

THE IMPACT OF THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

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Purpose: The concept of sustainable development as well as corporate social responsibility require the company to be more active in the social and ecological areas, which translates into increased effort and financial outlays. However, they contribute not only to the improvement of the company's image among stakeholders and employees, but also to a real improvement in occupational health and safety conditions.

The article was created in order to identify the possibilities and barriers to the implementation of the concept of sustainable development and CSR in the company, based on the applicable standards, experiences and psychosocial conditions.

Design/methodology/approach: In order to determine the impact of the concept of sustainable development and CSR on occupational health and safety, the article shows the relationship between selected aspects of occupational health and safety and the strategy of sustainable development and CSR. The benefits of the actions taken in this area were defined as well as additional possibilities resulting from their implementation were discussed.

Findings: The concept of sustainable development and CSR, despite the fact that they are becoming more and more popular, do not yet play a significant role in company management. The reasons should be sought in the lack of a full understanding of these ideas as well as fear of changes and costs that may result from them.

Originality/value: The article draws attention to the necessity of successive changes in the conduct of business activities aimed at realizing the mutual correlation between the success of the company and occupational health and safety. These changes may affect the determination of new opportunities and directions of development.

Keywords: occupational health and safety, safety, occupational health, health and safety service, sustainable development.

Document Category: Viewpoint, Technical Article.

1. Introduction

The activity of enterprises is closely related to the conditions of nature. The basic definition in ecology is the concept of an ecosystem that should be protected against the negative effects of the company's impact in order to maintain its balance. The concepts of the concept of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility are often used synonymously, however, they have slightly different values and complement each other. The difference between sustainable development and CSR is based on the vision and its recipient. There are many definitions of corporate social responsibility in the literature on the subject, but there is no one universal one (Castka, 2004, p. 216). externally, which is why it is often perceived as good PR or philanthropic activity. CSR focuses on activities in line with market expectations based on organizational order, positive local impact, and respect for human rights.

On the other hand, the concept of sustainable development assumes that all units involved in the company's activities are the recipient of this idea and it is focused more closely on internal activities, which, as a consequence, strengthens the company's brand on the market and causes a higher valuation of the business entity. The concept of sustainable development, which was specified in 1987, assumed that the world has the possibility of simultaneous economic growth and maintaining the current environmental conditions. The concept of sustainable development extends the economic activity of the company with social, environmental and ethical goals, assuming that only the implementation of all of them can ensure the survival of humanity in the future (Papuziński, 2005, pp. 275-290). Currently, we can observe an increase in the role of the concept of sustainable development and CSR as solutions that, properly implemented in a company, can lead to an increase in its competitiveness among conscious recipients, as well as change the nature of the business to a more environmentally friendly one. The ideas of sustainable development and CSR more and more often appear in enterprises as an integral part of their activities, unfortunately mainly in international corporations (Amarlic, Hauser, 2006, pp. 27-38). Taking into account the impact of business decisions on the environment, after passing the stage of being just fashion and grandiose slogans, is now becoming a necessity that companies have to face. A company that takes steps to introduce sustainable development and corporate social responsibility becomes more competitive, but above all, it is able to attract and retain a larger group of not only customers but, above all, employees who are necessary for this process (Kožuch, 2007, p. 268).

Conducting business in accordance with ethical values was caused in the last century by social changes, the main factors of which were (Walczak-Duraj, 2002, pp. 237-240):

- progressing globalization that required social control,
- searching for the ethical foundations of capitalism,
- public opinion pushing the need to be interested in the effects of business activities,
- frequent changes in legal regulations in the field of conducting business activity,

- degeneration of the image of enterprises in the eyes of the public,
- promoting the idea of economic freedom as a way to push through ethical business activity.

Nevertheless, enterprises operating in a free market economy still base their operations on economic results, not ecological or social ones (Zieliński, 2014, pp. 650-660). Therefore, the implementation of these concepts in enterprises is very time-consuming and complicated. In individual industries, these tasks are additionally hindered by the specific conditions of the work process.

Therefore, this article considers corporate social responsibility and the concept of sustainable development as a challenge for enterprises and shows the impact they have on occupational health and safety.

In most of the key areas of sustainable development and CSR, it is possible to identify difficulties and actions addressed to the main group of stakeholders, i.e. employees, and aimed at their safety and health protection. On the basis of general considerations, the key difficulties and activities were identified and how they affect occupational health and safety in enterprises.

