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BARBARA PLONKA**

**IMPLEMENTING CSR IN THE FASHION
INDUSTRY:
MEASURING THE DESIGNERS'
PERCEPTIONS AND COMMITMENT**



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Dissertation presented at IADE – Universidade Europeia in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Design, via the option of conducting a doctoral program for candidate holding a master degree or equivalent, performed under the supervision of Doctor José Ferro Camacho, Assistant Professor of the IADE – Universidade Europeia and under the supervision of Doctor Eduardo Corte-Real, Associate Professor with aggregation of IADE – Universidade Europeia.

I dedicate this work to all social activists and idealists who seek improvement in the fields of ecology, human rights, and animal welfare. Further, I devote this thesis to people who wish to reshape the surrounding reality into more ethical one, and do this through their individual commitment as well as professional involvement.

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palavras-chave

Responsabilidade Social Empresarial na indústria do vestuário; ética na moda; percepção dos designers sobre a RSE; compromisso dos designers na RSE; papel dos designers de moda na RSE

resumo

A dissertação contribui para o desenvolvimento do conhecimento existente sobre a implementação da Responsabilidade Social das Empresas (RSE) na indústria do vestuário. Este objetivo é alcançado através de uma análise profunda das percepções e dos papéis dos designers no desenvolvimento da RSE, no âmbito das questões e dos processos organizacionais. Esta análise inclui, por um lado, a avaliação de seu compromisso e, por outro, a adaptação global da RSE na indústria do vestuário contemporânea.

A indústria de vestuário enfrenta muitos desafios relacionados com questões éticas e ecológicas. Encontrar as melhores ferramentas para a implementação da RSE na indústria da moda, como observadas sob as lentes do design e dos designers, é o principal objetivo do estudo.

Com a ajuda de uma revisão abrangente da literatura por um lado e uma abordagem metodológica mista por outro – i.e., pela avaliação das percepções dos designers através de inquéritos e de entrevistas - esta investigação estuda a envolvente da indústria do vestuário a fim de estabelecer uma definição adequada de Responsabilidade Social das Empresas e dos processos para a sua implementação.

Comprova-se que os designers influenciam significativamente a prática da RSE, uma vez que desempenham um papel fundamental na sua implementação na indústria do vestuário. Na perspectiva destes criadores, a sua contribuição para políticas empresariais éticas é mais visível através de diversos elementos, tais como, as escolhas em relação a tecnologias sustentáveis, o compromisso educacional e comunicacional com seu ambiente de trabalho, a sua influência nas decisões dos executivos e o seu papel na recolha de dados e na definição das preferências dos consumidores “verdes”. No entanto, as funções na RSE desses designers parecem ser negligenciadas ou marginalizadas.

A investigação aponta para fatores como uma lacuna no diálogo entre os criadores, os executivos e outros membros da equipa; o papel de outras posições na empresa como exemplificado pela gestão intermédia que bloqueia a entrada dos designers na RSE; e a falta do poder de decisão dos criadores dentro da organização. Ao medir as perceções dos designers de moda, o estudo conclui que seu papel geral no desempenho da RSE é significativo, mas subestimado e dificultado pelo sistema empresarial.

De acordo com estes resultados, o capítulo devotado aos compromissos inclui novos encargos dos designers no sistema empresarial. Estas responsabilidades compreendem novos papéis na comunicação, na seleção de tecnologias, nos contratos de *outsourcing* e no desenvolvimento de melhores estratégias para expandir a consciência e o compromisso dos consumidores nas práticas da RSE. Adicionalmente, o compromisso dos designers expressa-se no desenvolvimento de novos conceitos de design singulares e criativos, na articulação e integração com *stakeholders* locais e na criação de novas abordagens no domínio da *slow fashion*. Acrescem medidas na área académica e educacional destinadas a expandir a base de conhecimento em RSE.

A dissertação sugere a criação de uma plataforma para impulsionar o debate entre *stakeholders* para a expansão do conceito. Neste enquadramento, as diretrizes éticas incluídas na autorregulação ajudariam ao desenvolvimento de uma cooperação mais estreita entre os designers e os executivos. Desta forma, a posição decisional e comunicacional dos designers em relação à RSE seria desbloqueada.

