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**CSR EMAT- CSR Excellence Management and
Assessment Tool**

Thesis booklet of the PhD dissertation

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1. Importance and aims of the research

While corporate social responsibility is an expected way of behaviour in western countries, in Hungary the interpretation of the aspect is yet to be clarified. The history of corporate social responsibility reaches back to several decades. CSR perspectives in their modern sense became the topic of research in the USA and other developed countries at the beginning of the 1950s. In today's globalised world where geographical borders often become blurred, corporate leaders must keep the pace of expectations from mother companies and partners, as well as the arising needs of the market and society. Managers must be profit-oriented, but also have to react to environmental and social challenges in order to keep their competitiveness. In the wake of the ever stronger prestige of the CSR perspective, also Hungarian companies are expected to think and operate in a social responsible way. However this effort is in the fledging stages and one of the many reasons hereof is the lack of literature in Hungarian and a clear-cut narrowing of the term. On the other hand, the aspect started from the Anglo-Saxon culture bearing those cultural characteristics which cannot always be interpreted in the Hungarian practice. Therefore the elaboration of guidelines which would help the implementation of the aspect on a management level adapted to the Hungarian way of operating companies. If there is a lack in proper information and the framework system the responsible way of thinking on the management level cannot be expected.

The aim of the research was on one hand the elaboration of an aspect system which would evaluate and serve as a guideline and help the managers find their way in the maze of the areas and activities of corporate social responsibility. On the other hand, the evaluation system enables the measuring of CSR excellence of companies and on the basis of this, the areas to be developed can be marked. The importance of the research can also be seen in the fact that the aspect does not have a generally accepted measurement system and the international methods by means of which CSR activities are attempted to be measured are mainly aimed at elements of sustainable development (society, environment and economy), and focus on large companies, or at least organisations where there is a person designated for this task. Managers of Hungarian SMEs who do not have enough information and command of the English language to understand international directives and norms are in a disadvantage compared to those companies where this aspect known in the western world enters Hungary along with foreign interests. This guideline in Hungarian and the evaluation system wish to help in combatting this information disadvantage. The CSR aspect can of course be adapted to all enterprises

irrespective of their activities and size, however, the research did not include micro-enterprises, because an application a management level is not applicable in their case.

The research focused on finding the answer to the following questions:

- Are the terms CSR and sustainable development differ from each other?
- Can the CSR concept and its elements be defined on the basis of the literature and the international norms and guidelines around the topic?
- Can a method suitable for measuring CSR be established by fitting the elements of the defined CSR concept into a proper framework system?
- Can the established model be interpreted and analysed among the target group?
- Can the measurements result in the comparability of enterprises and are they suitable for carrying out statistical analyses?

The aim of the research is the establishment of a practical tool which helps Hungarian managers to understand the CSR aspect and apply it on a conscious, corporate level. To reach this the research of the availability and the practical applicability of the model, to which corporate experts were asked to help who have solid knowledge and experience about the individual fields of the CSR aspect (HR managers, environmental management and labour protection experts and marketing leader). Once the method is tested, the corporate measurements can result in a general assessment of the present situation of the corporate integrity of the CSR aspect.

2. Research hypotheses and the quantitative research model

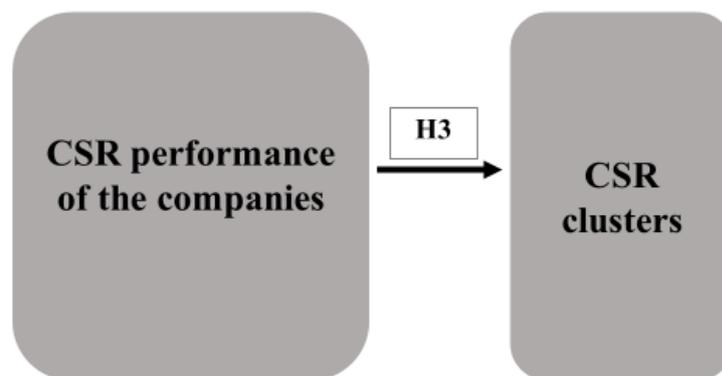
H1: The comparison of international guidelines and norms and existing models related to CSR and sustainable development enables the separation of the two aspects and the definition of the areas and the content elements of the CSR concept.

