

PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ECONOMIC OPERATOR'S SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT, BY MANUFACTURING METALLIC OBJECTS FOR THE CHILDREN'S PLAY, BOTH OUTDOORS AND INDOORS

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Abstract: *This scientific paper intends to practically approach aspects related to socially responsible management by relating it to the activity of an economic operator manufacturing metal objects. The development of the socially responsible management is approached in relation to the responsibilities which are part of the corporate social responsibility concept (CSR). Thus, in our research, we have especially used juridical analysis methods and juridical proposals (de lege ferenda proposals), but also several elements belonging to other research fields.*

Key words: *corporate social responsibility (CSR), socially responsible management, socially responsible economic operator, metallic objects for children's play.*

1. Corporate social responsibility and a socially responsible management

At present, the social responsibility of economic operators must be regarded from a complex perspective. We consider that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is what the community expects from an economic operator ecologically, economically, legally, ethically and philanthropically. In our opinion [9, pp. 85-99], social responsibility includes all these types of responsibilities: ecological responsibility, economic responsibility, legal responsibility and philanthropic responsibility.

The economic operators acting from the perspective of the CSR develop the following essential management aspects differentiating them from the other economic operators:

A) establishing the vision and mission of the economic operator, which considers the optimization of the interests of the respective economic operator (materialized in the profit), as well as the consumer's interests (maximization of the value expected from the respective product or service) and the general interests of the community (by complying with ethical principles and assuming social responsibility);

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B) conceiving specific marketing policies and strategies and marketing-mix (which also include strategies related to CSR);

C) adopting tactics specific to the socially responsible management vision;

D) using the management instruments for knowledge and researching the environment in which the economic operator acts;

E) other aspects especially related to strategic management.

The social responsibility of economic operators is imperative and consists of a set of objectives which must be implemented by the management of the economic operator in all its departments, not only in the social responsibility department. [9, pp. 85-99]

In the opinion of some specialists [1, pp. 416-455], the stages of implementing the CSR can be the following:

Stage 1: Establishing the CSR objectives; this stage consists of the identification of the key-area in which the respective economic operator wishes to evolve. It must set a series of specific objectives for itself related to what it intends to obtain in these fields, as well as the way the progress related to these objectives would be measured.

Stage 2: Designing the CSR strategies, a stage which implies knowing what is intended to be achieved (the pursued purpose). Designing the CSR strategy is the “visualization” of the way in which the respective economic operator can get from his current position to the position intended for the future.

Stage 3: Instruments for the implementation of the CSR strategies – social responsibility management – implies the performance of the same regular actions, but adding social responsibility.

Stage 4: Evaluating the results of the CSR: eventually, the results of the socially responsible activity must be evaluated. This stage helps economic operators evaluate their socially responsible activity, and

communicate it both to the stakeholders of the economic operator from within (employees), and to the stakeholders from without (consumers, those interested in the natural environment).

In Romania, CSR has become widespread as Romania joined the European Union.

The aspects related to social responsibility have been taken over by the Romanian economic operators, from the economic doctrine outside Romania [6, pp. 65-66], but also from the practice of the foreign economic operators which have opened branch offices or subsidiaries in Romania. This can be proved with examples of socially responsible actions performed by Romanian economic operators illustrating several categories of economic operators’ social initiatives.

2. The socially responsible management in the case of an economic operator manufacturing metal objects

For the sake of a better highlighting of the previously presented theoretical aspects, we shall apply the elements analysed regarding the socially responsible management to the activity of an economic operator manufacturing metal objects.

In the case of this economic operator, manufacturing metal objects, the corporate social responsibility is a social must, and it consists of a set of objectives which must be implemented by the management of the economic operator in all departments, not only the social responsibility department, even if such a department cannot be outlined. As we have previously mentioned, a socially responsible management implies not only abiding the law, but also a series of ethical norms.

Thus, a manufacturer of metal objects developing a socially responsible management must comply with the legislation regarding the purchase and use of raw materials, the legislation regarding its

operation, the legislation regarding the protection of the employees, the legislation regarding the intellectual property, the fiscal legislation and the entire legislative framework required by the development of their managerial activity, only because it is socially responsible, and not for fear of the legal sanctions to which he would otherwise be subject. Macroeconomically, this generates a series of material benefits, creating an economy regarding the control over the economic operators developing a socially responsible management, control performed by the executive body.

For instance, regarding the consumer protection legislation, the Consumption Code, Law no. 296/2004 republished in 2008, sets at Art. 8 the fact that “economic operators are obliged to bring onto the market only safe products or services, matching the prescribed or declared features, to have a proper behaviour in their relations with their clients, and not use abusive commercial practices”. In this case, we are only interested in the first two juridical norms, namely the obligation to “bring onto the market” safe products and the obligation of the economic operator not to incorrectly act in relation to consumers. One must note the fact that they use the term *correct* – meaning observe the ethical norms – and not the term *legal* – i.e. abide the law. Thus, the obligation of the economic operator exceeds the compliance with the normative documents, as he is obliged to also comply with the ethical norms in relation to consumers.

We believe that the interpretation of these norms should also be extended to socially responsible actions, not only to the products brought onto the market for sale. Thus, *de lege ferenda*, we believe that this article should be rephrased as follows: “the economic operators are obliged to bring onto the market *or distribute, even free of charge*, only safe products or services, matching the prescribed or declared features, to have a

proper behaviour in their relations with their clients, and not use abusive commercial practices.”

