

# **INFLUENCE OF THE GENDER OF THE PROJECT MANAGERS ON THE APPLICATION OF CSR STANDARDS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT OF SLOVAK COMPANIES**

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## **Abstract**

The article focuses on the issue of the influence of gender in the application of CSR to project management in Slovak companies. This specific research focused on research in small, medium and large enterprises in the Slovak Republic, from the perspective of a project manager established in the company. An employee who performs quality work at work also expects, in addition to his salary, also the benefits that the employer can provide through CSR projects. This is also a very important social aspect of the company's behaviour towards its employees. The implementation of CSR elements in project management has appeared in recent years as one of the important areas within CSR. The authors of the paper point out and at the same time confirm the importance and influence of the gender of the project manager on the application of CSR standards in project management. The study, which is the basis of the research in the paper, consists of a quantitative and qualitative research of 544 selected small, medium and large enterprises in the Slovak Republic focused on a questionnaire survey. The data obtained from the survey were processed by advanced statistical methods. A chi-square test was used to verify respondents' answers to individual questions. Critical analysis serves to identify specific factors of application of the CSR concept in companies from the aspect of the project manager's gender. The paper provides empirical evidence on how gender affects the application of CSR in project management. Gender equality is a problem in part in modern society on management. Despite the fact that only 25% of the monitored project managers were women, the implementation of CSR in project management does not show large differences in the answers always and mostly, but in the answers it is often 13% more for women. We can state that the influence of gender in the implementation of CSR in project management is manifested in Slovak companies. This paper contains a list of recommendations for Slovak small, medium and large enterprises based on best practices abroad, mainly with the aim of increasing knowledge and involvement of social issues in project management of enterprises.

**Key words:** project management standards, CSR, project manager, gender, project

## **Introduction**

Fortunately, the time when the prevailing opinion in the company that the only responsibility of companies towards their stakeholders is financial responsibility in the form of maximizing value is long gone. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is far from being a new idea, and today it has become the rule that companies routinely integrate social and environmental aspects into their strategies (Metzker, 2020). Today, we take it for granted that top management deals with social responsibility. But you have to realize that it's not just about him. Project managers are helpful in achieving the strategic goals of the organization by achieving through projects the individual steps leading to their implementation. And it is thanks to this aspect that their role becomes key in corporate social responsibility. Due to the fact that the project manager is well acquainted with the day-to-day operation of the company, he is able to perceive and analyze socially relevant problems and situations that often may not be obvious to top management. For example, an experienced project manager can use the area of the risk assessment and mitigation to identify social risks in the implementation of projects that would otherwise go unnoticed. And it is here, for example, that we can look for differences between the perception of such risks by male or female project managers. Our reasoning is based on the fact that, according to research, women have a higher level of emotional intelligence than men (Hansenne, 2012) and therefore it is necessary to support the creation of places for women project managers, of whom there are still significantly fewer in the field of project management.

## **1 Project management and CSR**

Today, which poses new and new challenges to us, projects are already recognized as a necessary tool in the sustainable development of companies and society as a whole due to their key role. In his work, Silvius (2017) noted that the latest project management standards "explicitly refer to sustainability as a perspective that should be taken into account in project management and administration".

Project managers can influence their companies and organizations towards socially responsible behaviour not only in the area of the risk management and minimization, as we wrote above, but also in other areas, such as human rights, employee rights, environmental protection and supplier relations. Projects that involve partnerships with the local community can create lasting relationships of respect, goodwill and mutual benefit. However, for this to work, it is overwhelmingly important to understand the needs of the local community through

regular contact and dialogue, so that society becomes an integral part of social life. [5].

The role of the project manager in sustainable business management is undeniable and we can rely on the work of Hwang and Ng (2013), who concluded in their research that "Today's project manager not only performs traditional project management roles, but also manages the project as efficiently as possible. in terms of sustainability. " This key role of the project manager is also recognized in his work by Goedknecht (2013), who concluded that the project manager has a "big" influence on the practical application of sustainability principles.