As evidências que suportam esta dissertação são novas e consistem em resultados que devem ser úteis tanto para o desenvolvimento da teoria da RSE como para a adaptação prática da RSE na indústria da moda.

Keywords

Corporate Social Responsibility in the clothing business; ethics in fashion; designers' perception of CSR; designers' commitment to CSR; fashion designers' role in CSR

Abstract

This dissertation contributes to the existing knowledge on the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility in the apparel industry. This is achieved through an in-depth analysis of the designers' perceptions and roles in CSR with regard to organisational issues, as well as the exploration of their commitment on the one hand and the overall adaptation of CSR in the contemporary clothing industry on the other.

As the garment industry is facing many challenges connected with ethical and ecological matters, the chief objective of this study has been to find the best tools for CSR implementation in the fashion industry as seen through the design's and the designers' lenses.

With the help of a comprehensive literature review on the one hand and a mixed methodological approach on the other—namely measuring the designers' perceptions through surveys and interviews—this research investigates the apparel environment in order to provide a suitable definition of Corporate Social Responsibility and the processes of its implementation.

As it turns out, the designers influence the CSR practice significantly as they play a key role in CSR implementation in the clothing industry. From these creators' perspective, their contribution to ethical corporate policies is most visible through a number of elements, i.e. choices regarding sustainable technologies, educational and communicational commitment to their work environment, their influence on the executives' decisions, and their role in collecting data on the green consumers' preferences.

However, these designers' CSR functions seem to be neglected or marginalised.

The research points to factors such as: a dialogue gap between the creators, the executives and other team members; the role of other positions as exemplified through the middle management blocking the designers' input into CSR; and the lack of the creators' decisional power within the organisation. By measuring the fashion designers' perceptions, the study concludes that their general role in CSR performance is meaningful, but underestimated and hindered through the system.

As a result, the commitment section includes directions on new responsibilities for designers in the business system. These duties comprehend new roles in communication, in selecting technologies, in conducting outsourcing and in developing better strategies for expanding consumers' awareness and compromise to CSR's practices. In addition, designers' commitment to CSR aims to develop creative and unique design concepts, to expand the compromise with local stakeholders and to develop new approaches in the *slow fashion* design. Furthermore, to expand the knowledge basis this topic addresses several measures in the academic and education fields.

Additionally, the dissertation suggests the creation of a platform for stakeholders' further discussions on the expansion of the concept. Within this framework, the ethical guidelines included in self-regulations would help to develop tightened cooperation between the designers and the executives. This way, the designers' decisional and communicational position with regard to CSR would get unlocked.

The discoveries behind this thesis are novel and consist of findings that should prove useful both for the CSR theory development and the practical adaptation of CSR in the fashion industry.

