UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE OPINION OF STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The evolution in the Polish Higher Education Institutions (HEI) sector has resulted in new tasks being set for them where, in addition to educational activity, their cooperation with other entities is assumed. One of the contemporary challenges which they are obliged to face is university social responsibility (USR), the popularity of which is growing. This fact was an important premise for undertaking research to assess the current state of the higher education sector in the context of the implementation of the concept of social responsibility. Given these facts, the purpose of the article is to show the significance of the issues and to identify students' opinions on the implementation of the concept of social responsibility at Polish universities. Non-probability sampling was chosen, which is based on the researcher's intuition, experience and knowledge – judgmental sampling. The survey involved 162 respondents who are students of Silesian universities. The research showed that most students admitted that social responsibility is a concept which they define only intuitively, and on average every seventh person surveyed did not know of this conceptual construct at all. Although in most cases the definition of the essence of the concept of social responsibility is correct, there is a presumption that the respondents did not take all determinants of USR into account in the assessment process.

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Introduction

Changes in the higher education sector in Poland in the 1990s were particularly visible due to the growing number of higher education institutions (Figure 1). Quantitative changes were also accompanied by qualitative ones, which were determined, among others, by the provisions of subsequent legal acts regulating matters of higher education resulting from socio-economic and economic changes.

The initial phase of the implementation of reforms and increasingly drawing on the experience of business sphere entities by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) triggered a wide debate in the academic community, and the articulated anxieties included issues related to treating a HEI as a market entity (quasi-service enterprise); student as a client and promoting educational service. The main concern expressed in the context of the reported process of changes concerned the collapse of the HEI's authority and reducing it to the role of a service provider uncritically executing supply-side orders.

Figure 1. Number of HEIs in Poland in the period 1992-2018
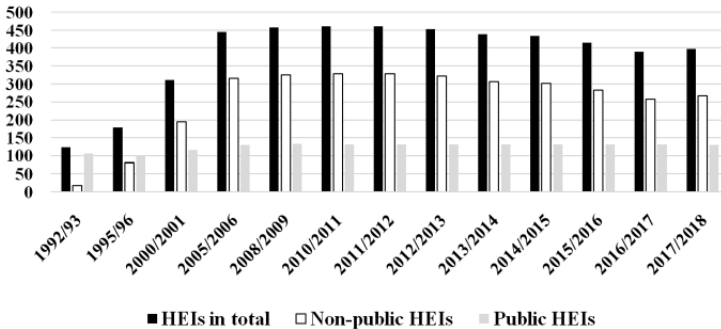
Source: own study based on Central Statistical Office 1992-2017;
Statistics Poland, Statistical Office in Gdansk 2018.

The emerging sector of higher education, with a new structure and potential, took the form of public and private sectors operating side-by-side rather than together (Kliestikova and Moravcikova, 2017). This state of affairs was explained by the different stage of HEI development in both sectors. By definition, the new order aimed not to consolidate the antagonistic division, but rather to set a new order, which, however, did not have to exclude competing mechanisms, rather than consolidate the antagonistic division. The way to do so should be through the introduction of rules that we call the principle of sector convergence. One of the manifestations of the sector convergence principle, which is a partnership between HEIs, was the admission of representatives of non-public HEIs to the group of rectors operating within the Conference of Rectors of Polish Academic Schools. In its new composition, it began to work on a legal act regulating higher education matters. The new Act of 2005 recognised as a priority the principle of common principles of operation of both sectors, so as not to emphasise the importance of the ownership status of the HEI, but rather other factors determining its advantage, including scientific achievements or the quality of education.

Sectoral transformation was also associated with Poland's involvement in the creation of the European Higher Education Area, which was reflected in the signature of the Bologna Accord. Poland's involvement in this undertaking, which aimed to enable cooperation between countries participating in the process and the comparison of mechanisms and results of the process, determined a number of actions in the administrative, legal and social fields. A key role in the future creation of the knowledge-based economy was seen in the development of the higher education system. The skills, knowledge and competences of HEI graduates aimed not only to determine the personal career path, but also to be an exponent of economic development capital.

Market realities give HEIs new tasks which require HEIs to use new tools. A contemporary HEI, being a knowledge-based organisation, focuses on resources (i.e. intellectual capital) that determine its level of competitiveness. In addition, it identifies its own strengths and weaknesses, comparing them with opportunities and threats identified in the environment. Today's HEI is also an institution which educates a conscious student, whose requirements for the educational product include not only substantive and practical value, but

also the use of information technology or interactive teaching methods. HEIs also create the multidimensional environments of networks for the exchange of information and knowledge with their stakeholders. Due to the fact that HEIs play an important role in creating a knowledge society, units of the higher education sector can also be analysed in terms of a socially responsible organisation.

