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Actions Objected at Employees in CSR - Report from the Study

1. Introduction

Modern economy requires the search for new and effective ways to build competitive advantage. One of them is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Heslin, Ochoa, 2008, p. 125; Korpus, 2006, p. 9; Hąbek, 2009, p. 70; Sobczak, 2011, pp. 75-76). It represents the concept which assumes the realization of the objectives of market enterprises with a simultaneous commitment to achieving long-term objectives for the benefit of society and the environment; objectives, the achievement of which involves going beyond the requirements of law and economics (Adamczyk, 2009, p. 44). The most important stakeholders of the enterprise are the employees (Szelağowska-Rudzka, 2011, p. 122). Employee participation in CSR activities is essential to their success (Chen Hung-Baesecke, 2014, p. 211). Due to the strategic role of employees, socially responsible practices should be directed to them in the first place (Gadomska-Lila, 2012, p. 42, Bursova, 2014, p. 105). The staff who are taken care of and treated as subjects by the organization are more willing to fulfill their duties concerning customers, contractors, and other recipients of the CSR (Chen Hung-Baesecke, 2014,

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p. 211; Heslin, Ochoa, 2008, p. 129; Grobelna, 2015, p. 80; Cichobłaziński et al., 2015, pp. 83-85). They prove with their own example that their company not only proclaims the idea of social responsibility, but actually implements it, starting with their employees. What is more, they carry the message to their family, friends, customers, local communities, and other stakeholders, at the same time becoming the ambassadors of the CSR practices of their employer in the environment (Szelałowska-Rudzka, 2011, p. 253; Benedek, Takacs-Gyorgy, 2014, p. 68). However, the socially responsible actions of companies objected at the employees are still insufficient and need intensification (Gadomska-Lila, 2012, p. 41; Kim et al., 2010, p. 554).

The aim of the study is to analyze CSR practices addressed to employees of the selected organizations in the Pomeranian Voivodeship. This is a pilot study which was conducted by the means of a direct questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on the guidelines of ISO 26000 standard concerning the area of practices at workplace.

2. The Concept of CSR and Its Areas in Accordance with ISO 26000

According to ISO 26000 standard, the concept of CSR means “the responsibility of the organization for the impact of its decisions and actions on the society and the environment throughout transparent and ethical behavior, which contributes to the society’s sustainable development, health, and prosperity; takes into account the expectations of stakeholders (individuals or groups interested in the decisions or actions of the organization)¹; is consistent with applicable law and the international standards of conduct; is implemented and practiced in the whole organization” (Nikodemska-Wołowik, 2011, p. 10).

The corporate social responsibility is compliant with the widely understood activities related to balanced development (Kizielewicz, 2016, p. 195). The actions should result from the strategy which includes the socially responsible objectives, as well as they should go beyond the existing legal and ethical norms and standards (Heslin, Ochoa, 2008, pp. 125-126; Mazur-Wierzbicka, 2012, pp. 28-29).

As P. Drucker (1999, p. 87) pointed out, “ [...] any business organization takes full responsibility for its impact on the local community and the society

1 These include customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, creditors, financial institutions, local community, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, schools and universities, the media, and the environment (as an important impersonal CSR stakeholder).

in which it operates". The ISO 26000 standard draws the attention to the fact that CSR concerns not only businesses (which it is most often associated with), but all organizations. As a matter of fact, they all generate certain effects of their activities for the environment (other market participants, communities, the environment), and thus they should bear responsibility for these effects (Spodarczyk, Szelałowska-Rudzka, 2015, p. 437; Benedek, Takacs-Gyorgy, 2014, p. 66).

ISO standard, as a practical guide for organizations wishing to implement the idea of social responsibility, indicates seven areas in which CSR practices should be successfully implemented. These areas are (Nikodemska-Wołowik, 2011, p. 11): organisational governance (guidelines on the broadly defined management), human rights (their observance by the organization, as well as its suppliers, and contractors), practices at workplace (human resource management issues, social dialogue, working conditions and safety at work), the environment (its protection against the adverse impact of the 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), social involvement and local community development (noticing and solving its problems). The practices at workplace include: ensuring the right to equitable remuneration, fair treatment and non-discrimination due to gender, views, race, etc., the right to decent working conditions, safety and health of workers, the right to information on safety and working conditions, the right to freedom in the leisure time, the right to immunity, the right to participate in decisions regarding employment (Szelałowska-Rudzka, 2016, pp. 424-426). The practices also affect the work done by others on behalf of the organization (human rights) and assume compliance with these guidelines as well in the commissioned organizations (Rybiański, 2011, p. 10, 13).

