Budapest University of Technology and Economics
Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences
Doctorate School of Management and Organization

The Integration of Sustainable Development in the Light of Corporate Communication
The Case of Corporations in Hungary

Summary of Doctoral Thesis

Author: Beatrix Ransburg
Scientific supervisor: Dr. Habil Mária Vágási
University Docent

Budapest, 2011
# Table of Contents

1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND ........................................................................................................ 3

1.1 AIM OF THE RESEARCH .................................................................................................. 4

1.2 TIMELINESS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH .............................................. 4

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ............................................................................................. 6

3 SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS ....................................................................................... 9

3.1 THESIS 1: THE HIERARCHICAL MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY FROM THE GLOBAL TO THE BUSINESS LEVEL ..................................................................................... 9

3.2 THESIS 2: DIVERGENCE OF THEORY AND PRACTICE - MISSING CONDITIONS .............. 10

3.3 THESIS 3: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS INTEGRATED GRADUALLY .............. 12

3.4 THESIS 4: FURTHER SPECIFICITIES OF THE CORPORATE INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINABILITY .......... 13

3.4.1 The Corporate Integration of Sustainable Development Is More Prevalent among Large Firms than SMEs ......................................................................................... 14

3.4.2 Parent Company Influence Is a Major Motivation Factor for the Integration of Sustainable Development ............................................................................................................. 14

3.4.3 International Activity Provides Incentive for Internalizing the Sustainability Concept ................................................................................................................................. 15

3.5 THESIS 5: THE COMMUNICATIONAL AND STRATEGIC ROLE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ........................................................................................................... 15

3.5.1 CSR Communication Constitutes an Aspect of Company Image ............................... 16

3.5.2 CSR Communication Focuses on the Issues Considered Being a Risk Factor Regarding Corporate Reputation ................................................................................................. 16

3.5.3 Firms Dealing with Outsourced Production Show No or Limited Awareness of CSR in Their Communication ................................................................................................. 17

3.6 UNIQUENESS AND USEFULNESS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS AS WELL AS PROJECTIONS FOR POSSIBLE FURTHER AREAS OF STUDY .................................................. 17

4 REFERENCES ....................................................................................................................... 19

5 PUBLICATIONS ..................................................................................................................... 21
1 Research Background

The concept of sustainable development is aimed at achieving a social and economic development, which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (World Commission on Environment and Development [1987]). The realization of the sustainability concept is surrounded by a powerful incentive globally (UN) and on national levels. Furthermore, today special attention is being put on the micro-level players - especially on business organizations - as a consensus emerged that business activity fundamentally affects the realization of the sustainability concept. As a result of the increasing legal, ethical, social and strategic pressure on business organizations, many companies realized that they cannot ignore the issue of sustainable development. Consequently the number of businesses integrating sustainability principles into their strategy and operation is steadily increasing. (Mah [2004], Maignan-Ferrel [2003], Porter-Kramer [2007], Schaltegger-Burritt [2005]; Füle-Kenéz [2005], Kerekes – Wetzker [2007], Szlávik et al [2005], Vágási [2004] and many more).

As part of the corporate integration process of sustainable development, companies publish their efforts in the hope that compliance will allow them a competitive advantage in the short or long-term. Corporate communication - appearing already in the initial phase of the integration process - reveals to which extent a company has internalized the principles of sustainability based on the following:

− The content of communication indicates the values sustained by the company. If a business is reporting on a topic, it means it is on its agenda, and consequently has to be part of the corporate set of values.

− Communication is partly aimed at demonstrating compliance with the requirements of various stakeholders, some of which have set their objective to monitor conformity with the principles of corporate responsibility (non-profit organizations, media) (Ransburg [2006]).

− The substance of communication can be verified. Some of the communication materials – e.g. sustainability reports – may be audited by a third party, and in many cases this audit involves the verification of communication content. The existence or absence of
such external audits of the report is an indication of the extent of corporate sustainability compliance.

It can therefore be assumed that the analysis of corporate sustainability communication can provide a timely picture of the scope of corporate acceptance of sustainable development, can indicate the direction of future development, and can pave the way for inactive companies towards a socially responsible operation.

