

CSR IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF TOURISM STUDY PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS PRAGUE

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Abstract: *The aim of the paper is to evaluate the educational process of CSR education and identify the important factors influencing the attitude of the students to this topic. The authors are presenting results of a 2017 survey. The starting point of the research was analysis of the Tourism curriculum at the University of Economics, Prague (VŠE), identifying the elements of CSR in terms of content, scope, forms and educational methods. That was followed by a survey concerning the extent of identification of fresh graduates with the CSR principles. As methods were used: analysis of secondary resources, interviews and questionnaire. The curriculum needs to be changed and the CSR should get higher importance and emphasis as the graduates evaluate the presence of the topic as insufficient. The graduates see the CSR as an important matter not conditioned by profit. Based on the researches, several guidelines for increasing the presence of CSR in the tourism curriculum are proposed. The presented research is part of the fulfilment of long-term strategy for improving the quality of tourism student education at the University of Economics, Prague.*

Keywords: *Tourism, Education, Corporate social responsibility, Graduates, Tourism study program, Sustainable Tourism*

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations World Tourism Organization [1] has declared 2017 the year of sustainable tourism. The focus is on the economic, ecological and social objectives pursued by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a central part of corporate strategies also for some of the companies in tourism. For customers as well as for employees, the integration of CSR strategies is becoming more and more important. The most advanced strategies of CSR are represented by the global players. Their impact on the CSR development and implementation is crucial as they systematically search for advantages and unique image on the market, and they have financial resources available.

Although the concept of CSR is commonly used, the precise definition of the content of CSR is difficult. „*The concept of CSR has had a long and diverse history in the literature*” [2]. In 2001 the Commission of European Communities stated the definition of CSR as „*Corporate social responsibility is essentially a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment*” [3]. The topic of CSR is defined in the same way in the teaching at the University of Economics in Prague.

Corporate social responsibility is very important, especially in western countries. That is for several reasons: responsibility becomes important for the customers; they are concerned about waste, environmental impact of their consumption and social fairness. Therefore, corporate

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social responsibility can be a competitive advantage, creates a positive image on the market and enhances positive relationship between company and customers or public. CSR can help also in the field of human resources management. As a responsible employer a company can easily get workers, enhance their loyalty and feeling of meaningful work, which is very important especially for the coming generation.

CSR as a concept has different definitions created by many authors. A. Dahlsrud analyzed 37 definitions of CSR [4] and based on the similarities defined 5 crucial aspects. The main focus areas are: environment, social area, economical area and stakeholders. The fifth aspect important for CSR definition is voluntariness. The commitments are accepted on a voluntary basis, going beyond the obligations set by legislation.

Education and competence of future managers is crucial for a successful CSR implementation. Sobczak [5] brings the argument, that not only the curriculum is important but also the real behaviour of the school. As it is necessary to implement CSR both as a strategy and concept, the managers must be able to set goals, create a strategy and report the results. To gain deep knowledge and competences, special attention must be paid to the education of future employees and managers. This research carried out in autumn 2017 was focused on the development of knowledge and competences relevant to the topic of CSR in the educational programmes for future managers enrolled in the Tourism course at the University of Economics, Prague.

Current status of Corporate social responsibility implementation in management education has been a topic of many articles in the past years, which shows that the topic is subject of current debates in the industry. In [6] the situation at Spanish universities is evaluated, Vázquez [7] studied CSR students' perception at Uruguay universities, [8] evaluated the situation at Bulgarian universities. The authors in [9] emphasize the importance of CSR as an integral part of education of future managers in the Czech Republic, and Adámek [10] analyses the extent of the wide range of CSR topics in education in the Czech Republic. Approach to education and teaching CSR is very complicated and unsystematic in the Czech Republic. Pavel Adamek [11] mentions 10 synonyms covering CSR education. In the same publication he also reports to a study conducted at the University of Economics, Prague. According to this study, only 73 % of students knew the term CSR and that was mostly from newspapers or thanks to studying at the school.

This article focuses on the education of future experts in the Tourism programme at The University of Economics, Prague (VŠE). The VŠE values openness to innovative ideas and approaches. The university is a socially responsible institution leading its students to ethical behaviour, social and environmental awareness and responsibility with regard to current challenges of our globalizing world and interlinked multicultural phenomena of economic and social life.

