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CSR and Innovativeness of the Organisation

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Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an effective and innovative management strategy to build a competitive advantage in the market. It contributes to forming favourable conditions for social and economic development.¹ It derives from and contributes to the realization of a sustainable development paradigm.² In this concept, economic, social, and environmental issues are equally important. The conception is a response to the economic, political, and social changes of the 20th and 21st centuries. They were formed under the influence of environmental changes and globalization processes, which caused positive changes resulted in growing social movements, democratization of a society, development of civil rights and information based society, intensification of human

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¹ J. Korpus, *Spoleczna odpowiedzialność przedsiębiorstw w obszarze kształtowania środowiska pracy*, Placet, Warszawa 2006, p. 9.

² Sustainable development is a socio-economic development, which is consistent with the requirements of environmental protection and allows you to meet the needs of the present without depriving future generations to meet their own needs. E. Jastrzębska, *Wprowadzenie do koncepcji CSR i zrównoważonego rozwoju*, in: *Jak uczyć o społecznej odpowiedzialności i zrównoważonym rozwoju. Przewodnik dla nauczycieli*, Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu, Warszawa 2011, p. 11.

and consumer defenders' rights, and the environmental movement.³ They also caused some negative results such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, and the increase of consumerism. Despite its origins and historical development, CSR does not only concern charity (although it is often perceived in that way).⁴ It is the way of running business, which enables to achieve its primary economic goal, i.e. to generate incomes for owners, including employees, consumers, suppliers, local communities, and authorities interests, and the environment protection⁵ (as an impersonal stakeholder of CSR).⁶ This approach to business provides enterprises with many benefits, including the improvement of their innovativeness potential.⁷

The goal of this paper is to present how the implementation of social responsible initiative, based on CSR areas proposed in ISO 26000, helps to create a process, organisational, marketing, and product innovations, and thus to shape the innovativeness of the organisation. The study adopted two research hypotheses. The first assumes that the introduction of the CSR strategy in the organization for the first time is an innovation process. Its further development leads to innovation and organizational innovativeness. The second hypothesis assumes that the first implementation of CSR good practices, based on specific areas of ISO 26000, such as organizational governance, human rights, labour practices, the environment, fair operating practices, consumer issues, community involvement, and the development in the organization, results in specific product, process, organization, and marketing innovations. The above-mentioned hypotheses were verified positively by conducting the analysis of literature using a 'desk research' method.

The essence of CSR

In the literature, much attention has been devoted to Corporate Social Responsibility. Drucker claimed that "(...) the society is not only the environment in which business is run. Even the most private company is a part of society and fulfil social functions (...)

³ E. Mazur-Wierzbicka, *CSR w dydaktyce, czyli jak uczyć studentów społecznej odpowiedzialności*, Stowarzyszenie Kreatywni dla Szczecina, Szczecin 2012, p. 7, 10–11. M. Rybak, *Etyka menedżera – społeczna odpowiedzialność przedsiębiorstwa*, WN PWN, Warszawa 2004, p. 17–18.

⁴ P. Kotler, N. Lee, *Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the most good for your company and your cause*, John Wiley & Sons, Ina., New York 2005, in: N.C. Smith, G. Lenssen, *Odpowiedzialność biznesu. Teoria i praktyka*, Wyd. Studio Emka, Warszawa 2009, p. 389.

⁵ J.J. Asongu, *Innovation as an Argument for Corporate Social Responsibility*, "Journal of Business and Public Policy" 2007, vol. 1, no. 3.

⁶ A. Lewicka-Strzałecka, *Odpowiedzialność moralna w życiu gospodarczym*, IFiS PAN, Warszawa 2006, p. 18.