1.1 Aim of the Research

Large corporations are on the forefront of developing sustainability communication tools and processes. The main objective of my research is to discover

− How companies, playing a major role in the Hungarian economy, interpret the corporate aspects of sustainable development;
− Based on corporate communication, what can be inferred regarding the extent of internalization of the sustainability principle;
− What are the characteristics and what is the strategic role of sustainability communication?

I do not seek to judge the actual sustainability performance of the companies, but rather the degree of integration which can be inferred from the content and means of communication. Through the analysis of the instruments and the focus of communication topics the underlying motivational factors of internalizing sustainability may be identified as well.

1.2 Timeliness and Importance of the Research

The impact of sustainability theory on corporate activity and marketing is extensively discussed in foreign literature, and it forms the topic of an increasing number of researches in Hungary. Management theory has internalized the triple-bottom-line interpretation of sustainability and is providing guidance to implementation of sustainable development into the corporate practice. The literature covers the principles of corporate social responsibility in a broad sense as the equivalent to sustainable development on the corporate level. The concept of corporate sustainability is extensively described and the motivational factors and
forces are theoretically identified. A number of publications deal with the theoretical benefits of compliance with sustainability. Strategic models were developed identifying the anticipated corporate responses to given problems. However, scientific knowledge is still incomplete in the following areas:

- How to define a level of corporate activity which can be considered as socially responsible?
- What kind of generally accepted set of instruments supports the transformation of companies towards socially responsible operation, their management and the communication of sustainability performance?
- Can the practical and financial benefits of being socially responsible be measured?

Various empirical studies have looked into the understanding of social responsibility among companies in Hungary. However, the majority of these researches as well as corporate activities themselves often had primary focus on the environmental aspect of sustainability and in many cases environmental compliance alone was interpreted to be compliance with the sustainability principle. In the field of marketing research results were achieved in connection with the environmental aspect (Nagy [2004-2005]; Schäfferné [2008]). There are however still relatively few studies which

- Analyze the issue based on the triple-bottom-line principle;
- Explore with a complex methodology (e. g. questionnaires and multi-directional observation) the instruments used in the corporate practice of sustainability integration;
- Carry out a detailed analysis of corporate sustainability communication.

Further novelty of my thesis is that from the 18 dissertations which are listed on www.doktori.hu and are related to sustainable development none address the corporate communication of sustainable development.

In the light of the above, my research is aimed at developing theoretically sound, future-oriented and operational findings. The theoretical foundation is of target-oriented, systematic and model-creating nature. It aims at contributing to a better understanding of Hungarian corporate practices through the identification of integration and communication characteristics, and to further the development of a sustainability supporting comprehensive instrument system through the analysis of the case of leading corporations. My empirical
research sought to uncover the specificities of Hungarian corporate sustainability practice with special emphasis on the following:

- How do enterprises interpret sustainable development and what role do they see for themselves?
- What kind of tools do they use in relation with the communication of sustainable development?
- What are the underlying motivational factors behind companies dealing with the issue?
- Do they see the benefits of being sustainable, what are these and do the benefits manifest?

2 Research Methodology

My research was implemented in multiple stages. (1) Theoretical literature review regarding the corporate interpretation and integration of sustainable development with particular regard to corporate communication. (2) Practice oriented secondary research of previous business studies (3) Primary research with a questionnaire survey among the experts of Hungary’s top 200 enterprises regarding the corporate communication of sustainable development (4) Structured online content analysis in two steps: (a) the review of corporate sustainability communication on the websites of the sample companies and their mother organizations (b) analysis of Hungarian sustainability reports.