The socially responsible activities towards employees also require the development of personal strategy. The effectiveness of these actions requires translating the business strategy of the organization into its functional strategies (e.g. financial, marketing strategies etc.), including personal strategy. The socially responsible objectives included in the strategy should also conform to specific subfunctions of Human Resource Management in the organization (to recruitment - from defining the needs of staff through recruitment, selection and introduction to the work; to motivation - the use of different remunerative and non-financial incentives, creating positive relationships with employees, assessment, staff development). This will allow to direct the staff on the

achievement of these objectives, and will confirm that the idea of CSR is not only proclaimed by the organization, but in fact it is implemented, beginning with the company's own employees. The entities adapting their personal strategy to the socially responsible business strategy, authenticate their actions towards employees and other stakeholders and gain support for their implementation on the part of employees. Employees, being satisfied with subjective treatment, supervisors' care, building positive relationships and principles of cooperation with them, mutual trust (Bylok et al., 2015, pp. 45-47; Cichobłaziński et al., 2015, s. 83), become ambassadors for their organization and its CSR practices to other stakeholders (Szelałowska-Rudzka, 2010, pp. 69-72; Benedek, Takacs-Gyorgy, 2014, p. 70; Kim et al., 2010, p. 557).

Based on the guidelines of ISO 26000 standard the pilot study was conducted in order to diagnose the occurrence of socially responsible activities addressed to employees of the selected organizations in the Pomeranian Voivodeship. The results and conclusions achieved from them are shown in the following parts of the report.

3. The Characteristics of CSR Practices in the Light of Study's Results

The study was conducted in 2014 with the means of a direct survey using a questionnaire specially developed based on the work practices specified in ISO 26000 standard. The study involved a total of 210 employees representing various organizations from the Pomeranian Voivodeship². Most of them (72%) were private enterprises (16% budget units, 5% both state-owned enterprises and cooperatives). These organizations were mainly involved in service activity (45%), but also mixed activity (22%), commercial activity(12%), production (11%) and public activity (9%). 34% of them were large organizations (employing more than 250 people), 30% were medium-sized (50 to 249 employees), 35% were small (1-49 people). The majority of the respondents were women (60%) aged 20-30 (74%) (31-40 years - 15%, more than 40 years - 11%), employed in executive (42%) and as professionals (35 %) (14% were managers, 4% were administration and office workers, others - 5%). The study results are presented in tables 1 to 14.

2 They were also non-regular students of the Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Quality Science (first and second degree) and the Faculty of Electrical Engineering (first degree) at Gdynia Maritime University.

Table 1. Being familiar with the concept of CSR

answers (%)		
yes	no	I do not know
34	45	21

Source: own study based on the research results

Table 2. The opinion on the implementation of the CSR concept by the organizations

answers (%)		
yes	no	I do not know
14	24	62

Source: own study based on the research results.

Table 3. The presence of the objectives related to social responsibility in the strategy of the organization

answers (%)		
yes	no	I do not know
25	23	51

Source: own study based on the research results

Table 4. The presence of the personal strategy in the studied entities

answers (%)		
yes	no	I do not know
40	27	33

Source: own study based on the research results

Table 5. The degree of satisfaction with working in their organizations

answers (%)			
definitely yes	yes	no	definitely no
14	65	19	2

Source: own study based on the research results

As the analysis shows, averagely 66% of respondents (the sum of the answers no and I do not know) do not know the concept of CSR (table 1), 62% do not know whether it is applied in the employing organization (table 2), 51% cannot identify whether their organization has a strategy taking into account the objectives of social responsibility (table 3). The inconsistency of answers regarding the implementation of CSR in the organization (14%) (table 2), and its inclusion in the strategy (25%) (table 3) are findings which draw one's attention. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that particular practices, to which the third question refers (tab. 3), are more easily observed and evaluated than the general occurrence of CSR. The use of personal strategy by the surveyed organizations turns out to score definitely higher. On average, 40% of respondents state that their organization implements the strategy (table 4). At the same time, it is the most common in large companies (58%) and the least in small ones (26%)³. 79% of respondents (the sum of the responses definitely yes and yes) are satisfied with the work in their organization, which confirms the involvement of the company in the employees and their matters (table 5).