⁷ *European Competitiveness – Report of European Commission*, 2008, in: E. Mazur-Wierzbicka, op. cit., p. 18.

and therefore economic activity imposes a responsibility on those who run it.”⁸ Thus, despite the objections, the CSR conception is becoming more and more important and popular. There are also more and more companies that incorporate it into their strategies and actions.⁹

“Corporate Social Responsibility is the new global direction of change in strategic management, which obliges companies to sustainable development with respect to the principles of economy, ecology, and ethics.”¹⁰ This is, on the one hand, “self-imposed consideration of social and environmental aspects in enterprise commercial activities, and while dealing with stakeholders.”¹¹ On the other hand, “the management is obliged to select such decisions and actions that contribute to the attention of self-interest (multiplying the company’s profit), as well as to protection and welfare multiplication.”¹² The attitude towards social contributions, active searching for possibilities of bringing own share in social welfare, is the highest level of corporate social responsibility, which can characterize the organization.¹³ Therefore CSR is the company’s social and ecological sensitivity to the matters of the external environment, and its ability to maintain a balance between the interests of customers, employees, shareholders, and other stakeholders,¹⁴ as well as providing certain services to the local community.¹⁵

The importance of social responsibility issues has led to the creation of ISO 26000. This standard extends the concept of corporate social responsibility to all organizations,

⁸ P. Drucker, *The Practice of Management*, Heinemann, London 1955, in: N.C. Smith, G. Lenssen, op. cit., p. 390.

⁹ In Poland, the interest in integration of socially responsible practices into business is growing. The number of companies presenting their CSR activities in the report prepared by the Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu increases from year to year. The report *Responsible Business in Poland 2014. Good Practices* presents 684 practice, including 420 new reported by 124 companies. “Extremely positive is much higher number of reported long-standing practices, because it means that companies are discovering the fundamental importance of CSR function in the long term”, <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/publikacje/raport-odpowiedzialny-biznes-w-polsce-2014-dobre-praktyki/> (10.04.15).

¹⁰ J. Korpus, op. cit., p. 51.

¹¹ *Green Paper Promoting European Framework for Corporate social Responsibility, Commission of the European Communities*, Bruksela, 18 lipca 2001 r., http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/soc-dial/csr/green_paper_pl.pdf, in: M. Bernatt, *Spoleczna odpowiedzialność biznesu. Wymiar konstytucyjny i międzynarodowy*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wydziału Zarządzania Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2009, p. 26.

¹² M. Rybak, *Etyka menedżera – społeczna odpowiedzialność przedsiębiorstwa*, PWE, Warszawa 2007, in: E.E. Mazur-Wierzbicka, op. cit., p. 27.

¹³ J. Korpus, op. cit., p. 59.

¹⁴ *Employees, customers, shareholders, suppliers, municipal local authorities, universities, community, NGOs, environment*, in: K. Szelałowska-Rudzka, *Udział pracowników w podejmowaniu decyzji jako przykład działań społecznie odpowiedzialnych – komunikat z badania*, „Zarządzanie i Edukacja”, no. 95/2014, p. 138.

¹⁵ M. Żemigąła, *Jakość w systemie zarządzania przedsiębiorstwem*, Placet, Warszawa 2008, in: *Spoleczna odpowiedzialność organizacji. Od odpowiedzialności do elastycznych form pracy*, eds. R. Walkowiak, K. Krukowski, Fundacja „Wspieranie i Promocja Przedsiębiorczości na Warmii i Mazurach”, Olsztyn 2009, p. 12.

not only companies, and emphasizes their impact on the environment, and the need to build relationships for welfare. In the field of corporate social responsibility, the standard includes the following key areas of the activity: corporate governance (guidelines on the broadly defined management), human rights (their observance by the organization, its suppliers, and contractors), labour practice (human resource management issues, social dialogue, working conditions, social facilities, and health and safety at work), the environment (its protection against the adverse impact of business), fair operating practices (ethical attitude to stakeholders, fight against corruption, the promotion of CSR in the area of its operation), consumer issues (factual and objective information, fair business practices, consumer education), community involvement, and the local community development (perceiving and solving its problems).¹⁶

The analysis of the literature indicates that the CSR concept is voluntary. It is addressed to a wide group of stakeholders, and is assumed to conduct a dialogue with them.¹⁷ Building relationships with stakeholders helps to respond to their needs, educate and learn from them, and translate the knowledge thus gained into products and processes.¹⁸ This allows to create innovations and innovativeness of the company.

Innovation and accelerating business innovation

According to Schumpeter, the innovation means¹⁹ the introduction of a new product, which customers have never had dealt with before, the introduction of a new kind of a product or the introduction of a new method of production, opening of a new market, obtaining new sources of raw materials or semi-finished products, and carrying out a new organization of industry (e.g. creating a monopoly or its breaking).