![Research Methods Diagram](Image)

Fig. 1. Research Methods
Source: Own formulation
The sample of my empirical study was drawn from Figyelő’s [2009] Top 200, the list of two hundred companies with the highest turnover in Hungary in 2008. When choosing the sample I took the example of previous empirical studies dealing with the subject (Terra Idea (2006); GKI (2009) the phase of personal interviews and web content analysis; and Erdélyi et al. [2009]), and analyzing the performance of the biggest corporations. The referenced "elite list" is considered appropriate for the analysis of corporate CSR communication practice, because it represents companies which are active in the field of CSR and in sustainability communication based on the following:

(1) These are large companies. In 2007 there were 924 large corporations in Hungary (i.e. employing more than 250 people) (http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/tab13_02_03i.html) 153 of these enterprises are on the Figyelő [2009] list.

(2) They are active in terms of CSR as from the 60 companies on the Accountability Rating list (http://www.accountabilityrating.com/Latest_results_Hungary.asp) only 10 are not included in the sample.

(3) They communicate actively as 56 of the sample companies were among the 200 biggest advertisers in 2008 (Source: Kantar Média (previously TNS Média Intelligence) AdexSpot program).

The empirical results were gained from three sources:

(1) Firstly, through a questionnaire survey among the communication and sustainability experts of the Figyelő [2009] Top 200. The respondents addressed sustainability issues through their daily work. The main issues investigated in the questionnaire were the following: *the corporate interpretation of sustainable development. *The extent and frequency of CSR communication. *The communication tools. *Sustainability standards. *Objectives of sustainability communication. *Results and effectiveness of CSR communication. *Motivational factors and missing incentives of sustainability integration. The questionnaire was sent out to 185 companies on the list. 15 were excluded because they were subsidiaries of companies already on the list and sustainability was addressed centrally at the mother company. The response rate (30.8%) was very high, 57 questionnaires were completed.
(2) Secondly, I have analyzed the sustainability communication of the 200 companies and, if applicable, of their foreign mother companies on their websites. During the content analysis I reviewed the following issues: *Is there sustainability related information on the website? *What is the name of the menu point related to sustainability? *Does the company have a sustainability report, is it independent or consolidated with the mother company? *What are the sustainability related topics addressed on the website? *Does the mother company address sustainability issues on its website and to what extent? *Does the company have a code of ethics in place and is it independent or industrial? 78.5% of the companies were subsidiaries of a foreign investor. For the perspective of sustainability I considered a company a subsidiary if the ownership was in the hands of industry-related investors. Financial investors usually do not influence daily operation of business; consequently they do not affect a company's strategic involvement in sustainable development. 87% of the surveyed corporations had at least one page in Hungarian on the web, 13% did not have a Hungarian website.

(3) Thirdly, 31 Hungarian sustainability related reports were studied during which I have observed the following issues: The type of the sustainability related report (short, long or integrated in the annual report). *The number of pages devoted to certain important issues and their proportion relative to the full length of the report. The issues surveyed: environmental questions, employee benefits, charity, product liability, healthy/safe work conditions. *Does the report follow any standard? *Is the report third party audited? *Is the report graded by the auditor?

In the Figyelő [2009] list I had the turnover data, the export sales data and the employee numbers of the given companies available; hence I could analyze association between the different variables. The analysis was performed using the SPSS software.

In the majority of cases I worked with nominal scales both in the questionnaire and during the content analysis. This significantly narrowed the scope of quantitative methods to be used. I referred to contingency tables, Chi-squared tests, Cramer V and Φ (phi in case of 2 by 2 crosstabs) correlation strength indicators and Z-tests in my investigation.
3 Summary and Key Findings

I have formulated five theses based on the literature review and my empirical research. I tried to provide various evidences described in the dissertation from different sources to each thesis in order to substantiate the robustness of every statement.

3.1 Thesis 1: The Hierarchical Model of Sustainability from the Global to the Business Level

The development of the sustainability concept from the global to the business level can be represented by a hierarchical model.

Sustainability can be defined at various levels. In Fig. 2, I illustrate the relations between the hierarchical levels ranging from global to individual. The different levels identify the actors and the scope of the issues these actors are subordinated to and have influence upon respectively.

