



CSR VS WOMEN: POTENTIAL APPLICANTS' EXPECTATIONS OF CSR AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

Companies are increasingly paying attention to corporate social responsibility (CSR) as they expect it to affect their attractiveness as employers. However, the question is whether prospective applicants expect social responsiveness from a future employer and how gender differences affect those expectations. The purpose of this study was to identify expectations that potential applicants have in terms of CSR from a prospective employer, and how gender differences affect applicants' expectations. Using a sample of 153 business students, the study reveals that gender differences matter. The results demonstrate higher CSR expectations of a prospective employer among women. The results are statistically important for such CSR aspects as the fair employee evaluation process, support for additional education, full information to customers, contributions to charities and corporate environmental responsibility. Additionally, the findings state the ratio of women to men expecting a total CSR from a prospective employer with said ratio being 5:1.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most cited definitions of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) in literature is the definition provided by Carroll (1979). In his opinion, "Corporate social responsibility encompasses the economic, legal, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (p. 500). McWilliams and Siegel (2001, p. 117) define CSR as actions that lead to some social good, beyond legal

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requirements and the interests of the company. Furthermore, CSR is embedded in the strategies and operating practices that impact on the well-being of all key stakeholders and the natural environment (Glavas, Kelley 2014).

More and more companies are paying attention to CSR. Some corporations have installed a top management team (TMT) position with the CSR (Strand, 2013). Some of them have reported their social and environmental performance in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidelines. Some corporations are included in stock exchange sustainability indexes, such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and the FTSE4Good Index. In Poland, there is the RESPECT Index on the Warsaw stock exchange that includes 25 publicly traded companies (in 2017). Some companies in Poland are included in corporate recognition lists presented by such newspapers as "Dziennik Gazeta Prawna" (DGP), "Gazeta Bankowa" and "Polityka" for their activities, projects, and innovations related to CSR. The companies that were included in the aforementioned lists inform the public through their websites about getting the recognition. For example, CEMEX Polska sp. z o.o. informs the public on its website homepage (www.cemex.pl) about getting a Golden CSR Leaf (Złoty listek) from "Polityka" and a platinum award from DGP. Some companies have aligned CSR to their business strategy (KPMG, 2014).

There are various benefits of pursuing CSR actions to companies. Fombrun and Shanley (1990) demonstrate that CSR contributes to company's better reputation. Turban and Greening (1997) and other authors (Kim, Park, 2011; Backhaus, Stone, Heiner 2002) highlight the impact of CSR on attracting employees. A business's social involvement should lead to a competitive advantage (Porter, Kramer 2006), particularly long term (Fiedor, 2016). Putting it in a nutshell, there are various reasons why a company should behave in socially responsible ways (Campbell, 2007).

However, a company is not socially responsible by itself. It is the employees who are involved in CSR programs. Company depends on employee engagement and support to achieve CSR objectives (Collier, Esteban 2007, p. 19-20; Slack, Corlett, Morris, 2015; Brammer, Millington, Rayton 2007). New employees' engagement with CSR may also be necessary for the delivery of CSR activities. However, the question arises whether new employees (or more precisely, prospective applicants) expect social responsiveness from a future employer. Research results demonstrate that women are more sensitive to CSR than men are when searching for a job (Woźniak, 2016; Fitzpatrick, 2013). Other research suggests, however, that the differences between women and men are not statistically significant (Kahreh, 2014). Of particular interest in this study is whether CSR expectations potential applicants have of a prospective employer are affected by gender differences.

CSR, ATTRACTING APPLICANTS AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

Some evidence suggests that organization's CSR is related to the attraction of high quality applicants (Albinger, Freeman, 2000, p. 250; Turban, Greening 1997). Jones, Willness, and Madey (2014) suggest that pride is one of three mechanisms by which CSR companies attract prospective employees. Job seekers pay attention to different CSR aspects, such as diversity, employee relations, community relations, the environment

and good quality product (Backhaus, Stone, Heiner, 2002; Lis 2012). In other words, job seekers have expectations of a future employer to behave in a socially responsible manner.

