsibility towards the community than companies that operate on international markets.

In the case of the type of the company, there was no statistically significant difference between different types of organizations (international or national headquarters, international or national subsidiaries).

According to the data presented in Table 5, Sig. value is above 0.05 for each of CSR factors.

**Table 5. Kruskal Wallis test for differences in CSR factors
regarding the type of organization**

	FCOMMUN	FHRM	FENVI	FSUPPL	FCONSUM	FINVEST	FUNDISC
Kruskal-Wallis H	6.612	2.890	5.391	2.316	3.843	5.880	4.416
df	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sig.	.085	.409	.145	.509	.279	.118	.220

Source: Authors

According to the data shown in Table 6, in the case of the national origin of the company, a statistically significant difference has been found between the organizations from the EU and Serbia regarding FCOMMUN and FENVI. In both cases, the companies from the EU got a higher mean rank than the companies from Serbia, regarding their responsibility to the environment (mean rank EU=46.85, mean rank Serbia=31.86) and to the local community (mean rank EU=44.91, mean rank Serbia=32.48).

**Table 6. Mann-Whitney test for differences in CSR factors
regarding national origin organization**

	FCOMMUN	FHRM	FENVI	FSUPPL	FCONSUM	FINVEST	FUNDISC
Mann-Whitney U	257.50	402.00	290.50	341.00	407.00	386.00	423.00
Wilcoxon W	1688.500	1833.00	1721.50	1772.00	1838.00	1817.00	576.00
Z	-2.739	-.727	-2.531	-1.652	-.681	-.929	-.844
Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.467	.011	.098	.496	.353	.399

Source: Authors

The reason why this difference exists can be explained in the sense that the European Union possesses several CSR policies, strategies and initiatives and environmental initiatives for businesses and that companies are aware of all benefits, but also requirements that are necessary to implement into their business.

5. Conclusion

There is an evidence of the growing importance of the concept of corporate social responsibility in the world in the last two decades. Many researchers from developed, but also developing and transition countries pointed to the benefits that CSR can bring to organizations that implement it. Some of those are the following: greater awareness of environmental issues and better environmental performances, better organizational performances, greater satisfaction and loyalty of employees, greater satisfaction of consumers, stronger relationships with investors and

suppliers, and better reputation in the community. Empirical research on this topic is increasingly present in international and domestic literature.

For the purpose of this research, the authors chose the stakeholder approach, since this approach recognizes the business organization as an entity that can have different influences on different stakeholders; also, this organization needs to take into account the interests of a wider range of stakeholders, not just its economic interests.

Based on the results of the research, we can conclude that CSR activities in Serbian companies, in the analysed sample, are on a relatively high level and that companies have directed their attention to creating more responsible business practices regarding all explored dimensions. Explanatory factor analysis pointed to the conclusion that the mentioned variables create specific factors, similarly to the previous research (Rettab et al., 2009; Grubor et al., 2020). This is more evident in companies that work on global and international markets, and in those that are from the EU countries, where CSR is even developed on the level of the European Commission. In the case of internationalization of business and operating on global and international markets, authors Godos-Díez et al. (2018) and Aguilera-Caracuel et al. (2017) also found that a company's CSR level and social performances and internationalisation are positively related, since those companies are present in the wider environment, and they need to satisfy different requirements from different stakeholders from different cultural, political, economic, and social environment.

Practical implications of the paper lie in the idea that these findings can be a starting base for creating new strategies for the improvement of CSR practices in companies, while it is also a research that brings results on CSR on data from a very important processing industry in Serbia. Theoretical implications are related to the fact that this is the first research in Serbia based on the presented questionnaire, so it represents a validation of the questionnaire. Most of the previous research in Serbia are based on the investigation of stakeholders' views on CSR, like the perception of employees and consumers of CSR in companies (Vuković et al., 2020a, 2020b), wider community (Dragičević-Radičević et al., 2020), while the research of Krstić et al. (2018) investigated managers in their strategic approach for the integration of CSR into business and Ivanović-Đukić and Lepojević (2015) on CSR and firm efficiency in Serbia. The research in this paper represents a continuing effort for a better understating of CSR and all the potentials that it can bring for companies.

Besides, there are some limitations of the paper, like the one that only the large companies are taken into account, while SMEs were excluded. This is an important limitation since SMEs create the largest share of the Serbian economy, more than 90%. Also, the authors used only statistical techniques for the investigation of the differences between groups, without more complex statistical methods. Both mentioned could represent a starting point for the future research and the analysis of the data.

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KORPORATIVNA DRUŠTVENA ODGOVORNOST U SAVREMENIM ORGANIZACIJAMA: PRIMER SRPSKE PRERAĐIVAČKE INDUSTRIJE

Apstrakt: Korporativna društvena odgovornost (KDO) kao koncept koji se bavi ekonomskom, socijalnom i ekološkom dimenzijom poslovanja, sve se više primenjuje u kompanijama širom sveta. Postoje različiti efekti koje KDO može imati na poslovne performanse, ali generalno je prihvaćeno da je KDO povezan sa pozitivnim ishodima u poslovnim organizacijama. Takođe, KDO je koncept koji se može shvatiti kao način za postizanje održivog razvoja u budućnosti. Cilj ovog rada je da istraži nivo primene KDO u Srbiji, s obzirom na velike kompanije prerađivačke industrije. Metodologija korišćena u radu obuhvata istraživanje teorijskih izvora, ali i analizu primarnih empirijskih podataka prikupljenih u Srbiji, u periodu od novembra 2019. do juna 2020. godine. Autori su dizajnirali upitnik za istraživanje stanja KDO u Srbiji, u poslovnim organizacijama, na osnovu prethodnih uspešnih empirijskih istraživanja. Deskriptivna statistika, faktorska analiza, Mann-Whitney i Kruskal Wallis test korišćeni su za istraživanje na uzorku od 73 velike prerađivačke kompanije u Srbiji. Analize su rađene u softveru SPSS. Rezultati ukazuju na relativno visok nivo društveno odgovornog poslovanja u srpskim prerađivačkim kompanijama i da savremene kompanije razumeju potrebu za postizanjem više ciljeva, nego samo ekonomskih.

Ključne reči: korporativna društvena odgovornost, održivi razvoj, prerađivačka industrija, velike organizacije, Srbija.

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