Table 6. Being familiar with the code of ethics used in the organization

answers (%)		
yes	no	no code
50	28	22

Source: own study based on the research results

³ The author presents detailed results due to the size of the company when the difference compared to the average result contained in the table exceeds 10%.

Table 7. The observance of the principles included in the code of ethics

	answers (%)			
	yes	no	I do not know	It does not matter to me
By employees	66	8	24	2
By employer	54	18	25	3

Source: own study based on the research results

Averagely in 50% of companies surveyed there exists a code of ethics (the most commonly in big enterprises - 62%, the least commonly in the small ones - 36%). The code is known by the respondents (table 6). 66% of them believe that the code is respected by employees, while 54% claims that it is applied by the employer as well (table 7).

Table 8. The structure of employment in the surveyed enterprises with regard to sexes

answers (%)				
similar	the same	more women	more men	I do not know
20	3	35	39	3

Source: own study based on the research results

Table 9. The structure of employment with regard to age, education, nationality, race and religion in the organizations participating in the study

	answers (%)			
	yes	no	I do not know	It does not matter to me
People aged 50+	71	23	6	0
Secondary education graduates	76	15	9	0
University graduates	93	4	3	0
Foreigners	25	59	16	0

People of a race different than white	12	69	19	0
People of non - Roman Catholic confession	32	16	46	6

Source: own study based on the research results

Table 10. The employment of people with disabilities in the organisations

answers (%)			
yes	no	no, due to the nature of the organization	I do not know
26	49	12	14

Source: own study based on the research results

Generally, the respondents state that their organizations employ more men (39%) than women (35%). Only in medium-sized enterprises the tendency is reversed (women - 42%, men - 33%). Similar or equal number of employees of both sexes is found only in 23% of companies (table 8). The surveyed organizations also employ people aged 50+ (71%), representatives of religions other than Roman Catholic (32%), foreigners (25%), people of a race different than white (12%) (table 9), as well as people with disabilities (26%) (table 10). The smallest numbers of them occur in small organizations (respectively: 54%, 20%, 12%, 4%, 8%), the largest numbers are observed generally in large ones (except for people 50+, who are most commonly employed in medium-sized companies - 85%). In the surveyed enterprises the employees with higher education are the majority (93%), however, secondary education graduates are also numerous represented (76%) (table 9).

Table 11. Cases of harassment of the employees in the surveyed organizations

answers (%)			
Nobody; harassment is nonexistent	manager	owners	colleagues
62	19	8	11

Source: own study based on the research results

Table 12. The interest of the surveyed entities in the working conditions of stakeholders

answers (%)		
yes	no	I do not know
31	37	32

Source: own study based on the research results.

In the majority of companies surveyed (62%) there is no harassment. In the remaining companies it is mainly committed by managers (19%) and colleagues (11%), and least commonly by the owners (8%) (with the exception of small organizations - 13%) (table 11). 31% of surveyed organizations also attach importance to the quality of the conditions of employment offered to employees by their contractors (table 12).

Table 13. Organizational solutions and technical sources facilitating the work of the surveyed organizations concerning various groups of employees

	answers (%)			
	supervisors	specialists	all the workers	I do not know
Flexible working hours (an employee begins their work day at a chosen time)	42	14	16	28
Telecommuting (work from home, a visit to the headquarters only when necessary)	19	12	5	64
Company laptop at disposal	46	24	10	20
Company mobile phone	47	27	12	14
Company car	42	18	7	33

Source: own study based on the research results

Most organizations include flexible working hours (72% - the sum of three responses without the option I do not know), a company mobile phone (86%), business laptop (80%) or car (67%). The least frequent in the surveyed companies is telecommuting (outside headquarters) (36%). The analyzed solutions,

facilitating the work and being a sign of attention towards employees, concern mainly managers and professionals, the group of all the employees remaining the least likely to obtain them (table 13).