Sustainability - as we refer to it today - originates from the global level as a concept conceived by the United Nations. The global level covers the requirements of responsibility and cooperation among nations in order to achieve sustainable development in all parts of the world. The second level of analyzing sustainability is the international-regional level. At this level, the European Union’s policy in terms of sustainability defines e.g. how European policies can encourage sustainable development. International-regional understanding is broken down to the national policies aimed at focusing on the issues relevant at a country level. The national issues are then reflected in the framework of national-regional policies, whose development is supported by a comprehensive tool, the Local Agenda 21 (LA21), which was first described in Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 - the global blueprint for sustainability from the United Nation Rio Conference in 1992.

The level of corporations should, theoretically, be subordinate to the national-regional level. According to this principle, the activity of business entities should be influenced by local policies. However, as global and multinational corporations act globally or internationally across several regions and country borders, companies transfer global and multinational business issues both to global, regional, and local levels.
The household/individual/consumer level of sustainable development is primarily understood as that of actors of sustainable consumption, with ethical social behavior. However, individuals may also be considered in their roles as employees influencing the corporate interpretation of sustainable development.

![Hierarchical Model of Sustainable Development](image)

**Fig. 2. The hierarchical model of sustainable development**  
Source: Own formulation

The hierarchical model is supported by the global, international-regional, national and regional interpretations of the sustainability concept and the cross references of the documents detailing the issues of sustainable development. The channeling role of companies is substantiated by their active involvement in the elucidation of sustainability both at the national as well as at the international-regional levels - hereby I am referring to the Multistakeholder Forum of the European Union and the activities of the WBCSD (World Business Council for Sustainable Development). Multinationals such as MOL or Magyar Telekom play an important role in developing the explication and understanding of the CSR concept in Hungary.

(Related publications: P1; P2; P7; P8; P9)

### 3.2 Thesis 2: Divergence of Theory and Practice - Missing Conditions

The multi-faceted theoretical approach to corporate integration of sustainability is in existence, but the knowledge deficit of the business sector and low stakeholders' motivation form barriers to mass-implementation in practice.
Based on literature review I concluded that the theoretical approaches necessary for the corporate internalization of the sustainability concept is comprehensive, as there are many publications dealing with the issue. The levels (Carroll [1991]; Lantos [2001]; Matten, Crane [2003] and many others) and content of corporate responsibility (European Commission [2001b]; Suggett - Goodsir, [2002]) have been discussed from many angles. The motivational factors of acting socially responsible have been elaborated on the theoretical level i.e. stakeholder theory, expected advantages etc. Today, there is a theoretical consensus as to sustainability being a factor of competition (Porter - Kramer [2007] Wheeler - Wetzker [2007], Chikán [2009]). My empirical research has revealed that the vast majority of experts (87.3%) also believe that the CSR concept is known to them. However, we find that although the issue is becoming increasingly implemented, the mass-internalization is still to be achieved. In order to facilitate the spread of CSR, the experts identified two areas with development opportunities: in the fields of concept knowledge and stakeholder motivation.

The knowledge deficit is underlined by the fact that 63.5% of the respondents said that there was a need for a standard, which can ensure the proper corporate fulfillment of the CSR concept. This indicated that companies need additional knowledge to understand what they have to do if they want to act responsibly. Moreover, 59.3% of experts deemed additional regulation in the field a necessity, indicating the need for further guidance. Z-tests have proven the significance of the percentages at a significance level of 10%. Additional proof was provided during the open-ended questions of the survey, where several experts emphasized the need for the exchange of best practice knowledge.

This thesis formulates statements of exploratory nature, my survey was sufficient for forming this kind of generalization, consequently I concluded that there was a need for further improvement in the field of CSR knowledge.

Survey research findings regarding the shortcomings of stakeholder motivation are highlighted below. All percentages were proven significant (\(\alpha=0.1\)):

- The lack of consumer interest was indicated by 74.1% of the experts.
- Nearly 60% said that acting socially responsibly does not guarantee a competitive advantage. This was underlined by the fact that the respondents could not link the annual revenue of 2008 to CSR activities.
The lack of state incentives was underscored by 81.8% of the respondents. 61.8% of the survey participants found that there was a need for changing the media attitude towards companies acting responsibly in order to facilitate the spread of the concept.