CSR is a multidimensional construct that comprises economic, legal, ethical and discretionary dimensions (Carroll, 1991). Carroll calls that a total CSR (1991, p. 42). Other authors have focused on the selected aspects of the CSR, such as organization's community relations, pro-environmental practices (Jones, Willness, Madey, 2014), community involvement and charitable giving (Kim, Park, 2011), or just the ecological aspect of CSR (Dögl, Holtbrügge, 2014). However, a holistic look at CSR merits attention. CSR is a complex construct consisting of economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic dimensions (Carroll, 1991).

When it comes to CSR, women are likely to play a significant role in a business and its performance. There is a relationship between having women on a board of directors and a company's engaging in CSR activities. In other words, the more women the company has on the company board, the more likely the company is to behave in socially responsible ways and the more likely it is to appear on such lists as the Most Ethical Companies or the Most Admired Companies (Landry, Bernardi, Bosco, 2016, p. 34; Setó-Pamies, 2015, p. 340). Bear, Rahman, Post (2010, p. 217) also demonstrate the positive impact of women on the company board on the company's reputation through CSR activities. Furthermore, when the Chief Officer of CSR is female and has a CSR functional background, then the company tends to achieve greater financial performance (Wiengarten, Lo, Lam, 2017). As socially responsible investors, women tend "to believe that a company's social and environmental performance is as important as its financial performance" (Cheah et al., 2011). They are also more likely to believe that companies should be responsible not only to shareholders, but also to the broader society (Cheah et al., 2011). Previous research focused not only on the role of women on the company board in socially responsible companies or women as socially responsible investors, but also on women as prospective applicants. Both Fitzpatrick (2013) and Fatoki (2016), demonstrate that women tend to be more sensitive to CSR than men. Woźniak provides similar conclusions (2017, 2016). Based on this, it is expected that more potential female job seekers than men expect of a prospective employer to behave in a socially responsible manner. The following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Gender is related with potential applicants' expectation of a future employer to behave in socially responsible manner wherein women expect more than men. The paper presents a single hypothesis.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to identify what CSR activities are expected from a future employer by potential applicants. For this purpose, some measurement tools were considered. Literature provides several methods for assessing the perceptions of CSR. One of them is the "Perceived Role of Ethics and Social Responsibility" (PRESOR) instrument, developed by Singhapakdi et al. (1996) and used by Fatoki (2016) and Fitzpatrick (2013). However, this tool was not appropriate for the purpose of this study,

as it does not provide information about the expectations of potential job seekers with regard to a socially responsible prospective employer.

The PRESOR method was modified by Etheredge (1999) who suggested two-factorial subscales. One of them was used by Turker (2009) to measure the importance of CSR from employees' point of view. However, this subscale can be used to collect data from people working in a company, but not from potential job seekers. Therefore, other measurement instrument was chosen by the author for this study to measure prospective employee expectations about CSR activities conducted by the employer.

The development of the survey instrument was based on work by Maignan and Ferrell (2000). Ten items from the Maignan and Ferrell (2000) study were adapted for two reasons. They were assigned to each type of responsibility as defined by Carroll (1991). Furthermore, the operationalization of corporate citizenship was to be meaningful in order to conduct the research both in the United States and France. This measurement instrument, to the best of the author's knowledge, has never been used in Poland. Table 1 presents items used in the current study. Item number 1 corresponds to the economic dimension of CSR. Items number 2 and 3 relate to the legal dimension. Items numbered 4 to 6 relate to ethics. The remaining items apply to the philanthropic dimension of CSR. The responses were provided on a Likert scale anchored on 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agreed").

The research was conducted in May and June 2017. It used a convenience sample. A total of 184 part-time students were surveyed at a business university located in Warsaw (Poland). University students are likely to be potential job seekers (Backhaus et al. 2002; Lis, 2012). Paper questionnaires were handed out in class. Respondents were asked to complete and return them to the author. Of the 184 students, 178 completed the survey (96.7% response rate). 153 participants who completed the survey accurately were included in the sample. Of all the participants, 118 (77%) were undergraduates (the second and final year) and 35 were graduate students (freshmen) of management disciplines. Women (65%, $n = 99$) were overrepresented compared with men (35%, $n = 54$). Approximately, 58% of respondents were between 21 and 26 years of age, 29% were between 27 and 34 years of age, 13% were 35 and more years of age. The participants work full time (85%). The average number of years of professional experience is 7.4 ($SD = 6.4$).