Three decades of HE sector modernisation have resulted in numerous publications in the field of HEI management, including those pertaining to the relationship between the concept of CSR and the internal system for ensuring the quality of education at HEIs (Piasecka, 2015). However, due to the growing interest in the concept of SR, legislative changes in the higher education sector and the lack of analyses, it seems reasonable to undertake efforts to explore the field of HEI social responsibility in another semantic context, covering a different perspective.

1. Literature review

The relevance of the concept of CSR seems to be confirmed by problems identified in the business sphere, such as reprehensible behaviour towards customers and employees, lack of responsibility for the impact on the environment and the negative effects of inadequate management of the organisation (Majerova, 2015). Generally, CSR is a voluntary commitment of companies to ethical behaviour and participation in economic development, which aims to improve the quality of life of society, but also the planet (Gomez, 2014; Moravcikova et al., 2017). The implementation of the concept of CSR shows business practice from a completely different perspective, in which Stakeholder Management Strategies are gaining importance. This strategy derives from the stakeholder theory, where organisations have a moral obligation to meet the requirements of a wide range of stakeholders.

Today's understanding of CSR is the result of evolution, which according to the literature was initiated in 1889 by A. Carnegie. Social responsibility emphasises the importance of focusing on the problems of social entities. According to E.H. Bowen, *"Social Responsibility refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society"*, and A.B. Carroll highlights that *"the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organisations at a given point in time"* (Low, 2015).

The general picture of corporate social responsibility was presented by Carroll (2016) in the form of a model (the so-called Carroll's CSR Pyramid –The Four "Responsibilities"), which consists of four areas of responsibility: economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary/philanthropic (Figure 2). The literature also provides information on the weights that are assigned to the four CSR components identified in Carroll's Pyramid. Given the following order of elements: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic, the weight assigned to them is 4: 3: 2: 1 respectively (Pinkston and Carroll, 1996).

Figure 2. Carroll's pyramid of CSR
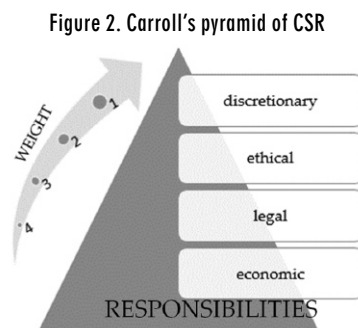
Source: Own study based on Carroll, 2016; Pinkston and Carroll 1996.

The literature is also rich in references to the definition of CSR formulated by the European Commission (2001), according to which CSR is "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis". The origins of many other definitions of corporate social responsibility can be found in the European Commission's definition formula (European Commission, 2011).

The documents presented discuss the essence of CSR, which does not apply only to business, as evidenced by subsequent studies. The Green Paper (2001) includes a fragment devoted to the concept of CSR implemented in the context of cooperation between science and business, which thus indicates the next tasks dedicated to HEIs: *"CSR Europe and the Copenhagen Centre have launched a programme with the aim to bring the business and academic community together to identify and address the training needs of the business sector on Corporate Social Responsibility so as to introduce and diversify courses on corporate social responsibility at all levels of study"* (Commission of the European Communities 2001). Today, the concept of social responsibility is no longer reserved merely for business sphere entities. The growing interest in it is also visible among non-profit organisations, e.g. universities. The market orientation of the HEI, protected against critics, has now become a fact. In light of research conducted by Pabian (2016), Polish HEIs professionalise management processes, as well as implementing marketing rules and principles, which is evidenced by the results obtained under the PORU indicators (the level of market orientation of HEIs). The HEIs surveyed managed to reach the level of 63.6% of the scale (regarding research and teaching staff), which proved a significant level of "marketisation".

The source material obtained indicates significant conditions for market development in the higher education sector and the legitimacy of treating HEIs as a quasi-service enterprise drawing on the experience of the business sphere. The new reality in which Polish HEIs operate is a field for discussion, especially among opponents of the university corporate culture, in which significant threats to the academic ethos are seen. As it turns out, both, academic and market cultures do not have to be in opposition to each other. By nature, they are complementary to each other, which is especially visible in the process of implementing the concept of social responsibility, in this case of the HEI, i.e. University Social Responsibility (USR). The latter is understood as: *"the ability of the University to disseminate and implement a set of general principles and specific values, using four key processes: Management, Teaching, Research and Extension, through the provision of educational services and transfer knowledge following ethical principles, good governance, respect for the environment, social engagement and the promotion of values"* (Giuffre and Ratto, 2014). This definition seems to correspond perfectly with HEI activities as a result of the mission assigned to the academic units of the higher education sector. The preamble to the current Constitution for Science (Journal of Laws, 2018) includes the credo of HEI activity: "Recognising that the pursuit of the truth and knowledge transfer from generation to generation is a particularly noble human activity, and recognising the fundamental role of science in creating civilisation, the principles of the functioning of higher education are defined as well as the principles of conducting scientific activity based on the following principles: it is the duty of public authorities to create optimal conditions for the freedom of scientific research and