2. Sustainable development and CSR in the literature on the subject

The concept of sustainable development is not a newly created creation, but it fits into the landscape of enterprises in a new way. This concept originated at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s and was developed in Agenda 21 at the Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro in 1992, where 27 Principles of Sustainable Development were defined. This document was signed by the ministers of most countries and aimed at establishing new forms of cooperation between states, social groups and nations, based on changes beneficial to all, which will protect the integrity of the global environment and development system.

The concept of sustainable development evolves along with the emerging challenges posed by the current civilization and technological progress, but it is also influenced by the successes and failures related to the implementation of the adopted 27 points of Agenda 21. In the 21st century, sustainable development is not only systematically developed, but also and promoted, among others, by UNESCO or the United Nations. The contemporary ideology of sustainable development is defined by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals announced by the United Nations in 2015 (UN General Assembly Resolution, 2015). These goals are:

1. End poverty in all its forms worldwide.
2. End hunger, achieve food security, ensure better nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure that all people, regardless of age, live healthy lives and strive for well-being.
4. Ensure high-quality, inclusive education for all and promote lifelong learning.

5. Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls.
6. Ensure access to water and adequate sanitation for all people through sustainable management of water resources.
7. Provide all people with access to stable, sustainable and modern energy sources at an affordable price.
8. Promote an inclusive, sustainable model of economic growth and full, productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Build a durable infrastructure, resilient to the effects of disasters, promote a sustainable, inclusive model of economic development and support innovation.
10. Reduce development inequalities between and within countries.
11. Create safe, sustainable, disaster-resilient cities and human settlements.
12. Develop sustainable models of consumption and production.
13. Take urgent action to stop climate change and counteract its effects.
14. Ensure the protection of oceans and seas and the sustainable use of their resources.
15. Protect and restore terrestrial ecosystems and promote sustainable use and management of forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peaceful, inclusive, sustainable models of human development, provide all people with equal opportunities and fair treatment and access to justice; build effective, accountable institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen the tools to implement and rebuild the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Noteworthy is the orientation of the individual goals adopted by the UN, which indicate the multidisciplinary nature of the concept of sustainable development and the need to undertake multi-area research in this area (Kuzior, 2014).

These assumptions can be treated as very ethical and noble ideas, however, which will be difficult to translate into practice. This may be evidenced by the lack of concrete achievements in their implementation so far. The first assessments of progress in achieving these goals were made in 2017 and showed that the degree of their implementation is not satisfactory due to the deepening inequalities in the social dimension and insufficient climate action (SDG Index and Dashboard Report, 2017). This assessment is an important voice in the discussion on how sustainable development is still an up-to-date and sustainable development paradigm, as well as determining where and what barriers arise that prevent the full implementation of this idea at the global, but above all, local level. The idea of social equality, the need to combat broadly understood social pathology and the need to protect ecosystems were undoubtedly the basis of this concept, but the social debate on the practical aspects of its implementation is important (Ciążela, 2021, pp. 41- 56).

Sustainable development has become an opportunity for the world to ensure a better future (Kuzior, 2007, pp. 69-72), however, specific actions are necessary to make it happen.

The concept of sustainable development at the micro level began to take root in the awareness of enterprises as well as institutions and business entities through the tool, which is corporate social responsibility, in short called CSR or Corporate Social Responsibility. According to its assumptions, the realization of profits, the increase in the value of the company and its survival in the future are to depend on the balance of social, economic and ecological goals (Wolniak, 2016, pp. 115-123). The origins of the idea of corporate social responsibility can be found in antiquity, where economic activity did not have such a dimension as today, but even then philosophers, including Aristotle, condemned the so-called "the art of getting money" and separated it from the "art of managing". Sticking to the philosophical assumptions, it was assumed that the consequence of human freedom is the need to be responsible for one's actions (Filek, 2002). The beginnings of the currently known idea of corporate social responsibility can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century, and its pioneers were entrepreneurs - philanthropists such as John Patterson or John Rockefeller. The breakthrough period for the idea of corporate social responsibility was the 1950s, when the first publication was published that comprehensively covered corporate social responsibility, entitled "Social Responsibilities of the Businessman" by R. Bowen (Visser, 2008, pp. 473-479). The first definition of CSR was introduced in the 1970s by Archie Carroll, who took into account legal, ethical, economic and philanthropic responsibilities, on the basis of which the CSR pyramid was created (Carroll, 1991, p. 42).



Figure 1. CSR pyramid according to A. Carroll.

Source: Carroll, 1991.