Index

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Introduction | 36 |
| 1.1 Problem Characterization | 37 |
| 1.2 Corporations as Perceived Object | 39 |
| 1.3 Corporate Social Responsibility Theory | 41 |
| 1.3.1 Critical Approach to Universal Definition of CSR | 41 |
| 1.3.2 Archie B. Carroll’s Definition of Corporate Social Responsibility / Brief History of CSR Classification | 43 |
| 1.3.3 Statement of the Problem | 50 |
| 1.3.4 Research Aims and Objectives..... | 51 |
| 1.3.5 A Brief Description of the Methodology and Research | 52 |
| 1.3.6 Research Outline/ Thesis Plan..... | 53 |
| | |
| 2. The Literature Review | 57 |
| 2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility: Three Areas of the Concept’s Application. CSR 3 - Environment, Human Rights, Animal Welfare..... | 57 |
| 2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility in Fashion | 64 |
| 2.2.1 Fashion Manufacture Global Footprint | 64 |
| 2.2.2 Aesthetics, Individualism and Social Positioning through Fashion | 67 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 2.2.3 Fashion Democratization..... | 68 |
| 2.2.4 <i>Fast Fashion</i> in the Context of the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility..... | 70 |
| 2.2.5 Misunderstandings and Inconsistences in the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Fashion Industry | 72 |
| 2.3 The Marketing Role in the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility .. | 76 |
| 2.3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility as a Marketing Tool..... | 76 |
| 2.3.2 The Positive Aspects of Marketing Usage of Corporate Social Responsibility | 77 |
| 2.3.3 The Negative Aspects of Marketing as the Key Agent of Corporate Social Responsibility | 80 |
| 2.3.4 Marketing as the Wrong Field for the Performance of Corporate Social Responsibility | 84 |
| 2.4 Assessing the Company’s Perspectives on Social Responsibility..... | 87 |
| 2.4.1 Company’s Approach and Marketing Approach Differences | 87 |
| 2.4.2 Corporate Social Responsibility as Company’s Reputation Leverage... .. | 90 |
| 2.4.3 Governments’ Regulations vs. Corporate Ethical Conduct..... | 94 |
| 2.4.4 Executives and Subjective, Monetary Driven Corporate Social Responsibility | 99 |
| 2.4.5 Complexity vs. Company’s Corporate Social Responsibility Performance..... | 104 |
| 2.4.6 Companies’ and Consumers’ CSR Marriage..... | 107 |
| 2.4.7 Distrust in Corporate Social Responsibility | 110 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 2.5 Looking at Corporate Social Responsibility through the Role of Customers. | 118 |
| 2.5.1 The Ethical Consumers- The Better Educated and Well Earning Cougar..... | 121 |
| 2.5.2 The Motives for Ethical Purchase- “Product First, Ethics Second” | 125 |
| 2.5.3 Ethical Consumerism in Fashion Industry- Aesthetics Trump Ethics.. | 130 |
| 2.5.4 Neutralization- Exciting Ethical Responsibility | 134 |
| 2.5.5 <i>Greenwashing</i> - Manicuring the Corporate Image | 135 |
| 2.5.6 Consumers’ Education versus Corporate Social Responsibility- The Everyday Men’s Taste, the Everyday Men’s Ethical Design..... | 138 |
| 2.5.7 Collective Responsibility - Does Democracy Really Work Here?..... | 144 |
| | |
| 2.6 The Role of the Designers in the Implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility | 152 |
| 2.6.1 What is Contemporary Design?- A Corrosive Profession..... | 152 |
| 2.6.2 The Ethical Design Remedy- The Lasting Combat..... | 156 |
| 2.6.3 Different Case Studies, Different Practices of Corporate Social Responsibility Ethics | 161 |
| 2.6.4 The Multidimensional Character of the Designer’s Profession..... | 175 |
| 2.6.5 The Designers’ Wish List- Designers as Sustainability Main Performers | 178 |
| 2.6.6 Designers as Social Brokers- Creating a Bridge with the Consumers . | 180 |
| 2.6.7 A Cross-Players’ Function of the Creators in Corporate Social Responsibility | 182 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 3. Research Design and Methodology | 190 |
| 3.1 Literature Review | 190 |
| 3.2 The Elito Method..... | 191 |
| 3.3 The Literature Review Main Themes | 192 |
| 3.4 Research Setting- Quantitative Research- The Survey..... | 195 |
| 3.4.1 Respondents | 195 |
| 3.4.2 The Questions | 197 |
| 3.4.3 Data Collection | 201 |
| 3.4.4 Reliability | 202 |
| 3.5 Qualitative Research – Semi-Structured Interviews..... | 202 |
| | |
| 4. Field Work, Data Analysis, Report Results | 204 |
| 4.1 First Part -Survey Dedicated to CSR as a Perceived Object..... | 211 |
| 4.2 Second Part -Survey Dedicated to Designers’ Perception on the Customers | 217 |
| 4.3 Third Part and Fourth Part -Survey on the Designers’ CSR Perception in Context of Marketing and Company Operation | 223 |
| 4.4 The Fifth Part -Survey on the Designers’ job duties in context of CSR..... | 227 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 4.5 The Sixth Part – The Respondents’ Demographics and Work Place | 235 |
| 4.6 Additional Cross- Analysis..... | 239 |
| 4.7 The Interviews | 246 |
| 5. Discussion of Results | 274 |