Because of the blending of the terms of CSR and sustainable development, the two aspects need to be separated and the elements of the CSR concept need to be defined. Both concepts are motivated by similar aims, however, there are differences. The uncovering and comparing of related, internationally accepted guidelines and norms enables the separate definition of the two aspects, the formulation of differences and the clearing of areas and content elements.

H2: An appropriate framework and the content elements of the formulated CSR concept can be used to create a management tool, which can help to assess CSR activities of companies.

There is a need for the elaboration for a guideline and a model which helps the application of the CSR aspect on a management level among Hungarian enterprises, because for now only

large and multi-national companies deal consciously with CSR activities, despite the fact that more than 90% of domestic enterprises are SMEs. Responsible activities can be tracked in the practice of smaller enterprises, but this is not done consciously. Norms and guidelines used by large companies are too complicated and time-consuming for the leaders of SMEs. A simpler and more easily applicable guideline and model could help these enterprises to apply CSR more consciously. An appropriate model, as a framework, adapted to the CSR criteria will provide the tool which could help the leaders of enterprises to find their way in the maze of social responsibility. It is important to state the micro-enterprises were not investigated in the course of the research. Social responsibility is important and can also be interpreted in their case, but since the focus is the application of a management tool, in case of micro-enterprises this is not relevant.



H3: On the basis of measurement results, the companies can be grouped into well-distinguishable groups according to their CSR performance.

It is assumed that on the basis of the measurement results, the companies in the sample can be out into well-distinguishable groups with the help of cluster analysis and on the basis of that the CSR intensity of enterprises in these groups can be.

3. Research methodology and the research sample

The key element of the research was the definition of the term of CSR because ever since the first article was read by the author about the topic, it was not clear what this aspect meant. Even though several definitions exist about the areas of the concept, so far no generally accepted definition was met at least not in a sense which could help the leaders of enterprises to identify

the practical elements of CSR. The next step of the research was to collect the CSR-related international norms and guidelines with the majority being available only in English. The content elements were collected into tables and translated into Hungarian. Then the contents of the individual elements were compared and those elements of the CSR concept and the related aspects were formulated, which along with their processes will be introduced more specifically in the next chapter. Once the content elements were identified, the EFQM model was selected as the framework system. After the content elements and the evaluation system were compiled, experts on the individual fields were asked to assist and comment. A total of 20 experts helped the work during its validation. Following the validation, the evaluation system was corrected on the basis of suggestions and the organisation of interview with enterprise leaders was initiated. The aim of making the sample selection was the inclusion of enterprises of all sizes, but the micro-enterprises, because the aim was to justify the applicability of the elaborated model in case of enterprises of all sizes and activities. The third selection criteria was to include enterprises of various profiles into the sample. I attempted to reach the largest possible number of enterprises through these aspects and personal contacts. The family enterprise of the author (Mu-Vill Bt.) is dealing with work safety, fire protection and environmental protection all over Hungary, thus it was a great help that partners could be addressed and those companies could aid the work by recommending further companies. As a result 94 interviews could be conducted all over Hungary with the leaders of companies between September 2016 and September 2017. The interview took place in 20-40 minutes. The interviews were conducted with managers, who were either general managers, or middle-managers with relevant information about the topic. The answers were evaluated after the interviews and the results achieved on the individual fields were calculated and fixed in an Excel table along with the basic data of the enterprises. The sample cannot be considered to be representative, thus conclusions for the basic multitude could not be drawn, but this was not the primary aspect, but rather to justify the applicability of the elaborated method.

The CSR EMAT evaluating set of aspects measures activities implemented on 9 areas of the model and the deriving results, which the interviewees evaluate on a five-degree scale, along 47 sub-criteria. Cluster analysis method was used to form the groups. As the variants involved into the cluster analysis were measured on a unified, five-degree scale, neither the striking data, nor the unification caused a problem during cluster formation. The non-hierarchical K-MEANS analytical model was used to analyse the clusters. As a result of data reduction the investigated enterprises could be put into three well-distinguishable groups.