At the same time, the first code of corporate social responsibility was published under the title "The Sullivan Principles" (Bernatt, 2009, p. 23). In the 21st century, there was a very strong development of the idea of social responsibility and with it the emergence of new standards and codes, whose authors are leading experts and practitioners and contain key definitions for a wide range of recipients in the field of CSR (Visser, 2012).

Unfortunately, most often in the case of small enterprises and individual entities, activities for corporate social responsibility focus mostly on improving the image or feigning a pro-social and pro-ecological attitude by promoting common activities for local communities and employees, which does not bring any added value (Kuzior, Knosala, 2015, pp. 119-129). Among the causes of problems with the implementation of these concepts in enterprises, the focus on the economic aspect and the lack of established ethical values should be indicated. Until recently, the fault for these failures was also seen in the lack of standards and specific measures that would enable the scope of implementation or the assessment of its level. In connection with the above, an international template was developed containing guidelines for reporting issues related to sustainable development, i.e. the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). According to the recommendations, the report should consist of two parts, where the first part is general and contains the characteristics of the entity, and the second part includes the management approach and indicators. The report defines the impact of the conducted activity on issues related to sustainable development and presents numerical indicators that are to allow the assessment and comparison of the effects in economic, environmental and social terms. In addition, social aspects have been divided into subcategories that allow the separation of individual activities in the field of:

- employment practices,
- human rights,
- society,
- product liability.

This division results from the diversity of the company's stakeholders, who are not only employees and customers, but also representatives of local communities (Caputa, 2015, p. 44).

Nevertheless, in order to determine the scope of CSR objectives implementation, industry and universal standards should be formulated, which may raise doubts as to the reliability, cost and time-consuming nature of the collected data necessary for parameterisation.

3. Occupational health and safety issues in key areas

The basic rules for ensuring the proper state of occupational health and safety and health protection are contained in the relevant legal regulations and they shape the OHS management system in the company. Corporate social responsibility assumes going beyond legal requirements by increasing investments in the field of environmental protection, human capital, and relations with contractors. An integral part of CSR and a social obligation of the company is to care for the health of employees and ensure safe working conditions (EU-OSHA, 2006, p. 7). Systemic occupational health and safety management includes primarily human, technical and financial resources and includes the company's objectives, its structure, procedures and responsibility (Sobociński, 2000, p. 342). The modern management style adopted in the company requires the inclusion of all aspects of activity, including shaping working conditions by assessing occupational risk, analyzing the work environment and taking decisive actions to reduce or even eliminate the existing risk related to the performance of individual tasks at work positions (Borysiewicz, Lisowska-Mieszkowska, Żurek 2001, p. 46). Occupational health and safety management can also be defined as specific aspects of the overall management adopted in the enterprise, which are closely related to the development and implementation of the occupational health and safety policy (Pietrzak, 2005, p. 7). Minimizing occupational risk to an economically justified level is the overriding objective of occupational health and safety management. Risk management should be one of the elements of the organization's strategy based on the analysis and prevention as well as control of the effectiveness of the implemented countermeasures. The concept of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility in the field of occupational health and safety were initiated with the introduction of system standards and guidelines in the form of e.g. OHSAS 18001, which was then replaced by ISO 45001, and is an international Occupational Health and Safety Management Standard. Implementation of the above standards in the company brings many benefits for the company, such as:

- the possibility of joining international tenders (many companies require their contractors and sub-suppliers to implement the above-mentioned standards),
- developing cooperation with current stakeholders,
- improving the health and well-being of employees in the workplace,
- strengthening the company's reputation,
- ensuring a safe and hygienic workplace, free of injuries and diseases,
- attracting and retaining skilled workers.

The basic purpose of the standards established in the field of occupational health and safety is to improve working conditions by systematizing activities for accident prevention or reducing hazards arising from the work process. As in other international quality or environmental management systems, the concept of continuous improvement applies. It is of course important

to comply with the statutory provisions of law and other established standards, however, an important aspect is monitoring and determining the effectiveness of the measures in force and adopted for use. The success of using safety management systems in an enterprise depends on the involvement of the management, health and safety services, and all employees at various levels of the organization.

Occupational health and safety is an important element of the sense of social responsibility, as employee safety is one of the components used to measure the company's overall progress in this area. These components include:

- health and safety of employees,
- a healthy product (not having a negative impact on the environment and users),
- compliance with applicable standards and working conditions,
- observance of human rights,
- employment equality in terms of accessibility and opportunities.

