Corporate Social Responsibility as a Brand: Practical Activity or Social Hypocrisy?

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Companies seek to promote social responsibility activities, as these activities are perceived as certain goodwill in societies. This becomes the particular brand of the organization. However, there is often a gap between what is declared by the organization and what real practices of the socially responsible organization are.

However, the following **problem questions** arise: is imitation of social responsibility the natural state of the organizations that declare it (mimicry)? What are the fundamental reasons, which prevent the organization from actually implementing social responsibility rather than imitating it? Wouldn't such social hypocrisy affect the brand of the organization itself?

Purpose – after identification of corporate social responsibility becoming a brand, to evaluate the interest of companies in carrying out practical activity, avoiding social hypocrisy.

Experimental design and methodology. The theoretical part of the research is based on the analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction methods. The empirical part provides the results of expert assessment. The research was conducted using the method of a semi-structured interview. Questions of the interview are made on the basis of results of the analysis of academic literature, i.e., the following categories are distinguished: socially responsible activity and its imitation; internal and external circumstances leading to imitation of socially responsible activity; the influence of social hypocrisy on the brand of the organization.

Major finding. In the countries of different levels of social and economic development, corporate social responsibility is used as a brand, but the level of social hypocrisy is different, as social maturity of stakeholders is different as well.

Discussion and conclusions. Scientists from different countries are critical of the practice of corporate social responsibility in their countries, emphasising that this is often a means of marketing, rather than practice. In particular, this problem is stressed by economically developing societies, where there are no old traditions of corporate social responsibility. Scientists from those countries with comparatively old traditions of corporate social responsibility emphasise the need to look at the processes of social responsibility optimistically rather than critically. However, using corporate social responsibility as a brand one can disappoint stakeholders.

Research limitations. The results of this research may not fully reflect the situation in respect of all Lithuanian companies, they only show frequent problems, which should be examined in greater detail in the future studies and the results in different countries should be compared.

Key words: social responsibility, brand, ethics, morality, reputation.

JEL classification: M140, M310.

1. Introduction

Relevance of the research. Corporate social responsibility has become an attractive corporate marketing strategy in communicating with stakeholders. However, it is necessary to note the fact that from the very beginning of the studies corporate social responsibility was analysed not as an instrument, for example, in marketing, but rather research and discussion aimed to respond to the questions raised by the rapidly developing different areas of industry, which increased social tension and environmental pollution. Therefore, recently there already arise questions as to whether there is no deviation to the other extreme, turning the idea of corporate social responsibility into one more purely technical strategy of the company and moving away from the underlying principles of social responsibility. These questions arise after the facts that Western corporations declaring themselves to be socially responsible use the services of enterprises of developing countries, exploiting workers emerged. However, these are only striking, exceptional examples. Larger or smaller offences against the ethical principles or focusing on exclusively one of the areas of corporate social responsibility with varying degrees of respect to the interests of all

stakeholders are often in the activities of enterprises. This problem is especially relevant in the countries, where corporate social responsibility has relatively recent traditions for a variety of reasons, e.g. social, political and economic transformations, which post-Soviet State had to go through.

Authors from developing countries note the benefits of corporate social responsibility, which give the companies of their countries extra competitiveness, or examine the aspects that could enrich the social responsibility by the contribution of religion/culture of their country. All of this is significant and it enriches the developing concept of corporate social responsibility. At the same time this suggests that corporate social responsibility is becoming the value object, due to which companies focus on current or future challenges in practice, but does not respond the main question: to what extent and in what way the companies themselves are prepared not to imitate that they technically meet the criteria of corporate social responsibility, but behave really honestly? On the other hand, the analysis of numerous studies shows the lack of attention to the analysis of causes, which lead to the imitation of corporate social responsibility.