The way in which corporate social responsibility is linked, which is linked to equality between women and men, is receiving increasing attention from all stakeholders, as commitments aimed at achieving equal opportunities for women are generally a top priority today. However, the fact is that women remain under-represented not only at the highest level in companies, but of course also in project managers. At the same time, there is a lack of sufficient knowledge of the many consequences of this unbalanced situation. Gender issues have led to increasing initiatives in CSR programs [Grosser, K 2019].

The issue of fewer women employed as project managers is also related to some significant application of stereotypes, which are barriers to access to women and the creation of barriers to their subsequent development (Sharp et al., 2012; Hari, 2016). Women are often perceived primarily as women, not as professional project managers (Faulkner, 2009; Hatmaker, 2013), when in the main results it is mostly probably, that they obtain lower salary than men (Belgorodskiy et al., 2012; Shen, 2016; Evropská komise, 2018).

## **2 Methodology**

The case study included in the paper is primarily composed of quantitative and qualitative research of 544 selected small, medium, and large enterprises in the Slovak Republic, which focused on the questionnaire survey. The data obtained by the research team from the survey were processed by advanced statistical methods. The chi-square test was used to verify the answers of individual respondents to individual questions. The respondents of the questionnaire survey were selected project managers in the surveyed companies. At the same time, a critical analysis was performed, which serves to identify specific factors in the application of the CSR concept to project management in companies, from the perspective of the examined gender of the project manager. We used the SAS statistical program to process the obtained data. The non-parametric method was the Kruskal-Wallis test, which is a non-parametric equivalent of one-way analysis of variance and this allows to test the hypothesis H0

that the  $k$  ( $k \geq 3$ ) independent sets come from the same distribution. This is a direct generalization of the Wilcoxon test with two selections for sets of independent selection ( $k \geq 3$ ) (Markechová, Stehlíková, 2011).

We interpret the interpretation of the individual results as follows: If the P-value of the Kruskal-Wallis test is higher than 0.05, we do not reject the null hypothesis; otherwise, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The influence of the investigated quality factor on the explained variable is statistically significant (Markechová, Stehlíková, 2011). The statistical software SAS 9.3, in which we performed the calculations, also offers the calculation of the so-called Spearman coefficient. P-value, which we compare with 0.05. If the value of P is higher than 0.05, we do not reject the null hypothesis, the dependence between the examined variables is not statistically significant. Conversely, if the value of P is less than or equal to 0.05, we accept the alternative hypothesis, the dependence between the variables is statistically provable. The mosaic graphs and squares X that we tested in program R. The questionnaire consisted of 5 identification questions about the company and four groups of questions that were focused on project management, project implementation, education and training of project managers, application of CSR in project management and to identification questions about the survey respondents, ie the project managers of the surveyed companies. The questionnaire was distributed via an online form in Google forms between September 2019 and August 2020. Individual project managers were contacted based on contact details from databases and confirmed basic information about the company that participated in the survey, which means that the survey was not anonymous but convincing. and duplication of the companies surveyed was eliminated. In terms of enterprise size, the research team was able to obtain answers from small enterprises, namely 56%, medium-sized enterprises were 24% and large enterprises accounted for 20%. A very important variable in the sample of surveyed enterprises was the sector of the economy in which the surveyed enterprise operates mainly. Most, 20.6% of companies were from the public sector and the second-largest group was industrial manufacturing companies, 19.1%. Gender equality is a problem in a part of modern society on management. Despite the fact, that only 25% of the monitored project managers were women (Tab. 1).