Table 14. Differentiation of remunerative incentives and non-financial incentives occurring in the organization and the degree of employees' satisfaction with them

component/actions	Level of satisfaction (%)				frequency of occurring (%)
	very satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	
Basic salary	7	55	30	8	100
Bonus	7	46	35	12	88
Known and accepted bonus rules	8	38	37	17	82
Financial rewards	5	38	36	21	70
Material prize	3	25	45	26	58
Benefits package	11	41	31	17	71
Profit sharing	3	17	38	43	46
Bonds/shares of the company	1	16	43	39	44
Praise from supervisors	10	52	29	9	82
Integration meetings	20	50	19	11	74
Supervisor's concern over employee	11	51	28	10	84
Friendly atmosphere at work	23	55	18	4	96
Promotion opportunity	8	30	43	19	85
Career paths	8	33	39	20	80
Freedom to express opinions	16	49	28	7	93
Opportunity to suggest improvements & ideas	18	50	25	7	90
Access to information about the organization	15	62	17	6	84

Smooth flow of information between supervisors and employees (both ways)	12	50	32	6	95
Smooth flow of information between co-workers	20	60	16	4	92
Funding of studies	6	14	28	52	67
Interests developing trainings	5	30	35	30	70
Language courses	6	23	31	40	60
Fair assessment	5	34	38	23	85
Known, accepted assessment rules & criteria	9	38	34	19	72
Additional medical services	13	28	28	31	61
Freedom to choose the way to carry out tasks	13	53	21	13	76
Healthy lifestyle promoting	9	38	34	19	61
Encouraging the employees to comply with the rules of eating healthily	9	26	42	23	50
Passes to sports facilities	15	22	28	35	59
Keeping the work - life balance	4	33	33	30	57
Purchase of books for the company library	7	19	37	37	48
Possibility of organizing volunteering work	12	34	29	25	53
Health and safety conditions exceeding the law	7	37	46	10	54
Supplementary pensions	3	20	43	34	48
Concern about team building and team work	8	46	34	12	74
Employer's concern about building trust in workers	9	37	38	16	72

Source: own study based on the research results

The surveyed organizations most frequently use the following incentives: basic salary (100%), bonuses (88%), and known and accepted bonus rules (82%), fair assessment (85%). The next incentives, with regard to frequency of occurrence, the possibility of promotion (85%), and career paths (80%) are more commonly applied in big organizations. On the other hand, fair assessment (85%) is least commonly reported by employees of medium-sized companies. Attention is drawn to a large number of indications of friendly atmosphere at work (96%), smooth flow of information between supervisors and employees (95%) and among the employees (92%) (less frequent in medium-sized organizations). Freedom of expressing opinions (93%), and suggesting improvements and ideas (90%) more commonly occur in small organizations. Supervisor's concern over employees (84%), access to information about the organization (84%), praise from supervisors (82%), as well as superior's concern about team building and team work (74%) and about building trust in employees (72%) are again the least frequently found in medium-sized organizations (table 14).

The incentives which the respondents are least likely to use, regardless of the size of the organization, include: bonds / shares of the company (44%), profit sharing (46%) and the purchase of books for the company library (48%). The respondents are precisely the most dissatisfied with the access to the bonds / shares of the company (83% - the sum of answers dissatisfied and very dissatisfied), funding of studies (80%), supplementary pensions (77%), the purchase of books to company libraries (74%), material prizes (71%) (as many as 90% of employees of small organisations) and the share in profits (70%). The most satisfying factor is the free flow of information between employees (80% - sum of answers very satisfied and satisfied), friendly atmosphere at work (78%) (mainly in small and big organizations), access to information about the organization (77%), integration meetings (70%), the possibility to suggest improvements and ideas (68%), the freedom to choose how to implement the tasks (66%) (relatively less frequently occurring in big organizations) and the ability to freely express opinions (65%) (table 14). Employees of big companies are more than others satisfied with the additional medical services and passes to sports facilities, and employees of medium-sized companies are more satisfied with health and safety conditions exceeding the law.

4. Conclusions

The pilot study has revealed that most of the participating organizations do not fully implement organized, systemic socially responsible activities. The

concept of CSR is not known to a wide range of the employees. However, specific actions aimed at employees undertaken by these organizations conform to the guidelines of ISO 26000 standard concerning the area of practice in workplace.