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Applicants' expectations towards prospective employers

Table 1 presents the total results of male and female respondents. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.806 for female respondents and 0.821 for male respondents.

All respondents expect the CSR from a future employer. In particular, they want a future employer to ensure fairness in the employee evaluation process ($M=4.9$, $SD=0.4$). They wish for the company to prevent discrimination in compensation and promotion and to maintain work-life balance ($M=4.7$, $SD=0.6-0.7$). They also look for trustworthiness ($M=4.7$, $SD=0.6$). These are the most desirable aspects of CSR among

potential job seekers, which correspond to ethical, legal, and philanthropic dimensions of CSR.

In general, the least desirable CSR aspects among prospective employees are giving contributions to charities ($M=3.4$, $SD=1.1$) and reducing the amount of energy and materials wasted ($M=3.5$, $SD=1.1$). This implies that the philanthropic dimension of CSR is split between two groups of stakeholders: employees and the society, including the environment.

Table 1. Respondents' expectations of a future employer by total and by gender

I expect that...	Woman		Man		Total	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1. Top management will establish a long-term strategy	4.0	1.0	3.8	0.9	4.0	0.9
2. Company will have job offers for employees regardless of their age, gender etc.	4.0	1.3	3.7	1.2	3.9	1.2
3. Company will prevent discrimination in compensation and promotion	4.7	0.7	4.6	0.7	4.7	0.7
4. Company will be recognized as trustworthy	4.7	0.6	4.6	0.7	4.7	0.6
5. Fairness will be an integral part of the employee evaluation process	4.9	0.5	4.8	0.4	4.9	0.4
6. Company will provide full information to customers	4.6	0.7	4.1	1.0	4.4	0.8
7. Company will support employees acquiring additional education	4.7	0.6	4.4	0.8	4.6	0.7
8. Company will implement work-life balance	4.8	0.6	4.6	0.7	4.7	0.6
9. Company will give contributions to charities	3.6	1.1	3.1	1.1	3.4	1.1
10. Company will reduce the amount of energy and materials wasted	3.6	1.1	3.2	1.2	3.5	1.1

Source: own study.

With respect to each CSR aspect mentioned in Table 1, women have higher expectations of a future employer than men. In particular, large differences are observed with respect to providing full and accurate information to customers about products and services (Mean=4.6 for women, $M=4.1$ for men), giving donations to charities ($M=3.6$ for women, $M=3.1$ for men), and reducing the amount of energy and materials wasted in the company ($M=3.6$ for women, $M=3.2$ for men). Additionally, women have greater expectations than men with respect to the diversity of workforce in terms of age, gender etc. ($M=4.0$ for women, $M=3.7$ for men). The same applies to the issue of supporting employees who gain additional education ($M=4.7$ for women, and $M=4.4$ for men). Some smaller differences in the respondents' opinions are observed with respect to the remaining issues, such as work-life balance, establishing a long-term strategy by top management team, fairness in evaluating employees' performance, preventing discrimination in employees' compensation and promotion, and a company's trustworthiness.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used for data analysis. By applying this test, the study reveals of which CSR aspects women have higher expectations than men ($p < 0.05$), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U test

Number of expectations	Mann Whitney U test	Z	Sig. level	Women with high expectations
1	2,294.0	-1.252	0.211	
2	2,135.5	-1.903	0.057	
3	2,366.5	-1.028	0.304	
4	2,292.5	-1.629	0.103	
5	2,239.0	-2.313	0.021*	Yes
6	1,891.0	-3.108	0.002*	Yes
7	2,165.0	-2.142	0.032*	Yes
8	2,325.0	-1.526	0.127	
9	1,934.0	-2.616	0.009*	Yes
10	2,065.0	-2.159	0.031*	Yes

* $p < 0.05$

Source: own study.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that gender is linked with the applicants' expectations of a prospective employer to behave in socially responsible manner, meaning that women expect more than men do. The hypothesis was supported for five out of ten CSR aspects. These are: treatment of the environment, giving contributions to charities, providing full information to all customers, fairness as an integral part of employee evaluation process and supporting employees who acquire additional education. The results show partial support for Hypothesis 1. Women are the most likely to expect that a company has job offers for all employees regardless of their age, gender etc. However, Mann-Whitney U test does not support this finding ($\alpha = 0.05 < 0.057$).