| 5.1 CSR as a Perceived Object | 274 |
| 5.1.1 Contemporary Introduction of Corporate Social Responsibility by the Clothing Industry..... | 277 |
| 5.2 Designers as Actors that Perceive | 281 |
| 5.3 Organizational Context of CSR Application..... | 282 |
| 5.3.1 Designers and Large Enterprises in Comparison with SME in the Context of Corporate Social Responsibility | 282 |
| 5.3.2 Designers and SME in the Context of Corporate Social Responsibility | 293 |
| 5.3.3 Designers, Ownership Structures, and Corporate Social Responsibility | 295 |
| 5.4 Collective Meaning for Fashion Designers | 297 |
| 6. Conclusions, Recommendations And Future Research | 299 |
| 6.1 Designers’ Commitment..... | 299 |
| 6.1.1 Designers as CSR Communicators..... | 299 |
| 6.1.2 Designers as Corporate CSR Trainers | 301 |
| 6.1.3 Designers’ Role in CSR through Technological Solutions As The | |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Proper CSR Tool. Designers to be Underestimated CSR Players..... | 302 |
| 6.2 Industry Adaptation of CSR | 304 |
| 6.2.1 CSR Not Common..... | 304 |
| 6.2.2 Managers’ Role In Conditioning CSR and Setting Up The Designers’ Position In CSR | 305 |
| 6.3 CSR Implementation and the Company’s Dimension..... | 307 |
| 6.3.1 Complexity As an Obstacle For CSR..... | 307 |
| 6.3.2 Outsourcing Commitments..... | 309 |
| 6.3.3 Education Commitment..... | 310 |
| 6.3.4 CSR Adaptation through Creativity and Uniqueness..... | 314 |
| 6.3.5 CSR Through Local, Micro Economy And <i>Slow Fashion</i> | 316 |
| 6.3.6 CSR Through Choosing the Right Consumers..... | 318 |
| 6.3.7 The Role of Self- Regulations | 319 |
| 6.3.8 Governments’ Involvement and Support for CSR | 321 |
| 6.4 Limitations and Future Research..... | 322 |
| 6.5 Final Remarks..... | 323 |
| References | 325 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 1: Q1. In your perspective, where did you get your CSR knowledge from? Mark the importance (1-5 scale);..... | 211 |
| Table 2: Q2. In your perspective, to what issues did the knowledge/ education relate to? Mark the importance (1-5 scale)..... | 213 |
| Table 3: Q3. In your perspective, did the education you got at school on CSR prepare you for designing in this area?..... | 214 |
| Table 4: Q4. From your perspective, did it give you knowledge on different CSR actors? Mark the importance in the school program (1-5 scale);..... | 216 |
| Table 5: Q5. In your perspective, what CSR's components are important for the consumers? Mark the importance (1-10 scale) | 218 |
| Table 6: Q6. According to your opinion, what are the reasons for buying clothes related to CSR? Mark the importance (1-5 scale); | 219 |
| Table 7: Q7. According to your opinion, what are the reasons for customers not buying goods related to CSR? Mark the importance (1-5 scale); | 220 |
| Table 8: Q8. In your opinion who are the most involved consumers into CSR? Mark their share in the group; | 221 |
| Table 9: Q9. In your perspective, to what extent has the fashion industry been taking into account consumers' role in CSR implementation?;..... | 223 |
| Table 10: Q10. According to your perspective, mark the importance (1-5 scale); ... | 224 |
| Table 11: Q11. According to your perspective, mark the importance (1-5 scale); ... | 226 |
| Table 12: Q12. To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation, mark the importance (1-5 scale); | 228 |
| Table 13: Q13. In your present job and / or company, to what extent are the following jobs (or equivalent) really contributing to CSR implementation;..... | 230 |
| Table 14: Q14. In your perspective, to what extent shall the consumers' role be taken in CSR implementation by the company, mark the importance (scale 1 – 10); | 232 |
| Table 15: Q15. In your perspective, to what extent shall the designer's role be reinforced in CSR implementation? Mark the importance (1-5 scale);..... | 233 |
| Table 16: Q16. In your opinion, are designers becoming more aware and reflective on their role in CSR dissemination and implementation, mark the scale (1-10);..... | 234 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 17: Respondents' age;..... | 236 |
| Table 18: Respondents' education;..... | 236 |
| Table 19: Respondents work experience;..... | 237 |
| Table 20: Organization of the respondents' work for; | 238 |
| Table 21: Importance of other designers as a knowledge source and company that designers work for; | 239 |
| Table 22: To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation and company that designers work for- briefs from managers; | 240 |
| Table 23: To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation and company that designers work for- company dimension; | 241 |
| Table 24: Knowledge on different CSR actors in the school program according to work experience..... | 242 |
| Table 25: Issues concerning knowledge/ education relate to work experience..... | 243 |
| Table 26: Statement concerning CSR and work experience- reputation..... | 244 |
| Table 27: Statement concerning CSR and work experience- management..... | 245 |