Based on the above I concluded that (1) although the vast majority of companies believe that CSR is known to them some misinterpretation have been observed. There is not enough knowledge as to how the company wanting to fulfill its liability to the maximum can act responsibly. For example, the much awaited standard that can help companies deal with corporate social responsibility in a structured way has only recently been finalized. There is little best practices knowledge as well. (2) Stakeholder orientation of the CSR concept is theoretically accepted, but in practice there is little evidence to its fulfillment. The low interest of stakeholders in the integration of CSR, provide a long-term rather than short-term incentive. For the above reasons CSR at the moment is not a real factor of competition, although it is expected to become one in the long run. In the absence of tangible results originated from responsible corporate activity, the concept is rather considered an investment which is expected to provide a yield in the long-term.

(Related publications: P2, P3, P5, P6, P9)

3.3 Thesis 3: Corporate Social Responsibility Is Integrated Gradually

The corporate integration of sustainable development is gradual and characterized by the increase in the number of accommodating companies and by the evolving variety of applied CSR specific tools towards comprehensiveness.

To prove the gradual nature of CSR integration I drew conclusions based on literature review and secondary data.

Scientists have long been underscoring the growing number of CSR integrating companies (Füle-Kenéz [2005], Kerekes – Wetzker [2007], Szlávik et al [2005], Vágási [2004]). Empirical proof is provided by the following data. The research carried out by the United Nations Development Program [2007] found that 44 Hungary-based companies published a report related to sustainability. At the time of writing this paper the number of companies
was 90 (http://www.kovet.hu/view/main/160.html). This increase in the number of reporting companies suggests that CSR reporting is gradually spreading, more and more businesses deal with the issue.

According to Wimmer - Zoltayné [2006] the awareness and prudence regarding the CSR concept change throughout the development path of the concept within a company: i.e. companies start dealing with the concept based on their “instincts, motivated by their will to do something good” and to meet existing social expectations. Later their different CSR activities are consciously incorporated in the business strategies. Consequently, the comprehensiveness of applied CSR related tools is gradually achieved.

The progressive evolution of CSR specific instruments is also underscored by the fact that the number of ISO 14001 certified companies is increasing (Kiss [2007]). The progressive nature characterizing the integration of the ISO 9001 quality standard (i.e. it is first integrated by large companies) (Topár [2001]) seems to be valid in the field of social responsibility.

(Related publications: P4, P5)

3.4 Thesis 4: Further Specificities of the Corporate Integration of Sustainability

The corporate integration of sustainable development can be described with the following characteristics:

- more prevalent among large firms than medium and small enterprises (SME);
- parent company influence is a major motivating factor for integration;
- international activity provides incentive for internalization.

To prove my thesis I used a variety of methods. The first statement was formulated based on literature review and secondary research. The second (the role of parent companies) and third (international activity) statement is based on my empirical study (web-content analysis and questionnaire).
3.4.1 The Corporate Integration of Sustainable Development Is More Prevalent among Large Firms than SMEs.

In October 2010 Követ Association recorded 90 companies having published a sustainability related report. I have examined these companies in terms of their size and found that 75.6% were large companies (Small Business: 10; Medium companies: 8; Enterprises: 68, Local Government or Public Company: 4), accordingly large companies are more prevalent among those publishing sustainability related reports. If we consider that the 68 large companies constitute 7.4% of corporations in Hungary while the 8 medium sized companies make up only 0.03% of all medium sized companies in the country, it is apparent that reports – which are considered specific CSR instruments and an indicator of commitment to CSR – are more widespread among large corporations than among SMEs.

Further indicators of the statement are provided by Erdélyi et al. [2009] who found that activeness of CSR communication is increasing with company size, i.e. large companies communicate their CSR efforts to a greater extent. According to the research carried out by GKI [2009] the more employees a company has, the greater the CSR awareness. Consequently, an employee of a corporation is more likely to be confronted with the issues of sustainability than someone being employed at a smaller company. The same GKI [2009] research showed significantly higher level of strategic CSR integration at large companies than at smaller ones.