4. Presentation of the research results

As the first step of the research the most often used CSR definitions were collected and the own definition was formulated, according to which the CSR is a way of thinking which attempts to reduce negative environmental impacts, to improve working conditions and support social well-being by considering the interests of the parties involved in the enterprises and in cooperation with them with self-defined activities reaching beyond legal prescriptions in accordance with the own competences and resources. The CSR aspect must influence the entire operation of the enterprise by becoming integrated into its strategy.

As the terms of CSR and sustainable development often merge, it is important to clarify the common and different aspects of the two terms. Both concepts are aimed at reaching similar goals (like social and environmental sustainability and added value), but the third pillar of sustainable development is defined by economic aspects, while in case of CSR the third area focuses on the responsibility towards employees. The objectives of sustainable development are aimed at solving global problems, while CSR activities mainly manifest in local spaces, taking the interests and expectations of those involved into consideration. Thus the CSR activities indirectly support certain objectives of sustainable development, which are relevant compared to the given culture.

The pursuit of the development of the CSR aspect lead the author from the United States, to the European Union and to Hungary. In the USA mainly large enterprises excel in their CSR activities in a way that a part of the gained profits are used for philanthropic purposes. The European Union, on the contrary, recognised the competition advantage underlying the CSR and also the fact that CSR is not only philanthropy and outward communication, but the aspect has to make its way through the entire operation of the enterprises. Thus the EU is trying to support the CSR activities of European enterprises by various programs and directives. Furthermore, the EU set the goal to be a centre of excellence in Europe on the field of social responsibility of enterprises. More than 90% of Hungarian enterprises are SMEs, who are rather guided by a good feeling, rather than consciousness, when doing CSR activities. Just like in other European countries in Hungary large enterprises excel on the field of CSR. International standards, norms and directives are aligned to their operation and competences. In their case there is a person assigned to CSR activities and the communication thereof. These directives and norms are complex, their application and understanding is time-consuming, especially since there is no person assigned to these tasks.

On the basis of the literature it is evident that there is a need for elaborating a guideline which could help the conscious, management-level application of the CSR aspect and could also give smaller enterprises possibilities. As the aim the elaboration of a management tool was the aim of the research, a survey of the management areas related to the research (strategy, corporate culture, stakeholder management and quality management) was included in the literature part. The literature made evident that the social responsibility of enterprises appears in the strategic management of the last years as a continuously increasing element formulating strategic goals. It also became clear that not only various management tools can help the corporate integration of the CSR aspect, but also the practical implementation of value-creation and social responsibility support the operation and culture of an enterprise.

After studying and comparing the international directives and norms elaborated for the CSR aspect the areas of the CSR concept (management, employees, society, environment, product & services) and their content elements were formulated. The EFQM model of excellence, following the TQM logic, elaborated for supporting and measuring excellent operation and spreading wide among European enterprises was chosen to be the framework of the model. Several authors confirmed that the elements of the EFQM model support the company-wise implementation of CSR activities. A model was elaborated which keeps the logical structure of the EFQM model and which was filled exclusively with content elements describing CSR activities.

The next part of the dissertation introduced the elaborated CSR EMAT (Corporate Social Responsibility Excellence Management and Assessment Tool) model, the method of its creation, its elements and validation process. As I stated that the CSR EMAT is a management tool which can be applied for enterprises irrespective of their size, or field of operation, quantitative interviews were conducted with the managers of 41 large, 27 medium-sized and 25 small enterprises in the course of which practically implemented CSR activities were evaluated using the aspect system. After being convinced of the applicability of the model, the answers received were evaluated and fixed in an Excel table. The statistical analyses were implemented on the basis of those results.

Cluster analysis was used to group the enterprises in the sample on the basis of their CSR performance. The analysed enterprises could be grouped into three well-distinguishable categories as a result of the data reduction: **1. CSR communicators (47 enterprises), 2. CSR starters (14 enterprises) and 3. CSR conscious (33 enterprises).** The *CSR communicators* mainly focus on those CSR activities which are outward-oriented, towards the customers and

the society. *CSR starters* perform much better on all investigated fields, their results are rather average, yet there are such on all fields. *CSR conscious* enterprises carry out conscious CSR activities and performed best on the investigated areas and excelled regarding key results.

Following the evaluation of the companies in the sample the steps of the CSR management process and the management tools which can be used during these were introduced as the last element of the CSR EMAT model.