Increasingly more companies declare to be socially responsible in response to the public expectations, ecological and social challenges. As corporate social responsibility (CSR) is based on the principles of public morality, social coherence, sustainable environment, altruism (Aaronson, 2003; Arvidsson, 2011; Pérez and del Bosque, 2013; etc.), arising from the initiatives of the organizations to operate in a transparent and responsible manner in respect of all the surrounding environment (Grundey, 2008; Young and Thyil, 2009), this initiative is welcomed by the societies. The companies strive to declare to be socially responsible companies, as this activity is perceived as certain goodwill in the societies. This becomes a particular brand of the organization. According to Chun (2014), increasing numbers of brands position having CSR as their founding ideology, as it has been realised that the indirect benefit is achieved through the goodwill of the company (Galbreath and Shum, 2012). Many studies confirm that CSR positively influences brand image of the company, increases the value, provides the competitive advantage both in the local and global market (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001; Verboven, 2011; Popoli, 2011; etc.). Moreover, the understanding that social responsibility is useful for the work of the organizations, in various processes of organization of activities (Evans and Davis, 2008; Raub and Blunschi, 2013; Costas and Kärreman, 2013; etc.), in the relations with external interest groups (Mazurkiewicz, 2004; Young and Thyil, 2009) motivates the enterprises themselves to pursue CSR.

Although CSR is becoming an effective instrument in corporate competition, there remains a lot of discussion both among corporate management practitioners and theorists on what must be corporate social responsibilities, when the company can be considered to be socially responsible, and where to draw the line between the real corporate social responsibility and the one declared only for marketing purposes. Laeequddin and Waheed (2012) emphasise the ethical dilemma. According to the authors, situations in which disqualifying suppliers who fail to comply with CSR criteria could limit the number of suppliers or create higher dependency relationships on limited number of suppliers adding cost to production. What is ethical to a customer may not necessarily be ethical to its supplier. Although some authors, e.g. Christensen et al. (2013) argue that differences between words and action are not necessarily a bad thing and that such discrepancies have the potential to stimulate CSR improvements, there is the risk that the CSR as an integral part of the brand, may become merely an imitative activity, especially in developing economies, that do not have deeper traditions of the application of corporate social responsibility in practice and the traditions of harmonization of the interests of different social groups. So there is often a gap between what the organizations declare and real practices of socially responsible activities, therefore, public confidence in business remains complicated. It is no coincidence that it is stressed that investment must be directed to the companies promoting social and ethical values, in order to recover citizens' trust (Pinto, 2011). Therefore, in this article, on the basis of the research of the relation of CSR and the brand, the discussion on the risk of social hypocrisy arising when investing in the brand of socially responsible enterprises is developed.

This **research aims** to reveal the declarative character of activities of corporate social responsibility, using the status of the CSR to the purpose of the brand, i.e. the aim of the research – having established that corporate social responsibility has become the brand, to evaluate the interest of companies to carry out practical activities, avoiding the social hypocrisy.

Problem questions. The organizations positioning themselves in the society as socially responsible, are influenced by different reasons, one of which is the formation of a favourable opinion and the brand, therefore, the following issues are raised in the research: is the imitation of social responsibility the natural

state of the organizations declaring it (mimicry)? What are the fundamental causes, which prevent the organization from imitation of social responsibility rather than actually implementing it? Can social hypocrisy cause harm to the brand of the organization?

The originality of the research is determined by the fact that this research fills in the gaps in the studies of CSR and corporate brand in the context of developing economies, taking into account the gap between the rhetoric of the CSR and practice, thus giving the opportunity to address these contexts in an integrated manner by reducing the dissonance in the activities of enterprises.

Research limitations. Extrapolation of results of the research is limited, since the research was carried out only in one of the developing economies, therefore broader international studies are necessary.

2. Literature review

Corporate charity has always been positively appreciated in the societies, but only from the middle of the last century there was an increased interest in the CSR as a corporate social duty (Bowen, 1953) as well as an instrument to correct market failure (Arrow, 1973) and it became an important part of the strategy of many companies (Carroll and Shabana, 2010; Acquier et al., 2011; Caulfield, 2013; Dhanesh, 2014; etc). Globalization of business has fostered the development of CSR idea in the countries where the traditions of social responsibility are relatively new (Chapple and Moon, 2005; Dhanesh, 2014), as the medium of moral values and expectations of the public is traditionally favourable to the development of CSR. Therefore, despite the fact that for many decades the discussion on how much the CSR is useful to the companies and can affect their shareholders' interests and the attractiveness of the companies on the financial markets takes place (Friedman, 1970; Baron, 2001), both theoretical papers and corporate strategies still emphasise the ethical and value aspects of this concept in various business areas (Post, 2003; Nussbaum, 2009; Ardichvili, 2013; etc.). It is argued that aiming at social coherence it is necessary to look wider than economic interests, taking the interests of different groups of society into account. As it is stated in the European Commission's Communication (2011), to fully meet their corporate social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders, with the aim of: maximising the creation of shared value for their owners / shareholders and for their other stakeholders and society at large; identifying, preventing and mitigating their possible adverse impacts.