There are other authors who state that innovation also means introducing a solution implemented earlier by someone else (imitation). Hence, there exists an idea that innovations create some continuum, starting with those imitations which were successfully used by others, and later only implemented, to the appropriate and radically new innovative products that have never been used by anyone before.²⁰

Oslo Manual (OM) introduces a certain order in innovation. According to it, the innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product

¹⁶ *RespEn. Odpowiedzialna przedsiębiorczość. Polskie i szwedzkie MSP wobec wyzwań CSR*, ed. A. Nikodemka-Wołowik, Warszawa 2011, p. 11.

¹⁷ E. Mazur-Wierzbicka, op. cit., p. 28–29. W. Ociecek, B. Gajdzik, *Spoleczna odpowiedzialność przedsiębiorstw produkcyjnych*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Śląskiej, Gliwice 2010, p. 69.

¹⁸ E. Jastrzębska, op. cit., p. 13–14.

¹⁹ J. Schumpeter, *Teoria rozwoju gospodarczego*, PWN, Warszawa 1960, p. 103.

²⁰ A. Francik, *Innowacje jako źródło przedsiębiorczości*, in: J. Targalski, A. Francik, *Przedsiębiorczość i zarządzanie firmą. Teoria i praktyka*, C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2009, p. 91.

(good or service), a process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practice, workplace organization, or external relations.²¹ This applies to both solutions based on the present invention and the imitative innovation improvement.

The Oslo Manual singled out four types of innovations, associated with a product, a process, marketing, and organization. Product innovations are connected with a product, service, or applications of significant changes. These include both entirely new products, as well as, significant improvements to the existing goods and services in terms of their functional characteristics or performance. Process innovations mean significant changes in the methods of production, products delivering (logistics), and service creating and providing. This category includes significant changes in technology, equipment, or software. Marketing innovations are connected with new (previously not used by the company) marketing methods implementation, inter alia, project or product design (changes in the form or appearance of products without altering their functional characteristics or performance), package, promotion, and product distribution, as well as product pricing, and service methods. Organizational innovations relate to the implementation of new organizational methods (e.g. the first system implementation training, thorough transformation processes, the implementation of new systems, e.g. supply chain management), workplace organization (e.g. the introduction of new methods of the distribution of tasks, or the power to take decisions among employees), or business relations with the environment (e.g. establishing a new type of cooperation with research institutions, customers, or suppliers).²²

There is no innovativeness without innovations.²³ It means the ability to generate and implement innovations, the willingness to change, search for, and implement own or other people's ideas, environmental monitoring, and dealing with a high risk or some uncertainty.²⁴ It is also creating a new product or a process as a result of innovative changes, and then implementing it into practice.

CSR as a method of building innovativeness of the organization

Firstly, the implementation of CSR concept in an organization, not only in the form of business strategy, but also in good practices, is an innovation process. It is a new approach to running a business, which intrinsically is not merely focused on generating

²¹ *Oslo manual. Guidelines for collecting and interpreting innovation data*, OECD/European Communities, Paris 2005, p. 46.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 19, 50–55.

²³ A. Karaś, *Rozwój kompetencji pracowników jako podstawa innowacyjności przedsiębiorstwa*, Zeszyty Naukowe Małopolskiej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Tarnowie, vol. 20, no. 1/ 2012, p. 75.

²⁴ A. Francik, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

profit (at any price), but draws attention to the need of taking into account the existing social and environmental goals. Building relationships with stakeholders, sustainable development is an innovative way of management, which causes organizational innovation (in terms of the reorganization process and training), process innovation (e.g. the implementation of a new environment-friendly technology), marketing innovation (an innovative way to communicate with the market), and product innovation, when social responsibility leads to new products, creating or changing the existing ones.

The policy of the European Union confirms that socially responsible actions lead to innovation, and improve the innovativeness of the company. Even in its Lisbon Strategy (2000), the EU included its long-term goals, promoting CSR as one of the main pillars of the competitive knowledge-based and sustainable economy development. In the subsequent papers,²⁵ the EU developed further commitment to promote corporate social responsibility (including SMEs) in the strategy “Europe 2020 for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.”²⁶ There are also other international organizations’ initiatives which help to develop and popularize the CSR concept.²⁷ They provide some guidance on how to implement, conduct, and report the social responsible practices, and thus develop organizations’ innovativeness.