Gender differences, high and low expectations towards employers

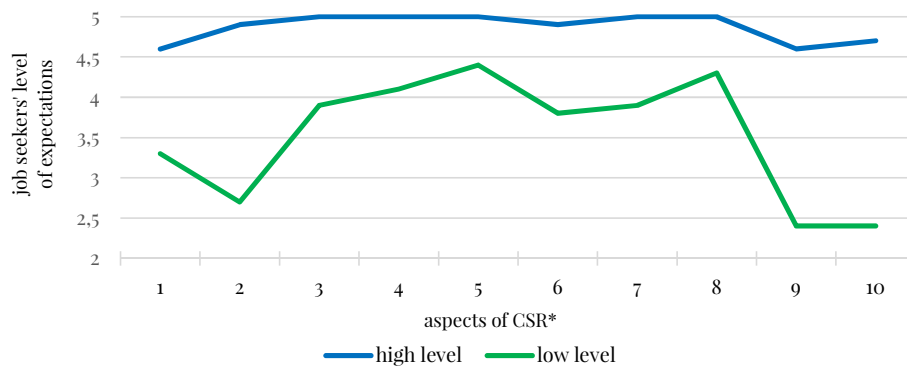
The mean scores for the 153 participants' CSR expectations ranged between 2.7 and 5.0. The upper 25% individuals were defined as a group with high expectations, and the lower 25% as a group with low expectations of a future employer in regard to CSR. Descriptive statistics for study variables are presented in Table 3. Using a five-point Likert scale, high and low level of potential applicants' expectations are illustrated in Figure 1.

Using demographic characteristics, the results show that women have higher expectations than men do of a future employer in regard to CSR. In the group with the high level of expectations, women account for 84.2% ($n = 32$) whereas men account for 15.8% ($n = 6$). In the group of respondents with the low level of expectations, women and men are in equal proportions. The variables were compared using the chi square test of independence. Using this test ($\chi^2 = 10$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.001$), the results show the link between gender and CSR expectation of a potential employer, specifically women expect more of a future employer with respect to CSR than do men.

Table 3. High and low level of expectations of respondents toward a future employer

Number of expectations		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
High	M	4.6	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.0	4.6	4.7
	SD	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.6	0.6
Low	M	3.3	2.7	3.9	4.1	4.4	3.8	3.9	4.3	2.4	2.4
	SD	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.7	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9

Source: own study.



*Aspects of CSR: 1 – long-term strategy; 2 – workforce diversity; 3 – prevention of discrimination; 4 – firm’s trustworthiness; 5 – fair employee evaluation; 6 – full information to customers; 7 – support in additional education; 8 – work-life balance; 9 – contributions to charities; 10 – reduction of energy wasted.

Figure 1. Respondents with high and low expectations of a prospective employer’s CSR
Source: own study.

Strong support for different CSR aspects

Table 4 portrays women and men who strongly agreed with the items presented in the survey. Again, the findings reveal differences between women and men. In other words, women demonstrate higher expectations than men toward a future employer with respect to CSR.

Of all the respondents surveyed using a five-point Likert scale, only 12% strongly agreed with nine of the ten items. The mean for all of the survey items was at least 4.9. It means that very few participants expect total CSR in accordance with the A. B. Carroll model. Women account for a large share of these respondents (15 women, 3 men). The ratio of women to men is 5:1. Of all female respondents (n = 99), only 15% have expectations of a future employer to engage in socially responsible actions. In all male respondents (n = 54), such percentage is 5%. It is worth noting that gender matters.