Occupational health and safety is considered one of the main elements of the company's ethics due to the inclusion of business values in the activities of corporate social responsibility. Other important elements of the company's ethics are environmental protection and work-life balance. Social responsibility in the company is based on the synergy between the three areas of economy, society and environment. These areas should be perceived in many dimensions, and an important aspect of achieving synergies will be the promotion of common values through:

- involving employees in decision-making processes,
- improvement of qualifications and development,
- introducing solutions not only required by law, which will improve the organization and culture of the workplace,
- development of human capital,
- defining and specifying the organizational order that will ensure transparency and ethicality of decisions made and the manner of their implementation,

A socially responsible enterprise is conducive to shaping its image as a reliable employer, increases the safety culture, which translates into increased employee satisfaction with the duties performed, identification of employees with the enterprise and, as a consequence, increases efficiency and generates additional profits (Olesiński, 2010, p. 7; Kuzior et al., 2022). Shaping sets of behaviors based on knowledge and creativity is of key importance for the success of the company because it is people who shape and develop the company's potential and create the company's brand (Amit, Zott, 2001, pp. 493-520). Over the last decade, the dimension of occupational health and safety care has changed significantly due to the introduction of modern technology, for example in the form of intelligent robots (Kuzior, 2017, pp. 31-38), however, the employee is still the most important element in the company. Negligence in the sphere of employee development, as well as lack of care for his health and

well-being lead to the degradation of this resource. Employee education in the company should be guided by the belief that it is worth investing in their development in order to bind them to the company for a long time, hence it should be well thought out, planned and, above all, consistently conducted. The basis for shaping the required level of competence in the field of occupational health and safety in the company is assigning the highest priority to the health and life of the employee. Training should be designed in relation to key health and safety issues, and take into account the specificity of work, individual predispositions of employees and emphasize the importance of occupational health and safety for the efficiency of the individual and organization. However, occupational health and safety should not only be limited to manufacturing enterprises. An important aspect is also to draw attention to the responsibility of management and employees for occupational health and safety and the social, environmental and economic consequences of ignoring OSH. The concept of comprehensive occupational health and safety management combines three areas of business activity:

1. technical safety, which is based on the safe operation of machines, devices and workstations, their protection and inspections,
2. systemic security based on procedures, instructions and reliable occupational risk assessment,
3. behavioral safety based on the observation of behavior and reinforcing safe behavior.

Occupational health and safety management systems can be used to implement the principles of social responsibility in employment practices or employment relationships through activities in the field of:

- eliminating violence at work,
- identification and elimination of psychosocial risks,
- identification of the employee's psychophysical conditions and the selection of appropriate preventive measures,
- minimizing stressful situations and determining ways to deal with them,
- organizing training targeted at disabled and older workers,
- maintaining a balance between private and professional life,
- promoting health and increasing the level of safety,
- identifying training needs and providing opportunities to improve qualifications.

Convincing employees to the adopted CSR strategy and its direction depends on many factors, the main one being the broadly understood fulfillment of employee rights. Focusing on purely financial aspects is not enough to meet the company's objectives in an increasingly demanding society. Therefore, broadly understood occupational health and safety is one of the most important aspects of social responsibility.

4. Conclusions

Contemporary challenges faced by enterprises indicate the need to develop the competences of the staff. Attention to aspects related to occupational health and safety is part of the corporate social responsibility, mainly in relation to internal stakeholders (Kuzior, 2016; Kuzior, Staszek, 2021, pp. 307-322). It is important to maintain cohesion between the company's business strategy and the development of employees' competences, which will allow it to gain an advantage over the competition. Proper management of occupational health and safety in an enterprise enables an increase in work efficiency, improves the company's image, reduces the impact of accidents on employees and reduces the risk of failures, interruptions in work, disruption of processes and related financial losses. Occupational health and safety is an important element of the social dimension of CSR. The sense of social responsibility enables the incorporation of safe and hygienic work into the company's activities at the strategic level, and consequently contributes to the growth of social recognition, which is of great importance for the company's success.

Enterprises are increasingly implementing occupational health and safety management systems, although they are not required or regulated by law. These activities are undertaken in order to obtain economic benefits, as well as to achieve a certain prestige dictated by having a certificate. Socially responsible activities of the company can bring many benefits, not only financial, but also significantly affect the uninterrupted development, which makes it easier to run a business. However, in Poland, the approach to occupational health and safety is entrusted to the appropriate services and management, and employees are not interested in this subject (Witkowski, 2001, p. 49). Hence, individual competencies should be expanded, as they are conducive to raising collective awareness. Expanding competences in the field of occupational health and safety, high organizational culture, modernization of machinery and equipment as well as technological development guarantee high quality and safety of service for internal and external stakeholders.

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