artistic creation, freedom of teaching and autonomy of the academic community; each scholar is responsible for the quality and reliability of research and for bringing up the young generation; HEIs and other research institutions implement a mission of special importance for the state and nation: they make a key contribution to the innovation of the economy, contribute to the development of culture, and co-shape moral standards in public life". If the basic features of an organisation which implements the concept of CSR (ISO 26000), such as accountability, transparency, ethical behaviour, respect for stakeholders, respect for the rule of law, respect for international norms of behaviour, and respect for human rights, are compared (International Organisation for Standardisation, 2010), a parallel can be found in further provisions of the Act which regulates higher education, namely, Article 2: "The mission of the higher education and science system is to conduct the highest quality education and scientific activity, shaping civic attitudes, as well as participation in social development and creating an economy based on innovation", and Article 3, which indicates that *"The basis of higher education and science is the freedom of teaching, artistic creativity, research and the announcement of their results, and the autonomy of the HEI"*. In addition, these features should be compared with academic values understood as principles and beliefs arising from tradition, which are the basis of ethical standards adopted by the academic community, and are also in line with the features of the organisation which implements the concept of CSR.

Unfortunately, the multiplicity of definitions of USR observed in the literature is not proof of a thorough analysis of the concept. Esfijani et al. (2013) argue that there is no consensus between different authors in this area. As there is no preci-sion presented in many publications, the authors conducted research whereby they developed an ontology for USR. The project had two goals, namely to identify the key themes of USR based on the various definitions of the concept in the existing literature and to propose a unified global understanding of USR. The definitions of 18 authors were meta-analysed, and as a result, eight different approaches were identified. The next step in developing a unified definition was to identify and define seven sub-concepts, namely engagement, education, research, service, ethics, transparency, and stakeholders. As a result, the definition was adopted as follows: "*USR as a concept whereby a university integrates all of its functions and activities with the needs of society through active engagement with its communities in an ethical and transparent manner which aims to meet the expectations of all stakeholders*" (Esfijani et al., 2013).

The Lisbon Declaration (2007) laid the foundations for the analysis of HEIs in terms of social responsibility, where the section entitled "Universities and an Inclusive Society" presents the scope of HEI's responsibility: *"Europe's universities accept their public responsibility for promoting social equity and an inclusive society. They are making great efforts to widen the socio-economic basis of their student populations; they are dedicated to ensuring access and giving opportunities to succeed to all those who are qualified and have the potential to benefit from higher education. Success in this task requires partnerships with governments and other parts of the educational system"* (European University Association, 2007). Also, HEI documents include those that confirm the fact of taking on social responsibility. These include HEI strategies, as well as documents describing HEI quality assurance systems, and finally codes of ethics for students and

research and teaching staff. These documents are tools that allow for the practical implementation of the concept of USR.

Despite the growing number of documents created in order to properly implement the concept of social responsibility, it is difficult to clearly determine at what stage of development USR is. Within the group of 397 HEIs in Poland, their various levels of advancement is identified within various trends (directions) of social responsibility. After a stage of complete lack of interest of the academic community in management concepts (including USR) or even reluctance to draw on the experience of the business sphere, it can be stated that some HEIs have changed their position. 83 HEIs decided to sign the Declaration of University Social Responsibility, which may be evidence of an attitude of social obligation, a sense of responsibility or merely a social reaction.

Tetřevová and Sabolová (2010) emphasise the fact that social responsibility is crucial in the case of HEIs, which results from the fact that HEIs are considered to be centres of intelligence, knowledge and creative activity, and they also play an important role in science, cultural, social and economic development, as reflected in the USR levels (Figure 3).

The activities of modern HEIs allow for the assumption that academic institutions today are socially responsible organisations. The beneficiaries of implementing the concept of USR include those from the internal groups. This translates into increased levels of satisfaction among employees, who are HEI ambassadors and contribute to the value of the HEI, and those from the external group. The latter, which are particularly important for HEIs, include benefits in the form of the increased interest of stakeholders in its activity, and thus the possibility of obtaining additional sources of funding for the HEI. In addition, building a positive image, an increased level of competitiveness, raising the level of organisational culture or building relationships with, for example, local communities can be mentioned, as well as counteracting adverse phenomena resulting from globalisation in the context of the global market.