The Department of Tourism of the Faculty of International Relations of the VŠE has had a long tradition in preparation of experts and top managers for tourism. The industry awarded its long pedagogical activity with the title "School of 2015". The Department of Tourism is the guarantor of 35 tourism courses. In the bachelor study programme „Tourism and Regional development“, there are enrolled 70 students; the master Study programme „Tourism“ has 120 enrolled students. With these numbers and overall reputation of the university and Tourism department, it is a leader in economic education, it sets trends and is a flagship for other private or regional institutions. Therefore, the emphasis on CSR education in the Department of Tourism can be a significant stimulus for other institutions teaching Tourism to follow.

2. METHODOLOGY AND GOALS

This research was carried out in September – December 2017. Two assumptions were created based on feedback from business, academics' experience and expectation supported by permanent contact with students and graduates: (1) The presence of the CSR topic in the Tourism programme is perceived as low, even though (2) graduates perceive the CSR as an important part of business. To confirm if the assumptions were right, a research of multiple sources was conducted.

The method is focused on implementation of the topic of CSR into specialized tourism subjects guaranteed and taught by the Department of Tourism. „There is an impressive history associated with the evolution of the concept and definition of CSR“ [2]. Although the CSR topic has been discussed already for more than a half of the century, there is no universally valid and unified global definition. Several international and national organisations as well as experts and authors of scientific articles try to define CSR [8]. In the context of this research CSR was defined as a rather broad range of related subtopics (Ethics, Sustainable development, which is in accordance with findings of [10] and [11].

This study consists of several parts and uses three different sources of data (pedagogic documents, interviews with teachers and survey of graduates). The content analysis is based on the analysis of secondary resources – pedagogic documents. All pedagogic documents were analysed, e.g. study programmes of bachelor and master degree, course syllabi, course schedules. The formal implementation of CSR topics in the curriculum was checked.

The syllabus creates a stable framework for what should be covered, however, the particular lecturer can adjust the content to current development and trends and emphasize selected topics. Therefore, it was necessary to implement the method of interview. The teachers' attitude to the topic was investigated via detailed semi-structured interviews with open and closed questions, the study was carried out with all teachers of the Department of Tourism of VŠE to assess the actual depth, content and form of CSR education. 8 teachers were asked about the CSR, 5 of them deal with the CSR topic during their courses. The average length of the personal interview with a relevant teacher was 50 minutes.

The perception of CSR and the impact of VŠE teaching on the creating of this perception was found via a questionnaire distributed among students and graduates of the study programme Tourism at the University of Economics, Prague. The questions were divided into two parts – one examined the questions about the study programme, presence of CSR in teaching and effect of the Tourism programme regarding CSR. Questions about the influence of selected factors were added into this part. The second part investigated the attitude of graduates towards CSR topics and pillars. Partially the Likert-type scale and partially rating scale was used in the closed questions. The rating scale was structured in the same way as school grading: 1 was the best, highest, most important, 5 the worst, the least important etc. In this part of the research 187 former students of the Tourism programme were asked to fill the questionnaire, the return rate was 38 % and there were 72 answers collected.

3. ANALYSIS OF CSR IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS

Graduates of the bachelor study programme Tourism and Regional development are qualified to carry out work in tourism businesses (such as hotels, restaurants, travel agencies etc.) or in institutions promoting tourism development (such as info centers, regional offices, destination management organisations etc.). Knowledge of economics, good language skills and professional experience gained during the programme enable the graduates to find positions in all of the above-mentioned establishments.

Graduates of the master study programme Tourism find positions particularly in the top management of tourism-related companies, in consulting or audit companies, in international establishments in the tourism sector, or they start their own businesses.

The Department of Tourism offers altogether 35 courses, out of which 18 are taught in the bachelor programme and 17 in the master programme. The courses are listed in Table 1.