List of Charts

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chart 1: Q1. In your perspective, where did you get your CSR knowledge from? Mark the importance (1-5 scale);..... | 211 |
| Chart 2: Q2. In your perspective, to what issues did the knowledge/ education relate to? Mark the importance (1-5 scale)..... | 213 |
| Chart 3: Q3. In your perspective, did the education you got at school on CSR prepare you for designing in this area?..... | 214 |
| Chart 3.1: Importance of school as a knowledge source and the perception of CSR knowledge?; N=100..... | 215 |
| Chart 4: Q4. From your perspective, did it give you knowledge on different CSR actors? Mark the importance in the school program (1-5 scale);..... | 216 |
| Chart 5: Q5. In your perspective, what CSR's components are important for the consumers? Mark the importance (1-10 scale) | 218 |
| Chart 6: Q6. According to your opinion, what are the reasons for buying clothes related to CSR? Mark the importance (1-5 scale); | 219 |
| Chart 7: Q7. According to your opinion, what are the reasons for customers not buying goods related to CSR? Mark the importance (1-5 scale); | 220 |
| Chart 8: Q8. In your opinion who are the most involved consumers into CSR? Mark their share in the group; | 221 |
| Chart 9: Q9. In your perspective, to what extent has the fashion industry been taking into account consumers' role in CSR implementation?;..... | 222 |
| Chart 10: Q10. According to your perspective, mark the importance (1-5 scale);.... | 224 |
| Chart 11: Q11. According to your perspective, mark the importance (1-5 scale);.... | 225 |
| Chart 12: Q12. To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation, mark the importance (1-5 scale); | 227 |
| Chart 13: Q13. In your present job and / or company, to what extent are the following jobs (or equivalent) really contributing to CSR implementation;..... | 230 |
| Chart 14: Q14. In your perspective, to what extent shall the consumers' role be taken in CSR implementation by the company, mark the importance (scale 1 – 10); | 231 |
| Chart 15: Q15. In your perspective, to what extent shall the designer's role be reinforced in CSR implementation? Mark the importance (1-5 scale);..... | 232 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chart16: Q16. In your opinion, are designers becoming more aware and reflective on their role in CSR dissemination and implementation, mark the scale (1-10);..... | 234 |
| Chart 17: Respondents' age;..... | 235 |
| Chart 18: Respondents' education;..... | 236 |
| Chart 19: Respondents work experience; | 237 |
| Chart 20: Organization of the respondents' work for;..... | 238 |
| Chart 21: Importance of other designers as a knowledge source and company that designers work for; | 239 |
| Chart 22: To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation and company that designers work for- briefs from managers; | 240 |
| Chart 23: To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation and company that designers work for- company dimension;..... | 241 |
| Chart 24: Knowledge on different CSR actors in the school program according to work experience..... | 242 |
| Chart 25: Issues concerning knowledge/ education relate to work experience | 243 |
| Chart 26: Statement concerning CSR and work experience- reputation | 244 |
| Chart 27: Statement concerning CSR and work experience- management..... | 245 |