Especially:

- most employees assess positively the basic salary, bonuses, social packages,
- employees are most satisfied with the friendly atmosphere at work, integration meetings, as well as the superiors' concern towards employees, praise from superiors, and their efforts to build trust in employees,
- the superiors' concern towards employees is also associated with the employees having access to information, its efficient flow (horizontal and vertical), the ability to speak, suggest improvements and ideas, the freedom to choose how to implement the tasks; these actions demonstrate the possibilities afforded to employees to participate in decisions, which is especially important due to the impact of employee participation to improve the efficiency of the organization, its innovation, and its competitive position in the environment,
- also, in the surveyed enterprises flexible forms of employment are implemented, tools to improve the organization of work are available (company mobile phones, laptops or cars), which also may be regarded as a sign of concern towards employees,
- despite not yet being widespread and sufficient enough, some activities are being undertaken, related to the care of a healthy lifestyle of employees, balancing their personal and professional life, ensuring health and safety exceeding the provisions of law, offering additional medical benefits and pensions,
- working conditions the contractors offer their employees are taken into account,
- surveyed organizations - the large ones in particular - employ people aged 50+, foreigners, representatives of different religions and different races, and people with disabilities; it may be assumed that those organizations do not discriminate on grounds of gender, age, national origin, race, religion or disability, they have codes of ethics and they implement the principles contained therein, what should also be emphasized,
- unfortunately, in some of them harassment occurs and is performed mainly by the superiors,
- actions related to the more widespread implementation of personal strategy (especially in small organizations), also require intensification which will enable a better coordination of actions aimed at employees as key stakeholders of the socially responsible practices,

- generally however, the vast majority of employees are satisfied with the work of their organization, which emphasizes the effectiveness of activities undertaken so far, addressed to employees.

5. Summary

Undertaking socially responsible practices aimed at employees has been found in the surveyed organizations. These actions are consistent with the guidelines of ISO 26000 standard in the area of practice in workplace. However, in order to be fully effective, to generate benefits for the organization and its other stakeholders, they should be supported by a strategy of operations including socially responsible objectives, and by the personal strategy (resulting from the overall strategy).

Abstract

Actions Objected at Employees in CSR - Report from the Study

The study analyzed the essence of the social responsibility of organizations and indicated the areas of actions to which this concept applies in the organizations. Particular attention has been paid to CSR practices objected at employees as key stakeholders of the organization. The purpose of the study was achieved in the form of analysis of CSR practices addressed to employees of the selected organizations in the Pomeranian Voivodeship. It has been confirmed that the study subjects undertake socially responsible actions addressed to their employees. These actions are compliant with the guidelines of ISO 26000 standard in the area of practice in workplace. However, it has been shown that socially responsible objectives are not commonly present in the strategies of these organizations. Personal strategies and the knowledge of the concept of CSR among employees also occur not frequently enough. The presented study is a pilot study. The reached conclusions apply only to the participating organizations. However, it should be noted that the concept of CSR is not yet widely and successfully implemented in organizations within the Pomeranian Voivodeship. It requires further popularizing and intensifying. Also, the practices of CSR addressed to employees should be further improved.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR practices, ISO 26000 standard, practices at workplace, personal strategy, Human Resources Management.*

Streszczenie

Działania ukierunkowane na pracowników w koncepcji CSR – komunikat z badania

W opracowaniu przeprowadzono analizę istoty społecznej odpowiedzialności organizacji, wskazano obszary działań, których w organizacji koncepcja ta dotyczy. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na praktyki CSR ukierunkowane do pracowników, jako najważniejszych interesariuszy organizacji. Zrealizowano cel opracowania w postaci analizy praktyk CSR skierowanych do pracowników wybranych organizacji województwa pomorskiego. Stwierdzono, że badane podmioty podejmują działania społecznie odpowiedzialne adresowane do swoich pracowników. Działania te są zgodne z wytycznymi normy ISO 26000 w obszarze praktyki w miejscu pracy. Jednakże wykazano, że w strategiach działania tych organizacji cele społecznie odpowiedzialne nie są powszechnie obecne. Niedostatecznie często występują w nich również strategie personalne oraz znajomość koncepcji CSR wśród pracowników. Przedstawione badanie ma charakter pilotażowy. Uzyskane wnioski odnoszą się tylko do uczestniczących w nim podmiotów. Jednak zauważyć należy, że koncepcja CSR nie jest jeszcze powszechnie i skutecznie realizowana w organizacjach województwa pomorskiego. Wymaga dalszej popularyzacji i intensyfikacji. Także praktyki CSR skierowane do pracowników powinny być dalej doskonalone.

Słowa

kluczowe: *społeczna odpowiedzialność przedsiębiorstw, praktyki CSR, norma ISO 26000, praktyki w miejscu pracy, strategia personalna, zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi.*

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