Nevertheless, despite the promotion of development of the concept and the increasing number of enterprises positioning themselves as socially responsible, certain failures are admitted. For example, according to Angerler and Liegl (2008), although many different organizations are participating in the CSR debate and have launched various initiatives, companies have not implemented holistic CSR measures aiming at sustainable development to a significant degree. Moreover, Young and Thyil (2009) note that the position of labour as a stakeholder is problematic, with a divergence between espoused statements on CSR and how they are operationalized throughout the organization. The emphasis seems to be on environmental and financial sustainability with lesser importance placed on dimensions of workplace management and accompanying employee relations approaches.

In this case, one of the main reasons is the duality of the concept of CSR accepted by business entities. According Dhanesh (2014), although scholars have proposed multiple drivers of CSR, two contrasting perspectives dominate the discussion: the moral and the strategic. These aspects are closely interrelated, so it is often difficult to distinguish which one dominates in socially responsible activities of the company. It must be acknowledged that the companies aim to be flexible and adapt to both the external and internal requirements arising in the organization, therefore, CSR is also the pragmatic consequence of the requirements (Caroll, 1991; McWilliams and Siegel, 2001; Mazurkiewicz, 2004; Geva, 2008; Young and Thyil, 2009; Baumann-Pauly et al., 2013; etc.), which often becomes dominant, outweighing the moral aspects. Orientation to the pragmatic benefit is fostered by the fact that increasingly more arguments that corporate social responsibility can be economically worthwhile and useful in every possible way are discovered. For example, environmental activities (Delmas et al., 2013), which together allow saving the resources of the enterprise, promoting customer loyalty and confidence (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001; Galbreath and Shum, 2012; Homburg et al., 2013; etc.), etc. are useful to the companies. With incorporation of the components of human resources, customer loyalty and sales promotion into the company strategy,

social responsibility stops to be the position fostered by merely moral imperatives. Thus, it is not coincidence that CSR takes the dominant role in the relations both with internal stakeholders and external entities. Companies pay special attention to communicating the socially responsible activities carried out by the company both inside and outside of the company (Verboven, 2011; Dhanesh, 2014). According to Chaudhri (2014), fuelled by concerns for transparency and the need to build trust and confidence of stakeholders, CSR communication and reporting has become a mainstream management function.

According to Polonsky and Jevons (2009), there is a general agreement that global brands should ensure that they incorporate social responsibility. To do this properly, organizations must understand what it means to be socially responsible and how they can leverage their actions. CSR means the ethical behaviour (Topal, 2005; Fan, 2005). Therefore, the companies creating their brand are trying not to move away from ethical principles, which are significant to the public and relate the development of the brand, both directly and indirectly, to the CSR. However, the rhetoric of enterprises in the CSR discourses does not always become practice (Dumay and Lu, 2009; Fassin and Buelens, 2011), what encourages discussion about the effect of corporate dissonance (Bernstein, 2009) and corporate social irresponsibility (Perez-Batres and Doh, 2014). In practice of activities of companies the limits of ethical principles become freely interpreted, as a result, organizations in their communication with various stakeholders sometimes balance between sincerity and hypocrisy (Fassin and Buelens, 2011; Lacey and Groves, 2014). Sanders (2012) points to a conceptual abyss separating the theory and reality of international CSR. It is also stated that contrary to the dominant liberal discourse in business ethics and CSR, an increasing potential for Machiavellian behaviour in the corporate sector is to be expected. The main expectations of companies in the wide CSR discourse are related to the financial benefits resulting from the positive reputation from the point of view of the consumers (Papasolomou-Doukakis et al., 2005), but some research shows that CSR does not have a significant impact on the decisions of buyers to purchase a product (Hartmann et al., 2013), therefore, the companies find themselves in an ambiguous situation seeking to be economically responsible to their shareholders and implement moral commitments to other stakeholders. In addition, CSR requires significant investment, the recoupment of which always remains the subject of discussion. Therefore, it can encourage enterprises to focus more on the imitation and simulation of social responsibility in the practice in their communication processes, which discords with practical activities. On the other hand, it is necessary to distinguish between the simulation, which can be an integral part at the beginning of the implementation of the CSR, and fraudulent imitation, manipulating the positive consumers' reactions to the product or service brand developed. Debeljak et al. (2011) identifies some elements of insincere CSR in every company in its early stages of acquiring CSR practices, especially in the early stages of the development of the business culture, and also during the maturing process. However, according to Fan (2005), a good brand must be a legal as well as ethical one. Any unethical behaviour will severely damage or even destroy the total intangible asset as evidenced by the recent high profile corporate scandals. Transparency and new communication strategy will reduce perceived hypocrisy and mitigate its negative consequences (Coombs and Holladay, 2013; Arli and Tjiptono, 2014), therefore CSR calls for a reappraisal of companies' brand and reputation management (Lewis, 2003).