<i>Course title</i>	<i>Mandatory/ optional</i>	<i>Course hours (lecture/ workshop)</i>	<i>CSR coverage (hours - syllabus)</i>	<i>CSR coverage (hours - actual)</i>	<i>CSR relevant</i>
Bachelor's courses					
Tourism - Basic Information	M	26/0	2	3	✓
Regional Structures of the Czech Republic and EU	M	26/26	0	0	
Organization and Management of Hospitality and Accommodation	M	26/26	0	2	✓
Tourism/Cestovní ruch	M	26/26	0	0/2	✓
Regional Development and Culture	M	26/26	0	0	
Sustainable regional development and environment	M	26/26	0	0	✓
Travel Agencies - Organization and Management	M	26/26	0	0	✓
Programming and Projecting of Regional Development of Tourism	M	26/26	0	0	·
Practical Experience in Tourism Industry	M	0/52	0	0	✓
Rural Tourism/Venkovský cestovní ruch	O	0/26	0	0	
Tourism Attractivities and Products in the Czech Republic	O	26/26	0	0	
Geography of Tourism in Czech Republic	O	26/26	0	0	
Intercultural Communication in Tourism and Hospitality Industry	O	0/26	0	0	
Position of the Czech Republic in World Tourism - Study trip abroad	O	0/26	0	0	
Introduction to online marketing in Tourism industry	O	0/26	0	0	✓
Innovative Approaches to the Tourism Product Creation	O	0/26	0	0	·
Spa, Wellness and Medical in Tourism	O	0/26	0	0	·
M.I.C.E. management	O	0/26	0	0	✓
Total bachelor's courses		728	2	5	0,68%

Master's courses					
International Tourism	M	26/26	0	0	
Hotel Management	M	26/26	0	x	✓
Travel Agencies and Events Management	M	26/26	0	0	✓
Marketing, Management and Decision-making in Tourism	M	26/26	0	0	✓
Spa Tourism	O	26/26	0	0	
Geography of World Tourism	O	52/0	0	0	
Actual Problems of the Tourism Development	O	26/26	2/2	2/2	✓
Marketing Management of Tourism Destination	O	26/26	0	0	.
Hotel Operation System (computer simulation)	O	0/26	0	0	
Cultural Differences in International Tourism	O	26/26	0	0	
Tourism and Hotel Industry Information and Reservation Technologies	O	26/26	0	0	
Sustainable Development of Tourism	O	26/26	1	1	✓
Trends in World Tourism - study trip	O	0/26	0	0	.
Online marketing and its application in Tourism industry	O	0/26	0	0	
Event Management	O	0/26	0	0	✓
Multicriterial assessment of tourism conditions	O	0/52	0	0	
Innovative Approaches to the Tourism Destination Development	O	0/26	0	0	.
Total master's courses		754	5	5	0,66%

Total		1482	7	10	0,67%
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Table 1: Overview of the course structure

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Number of guaranteed courses</i>	<i>Number of courses relevant to sustainable development</i>	<i>CSR as a separate lecture topic</i>	<i>CSR mentioned non-systematically</i>	<i>Teaching form</i>				
					Lecture	Discussion	Guest speaker	Report	Field research
1	8	3	integrated in company culture topic		✓
2	10	2	1/2 lecture		✓	✓	.	✓	.
3	10	1							
4	2	1	covered within marketing		✓	✓	.	✓	✓
5	1	0		✓			✓		
6	2	0		✓		✓	✓		
7	1	0		.					
8	1	0							

Table 2: Overview of teachers' attitude to CSR

At the Department of Tourism, there are 8 permanent teachers, out of which 3 are also guarantors of 5 courses that cover the topic of CSR or sustainable development. Another 3 teachers do not cover CSR in their courses as a part of the syllabus, however, they sometimes bring up CSR issues in discussions relevant to other topics.

A positive finding is the presence of an individual course for the topic Sustainable Development at both bachelor and master study level. Bachelor students take up a mandatory course called “Sustainable regional development and environmental aspects”, master students may take up an optional course called “Sustainable tourism development”. In these courses, students encounter the institutional perspective and general principles of sustainable tourism development from the point of view of tourist regions/destinations. The business point of view is covered very briefly as a subtopic of company culture.

Different teaching forms are used in the course of CSR education, the most frequently used ones are lectures, discussions, workshops or individual reports covering CSR topics. Field research concerning CSR topics is carried out within the course of Tourism Marketing.