Table 4. Women and men who strongly agreed with CSR items in the survey

Number of expectations		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Women	Share (%)	70.5	74.2	67.2	68.1	67.9	73.3	69.4	67.5	80.6	72.2
	N (#)	43	49	80	79	89	63	75	81	25	26
Men	Share (%)	29.5	25.8	32.8	31.9	32.1	26.7	30.6	32.5	19.4	27.8
	N (#)	18	17	39	37	42	23	33	39	6	10
Total	Share (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (#)	61	66	119	116	131	86	108	120	31	36

Source: own study.

CONCLUSION

The paper investigates gender differences in potential applicants' expectations towards the future employer with respect to CSR. In this study, ten various CSR aspects that correspond to four CSR dimensions according to Carroll (1991) were explored. The hypothesis predicted that gender is related to potential applicants' expectation of a future employer to behave in a socially responsible manner and that women expect more than men do. Overall, women have higher expectations than men do of future employers. This finding is consistent with previous research (Fatoki, 2016; Fitzpatrick 2013). Kahreh et al. (2014) also demonstrate that women are more CSR-oriented than men, although the results are not statistically significant. In this current study, the results show partial support for Hypothesis 1. The hypothesis was supported for five of the ten examined issues, such as: a fair employees' evaluation process, full information to customers, support for employees acquiring additional education, giving donations to charities, and the reduction of energy and materials wasted in a business. Wołodźko and Woźniak also demonstrate that information on specific pro-environmental activities is more important for women than men (Woźniak, 2016, p. 46).

Scholars have suggested that workforce diversity with regard to age, gender etc. affects the organization's attractiveness as an employer (Backhaus et al. 2002; Lis, 2012). When it comes to examining the issue of diversity, results indicate that women have a higher expectation in this regard than men do. However, the result is not statistically significant.

As shown in Table 4, the large ratio of women to men is to observe among those participants who strongly agreed with given items in the survey. Therefore, gender is linked with potential applicants' CSR expectations of a future employer.

With respect to a total CSR as defined by Carroll (1991), there are few respondents (12%) who perceive all the analyzed CSR aspects as almost equally important. This group of respondents includes both women and men. However, the ratio of women to men is 5:1. It is highly likely that women are potential chief executive officers of the CSR-implementing companies. Some evidence of this issue stems from the report "Menedżerowie CSR" [CSR Managers]. Of all survey participants who are responsible for

CSR (n = 133), 79% are women (Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu, [Responsible Business Forum] 2015, p. 11).

Implications

Corporate social responsibility is more important for women than men. Moreover, “women form a high percentage of the total number of university graduates” (Setó-Pamies 2015, p. 335). This means that a company should pay increasing attention to its organizational attractiveness as an employer through socially responsible activities when attracting potential female applicants. These CSR activities may concern supporting employees getting additional education, treatment of the environment, ensuring fairness in employee evaluation process, contributing to charities, and providing full information to customers.

Companies that want to behave in a socially responsible manner should provide newcomers with assistance in learning about CSR activities. Only 12% prospective employees expect total CSR from the employer in accordance with the Carroll model. Therefore, socially responsible companies should establish the foundation for newcomers’ attitudes towards CSR during the adaptation and socialization process.

Limitations and future studies

Limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The respondents are from one of the universities in Warsaw. As such, the data do not reflect the opinions and attitudes of individuals from other universities in Poland. Moreover, it is possible that the majority of women (64.7%) in the sample affected the research outcomes. It would be noteworthy to conduct research using a sample with the predominance of men or a sample with equal gender ratios.

Future research could examine how newcomers’ expectations affect their engagement with CSR after being hired by a company (Aguinis, Glavas 2014; Slack, Corlett, Morris, 2015). Some participants have high expectations whereas the others have low expectations of social responsiveness from the future employer. This might result from different attitudes of participants, ranging from commitment through indifference and a lack of acceptance for a company’s CSR programs (Rodrigo, Arenas, 2008). These individual differences might moderate the relationship between CSR and organizational attractiveness as an employer.

Women also differ when it comes to their expectations of social responsiveness from a future employer. Women account for 50% of the group with low expectations. Further research would be useful to explore why women differ when it comes to CSR. The same applies to men.

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