According to P. M. Dumas (2006), CSR shares the idea that changes in corporate behaviour resulting in the public good of social responsibility could be achieved through the market by embedding certain values or principles into the cost/benefit analysis of private companies. Special attention in this discourse is given to developing economies. The research carried out by Mostardeiro (2007) in Brazil has shown that stakeholders such as the company's president, stockholders, employees, community, customers, and competitors exert considerable influence in the formation of CSR strategies. In addition, the research carried out by Planken et al. (2013) in a developed and emerging economy provides indications that stakeholder expectations in emerging and developed economies may be more similar than previously suggested. Most extant literature assumes that CSR in developing countries mimics western patterns (Srisuphaolarn, 2013) or CSR agendas in emerging economies are largely driven by external forces, namely pressures from parent companies, international market and international agencies (Belal and Momin, 2009). There is no doubt on the positive role in solving social issues (Ragodoo, 2009; Planken et al., 2013; Jamali, 2014; etc.), however, it should be noted that to take CSR to the next level in developing countries, we need to accord systematic attention to strengthening the institutional drivers of CSR, and putting more pressure on companies to move beyond philanthropy, rhetoric, legitimization, imagery, and public relations to

substantive engagement in CSR and genuine attempts at change and development (Jamali, 2014). In any case, the organizations implementing CSR target at the public expectations, so social initiatives become an integral part of the process of communication with stakeholders, using various information channels, both traditional media and social networks (Bielenia-Grajewska, 2014; Etter, 2014). The effect of CSR in communication with stakeholders on the goodwill and brand of the company is multiple. Khojastehpour and Johns (2014) emphasise that environmental CSR has a positive effect on corporate/brand reputation and corporate profitability. Positive impact is made on such stakeholders as the employees (internal customers), customers (external customers), suppliers, competitors, bankers, and investors (Esen, 2013; Blombäck and Scandelius, 2013). Therefore, such an attractive marketing means, satisfying the expectations of stakeholders, provides a competitive advantage to the enterprises with different specificity of the activities (Podnar and Golob, 2007; Santos, 2011; Lee and Roh, 2012; etc.).

3. Research methodology

Quite a lot of studies analysing the CSR, corporate reputation and brand have been carried out at an international level. However, the problem of the instruments, which would allow the implementation of the complex aim of this research in the context of a developing economy, has been encountered. When dealing with this problem, more careful analysis of literature was carried out, selecting the studies relating the values of social responsibility, corporate reputation and the brand, and distinguishing the key debatable aspects that in authors' opinion could be valuable to the research. Thus, the questions of this research interview are made on the basis of the results of analysis of scientific literature presented in the first section of this article, i.e. the following categories are distinguished: socially responsible activities and its imitation; internal and external circumstances leading to imitation of socially responsible activities; the influence of social hypocrisy on the brand of the organization. Table 1 provides a summary of the structure of the research instrument.

Categories	Problem	Sources on the basis of which the categories have been distinguished
Socially responsible activities and irresponsibility, imitation	CSR is an attractive theory, which is implemented in practice, however, the problem of dishonesty of companies when the expected and/or declared values remain not implemented is still relevant	Wagner et al. 2008; Jones et al., 2009; Perez-Batres and Doh, 2014; etc.
Internal and external circumstances leading to imitation of socially responsible activities	The existing business tradition and lack of a holistic partner approach to the relations with stakeholders	Baron, 2001; Angerler and Liegl, 2008; Young and Thyil, 2009; Dhanesh, 2014; etc.
Influence of social hypocrisy on the brand of the organization	Trust/distrust of stakeholders in fairness of business	Bernstein, 2009; Fassin and Buelens, 2011; Lacey and Groves, 2014; etc.