The innovation-creating guidelines on the basis of social responsibility are provided by standard ISO 26000. The standard shows which particular socially responsible practices, associated with each of the seven areas, are innovations,²⁸ partial innovations when product, processes, or methods of operation carried out under the influence of the already implemented CSR policies (or strategies) are improved, or strictly novelty providing the solution which has not been applied in an organization before.

The examples of process, organizational, product, and marketing innovations based on specific areas of ISO 26000 are given below.

Corporate Governance. The implementation of a socially responsible strategy, and socially responsible initiatives into the management system, and the certification of the management system based on standard AA 8000, are the examples of process innovation. Other examples of innovative activities in this area include: ethical code, social reporting development and implementation (standard AA 1000 and AA 8000),

²⁵ e.g. *Green paper on CSR 2001, White Paper in 2002, The European Commission Communication A business contribution to sustainable development, 2002.*

²⁶ (Innovation Union (COM(2010) 477). J. Korpus, op. cit., p. 61–63; E. Mazur-Wierzbicka, op. cit., p. 17–19.

²⁷ e.g. *The principles of Global Compact ONZ (1999); Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises OECD (2000), Global Resources Initiative (1997)*, which prepared the rules of CSR standardisation and other organizations, which made the standards of CSR: ISO 26000, SA 8000, AA 1000. Based on: M. Bernatt, op. cit., p. 75–101; J. Korpus, op. cit., p. 70–82.

²⁸ Cf. E. Mazur-Wierzbicka, op. cit.; Raport „Odpowiedzialny biznes w Polsce 2014. Dobre praktyki”, Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu, Warszawa 2015.

dialogue with stakeholders – information exchange, negotiating solutions, involving them in the decision-making process (organizational); creating a CSR exchanging web-based platform (marketing); modifying products under the influence of dialogues and agreements with stakeholders (product).

Human rights. In this area, the socially responsible actions include: managing diversity in the workplace, counteracting the mobbing practices (process); increasing the number of women in leadership positions, placing professional experience and jobs for people with disabilities (organizational); posting the information on human rights on the products, and CSR practice (marketing).

Labour practices are based on employees' engagement in the decision-making process (participation of employees allows to create the mechanisms of suggestion for improvements and innovations), and also a family policy (process). They go far beyond the traditional health and safety dialogues with employees. They help to improve the internal communication (including the communication with the top management), the integration of employees (e.g. inviting employee's children to open days in their parents' firms), taking care of the workers' health (e.g. a fruit day, funded by the employer to promote travelling to work by bike), introducing innovative ideas boxes with competitions, and individual development programs for staff, work-life balance programs, flexible forms of employment, teleworking, employee's volunteering (e.g. for orphanages or the local society), supporting employees with supplementary pension schemes, outplacement, scholarships for their children (organizational); lectures by some outstanding people in different fields (e.g. K. Holowczyc was invited by ING Bank Śląski to talk to the employees about meeting challenges)²⁹ (marketing); improving the products of a company by means of employee participation (product).

CSR activities concerning the *environment* include: developing and implementing environmental management system (in accordance with ISO 14001); reducing the emission of various pollutants;³⁰ enhancing the environmental education of employees and consumers, e.g. through providing reliable information on the chemical composition of products (process); organizing ecological competitions for children, eco-office (saving paper), waste sorting, recycling, sustainable transport – carpooling, the usage of bicycles or public transport (organizational); training, dialogue with consumers on the company product range (marketing); the usage of the energy-saving technologies, 'eco' products (product).

²⁹ *Odpowiedzialny biznes...*, p. 44.

³⁰ DuPont example shows that the initiatives of the preservation of the environment could be profitable and "benefits that can accrue from a properly implemented strategic CSR program entails classifying such a program as an investment for the company, not an expense", J.J. Asongu, op. cit., p. 19.

Fair operating practices include: fair competition, fair implementation of business processes and honest relationships with other organizations (public and non-governmental), anti-corruption practices, market education, and dialogues on the processes in the supply chain activities (process); CSR practice dialogue and workshops for suppliers and their possible extension to suppliers (organizational); operating a social media marketing platform (marketing).