Figure 3. USR Levels
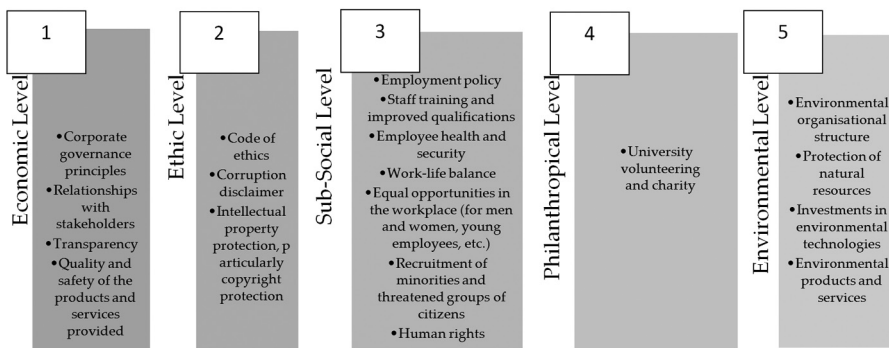
Source: Own elaboration based on Tetřevová and Sabolová, 2010.

The concept of USR has gained popularity in many countries, as evidenced by the activities of universities and the interest of scientists in issues of university social responsibility. Research into USR is characterised by varying degrees of sophisti-

cation and complexity in the process of obtaining information. This state of affairs is related to the different levels of implementation of this concept. Studies conducted from different perspectives can be found in the literature (Table 1).

Table 1. Examples of research conducted on USR in different countries

Author(s)	Topic/perspective	Spatial scope of the study
Ahmad, 2012	Students' awareness and behaviour in terms of the implementation of the concept of social responsibility	Malaysia
Alcota et al., 2013	Student and faculty perceptions of USR; the acquisition of arguments confirming the existence of a relationship between curricula and lecture practices of the university and students' involvement in ethical and social responsibility	Chile
Dima et al., 2013	A model of academic social responsibility	Romania
Tauginienë et al., 2013	Obtaining information from Vice-Rectors for Research and Deans on understanding social responsibility and management pursued within the framework of USR concept	Lithuania
Karimi, 2013	Designing the conceptual model of social responsibility	Islamic countries
Gomez, 2014	University Social Responsibility, a social transformation of learning	Puerto Rico

Source: Own elaboration.

The research reports referenced above are by no means an exhaustive list, but rather represent certain completed research projects within the framework of university social responsibility (USR) on various sub-area topics. The higher education market varies by country. Different countries represent different levels of social and economic development, including in the higher education sectors. The degree of state interference in higher education and the level of market orientation of HEIs are an important reason for choosing a sub-area of interest within the framework of USR. The projects carried out and the diversification on various markets constituted an important premise for undertaking research efforts on USR in Poland, especially in the context of the signature of the Declaration of University Social Responsibility by Polish HEIs in 2017 and 2019.

2. Research objective, methodology and data

The purpose of the research was to identify the determinants of the implementation of the concept of social responsibility by HEIs. The research objectives corresponded to two modules of the research process. The subject of the research in module I was students' opinions of the functioning of the HEI as a market entity. The respondents shared their insights regarding shaping the image of the HEI, the role of a modern HEI and activities directly resulting from the mission of the HEI and its market orientation. In turn, module II concerned the education of students by HEIs in terms of sensitising them to social, economic or environmental problems, as well as raising the awareness of the student community in the area of responsible consumption.

The following research hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1a: The degree of respondents' HEI involvement in the performance of tasks in the area of social responsibility is unsatisfactory.

Hypothesis 1b: The degree of respondents' HEI involvement in the performance of tasks in the area of social responsibility is strongly differentiated depending on the respondents' field of study.

Hypothesis 1c: There is a relationship between the low level of students' knowledge of social responsibility issues and the in-

sufficient involvement of universities in the implementation of the concept of USR as revealed in students' opinions.

A method of non-probability sampling was chosen based on the researcher's intuition, experience and knowledge, namely arbitrary sampling (so-called judgmental sampling), in which a researcher chooses a sample according to pre-determined criteria that may determine the expected quantity and reliability of information (Ibom and Akpan 2014). Considering all limitations of the procedure used (i.e. sample representativeness is difficult to determine and lower than in the case of random samples), the lack of the sampling frame of the study population determined the choice of the method of sample selection.

The data was obtained on the basis of the author's original survey questionnaire. The study consisted of handing out the survey form to the respondent, who completed and returned it to the interviewer. The data gathered from the questionnaires completed during the survey needed to be manually entered upon receipt, which made the entire process somewhat laborious. An undoubted advantage of the method used is the possibility of sample control and high return rate, and a primary limitation is the resistance of respondents to all kinds of surveys, which are perceived as time-consuming. The costs of conducting the study are relatively high, which is associated with the complexity of the process and the need to have a team of interviewers who must be properly trained (Babbie 1990; de Leeuw et al., 2008).