CSR Topic Coverage in the Bachelor Study Programme

Out of a total of 18 subjects, CSR topics are relevant in 7 subjects, however, only 3 of them actually cover CSR; these 3 subjects are compulsory. Out of the total of 312 course hours divided among the 7 relevant subjects, 5 are dedicated to CSR (which is 3 hours more than stated in the syllabus), altogether these add up to 1,60 % of all course hours in the 7 relevant subjects.

CSR Topic Coverage in the Master Study Programme

Out of a total of 17 subjects, CSR topics are relevant in 6 subjects, however, only 2 of them actually cover CSR; both subjects are optional. Out of the total of 286 course hours divided among the 6 relevant subjects, 4 are dedicated to CSR (which is fully in accordance with the syllabus), altogether these add up to 1,40 % of all course hours in the 6 relevant subjects.

4. RESEARCH AMONG GRADUATES

4.1. CSR in the Study Process

The first question targets the overall evaluation of CSR knowledge. The average evaluation of all answers is 2,65 and shows that students evaluate their knowledge to be rather poor. There are two dominant answers: 2 – I have a knowledge of the CSR topic, however not in its complexity and 3 – I have an overall awareness of CSR. Each answer got 36,6 %.

The organization of the study at the University of Economics, Prague consists of a common base given by the school and the specialized block given by the specialization. Therefore, the source of knowledge must be differentiated. The question is how the evaluation of the knowledge relates to the study in the Tourism department and how to the rest of the study. The first chart represents the relationship between CSR knowledge evaluation and the effect of the Tourism studies on this knowledge.

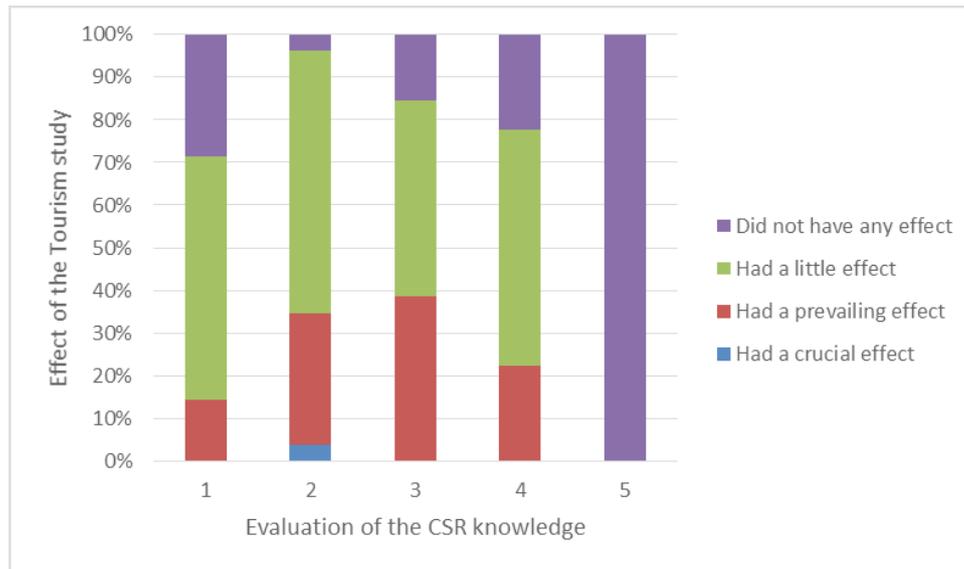


Figure 1: Relationship between CSR knowledge evaluation and effect of Tourism study

There is a weak linkage between knowledge evaluation and Tourism study. Only 14% of graduates evaluating their knowledge 1 and 2 perceive effect of Tourism study as crucial or prevailing.

More significant is the linkage between the knowledge evaluation and the rest of the study at the University of Economics Prague as shown in the second graph. 26% of the graduates evaluate their knowledge as 1 or 2 and describe the effect of their study at the university as crucial or prevailing. The graph below clearly shows that the better the knowledge the bigger effect of the study.