H1: The comparison of international directives and norms related to the CSR aspect and the sustainable development enables the separation of the two aspects and the definition of the areas and content elements of the CSR concept.

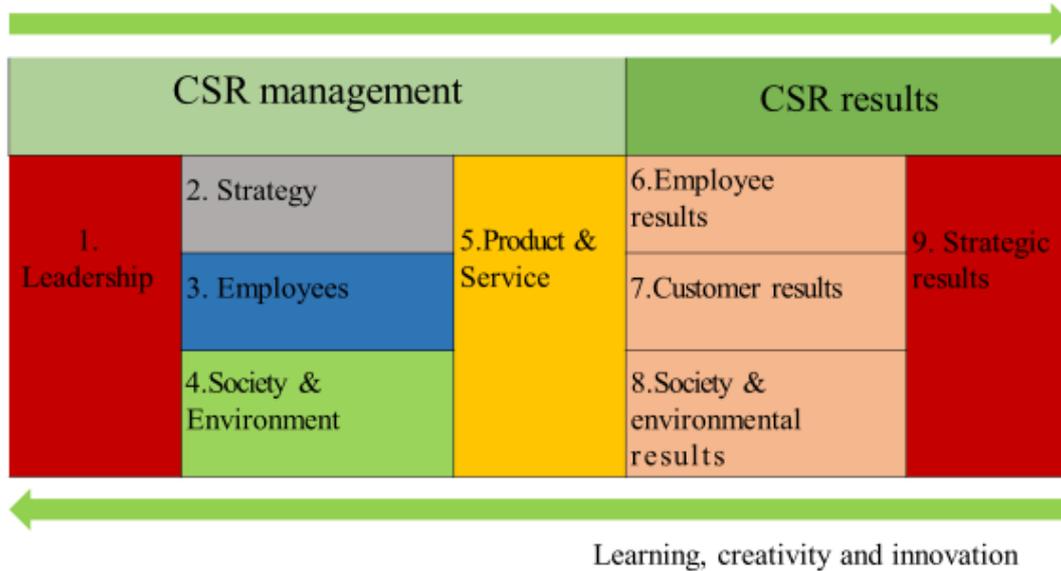
In the course of the secondary research the international directives and norms related to the CSR aspect and the sustainable development (the Green Paper of the European Commission, the Global Compact of the UN, the Global Reporting Initiative, the OECD directives and the ISO 26000) were collected. The basic elements of the directives and norms were collected in a table (Table 7) and compared and the areas of the CSR concept was formulated alongside those elements which were present in all documents (Figure 13): management, employees, environment, product & service. In order to define the content elements of these areas the aspects related to the individual areas of the concept were collected. The summary of the areas of the concept is included in Table 8-12. On the basis of this the hypothesis can be verified.

Thesis 1 On the basis of international standards and norms related to the CSR aspect and the sustainable development (like the Green Paper of the European Commission, the Global Compact of the UN, the Global Reporting Initiative, the OECD directives and the ISO 26000) the areas of the CSR concept – Management, Employees, Environment, Society, Product and Service - and their content elements were defined and these constitute the sub-criteria of the CSR EMAT model.

H2: An appropriate framework and the content elements of the defined CSR concept help to establish a management tool which can bolster the evaluation of CSR activities of companies.

Chapter 5 of the thesis presents the establishment of the CSR EMAT model which justifies that criteria and related sub-criteria formulated alongside the CSR concept and aligned along the logic of the EFQM model of excellence result in a management tool which is capable of evaluating the CSR activities of companies irrespective of their size and activities. The

applicability of the model is justified by the 20 experts involved into the validation process and the evaluation carried out for 94 enterprises. On the basis of this information the hypothesis can be verified.



Thesis 2 The management model (CSR EMAT) established on the basis of the content elements of the EFQM excellence model and the CSR concept is suitable for evaluating the CSR activities of companies irrespective of their sizes and activities.

H3: Based on the results of the measurements the companies can be listed in three well distinguishable groups according to their CSR performance.