The research involved 162 students of HEIs located in and around Silesia, representing both public and non-public sectors and studying in various fields. The sampling was based on the assumption that the structure of the group of respondents in terms of the features analysed (such as gender and field of study) will correspond to the structure of the general population. The vast majority of the respondents were women (60.5%), which made it possible to maintain a similar structure of the respondents in terms of the analysed feature to that of the general population (Statistics Poland, Statistical Office in Gdansk 2018), wherein the female gender is dominant and accounts for approximately 57.5% of the total (representative quota sample). 96% of respondents were between 19-25 years old, so at the age typical of higher education students in Poland.

One has to add that, in the process of sample selection, care was taken to maintain typological representativeness regarding the declared field of education, which in practice consisted of selection of population representatives such that all values of the variable identified in the general population would be reflected in the research. An attempt was also made to maintain object representativeness, which consists of maintaining variable distributions in the sample corresponding to the distributions of these variables in the community. The possible options of this variable include the subgroups of business and administration (51.9%), engineering and technical (8.6%), medical (3.1%), social (11.7), pedagogical (4.9), language (8.6%), and others (11.1%). In the general population, the largest group were students studying in the subgroup of business and administration, and the smallest group were language students. Two fields of study, namely medical and pedagogical, are underrepresented in the sample, which should be considered at the hypothesis testing stage.

Fewer than 96.5% of students represented public HEIs, and six respondents represented non-public HEIs. Taking into account the date when the HEIs were established, the HEIs can be divided into three groups – every tenth respondent studied at a pre-war HEI (until 1939), ap-

proximately 5.5% of the respondents were students at HEIs established after the economic transformation (after 1989), and the largest group was comprised of members of the student community of post-war HEIs (1944-1989).

The analysis of the results obtained during the study was carried out using statistical methods which were suitable for the specific type of data obtained. For hypothesis testing, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. It allows one to determine whether the differences between the samples are due to random error (sampling errors) or whether there are systematic treatment effects that cause the mean in one group to differ from the mean in another. In other words, the ANOVA test is used to determine the influence that independent variables have on the dependent variable in a regression study.

In this study, ANOVA was used to test if the results obtained as part of assessing the degree of HEI involvement in the implementation of USR depend on students' fields of study. The procedure required the formulation of a null hypothesis (all group means are equal) and an alternative hypothesis. To verify the hypotheses, a one-way ANOVA analysis of variance was used; it was preceded by checking the assumptions about the distribution of results in each group and the assumptions about the homogeneity of intra-group variance. In order to check the first assumption, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was carried out for one sample. Checking the assumption of homogeneity of intra-group variance, i.e. with the similar dispersion of results around the mean in each group, resulted in the preparation of lists with descriptive statistics for all categories of the variable (field of study) and conducting Levene's test. The last step of the procedure was to perform the ANOVA. The test statistic for a One-Way ANOVA is denoted as F and the formula for ANOVA is (Bedyńska and Brzezicka, 2007):

$$F = \frac{MST}{MSE}$$

where:

F – ANOVA coefficient

MST – Mean sum of squares to the treatment

MSE – Mean sum of squares due to error

If at a given $Fp < 0.05$ then H_0 is rejected

Statistical calculations were made based on the functionality of the IBM SPSS Statistics program.

3. Research results

In practice, USR can be identified and assessed by a set of activities in various forms, ranging from philanthropy, to the implementation of social projects and initiatives, to environmental programs. USR may be manifested in the adoption of a specific model of HEI management, but also the implementation of education in the field of social responsibility among students. HEI students in Silesia and the surrounding areas were asked to evaluate their HEIs in terms of the implementation and application of the concept of social responsibility.

The respondents could rate the degree of HEI involvement in SR issues on a scale of 0-5, where 0 meant a complete lack of involvement, while 5 meant a very high level of involvement (Table 2). It was assumed that a rating of 4-5 is satisfactory for a HEI; a rating of 2-3 is unsatisfactory; and a rating of 0-1 is undesirable.

Over 83% of the respondents assessed the degree of involvement of their HEIs in SR activities with a rating of 3, which translates into an average level of operability. Slightly more than 15% of the respondents noticed HEI activities, which allowed them to give a rating of 4, indicating significant involvement. The maximum score on the scale was given by only two out of 162

respondents. On average, every four-teenth respondent did not notice any reasons for implementing the concept of SR in the case of their HEI. The most frequently given ratings corresponded to low and medium degrees of involvement, constituting 57.4% of all respondents.