**Tab. 1: Gender of project manager in the researched companies**

Gender	Number	%
Men	407	74.8%
Women	137	25.2%
Together	544	100.0%

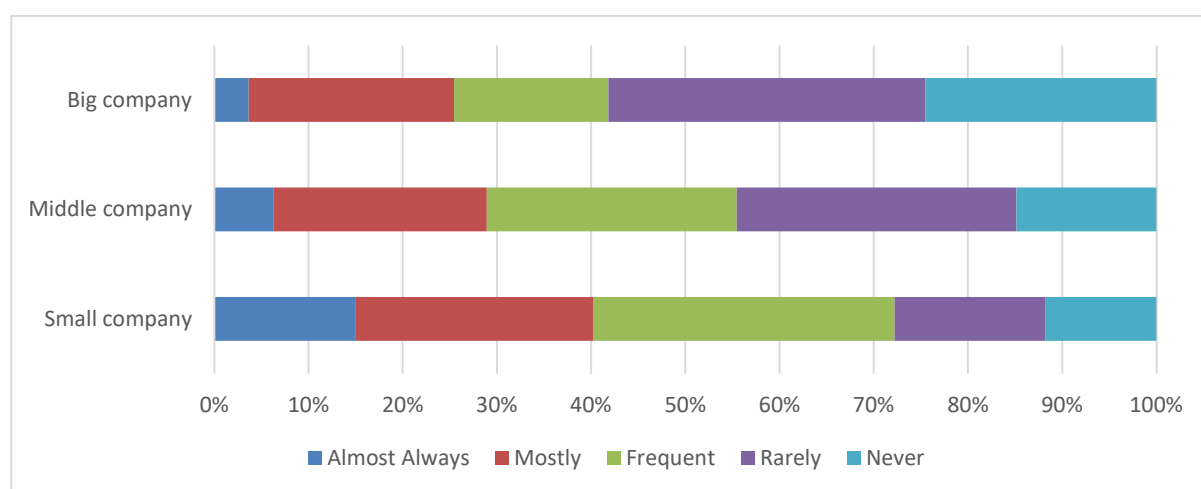
Source: own research

The aim of the questionnaire survey was to provide a sample of opinions of project managers of companies from the whole territory of Slovakia, therefore the third identifying feature was the region, according to the territorial division of the republic. As the highest concentration of enterprises is in the Bratislava Region, this was also reflected in the sample obtained, 37.1%, followed by enterprises from the Banská Bystrica Region, 19.5%, and the Nitra Region 13.6%. A very important observed 4th variable was the annual turnover of the company. The structure of the monitored enterprises was recorded as follows: enterprises with a turnover of up to 2 mil. 53.3%), turnover 3 - 10 mil. 20.2%), turnover 11 - 50 mil. € (12.9%), turnover 51 - 200 mil. € (7.4%) and companies with a turnover of more than 200 mil. € (6.3%).

### 3 Results

The paper provides empirical evidence on how companies apply CSR implementation to project management. As the research was extensive, we also found out how selected local companies apply the social aspects of CSR to employees and employees and their families in the concept of their own project management, as well as how companies cope with social problems. problems in the region and social problems in society.

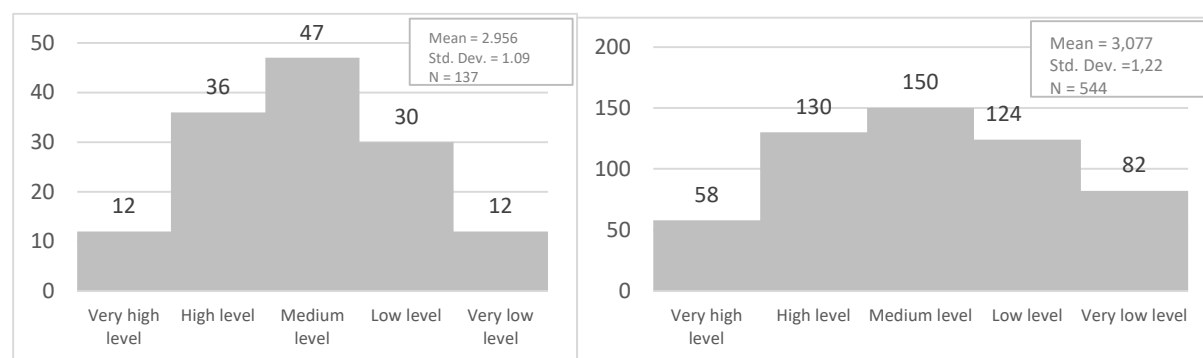
**Fig. 1: Application of the CSR concept to the project management**



Source: own research

Figure 1 documents the results of applying CSR to project management of companies in terms of size. It is very important that up to 15% of the small enterprises in the sample survey almost always try to apply this, and in the answer mostly the ratio is as follows: up to 25% of small, 23% of medium and 22% of large enterprises surveyed. As in this paper we focus primarily on the gender relationship of the project manager in the issues of applying CSR to project management, we have paid significant attention to this variable. 52% of the surveyed companies are involved in project management projects with an average value of more than EUR 20,000. It could be said that in terms of turnover and size of projects, there is some scope for the application of CSR in the management and marketing of the company. The project managers of the surveyed companies, regardless of gender, stated that in terms of monitoring, only 53% of companies perceive the need to implement CSR in project management from a social point of view. In small businesses, people and therefore project managers are more connected to the environment in which they operate due to fewer employees and family and friendly ties. There are personal ties in these companies, which is logically reflected in selected forms of CSR in marketing management and its project management.