List of Figures

Figure 1 Establishing Research Question and Developing Empirical Process 190
Figure 2 Perceptions- Research Scheme Organization..... 194

List of Abbreviations

CEOs: Chief Executive Officers

CNSR- Consumers' Social Responsibility

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

DFS: Design for Sustainability

EU: European Union

FSC- Forest Stewardship Council

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

SME: Small/ Medium Enterprise

MNE: Multinational Enterprise

List of Acronyms

PETA: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

SAC- Sustainable Apparel Coalition

Glossary

CEO- Chief Executive Officer/Top Manager/ Executive, in case of SME the Owner: “A chief executive officer (CEO) is the highest-ranking executive in a company, and her/ his primary responsibilities include making major corporate decisions, managing the overall operations and resources of a company, acting as the main point of communication between the board of directors and corporate operations, and being the public face of the company.”¹

Democratic Fashion: another name for *fast fashion*, i.e. clothes that are widely accessible and distributed worldwide, produced and sold with low costs.²

Fashion Buyer: a professional responsible for purchase of materials, semi- finished products or ready products. A fashion buyer is “travelling the world to select the latest pieces off fashion week runways”, is “responsible for selecting and ordering what is sold in stores to ensure maximum profit”. Fashion buyers “constantly stay on the lookout for new brands, designers and trends”. “Once the buying process gets going, the buyer writes up buys, rolls out the budgets and processes orders”. They “can also be responsible for sourcing fabric and materials for brands” and they “need to have a vast network with suppliers that sell fabric in bulk as well as in smaller quantities. Also, a good relationship with mills and suppliers is key. Oftentimes they will work with fabric agents that can offer advice and better trading terms with the mills”.³

Marketing Manager: “(...) fashion marketing managers often help create advertising campaigns and branding efforts. (...) Positions with larger companies or corporations often require fashion marketing managers to monitor the reactions of customers and retail outlets to new products and brand initiatives”.⁴

¹ <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/ceo.asp> [Accessed February 2019]

² <https://www.mochni.com/is-fast-fashion-really-democratic-fashion/> [Accessed February 2019]
<http://selfpassage.info/CoF/CoF.htm> [Accessed February 2019]

³ <https://fashionunited.uk/news/fashion/fashion-careers-what-does-a-fashion-buyer-do/2019011841092>
[Accessed February 2019]

⁴ https://study.com/articles/Fashion_Marketing_Manager_Job_Description_Duties_and_Requirements.html

Product Manager: a professional in the clothing company responsible for selection and approval of the designed and pre-manufacture garments for final sales and market introduction. Product managers take care of the final product, its quality, final price and supplying it to the market.⁵ “Sitting with the Design and Production departments of a fashion/retail company, a Product Manager will oversee the Product Development team and production team as well as working closely with the design and sales teams within the fashion company's head office”. What is more the Product Manager is responsible for “gathering and prioritising product and customer requirements for the fashion/retail company, defining the product vision of the fashion brand, and working closely with engineering, sales & marketing, and design to ensure revenue and customer satisfaction goals are met”.⁶

Artistic Director/ Creative Director: a professional working for the company to compose artistic, meaning aesthetical and technological guidelines for the collections, recommending the trends to be followed and running the look of the whole set of clothes to be presented to the Product Manager.

Fashion Designer: for the usage of this work there were included synonyms of this profession- Creator, Inventor. This job is precisely described in Section 2.6.4.