Table 2. Degree of HEI involvement in the implementation of the concept of SR in the opinion of students

Rating	Degree of HEI involvement assigned to the rating	N	Percent	Cumulative percent
0	no involvement	11	6.8	6.8
1	negligible involvement	31	19.1	25.9
2	low involvement	49	30.2	56.2
3	medium involvement	44	27.2	83.3
4	high involvement	25	15.4	98.8
5	very high involvement	2	1.2	100.0
Average rating of involvement				2.29

Source: Own elaboration.

Due to the fact that Polish research was conducted among students in various fields, the question should be asked as to whether the results obtained as part of assessing the degree of HEI involvement in the implementation of the concept of USR depend on respondents' fields of study. To this end, two hypotheses were formulated: H0 saying that the result does not depend on the group - in other words that the results come from a distribution with the same average; and an alternate hypothesis that the results depend on students' fields of study, and thus that the results obtained among students in various fields come from a distribution with different averages. To verify the hypotheses, a one-way ANOVA analysis of variance was used, preceded by checking the assumptions about the distribution of results in each group and the assumptions about the homogeneity of intra-group variance. In order to check the first assumption, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was carried out for one sample (Table 3). On average, students rated HEI involvement in social responsibility issues at a level of 2.29, and the so-called average dispersion of assessments of the degree of HEI involvement indicates that the ratings are separated on average by about 1.18 from the arithmetic average. The result of asymptotic significance obtained in the test is less than 0.05, which gives grounds to reject the null hypothesis and the statement that the tested distribution is not a normal distribution. It should be emphasised, however, that analysis of variance is relatively robust to departures from normality of distribution, therefore the obtained result is not an obstacle in terms of the ANOVA analysis.

Table 3. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for one sample (regarding the degree of HEI involvement in the implementation of the concept of SR)

N		162
Normal distribution parameters a,b	Mean	2.29
	Standard deviation	1.178
Largest differences	Absolute value	0.165
	Positive	0.159
	Negative	-0.165
Test statistics		0.165
Asymptotic (two-sided) significance		.000c

a. Test distribution is normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Source: Own elaboration.

Checking the assumption of homogeneity of intra-group variance, i.e. with the similar dispersion of results around the mean in each group, resulted in the preparation

of lists with descriptive statistics for all categories of the variable (field of study) (Table 4) and conducting Levene's test (Table 5). The lowest level of average HEI involvement in the implementation of the concept of social responsibility was noted among the group of medical students, and the highest level was visible among the group of economics students. In addition, deviations in individual subgroups were similar.

In the Levene's test for the homogeneity of variance, the following pair of hypotheses was used: H0 – the difference between the variances in the examined groups is homogeneous (or similar), H1 – the variances in the examined groups are different. The Levene F value (6.155) is 1.91. In turn, the significance calculated for Levene's test is higher than 0.05, and therefore there is no reason to reject H0, so the variance is assumed to be equal. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis was rejected and the null hypothesis was adopted stating that the difference in variance in the tested groups is not statistically significant.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the question pertaining to the degree of HEI involvement in the implementation of the concept of social responsibility

| Detailed list | N | Mean | Standard deviation | Standard error | 95% confidence interval for the mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
					Lower limit	Upper limit		
Business and administration subgroup	84	2.30	1.050	0.115	2.07	2.53	0	5
Engineering and technical subgroup	14	2.57	1.158	0.309	1.90	3.24	1	4
Medical subgroup	5	1.60	1.517	0.678	-0.28	3.48	0	3
Social subgroup	19	2.00	1.106	0.254	1.47	2.53	0	4
Pedagogical subgroup	8	2.88	1.356	0.479	1.74	4.01	0	4
Language subgroup	14	2.29	1.267	0.339	1.55	3.02	0	4
Other fields	18	2.28	1.565	0.369	1.50	3.06	0	5
Total	162	2.29	1.178	0.093	2.11	2.47	0	5

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 5. Test of the homogeneity of variance for the question pertaining to the degree of HEI involvement in implementing the concept of social responsibility

Detailed list		Levene's test	df1	df2	Significance
Question: Please assess the degree of involvement of your HEI in the issues of social responsibility (e.g. conducting classes, training, the implementation of the concept of USR by a HEI, promoting responsible consumption, etc.). Answering involves entering "x" into the field symbolising a certain degree (0 – no involvement, 5 – very high involvement).	Based on the mean	1.914	6	155	0.082

Source: Own elaboration.

After verifying all assumptions, the ANOVA analysis of variance was performed (Table 6). Significance for the F-statistic (6,155) = 0.939, while the indicated number of degrees of freedom (df) is 0.469, which gives the basis for adopting the null hypothesis, and thus for concluding that the differences in the results obtained in different

groups of students are not statistically significant, and that the field of study is not a factor which affects the assessment of the degree of involvement of the respondents' HEIs in the implementation of the concept of social responsibility.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA analysis of variance for the degree of HEI involvement in implementing the concept of SR

Detailed list	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Between groups	7.833	6	1.305	0.939	0.469
Inside groups	215.531	155	1.391		
Total	223.364	161			

Source: Own elaboration.