3.4.2 Parent Company Influence Is a Major Motivation Factor for the Integration of Sustainable Development.

According to the expert survey 52.3% of the subsidiaries started to integrate the sustainability concept based on parent company initiative and there is a significant, slightly sub-medium strong correlation between the ownership status (i.e. independent corporation or subsidiary) and the initiating factor of CSR integration. Web analysis showed that 60.5% of subsidiaries published a sustainability related report, while only 23.2% of independent companies reported formally on their CSR activities. The existence of reports compared with the ownership status showed a significant, sub-medium strong correlation, indicating that subsidiaries are more likely to publish sustainability related reports than independent
companies. The fact that in 73.4% of the cases the parent company’s website dealt with CSR to a greater extent than that of the subsidiary also indicates the role model function of parent companies.

3.4.3 International Activity Provides Incentive for Internalizing the Sustainability Concept

There was a significant but weak correlation between the number of sustainability issues discussed on the companies’ websites and their annual export sales in 2008. This suggests that firms more active internationally are more likely to deal with CSR issues on their websites. 83.3% of the experts agreed that if a company wants to expand internationally, it is essential for it to be socially responsible. The Chi-squared test demonstrated that companies with the highest amount of export sales (over 46.1 billion forints) are more likely to formalize a sustainability/environmental strategy. The existence of a formal strategy, is also regarded as an indicator of commitment to sustainability, therefore the greater spread of such strategies among the internationally more active companies was considered to support the above statement.

(Related publications: P4, P5)

3.5 Thesis 5: The Communicational and Strategic Role of Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR communication constitutes an aspect of company image, and focuses on issues considered to be a risk factor regarding company reputation. Firms dealing with outsourced production show no or limited awareness of CSR in their communication.

The thesis statements were proven based on the results of my empirical research using contingency tables, Chi-squared tests, and Z-tests.
3.5.1 CSR Communication Constitutes an Aspect of Company Image

According to the experts’ opinion CSR communication constitutes an aspect of corporate image as both its objective as well as its perceived result show an image-dominated character. Companies are trying to improve their reputation by communicating about their CSR activities and commitment. Although, the CSR communication occurs both in connection with the products as well as the companies themselves, the results of CSR communication can only be tracked down in building corporate image. Related results are summarized in Table 15. of the dissertation.

Even though CSR-related standards are applied in order to facilitate the structured approach to the sustainability issues, a significant proportion of experts emphasized the easy communication and image building notion of standards when providing reasons for their use by their given companies.

3.5.2 CSR Communication Focuses on the Issues Considered Being a Risk Factor Regarding Corporate Reputation.

Crosstab analysis and Chi-squared test showed that the environmental issues were more likely to be discussed on the websites of companies operating in an environmentally intensive industry. There was a significant correlation between the web-coverage of social co-operation and the neutral or sensitive type of industries. Companies producing and selling socially sensitive products were more likely to discuss product liability on their websites.

There was a correlation between the name of the CSR menu point on the website and the nature of the industry, because sensitive and employment intensive industries were more likely to name their CSR menu “social responsibility / corporate responsibility”. In terms of environmentally intensive companies the menu point called “environment” appeared most frequently (56.3%).
3.5.3 Firms Dealing with Outsourced Production Show No or Limited Awareness of CSR in Their Communication.

Companies of outsourced production nature are more likely not to have a website in Hungarian as a substantial proportion of such companies (64%) have no website in the language of the country they are operating in.

Companies doing outsourced production are not likely to have either an integrated or an independent sustainability related report. This can be interpreted that in the case of these companies the integration of sustainable development is prevalent through the requirements of their customers and its awareness explicit in the communication and strategy is limited.

Five of such companies are on the Accountability Rating Hungary 2008 list, and all of them were given less than 35 points from the available 100. This indicates a poor CSR performance.

(Related publications: P4)

3.6 Uniqueness and Usefulness of the Research Findings as well as Projections for Possible Further Areas of Study

I consider the below results to be useful in practice and a novelty.