We also consider that Art. 69 of the Consumption Code stipulating the fact that “advertising must be decent, correct and elaborated in the spirit of the social responsibility” should be extended. Thus, *de lege ferenda*, this article must include a second thesis; thus “advertising must be decent, correct and elaborated in the spirit of social responsibility, *similarly to the entire management activity of an economic operator.*” This way, the entire managerial process will have to be performed in the spirit of corporate social responsibility.

As for the ethical responsibility, a socially responsible management implies knowing, informing the employees and observing all the ethical norms implied by the activity performed by the economic operator manufacturing metal objects.

The economic responsibility implies implementing a viable management system which would lead to achieving profit, but in accordance with the rest of the responsibilities contained by CSR.

Also, a socially responsible management implies the implementation of the ecological responsibility aspects implied by manufacturing metal objects, starting with choosing the raw materials and finishing with the effect on the natural environment of using these metal objects. This type of responsibility includes elements of juridical, ethical and philanthropic nature.

As for the stages of implementing the CSR in the management of an economic operator manufacturing objects, they are the following:

Stage 1: Establishing the CSR objectives; this stage consists of the identification of the key-area in which the respective economic operator wishes to evolve. An economic operator in the field of metal objects production should follow the ecological and social aspects of choosing

the raw material, the protection of the employees involved in the production process and the consumer protection. In case this economic operator makes metal objects intended for children, the category of consumers includes children and those taking care of children. The economic operator shall establish specific objectives of what he wishes to obtain in these fields in relation to the manner in which the progress related to these objectives shall be measured, possibly by means of several marketing research meant for these categories of stakeholders. [7, p. 20].

Stage 2: Designing the CSR strategies, a stage which implies knowing what is intended to be achieved (the pursued purpose). In the case of the economic operator analysed, the main pursued purpose is developing the relations with providers, employees and consumers, while the secondary purpose pursues the promotion of his socially responsible management among future potential consumers, employees or providers. Designing the CSR strategies is the “visualization” of the way in which the respective economic operator can get from its current position to the position intended for the future. The implementation of these CSR development strategies shall provide a real socially responsible management, which would outline a very attractive image of the respective economic operator for consumers, but also for future employees.

Stage 3: Instruments for the implementation of the CSR strategies – social responsibility management – implies the performance of the same regular actions, but adding social responsibility. Social responsibility comes as an extra effort for the economic operator, but shall bring a series of benefits regarding the profit, the increase of the number of consumers, as well as building consumer and employee loyalty.

Stage 4: Evaluating the results of the

CSR: eventually, the results of the socially responsible activity must be evaluated. This stage helps economic operators evaluate their socially responsible activity, and communicate it both to the stakeholders of the economic operator from within (employees) and from without (consumers, those interested in the natural environment). Also, within this stage, one can use the qualitative, as well as the quantitative marketing research [8, p. 24], depending on the results intended to be evaluated, and after the evaluation, it can be improved in a continuous process, with efforts and also equal benefits.

3. The philanthropic responsibility or an example of a socially responsible action in the case of an economic operator manufacturing metal objects

As for social responsibility, the philanthropic component has its own importance regarding the implication of the economic operator in the life of the community in which he performs his activity. However, the philanthropic responsibility must be implemented within a socially responsible management, in accordance with all the other responsibilities – juridical, economic, ethical and ecological. Centring the socially responsible management only towards the philanthropic responsibility is not adequate, although this trend is noticed with most of the economic operators in Romania.

In our case, for an economic operator manufacturing several metal objects, we consider that he has the possibility – without too many financial resources, because it possesses the skilled human resource and the raw material resulting after making the objects he produces and markets – to get involved in the endowment of the children’s parks, available in the community in which he performs his activity, with playing objects such as metal seesaws.

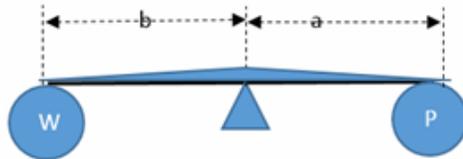


Fig. 1.

As one can notice in diagram 1, in order to build a children's seesaw, in a children's park, the economic operator shall consider – as shown by the mechanical notions regarding the middle support levers – the weight of a child and the force operated on the seesaw, according to the formula:

$$\frac{a}{b} = \frac{W}{P}, \quad \frac{P \times a}{b} = W, \quad \frac{W \times b}{a} = P \quad (1)$$

The economic operator shall perform the resistance calculation of the playing objects – of the seesaws – depending on forces, sizes and supports.

Also, the economic operator manufacturing metal objects shall consider the security and protection of the playing seesaws in order to protect the children and the accompanying persons.

The economic operator shall analyse the location of the seesaws, so that there would be enough room around the seesaws for them not to touch each other. Also, in building the seesaws for children, the economic operator must not leave any sharp, or cutting, or prominent edges, and the seesaws must have a proper height in order not to hit the children. The economic operator shall consider the availability of protected areas, so that children would not get hit.

Another important aspect in building metal seesaws is the study of the design of the playing objects in order to exert a greater attraction for children.

At the bottom of the metal seesaws to be found in parks or other open spaces or closed precincts, the manufacturing economic operator shall attach a board where he shall

write down his name and address, as well as other identification elements, in order to attract new clients among the children's caretakers.

3. Conclusions and proposals

A socially responsible management shall necessarily consider the entire set of responsibilities implied by the CSR, as analysed in this work.

Relating the work to an economic operator with a certain object of activity shows the applicative nature of this work regarding the development of a socially responsible management.

Also, the nature of the activity of the economic operator has allowed the performed juridical analysis and the *de lege ferenda* proposals made by the authors.

The development of the Romanian legislation by including corporate social responsibility aspects brings applicability to the legislative trends shown by the central bodies of the European Union.

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