The subsequent stage of research focused on gaining knowledge of the actual understanding of the conceptual construct of *Corporate Social Responsibility* (Table 7). The definitions given in the set of questions include those that have some connection with the above-mentioned concept (an incomplete definition), discuss the essence of the concept or represent its complete negation. 101 people, i.e. over half the respondents, defined CSR correctly. A significant group of people selected options that relate to the implementation of this concept, i.e. the implementation of the codes of ethics (11 people) or the publication of financial statements (22 people). Nobody decided to give their own definition, and 22 people admitted their ignorance in this respect.

Table 7. Definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility according to students

Detailed list	N	Percentage	Percentage of observation
a management concept taking into account not only the economic aspect of the company. but also environmental and social ones	101	62.3	62.3
sharing financial statements with the public	22	13.6	13.6
the implementation of codes of ethics in companies	11	6.8	6.8
the creation of social assistance funds for customers	6	3.7	3.7
I do not understand this conceptual construct	22	13.6	13.6

Source: Own elaboration.

Considering the fact that selecting the correct definition could have been the result of logical thinking, by accident or the use of an elimination strategy, at the next stage of the research the respondents were asked to share information on the source of their knowledge of CSR (Table 8). The largest group of respondents admitted that they had defined the term only intuitively (nearly half of the respondents). A group which was smaller by almost 9% confirmed that they had become familiar with the concept during didactic classes. On average, every fifth student came across CSR in the media, and five people learned about CSR from other sources (e.g. from family and friends).

Table 8. Source of obtaining information on CSR by students

Detailed list	N	Percentage	Percentage of observation
I understand this conceptual construct intuitively	75	37.3	46.9
from didactic classes (school, college, courses, training)	61	30.3	38.1
from the media	35	17.4	21.9

from personal experience as a consumer	20	10.0	12.5
from my own business experience	10	5.0	6.3
Other	5	2.4	3.1

Source: Own elaboration.

In the survey, the respondents were also asked whether in their opinion, regardless of the fields of study offered, HEIs should offer CSR classes, including sustainable development and responsible consumption. An affirmative answer was given by three-quarters of respondents. Less than 5% of students stood in opposition, believing that the obligation to acquire knowledge "of global problems" lies with the student himself or herself, not the HEI, and the former should actively seek information about CSR. These students attributed a large role in the consumer education process to the media. Approximately every fifth respondent had no opinion.

The Polish study assumed that in the general population, the largest group were students studying in the subgroup of business and administration, and the smallest were language students. Two fields of study, namely medical and pedagogical, are underrepresented in the sample, which should be considered at the hypothesis testing stage, which seems to confirm the results obtained. Students were asked to self-assess their knowledge in various fields, including in the area of SR. On average, Silesian students rated their level of knowledge as low. Respondents could choose grades on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 was the lowest rating, and 5 the highest). In turn, when it comes to assessing the degree of implementation of the concept of UCR, on average, the indications fluctuated around the average of 2.29, which was attributed to the low involvement of the studied university. The comparison of the two quantities analysed is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Relationship between the involvement of HEIs in the implementation of the concept of USR and the degree of students' knowledge of issues of social responsibility

Average rating	
Students' self-assessment in the field of knowledge of SR – percentage share of the indicator in the max. value of the scale	Degree of HEI involvement in the implementation of the concept of SR – average rating
37.5% Low level	2.29 Low involvement
Legend	
81%-100% high level 71%-80% – satisfactory level 51%-60% – medium level 41%-50% – unsatisfactory level 21%-40% – low level 0%-20% – negligible level	0 – no involvement 1 – negligible involvement 2 – low involvement 3 – medium involvement 4 – high involvement 5 – very high involvement

Source: Own elaboration.

4. Discussion

In the course of the analyses, an attempt was made to verify several research statements. The empirical material collected confirmed hypothesis H1a, as it turned out that the degree of involvement of respondents' HEIs in the implementation of tasks in the area of social responsibility is unsatisfactory. Nearly 84% of the respondents said that the effectiveness of their HEIs can be rated at a maximum of 3, of whom a group of over 57% gave responses which, according to the assumptions of the research, represented an unsatisfactory level of activities undertaken by HEIs. These results were similar to those achieved in Romania by Dima et al. (2013) which showed a lack of interest in the concept of SR in academia, as well as in Lithuania (Tauginienë and Mačiukaitë-Ţvinienë, 2013). The latter research confirmed that the position represented by the perception of university responsibility by the authorities hinders the development of USR. In addition, the statement that the results in the area of HEI involvement were determined by the respondent's field of study (H1b hypothesis) was verified. The analyses showed that

this factor has no significant impact on the results obtained in the groups analysed (H1b hypothesis).