Table 1. Structure of the instrument
Source: created by the authors.

As one can see from the structure of the instrument, there is a ternary problem, closely related by various components. Firstly, the organizations that declare social responsibility, actually uphold the declared values, which are a part of corporate culture, or there is a declarative form, when in order to have a positive image among the stakeholders it is invested in the image that does not necessarily reflect the true values of the company. That is, the organization focuses on the communication process, while not remaining transparent and open enough, and in practice it makes decisions inconsistent with the declared ethical principles. Secondly, the understanding of the CSR only as a component of a marketing strategy reflects the crisis of values in the organization, which is determined by both internal and external causes. This can be influenced by the lack of maturity of organizational culture, weak CSR traditions in the environment in which the organization operates and weak stakeholder pressure. And thirdly, the emerging social hypocrisy causes the crises that adversely affect the reputation of the organization among different stakeholders, make the investment in the brand ineffective, cause additional costs to deal with the crisis and to rebuild confidence, the risk of stakeholder disappointment and the decrease of competitiveness arises.

4. Research results

Organization of the research. Only socially responsible companies have been selected to carry out the research. When preparing for the research, the invitation to participate in the research has been sent to the heads of 19 enterprises by email. Only the managers of two companies responded to the first invitation. After repeatedly sending the invitations to participate in the research, the answers of 5 more managers have been received. It was explained to the informants who agreed to participate in the research that the interview will be recorded by the voice recorder, and the information from the data storage device will be deleted after transcribing the text. They were also assured that when the results of the research will be publicly presented, the data that would make it possible to identify the specific enterprises will not be named. Before the interview all prospective informants were sent the interview questions via email and the meeting time was arranged, so the informants had the time to ponder on their future responses. The aim of the research, without revealing the aspect of social hypocrisy was explained to all the informants.

Sample of the research. 7 managers of the enterprises were interviewed, but the responses of only 4 managers were further analysed. The interviews of the remaining three managers were either very abstract or stereotyped answers were given. Early acquaintance with the interview questions could influence that. Characteristics of the informants are shown in Table 2.

Code of the informant / Characteristics	I1	I2	I3	I4
Age of the informant	40	33	56	47
Education of the informant	Higher university (Master)	Higher university (Bachelor)	Higher university (Master)	Higher university (Master)
The overall experience of managerial work (in years)	15	5	11	9
Experience of managerial work in a socially responsible enterprise (in years)	3	5	2	5
The size of the organization, in accordance with the number of employees*	Micro-enterprise	Small	Medium enterprise	Medium enterprise
Areas of activity of the enterprise	Services	Services	Production	Production

Table 2. Characteristics of informants
Source: created by the authors.
*Note: Micro-enterprise (employs less than 10 employees); Small enterprise (employs less than 50 employees); Medium enterprise (employs less than 250 employees).

Thus, the managers who participated in the research have a relatively large managerial experience (from 9 to 15 years), but the experience of management of socially responsible enterprises is relatively little (from 2 to 5 years). However, the informants' education and managerial experience allow making comparisons, making significant conclusions. The sizes of the enterprises in accordance with the number of employees (10 to 250 employees) based on the current classification of enterprises in Lithuania match the status of small and medium enterprises.

Results of the research. The organizations distributed into two parts: start-ups and those already having a long-term practice on the market. Representatives of the start-ups are inclined to more responsible evaluation of the relationship of CSR and the brand with the prospects of their enterprises. Judging from the respondents' answers, the latter approach was influenced by the knowledge acquired during the studies and the existing approach to corporate responsibility to follow the ethical criteria and be responsible to the social environment, for example, I1: *"The idea of socially responsible business was born as long ago as in study years, as the idea of giving a sense to business, so we tried to base all the activities on the principles of CSR".* In contrast, the older respondents emphasized the marketing aspect in their statements: *"At the moment CSR is not very attractive among the consumers, however, when establishing relationships with customers, maintaining contacts with the authorities, it works positively"* (I3) and *"As well as ecological goods have not been popular until recently, but consumer education bears fruit <...> investment in CSR is investment in the future"* (I4).