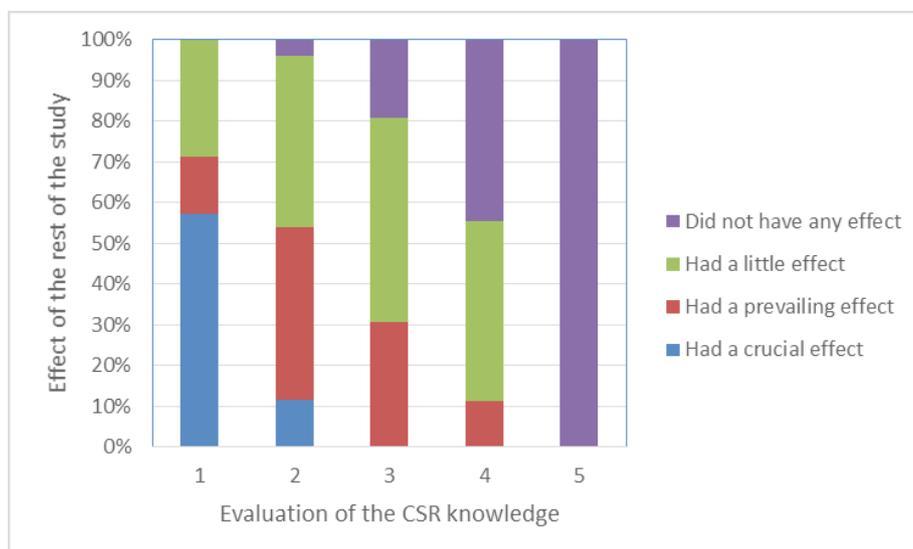


Figure 2: Relationship between CSR knowledge evaluation and effect of the rest of the study

From these two charts we can make a conclusion, that the study programme Tourism lacks focus on the CSR topic and if the graduates have knowledge relevant to CSR, it is thanks to other subjects. Consistent with this conclusion is the answer to the question: “How do you perceive the presence of CSR issues in the Tourism programme?” 70,8% of respondents answered “insufficient”.

The aim of the study is not only to transfer knowledge to the students, but also to prepare them for their professional life. Are the graduates prepared to implement CSR principles into their work? Most of them (56.9%) claim that they lack the knowledge, 42,3% think that the school prepared them only very little or not at all. The positive result of the study is that 15,3% of graduates are convinced that CSR is an important part of the managerial praxis and other 50% are rather convinced that it is important.

How important is the influence of the school? The graduates evaluated the importance of five factors. The results are presented in the following table.

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Average influence</i>	<i>Scatter</i>
Personal experience from practice in the field	2,41	1,62
School	2,54	1,14
Professional representatives	2,62	1,33
Family	3,23	2,1
Others	3,5	1,85

Table 3: The influence of the selected factors on the attitude to CSR

We can see a high impact of the school and a high unity in evaluating this factor as well. This research confirms the importance of education and better integration of CSR into teaching. As there are three important factors, the teachers should think about how to use them to increase the awareness of CSR among students. From the frequency point of view the most crucial factor is personal experience from the practice in the field. 43 respondents marked this factor with importance 1 or 2. Therefore, school should carefully choose the companies for internships and recommend the companies for part-time jobs during studying, if possible. The second most important factor are professional representatives, their behaviour and attitude (42 respondents marked this factor with importance 1 or 2). During the study students have many possibilities to meet interesting personalities from hotel management, travel agencies and destinations, it is the responsibility of each teacher to invite the socially responsible ones.

Evaluation of the family influence is very interesting, here the authors expected a considerable influence, however, the results showed the opposite. The high scope of family influence indicates large differences among individual graduates.

The graduates see best results in increasing the knowledge and competence in the field of economical responsibility and equity, however, the results are very similar. The results are shown in the following Table 4.

<i>Field</i>	<i>Average score</i>	<i>Number of answers 1 and 2</i>
Economical responsibility and equity	2,64	12 x
Environmental responsibility	2,90	10 x
Social responsibility	2,95	8 x

Table 4: Evaluating the increase of the knowledge and competence in the particular fields of CSR

To increase the awareness and knowledge about CSR, it is important to bring up the topic in the right form. There are two questions regarding the improvement of teaching. The results re-

garding the teaching form are very clear. The most preferred forms are projects and excursions (site inspection) both with 73.6%, followed by discussions with experts (69.4%). As this was a multiple-choice question, the sum is not 100%.