A cluster-analysis was used to group the companies in the sample according to their CSR performances. The investigated enterprises could be listed in three, well distinguishable groups as the result of the data-reduction (as it can be seen in the table 31). The first cluster is made up of 47 enterprises. These are the *CSR communicators* (enterprises doing outward-oriented CSR), who primarily focus on the customer-, social- and environmental results, but they performed on these areas also below average. These companies focus on those CSR activities which are outward-oriented, towards the customers and the society. 14 companies constitute the 2. cluster. These are the *CSR starters* (start-up enterprises towards the CSR activity), they clearly perform better on all investigated fields. Their results are average, yet they can show results on all fields. Next to the outward-oriented CSR focus there is the internal focus via the responsibility towards

the employees. The third cluster is made up of 33 enterprises. They are *CSR conscious* (enterprises carrying out conscious CSR activities), with the best results on the investigated areas and with regard to the key results they are doing outstanding activities. The members of this group think strategically about CSR, can boast best practices and are the best when it comes to practically implementing CSR. Based on the results the hypothesis can be confirmed.

Thesis 3 On the basis of the measurement results done by the CSR EMAT, the companies form three well-distinguishable groups according to their CSR intensity: CSR communicators, CSR starters and CSR conscious.

5. Individual, new results and practical applicability

The aim of the research was the establishment of the practical management tool which could help the leaders of enterprises in the corporate integration of the CSR aspect. As Lajos Szabó (et al., 2017) pointed out, all management tools are worth the amount of profit for the practical use and it will be able to make better decisions through the application. I hope to have compiled a model which can be beneficial for the practical side and it can support the leaders in their responsible role-taking. The CSR EMAT is a new tool which supports a new management perspective with the leaders of 94 enterprises proving its practical applicability. The CSR EMAT model includes the following new elements:

- the CSR model of excellence established along the CSR concept defined by the literature (leadership, employees, society, environment, product and service);
- the collected and compiled content elements of international standards describing CSR activities which shape the criteria system of the model;
- the valuating aspect system and the score-system which measure the CSR system only, it provides an easily applicable and unified framework system for the self-evaluation of enterprises irrespective of their scope, or size;
- the steps and applied tools of the CSR management process a CSR.

The new empiric results of the dissertation on the basis of the evaluation implemented by the CSR EMAT of the enterprises participating in the research:

- the enterprises in the sample **form three clearly distinguishable groups based on their CSR activities: 1. CSR communicators (47 enterprises), 2. CSR starters (14 enterprises) and 3. CSR conscious (33 enterprises)**. The CSR communicators communicate and perform outward-oriented CSR activities and strive to meet the

expectations of customers and the society. CSR starters perform seemingly better on all examined fields, yet their results are average, but they can show results on all fields. CSR conscious enterprises are enterprises carrying out conscious CSR activities and were the best on the examined fields and with regards to their key results and this is a proof of implementation on a strategic level.

Norbert Katona and Judit Tessényi (2015:19) researched the relation between CSR and strategic management and as a result they found that it is an added value if the companies evaluate their CSR activities on the basis of a continuously measurable and structured system and compare it to their best practices. They suggested that CSR performances should be made comparable on both national and international levels, thus the establishment of a quantified, weighted and objective evaluation model and its wide-spread application after the testing phase. I believe that the CSR EMAT model established as the result of the research meets these requirements, or provides the first step which can be followed and used to develop the idea and it can result in a management tool which is the basic mean of a new kind of thinking and CSR management.

6. Possibilities of continuing the research

Further possibilities of the research is the further development of the areas of the CSR EMAT model with an expert group (experts of the individual fields) and to elaborate it onto a norm level. The ISO 26 000 is a norm elaborated for social responsibility, but it is not suitable for certification and measurement. The author believes that the further development of the CSR EMAT could provide a solution for this problem.

The homepage and the online evaluation tool were compiled and as the next step would be the English-language version of the page. The homepage stores corporate measurements and good practices. An access to the homepage in English could provide the basis for international sampling which again could be the basis for further researches.

The CSR EMAT model was generally drafted to measure the CSR activities of companies, but there are possibilities of further development also on the field of implementing special measurements by reworking these activities adapted to the operation of various institutions, organisations and economical branches to compare the CRS activities of different branches.

The comparison is not only important as benchmarking, but it differentiates companies and influences their social evaluation. Similarly to an Excellence Award for EFQM-certified enterprises, an award on the basis of the CSR EMAT which would acknowledge and certify the CSR activities of companies would be worth establishing.

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