According to informants, it is difficult to measure the changes, since *"... we started to base the business on the principles of CSR from the first steps, so it is difficult to measure the apparent changes"* (I1), in addition, *"the period of time is too short to be able to answer this question unequivocally"* (I4). The informants value the direct benefits they experienced when they notice lower costs they bear using environment-friendly measures. *"In the past we also sought to reduce costs, but now it falls under the heading of the CSR"* (I4), according to I3, *"this is a natural business logic, reducing the costs, when less energy is used, waste is recycled, etc., but it can also be associated with CSR"*. I2 emphasized the influence on the psychological climate in the company: *"The pace of our activities is quick, there is a lot of creative tension and, therefore, the relationships between the employees and communication with customers have always been the centre of attention. <...> The norms of ethics in our enterprise are not merely a formality, and I can say that this has a positive effect on psychological environment"*.

Internal circumstances, determining imitation of CSR, can be divided into two parts. Firstly, it is the lack of balance of the constituents of social responsibility. Though only one informant (I4) directly identified the pressure from the company shareholders to reduce the costs of implementing CSR. I4 explained that the shareholders of the company *"don't see any direct financial benefit, so there is a gap from what we declare"*. That is, they rather focus on the economic responsibility. In addition, when providing support for the communities, there is the requirement *"to inform the public"*. That is, the purpose of the support is not the perception of social coherence, but the use of CSR in the image-making of the company. It becomes apparent in comparison with the I1, explaining that *"from the very beginning of business, we relate all activities to CSR principles, what makes it easier to create the company's identity both among the employees themselves and partners and clients"*. That is, the owners of the company are determined and motivated to follow ethical imperatives grounding CSR from the very beginning of the business. In addition, the reasons mentioned by I2 show a deeper understanding of an indirect benefit to the company, missing in the enterprises with the existing traditional business model, reflecting the selectivity of values adopted by the society, depending on the situation, and moral conformism. And this is the second cultural reason that influences the decisions referred to in the first case. Both I4 and I3 stressed that the direct users of production are insufficiently informed about the CSR. It is *"relevant to the suppliers and regulators"* (I4). In addition, a strong distrust in business still exists in the society, as the I2 notes, *"when you say that you are following high moral principles, they don't really believe, as many works in a not always fair way"*. However, although not all, but CSR initiatives are *"noticed by the third parties and are appreciated <...> we are just happy about that"* (I1).

The influence of social hypocrisy on the brand of the company may show greater or minor crises, which the companies have experienced or are experiencing because of the fact that the declared values do not match the practice. The detailed analysis of the answers of I1 has highlighted a certain contradiction, indicating that the image created does not fully meet the reality. According to the informant, the benefits provided by CSR to the enterprise are *"the increase of awareness among potential customers, more favourable evaluation by the partners; development of the stable image of the company",* but it is acknowledged that *"the company's financial flow has to be balanced",* because only then *"it will be possible to create the brand"*. In another place it is argued again that *"we refuse part of our profit by donating the product to those who can't afford it; we also consider the help to partners while freezing a large portion of our money so that their business wouldn't stop to be investment "*. Thus, there are questions, on the one hand, is the company that lacks financial stability really engaged in the activities declared, on the other hand, are the actions economically responsible enough in respect of the owners of the company.

Partial practical application of the principles and values of CSR by the company that declares CSR, which may be related to the lack of social responsibility awareness, can also be considered to be a certain feature of social hypocrisy. The answers provided by I3 revealed that most attention is paid to the most conspicuous activities related to such stakeholders as public authorities, partners, customers, shareholders, philanthropic activities. However, the employees of the company as stakeholders do not receive equal attention. The informant acknowledged that the employees *"do not feel the benefit directly <...> perhaps then the employees' opinions would be better"*.

The company represented by I4 is engaged in production of ecological products and declares that the products are *"environmentally friendly and healthy"*. However, it was acknowledged that *"the equals sign cannot be put",* as not all ecologically produced products can be regarded as healthy". But it was

stressed that *"we would suffer a greater damage because of poor product quality and consumer complaints <...> if we didn't pay the partners on time it would reduce trust in us"*. In other words, the company declaring CSR is not fully open in communication with local stakeholders, however, according to I4, it does not make a significant damage to the brand of the company.