Based on my theoretical study I set up a hierarchical model of sustainable development levels, which may help companies in the sustainability integration phase to understand the complexity of requirements and obligations originating from the principle’s global context and to identify the advantages and importance of the fulfillment of their corporate social responsibility. The hierarchical model may help in the decision making of the relevant national and regional projects. Results are novel because, although there is agreement that sustainability can be interpreted on many levels, my model describes in detail the hierarchy of interpretations, and the channeling role of companies.

Methodological novelty of my dissertation is the analysis of the same sample with three methods. I evaluated the results of the research phases combined, which strengthens the robustness of the findings.
Taking into account the findings of previous empirical studies and accepting the statement that corporate CSR activity is related to the company’s core business, I have created my own typology of industry and demonstrated the specificity of the integration process of certain categories of industry (i.e. environmentally intensive, employment-intensive, manufacturing sensitive products, neutral). My typology provides further clarifications regarding the exploration of CSR activity associated with the core activity.

By examining corporate communication I have proven that the industry has significant influence on the nature of CSR communication. Accepting Porter’s view that CSR is often of defensive nature, in my empirical research I have put an emphasis on analyzing the relationships among the following variables: content of communication, my industry typology and the industry related risk. Furthermore, I have provided evidence that communication is applied to counterbalance the reputation risks deriving from the core business of the company. This result further clarifies the role of CSR communication.

Regarding the international activities of the companies I have examined the extent of communication and the relation between the existence of a sustainability/environmental strategy and export sales, and provided evidence for a correlation. This issue has not yet been addressed by any previous research. I have also proven that based on their CSR communication companies of outsourced production nature have restricted awareness of sustainability. This was confirmed not only through the website content analysis but also through the examination of sustainability related reports. In the light of other previous studies, my findings provide further nuances to the context of international activity and CSR communication.

There was a theoretical agreement in the scientific literature regarding the existence of parental influence on the integration of the CSR concept. I have provided empirical proof to the theoretical hypothesis on a larger sample.

Results, not entirely new but in their interpretation novel and confirming the conclusions of previous researches (e.g. the role of communication as an aspect of corporate image, or the typology and analysis of the hindering factors) regarding the integration of sustainable development and its communication, can be considered a contribution to a clearer vision. In particular, the role of communication as an aspect of corporate image was confirmed in a multifaceted manner (i.e. the intended goal, realization, and result were
complexly considered). I have synthesized the hindering factors of CSR implementation based on both secondary as well as primary investigations.

The following issues arise from my results as important for more investigation: Why are local stakeholders the primary target group of CSR communication and what are the structured reasons for the eagerness of companies to satisfy the needs of this special group of stakeholders? Moreover, I suppose that in the future investigation and implementation of the recently finalized CSR standard, the scientific research results of the previous "era" will also provide important additional information.

4 References


(7) http://portal.ksh.hu

(8) http://www.accountabilityrating.com/Latest_results_Hungary.asp

(9) http://www.kovet.hu/view/main/160.html


(16) Ransburg B. [2006]: A vállalati siker nem csak pénzben mérhető - Fenntarthatósági jelentések, in Marketing & Menedzsment, XL. Évf. 2006/4. szám, 4-11. old


(18) Schäfferné Dudás K. [2008]: A környezettudatosság többszintű értelmezése és a környezettudatos fogyasztói magatartás vizsgálata, Doktori Értekezés, Pécs


5 Publications

Journal articles in a foreign language published in Hungary


Articles in Hungarian in a prominent journal

3. Ransburg Beatrix: A vállalati siker nem csak pénzben mérhető - Fenntarthatósági jelentések, in Marketing & Menedzsment, XL. 2006/4., pp. 4-11. INDEX 25545 HU ISSN 1219-03-49

4. Ransburg, Beatrix – Vágási, Mária: A fenntartható fejlődés vállalati integrációja és kommunikációja – A hazai nagyvállalati gyakorlat vizsgálata, Accepted for publishing: in Vezetéstudomány 2011, Lectors: Dr. Füle, Miklós and Dr. Tóth, Gergely

Presentations in a foreign language published in the proceedings of an international conference


Presentations in Hungarian published in the proceedings of a Hungarian conference