The respondents were asked if it is suitable to teach the topic as a separate subject – compulsory or optional, or as a part of other subjects (e.g. implementation of CSR in conditions of travel agencies, hotels etc.). Only 11.1 % of respondents see the importance of the topic to be so crucial that they recommend teaching the topic as a separate compulsory subject. 26.4% recommend teaching it as separate subject, however, as an optional course only. 62.5% respondents recommend teaching CSR as a part of another subject. This would lead to changes in the subject's content, however, this is probably the easiest way how to implement the topic in the curriculum.

4.2. Graduates and their Attitude to CSR

The respondents were asked how much they agree with the following statements: Implementation of the principles of CSR is very important for the future position of the company in the market. / The immediate benefit for the company is a necessary condition for the CSR implementation. / Social responsibility should be a matter of course for a successful company regardless immediate cost.

The results show that the graduates perceive CSR as an important matter, not necessarily conditioned with benefits or the profit. Only 16.6% of respondents agree or strongly agree that CSR implementation should be conditioned by profit. However, the respondents slightly preferred the answer connected with the market position (agree or strongly agree 48.6%, resp. 45.8%).

The following chart shows the suitability of CSR for different goals according to respondent's opinion. It can be seen that the commercial goals are considered as less suitable.

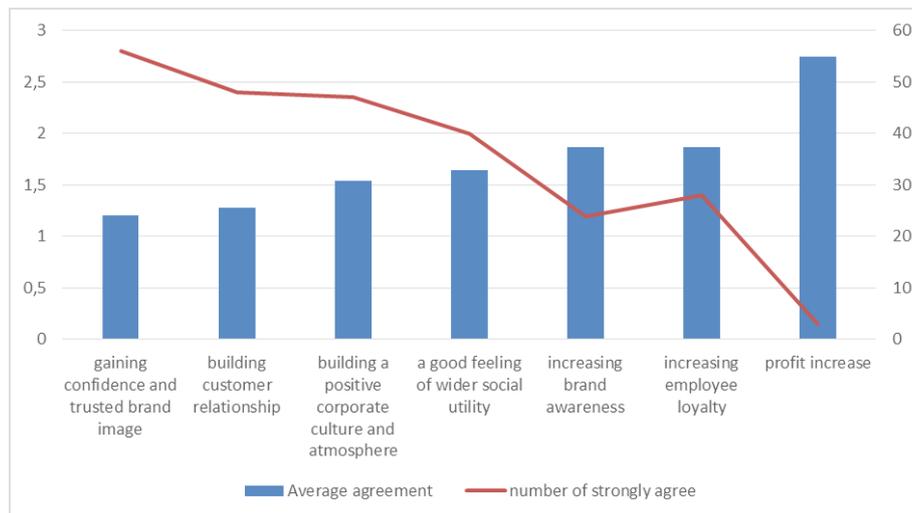


Figure 3: The suitability of CSR for different goals according to respondent's opinion (1 – I strongly agree, 5 – strongly disagree)

Respondents see Gaining confidence and trusted brand image as the most appropriate goal for CSR. This goal got the highest number of "Strongly agree" answers as well. The less appropriate goals are increasing brand awareness, increasing employee loyalty and profit increase with a large distance.

How would the graduates behave after getting a job? 88.9% of graduates would accept the practice in the company but will try to influence the CSR implementation. Only 9.1% of them will actively boost the CSR implementation. The fact that only 1.4% of them expect they will not engage in CSR implementation at all, which can be seen as a positive result.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Students' Perception and Topic Presence in the Courses

The first assumption was confirmed to be right. The CSR topic is considered important by both teachers and students and both groups find the current extent of CSR coverage in the programme insufficient. The topic is not presented with the appropriate emphasis; therefore, it is necessary to change the approach. The similar findings can be seen in the analysis of [12], who analyzed the MBA programs and found statements supporting the assumption, that the CSR is not present in the necessary extent and form. A very important issue is to prevent repetition in CSR coverage in different courses. Therefore, the topic can be divided into the institutional perspective (sustainability), business perspective (CSR) and CSR as a part of holistic marketing and its use in communication. It is very positive that only 1,4% of students have no or very little knowledge of the CSR topic, which is a big progress in comparison to 27% in the study mentioned by Adamek in [10].