The distinguished respondents' thoughts, reflecting the relationship of CSR, brand of the company and social hypocrisy, are presented in Table 3 under three categories: Socially responsible activities and irresponsibility, imitation (1), internal and external circumstances leading to imitation of socially responsible activities (2) and the influence of social hypocrisy on the brand of the organization (3).

Categories	Elaboration	Generalization
Socially responsible activities and irresponsibility, imitation	<it was the idea of giving sense to my business>, <there are many who fail to comply with the principles declared>, <we see the emerging long-term benefits (clients' and partners' approach to us)>, <dissemination of our production to clients>, <we understand that 50 percent of the declarations are unrealizable>, <we see the long-term perspective of CSR, but <...> it's relatively new and untried>, <we notice those imitating, it's one of the criteria for choosing partners>, <not everything is ideal>	Attractive marketing idea applied in practice, understanding that the communicated CSR is not always true.
Internal and external circumstances leading to imitation of socially responsible activities	<we plan investment in the development of the brand of a socially responsible enterprise only after stabilization of the company's financial flow>, <right from the beginning of business we relate all activities with CSR principles>, <the society is not mature for this yet>, <we don't represent it publicly>, <the expenditure doesn't bring dividends>, <feedback is almost imperceptible>, <time for consumers to start to value it is necessary>, <shareholders highlight this, but require minimum costs, while this is not fully compatible with CSR>	Financial motives, seeing no return on investment in real CSR activity, problems of business ethics, weak consumer pressure
Influence of social hypocrisy on the brand of the organization	<we refuse a part of our profit>, <we consider the help to partners while freezing a large portion of our money to be investment as well>, <we don't emphasise CSR, because it would be more declarative, what could raise a negative emotion>, < people don't really know what CSR is>, <poor quality receives more reaction>, <minimal risk, because people don't know what it is <..> there would not be major damage>, <we don't relate it to the brand directly>, <our brand is based on ecology, so it would hit the distributors' trust>, <many behave like this>	Perceived damage, in the hope that the risk is minimal due to the low awareness of CSR and widely applied double standards (dissonance of communicated values and the values applied in practice)

Table 3. The relationship of CSR, brand of the company and social hypocrisy
Source: created by the authors.

5. Conclusions

The studies carried out by many authors show that in the processes of communication with stakeholders CSR has a positive impact on the business brand and reputation, creating the image of ethical, sustainable and environmentally-friendly business. Therefore, it is becoming an increasingly popular public relations strategy of enterprises. At the same time, because of giving prominence to CSR, there is a risk for the brand of the enterprise that due to internal and external reasons this strategy becomes dominant, using social responsibility rather as a marketing strategy, leaving actual values in the background.

In the countries of different levels of social and economic development, corporate social responsibility is used as a brand, but the level of social hypocrisy is different, as social maturity of stakeholders differs as well.

The results of the research encourage businesses to discuss the statement that "Reports of firms'

behaviours with regard to corporate social responsibility are often contrary to their stated standards of social responsibility" (Wagner et al., 2009) additionally in the context of social hypocrisy, as well as some of the researchers' arguments that declaration of CSR, even departing from all the principles, is basically a positive sign. On the one hand, we can agree that the declaration of CSR basically encourages companies to think about the values of social responsibility, but it does not guarantee the ultimate result – the real and full implementation of the CSR. In addition, it does not provide a sufficient degree of optimism in the hope that this dissonance would not develop in social hypocrisy or has not already become such a practice.

It was found that CSR practice is perceived as an attractive marketing tool, positively influencing corporate brand and reputation, although the companies are not always open when communicating with stakeholders. The gap between the communicated values and practices is influenced by economic motives, seeing no return on investment in real CSR activities, business ethics issues, and weak pressure by some stakeholders. Although the possible damage of social hypocrisy on the brand of the company is realised, it is expected that the risk is minimal due to the low awareness of CSR and widely used and tolerated in the society double moral standards.

On the other hand, as the popularity of CSR and awareness in the society gradually increases, it also influences stakeholder exactingness to the enterprises declaring social responsibility. This factor encourages organizations to be more responsible to declare the CSR in the context of the opportunities and resources available to the consistent implementation of the ideas.

Nevertheless, corporate social hypocrisy should be construed in the wide context of the development of society and business culture. Therefore, a deeper analysis of these relationships, conducting the research in different cultures, countries with different CSR traditions in the future research would be significant.

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