Consumer issues are mainly related to the following: consumer education to promote business awareness; increasing products availability for the customers with disabilities (with limited mobility or hearing) or the elderly (organizational); conscious consumption, the programs related to the consumers' health and safety, informing about the products (marketing); making the product easier to use, e.g. cash collection 'box light', installed by ING Bank Śląski in a customer office (product).³¹

Community involvement and development of the local community are very important processes of socially responsible activities. They are carried out under local community integration programs. The programs include: education of adults, children, and youth, entrepreneurship (incubators, competitions for the best business), training, practice, and support to non-governmental organizations, promotion of physical activity, cooperation with universities, philanthropic and charity activities (organizational); public awareness campaigns, e.g. healthy nutrition; prevention of heart disease (marketing).

Some of the examples of the socially responsible practices have existed in the market for a long time, so they may not be considered an innovation within the meaning of Schumpeter. However, if used for the first time in the organization, they are an innovation. While developing, they lead to the creation of new solutions, including radical innovations. The inclusion of employees, i.a. through their direct participation, in the innovation process in order to search of improvements, develops this process in particular. The implementation of the new solutions based on CSR initiatives leads to the creation of company innovativeness, and improves its competitiveness. It enables to run business to the benefit of the company and its stakeholders, as well as, in the broad sense, of the society and the environment.

Conclusions

The implementation of CSR initiatives, CSR strategy is an innovative approach to business. It takes into consideration the implementation of social and environmental goals, creating innovation and organization innovativeness. This concept shows that - through a conscious process of building relationships with stakeholders - being respon-

³¹ *Odpowiedzialny biznes...*, p. 86.

sible for the economic consequences of the others, such as society, suppliers, employees and the environment – is the method of doing good business in an innovative way to build its competitive advantage. As shown in the study process, organizational, product, and marketing innovations can have their source in implementing socially responsible practices corresponding to specific areas of ISO 26000 (organizational governance, human rights, labour practices, the environment, fair operating practices, consumer issues, and community involvement and development). The implementation of these activities for the first time as defined by Schumpeter is an innovation (new to the firm, which has not been introduced in an organization before). Whereas improving of products, processes, or methods of operations carried out under the influence of already implemented CSR policies (or strategies) is a partial innovation (they are closer to imitation). The implementation of these innovations and their development within the organization leads to creating its innovativeness.

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Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an effective management strategy and an innovative way to build a competitive advantage of the company. It is not only focused on generating profit, but also on creating favourable conditions for social and economic development. Implementing CSR strategy in the organization for the first time is an example of the process innovation. It leads to building relationships with stakeholders, on the principles of sustainable development. The purpose of this article is to show the way in which the implementation of CSR initiatives, based on the areas of CSR proposed in ISO 26000 (corporate governance, human rights, labour practices, the environment, fair operating practices, consumer issues, community involvement, and local development), creates different types of innovation (process, organizational, product, and marketing), and improve the organisation innovativeness. The study used the method of 'desk research' literature.

Translated by Agnieszka Jakubiuk

CSR a innowacyjność organizacji

Społeczna odpowiedzialność organizacji (CSR) to efektywna strategia zarządzania, innowacyjny sposób budowania przewagi konkurencyjnej, który poza celami ekonomicznymi uwzględnia również kwestie społeczne i środowiskowe. Koncepcja CSR wdrożona w organizacji po raz pierwszy jest przykładem innowacji procesowej, prowadzi do budowania relacji z interesariuszami, w oparciu o zasady zrównoważonego rozwoju. Celem artykułu jest pokazanie, w jaki sposób, wdrożenie praktyk społecznie odpowiedzialnych – opartych o obszary CSR wyodrębnione w normie ISO 26000 – (ład korporacyjny, prawa człowieka, praktyki w miejscu pracy, środowisko, uczciwe praktyki handlowe, zagadnienia konsumenckie, zaangażowanie społeczne i rozwój społeczności lokalnej) prowadzi do tworzenia innowacji procesowych, organizacyjnych, marketingowych, produktowych i kreowania tym samym innowacyjności organizacji. W opracowaniu zastosowano metodę „desk research” literatury przedmiotu.