Fast Fashion: apparel collections that are manufactured and put on sale in a quick, low cost and collective way. Such name describes a phenomenon of clothes produced globally, usually outsourced from the so-called developing countries and commonly associated with low costs of production and sale, as well as with poor working conditions. *Fast fashion* is generally considered to have negative impact on the environment and human and animal welfare. *Slow fashion* is contrary to the above.⁷

⁵ <https://fashionunited.nl/modevacatures/functies/product-manager-banen> [Accessed February 2019]

⁶ <https://www.fashionpersonnel.co.uk/jobseekers/retail-job-sectors/product-manager> [Accessed February 2019]

⁷ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fast%20fashion> [Accessed February 2019]
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/fast-fashion> [Accessed February 2019]
<https://www.macmillandictionary.com/buzzword/entries/fast-fashion.html> [Accessed February 2019]

Global South Manufacturers: producers, subcontractors, and suppliers from countries that are considered to be developing; usually they are geographically situated in southern regions of the Earth.⁸

The *Higg Index*: an Internet application created to help fashion designers to measure and foretell the environmental and social impact of the designed garments, based on the analysis of technological and production data from a given organisation.⁹

Local Company: small scale organization that produces, distributes and sales commodities in a limited to a city, district or a small state area.¹⁰

Mulesing: the process of cutting parts of a living sheep's flesh from around its rump in order to prevent fly strike. Although the procedure is conducted without painkillers, it is officially approved in Australia, what exposes the country to public criticism and disapproval from international animal welfare organisations.¹¹

⁸ <https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/globalsouthpolitics/2018/08/08/global-south-what-does-it-mean-and-why-use-the-term/> [Accessed February 2019]

<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/exploitation-or-emancipation-women-workers-in-the-garment-industry/>

⁹ <https://apparelcoalition.org/the-higg-index/> [Accessed February 2019]

¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/2014/sep/11/fashion-entrepreneurs-how-find-factory-make-products> [Accessed February 2019]

¹¹ <https://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-clothing/wool-industry/mulesing/> [Accessed February 2019]

1.Introduction.

The research objectives of this thesis that intends to investigate the CSR area began with a thorough literature review that provided empirical material for this study, revealing the main themes with regard to further developments and leading CSR actors in the garment industry. The available publications allow for analysis of CSR on several fields, which could be grouped into leading themes: the history and definition of CSR, CSR in the fashion industry, marketing as a prospective agent of CSR, the company's role in ethical conduct, customers' contribution to CSR, and, finally, designers as significant CSR players.

Through looking at CSR in terms of a perceived object, the research has resulted in reaching for first paradigms of this work as CSR definition and its main three application areas in practical sense. The literature review opened space for mixed methodology approach on the one hand and the discussion on the main factors contributing to CSR in fashion on the other, as well as about what the interactions between the leading CSR actors are and where the missing gaps in CSR implementation are. As the last chapter of this work indicates, out of the many explored themes and players it is the designers who seem to offer a large potential with regard to CSR application in the garment industry.

However, although the evaluation of literature has provided some answers, it also has posed new questions and areas to be further investigated through surveys and interviews. It opens door to supplementary discussions on CSR as the perceived object, the designers as actors, and their commitment and role in organisational contexts. Altogether, the dissertation has taken the following form: *Implementing CSR in the Fashion Industry: Measuring the Designers' Perceptions and Commitment.*

1.1 Problem Characterization

According to the reflections and statements coming from Club of Rome (Meadows, Meadows, Randers, 1972), in the past we have inherited a certain set of habits: hedonistic, egocentric and technologically centred. We, as humans have put ourselves in the core of the universe and of interests. We have been consuming the earth almost without restrictions, leading to its endangered state, where the natural resources are declining; the globe is contaminated and ecologically abused. The earth is mutating its climate, its landscape, and its conditions of living. Within one generations' life we are witnessing changes that used to happen in the past within centuries, not decades or years. Soon the world will have to cope with overpopulation problem, resulting in lack of food, starvation, health problems, lack of space to live and of course related to these ones economic and political challenges. Already the results of these habits are starting to influence our present existence and will definitely influence our future. Club of Rome's vision of crisis depending on the limits of growth and unrestricted industrialization is even more accurate than before.