The second assumption was confirmed. The students see CSR as an important part of the business, they don't expect immediate profit, however, they see CSR as an important condition for a long-term success.

As the tourism field is very specific, one of the study programme goals is that the graduates should not have knowledge only of the general aspects of CSR, but they should be also able to apply them to practical day-to-day policies in tourism businesses even under specific conditions. This includes the analysis of impact on the company and potential benefits. Within the conceptual framework of the study programme, it is important to have a holistic approach to strengthening the teaching of CSR principles and to cover all the fields and implementation issues.

5.2. Suggested Action Points to Strengthen CSR Coverage in Tourism Study Programmes

It is desirable to increase CSR coverage as a part of specialized tourism subjects. The aim is to make the graduates familiar with the basic principles of CSR and to teach them how to apply an appropriate CSR strategy in tourism businesses. This means being able to judge the situation, suggest and implement an adequate CSR strategy, and to assess its impact on the company as well as the society.

Specific measures to implement based on previous findings are planned to take place over the period of 3 years: 1) Lecturers of courses will be asked to review and adjust their syllabi and include the topic of CSR and its good practices. 2) Department of Tourism at the University of Economics signed a Memorandum of cooperation with the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco - Life Beyond Tourism. This step will support our mutual cooperation in the field of cultural heritage, and will provide the opportunity to carry out activities in the field of enhancement of heritage through "travel for values" with the emotional involvement of the traveller and local community.

In line with the Foundation's project "Vo per Botteghe" we will create a complex case study on the topic of CSR. 3) Considering that the most effective educational form is own experience, we intend to implement a separate CSR project in the department with active student involvement.

Students of both bachelor and master programmes should be introduced to the topics of CSR also in the future. Courses dealing with sustainable development from the institutional perspective on sustainable development, standardization, and certification should in addition present the business perspective – principles and benefits of CSR from the managerial point of view. Suitable teaching forms for that partial topics are lectures, workshops and self-study methods.

Courses where Business management – management of travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, MICE and event management are taught, should implement also the topic of CSR with emphasis on the best practices in the form of excursions, guest speakers. Suitable teaching forms are lectures, introduction of best practices, discussions with industry experts from the Czech Republic as well as from abroad with experience in CSR implementation, examples from their business experience, excursions, individual work in the field, reports and presentations.

6. CONCLUSION

Despite the importance of the topic, the results of the analysis showed big gaps in the Tourism curriculum. The research among graduates confirmed the lack of CSR issues covered in the education. The curriculum contains only 1.6% of lessons referring to CSR in the bachelor's degree and 1.4% in the master's degree. There are also subjects where CSR is relevant, but is not included at all. Even the students see the coverage of the topic in their education as insufficient. According to students' opinion, the most effective way of teaching the topic is to implement it as a part of other subjects and the best forms are: individual projects, excursions and guest speakers. This is consistent with the factors that influence their approach to CSR – own experience, school and professional representatives. According to graduates' opinion the CSR is very suitable for (1) gaining confidence and trusted brand image and (2) building customer relationship. The implementation of CSR principles is mostly influenced by the personal approach of the owner or manager.

According to the research results several measures were proposed. A very important issue is to prevent repetition and overlapping between various courses. Therefore, the topic should be divided into the institutional perspective (sustainability), business perspective (CSR) and CSR as a part of holistic marketing and its use in communication. Guest speakers, excursions and projects were chosen as the most appropriate form.

The research touched several topics but brings only limited answers. One of the topics is the in-depth analysis of the attitude of students and graduates to the individual components and activities of CSR. Also, the comparison of the generation Y and X could be interesting, as their attitudes and priorities are formed by different influences. From the educational point of view the research of effectiveness of the particular teaching methods in changing and influencing the attitude would be helpful in creating education that is not only interesting but also effective.

As the Tourism is growing very fast in the last years, social responsibility is getting more and more attention. Over-tourism and loss of authenticity is a reality in many places and the economic and social balance is being sought. In the future, corporate social responsibility can be a substantial advantage in the market. Professionals should be ready and able to deal with the issue.

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