**Fig. 2: Application of the CSR concept to the project management/Woman/Together**

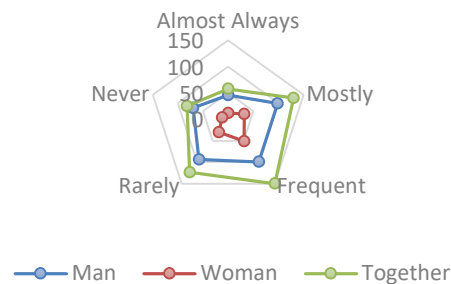


Source: own research

Figure 2 also presents the results of the application of individual forms of CSR in the project management of the company. Regardless of all variables, companies on average have the greatest tendency to focus on the application of CSR at the medium level, a total of 27%, but if we look at the gender of the woman, ie. Project managers of the female sex, there this level of the medium jumps to 34% in the monitored companies. The predominant frequent answer to

question 34.2 in the area of applying CSR to project management is also documented in Figure 3.

**Fig. 3: Application of the CSR concept to project management from gender point of view**



Source: own research

Questionnaire response test results (ot128) 34.2 of the questionnaire, application of CSR to project management of companies from the point of view of gender, value Test Statistics Value X-squared = 26.42, df = NA, value p = 0.0254, means that the answer is significant in relation to the gender of the project manager. We can state that this is where the female element, the higher emotional quotient of female project managers and thus the relationship to employees and their families as part of CSR in project management and thus oriented CSR projects of the company. Women are wives, mothers, and there is a stronger presumption of emotional focus in CSR, where it is the social relationship with employees and their families that creates an endless space for the implementation of CSR projects. As the research also focused on various CSR issues in relation to the company to employees and their family members, ie this form of CSR in the company, there is also a difference in relation to the company's annual turnover. X-square = 33 495, df = NA, p value = 0.0053, statistical value of the test indicates that the answer is also significant in terms of company turnover. Because we considered the gender of the project manager in this paper to be an important determinant of deciding on the application of CSR to the project management of companies, we decided to use the non-parametric method of the Kruskal-Wallis test.

In the case of monitoring and application of CSR to project management, there are significant differences between the turnover of companies. The impact of turnover has been demonstrated in the way companies follow societal challenges across society. There was also a difference in the influence of gender on decision-making between industries, and the following, such as 1 Telecommunications / Information Technology and 3 Retail / Consumer Goods and 2 Media / Entertainment, almost always and mostly had a significant influence of the female factor on CSR in their responses.

## Conclusion

Despite the fact in today's society, gender equality is being discussed more and more, not only at the national level, but this issue is also increasingly discussed at the level of the European Commission. Within the framework of gender equality, several opinions emerge, but, as mentioned above, also on the basis of the opinions of several authors, women are characterized by higher emotional intelligence and are more sensitive to solving problems that are associated with ethical, environmental and social issues. problems in the company, and society as a whole. We can state that gender equality is partly a problem in a modern company in the field of management and, also in the field of project management. Despite the fact that only 25% of the monitored project managers were women, the implementation of CSR in project management does not show large differences in the answers always and mostly, but in the answer it is often 13% more for women. This finding is a very interesting fact and so we can state that the influence of gender in the implementation of CSR in project management is manifested in Slovak companies, which were interviewed in the research on project management. Based on the above and also on the findings of a questionnaire survey and monitored interviews in Slovak companies, we recommend that women managers be implemented in project management in companies, so that in the surveyed companies more emphasis is placed on training project managers in CSR and its implementation. However, if we go back to the beginning, already in the recruitment and selection of employees for the position of project managers in companies, it would be necessary to discard all prejudices from the past and give a chance to women project managers.

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