Determinants of opinions formulated by students in the implementation of USR may have a different genesis; among others, they may result from direct observation of HEI activities, which are a derivative of the position of HEI authorities in the field of social responsibility. A lack of understanding of the idea of social responsibility in the context of the development of modern universities may prove to be a significant barrier to achieving success in the sector.

Hypothesis H2 was also positively verified. The data collected confirmed that there is a relationship between the low level of students' knowledge of social responsibility issues and the insufficient involvement of universities in the implementation of the concept of USR as revealed in student opinions. Nearly 47% of the respondents admitted that their understanding of the CSR concept is intuitive, although a conceptual construct was defined correctly in most cases. In addition, when self-assessing their knowledge of responsible consumption among others, the respondents were more critical of themselves.

The opinions of students indicate that the level of their university's involvement in implementing USR is low. It then confirms the findings of Karimi (2013) who stated that there is still a lot to be done by HEIs in terms of promoting social responsibility (and particular importance in the promotion of SR was assigned to PR activities), as well as Gomez (2014), whose research confirms that advanced promotional activities in the field of USR can be effective and reflected in the students' assessments regarding the functioning of the institutions.

One of the factors that could have a significant impact on the opinions formulated could be the insufficient knowledge of students in the field of social responsibility,

which was also confirmed during the survey. The results obtained are therefore an important premise for HEIs to launch a promotional campaign aimed at market education of student community representatives.

An analysis of the responses obtained shows that sensitivity to social problems and awareness of responsible consumption seem to require greater involvement in the teaching process. Currently, the greatest emphasis is placed on direct knowledge. Similar conclusions were reached by Ahmad (2012), i.e. the respondents showed special knowledge in the field of environmental protection needs and the role of CSR in the development of society. However, as it turned out, the state of consciousness did not correspond with the activities undertaken by students.

The low level of implementation of the concept of USR by Polish HEIs should be associated with a relatively short period of their functioning in a market economy and a relatively short period of interest on the part of the university authorities and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in SR in the context of formulating strategic plans for the sector's development. In 2017, the first major initiative was undertaken, focusing the academic environment around the issue of university social responsibility. However, it turns out that only a few dozen HEIs had signed the USR declaration by 2019, and thus many units still underestimate its importance, which in turn may affect the views of stakeholders regarding activities in the sector in this area. Undoubtedly, it is firstly necessary to increase the positioning of HEIs as socially responsible entities; secondly to involve students in the process of implementing tasks arising from SR; and thirdly to intensify the promotion of the idea of social responsibility, responsible consumption or sustainable development, which will be supported by planned academic activities.

Conclusions

The research was exploratory, which was determined by the desire for a more complete understanding of the situation in the higher education sector in the context of the implementation of the concept of USR. This research project is only the preliminary stage to a more extensive project that not only allows for the answer to the question: how is it? It seems necessary to identify the reasons behind the low level of students' knowledge of SR, which may be due to the lack of manifestations of activities in this field by HEIs, but it can also be explained by educational shortcomings in this area. HEIs are likely to appreciate the importance of USR, but they do not sufficiently inform students about it. It is important to obtain information from the HEI authorities about the concept, current and future activities in this area, opportunities and threats as well as the effects of these activities.

The research conducted indicates that the level of knowledge of students in the field of social responsibility is insufficient, and the experience of other countries in this area allows one to conclude that this situation may be affected by HEI activities in the field of education, but encouragement also seems justified and very effective in motivating students to participate in joint initiatives aimed at implementing the concept of USR. Such actions can be mutually beneficial. Joint development of so-called good practices can positively influence the level of implementation of the concept by universities, and thus contribute to increasing the pragmatic value offered to students. The study showed areas that should be subjected to a more detailed analysis, in particular the factors determining the current state of higher education. In addition, it is interesting to compare the opinions of different HEI stakeholders, allowing for a more complete understanding of the problem.

Despite some restrictions, such as limiting the analysis only to Silesian students and obtaining opinions from only one group of HEI stakeholders, one may state that the results of the research facilitated the initial diagnosis of the higher education sector in the context of USR. The research is an introduction to further, more detailed explorations, in which it will be possible to compare the degree of implementation of the concept of USR among various universities, diversified in terms of the type of institution, period of establishment, location, and level of market orientation. It will be important to compare the positions of various HEI stakeholders and obtain data from the university authorities. The confrontation of opinions, analysis of determinants and premises for the implementation of the concept of USR and taking quantitative data into account will be able to provide a true picture of the situation in the higher education sector.

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