A catastrophic image of the earth as consumed and heavily damaged by human activity, bad design and unsustainable manufacture is likewise shared by Chapman (2005):

Within the last 50 years alone, the world has lost over a quarter of its ancient rain forests, posing a large threat not only to biodiversity but also to the planet's air quality. In addition, both carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and the consumption of fossil fuels themselves have increased almost 400 per cent within the same period, catalyzing further irreversible devastation to the biosphere. (...) Global climate is already showing signs of mutation, with current projections indicating an average global temperature increase of up to 6° Celsius (C) over the next few hundred years. (...) Add to this the mounting problems of waste, acidification of soil and groundwater, deforestation, air pollution, diminishing natural resources, ozone depletion and global warming, then the picture does start to appear somewhat bleak, no matter what your ethical stance may be (p.33).

Disturbing numbers, relating to apocalyptic threats to the ecosystem caused by overpopulation and hazardous consumers' attitude to earth as unfinishable foundation of goods are similarly presented in catastrophic mood by Bandura (2007) who alarms:

There are limits to the number of people the earth can support sustainably. The world's population was 3 billion in 1950, more than doubled to 6.5 billion in the next 50 years, and it increases by about a billion every 15 years toward a rise of over 9 billion in the year 2050. Adding billions of consumers will take a heavy toll on the earth's finite resources and ecological system. The diverse forms of environmental degradation suggest that we have already exceeded the size of the human population the earth can sustain. (p.9)

Gore (2006) joins his voice to such critical point of view, pointing at the situation of overproduction and overconsumption causing global warming and the following consequences as a state of serious, international crisis, alarming on urgent, wide-reaching reaction. However, Al Gore, Oscar winning ecological orator and author of bestselling "Inconvenient Truth" book managed to gain a worldwide applause for his contribution to spreading knowledge on the global warming factors; on the other hand he was negated by a group of scientist and journalist as lacking scientific proofs and committing scientific errors in his calculations (Wayne, 2014).

Likewise, in the tone of global, ecological danger due to our unsustainable habits and planetary ecological collapse Smith (2013) carries his worries due to badly managed natural resources, unsustainable overproduction and overconsumption.

Yet despite all the ringing alarm bells, no corporation and no government can oppose growth and, instead, every capitalist government in the world is putting pedal to the metal to accelerate growth, to drive us full throttle off the cliff to collapse. Marxists have never had a better argument against capitalism than this inescapable and apocalyptic "contradiction". (p.127)

It is hard to deny a threat of global, ecological collapse, that will cause changes impossible to sustain by the world in which we live. The problems of economic, environmental and psychological nature are culminating now and it is necessary to look at these difficulties from scientific and objective perspective. The change of habits of our existence is necessary, the methodology of research and the structure of the whole economic and social system call for transformation. Redesigning our customs and the surroundings into more

sustainable ones, including corporations whose activity impact globally members of the system is crucial for our survival.

However, in order to change we should share with others how to recognize problems and our enemies. These enemies are our old, bad, unsustainable habits. The new choices are to be based on solid knowledge and new practices, which notice contemporary, global problems of environmental and social nature. The future habits should not rely on the competition rules, but they should work on the basis of a debate model with new responsibilities and ideas. The converted concept for human existence is not to be material or profit focused. The innovative theory for designing the future must be based on changing old habits and transforming towards novel ones that are grounded in sustainability, responsibility and long perspective attitude (Meadows, Meadows, Randers, 1972).

1.2 Corporations as Perceived Object

Thinking about the transition, humans have to structure their activities where failure is something possible and the process itself will be probably fuelled with tension and disagreement. The financial pressures and political influences might be one of many factors that will be against this transformation. These subjects would be international financial organizations, banks that root their functioning model on unlimited growth and natural environment exploitation and also corporations, that base their existence on transformation of natural resources into commodities. The introduced changes would limit these objects' profits and in a best case would force them to costly fluctuations of their strategies. No surprise it will be not the majority of the society that will follow these conversions and that there will be no such break as expected or even feedback as we could assume (Klein, 2000, Klein, 2007, Harvey, 2006, Giovanni & Silver, 2001).

The problems are summing up globally because the world functions globally as one organism. Thus the difficulties are to be solved internationally, where many factors and actors are taken under consideration. The corporations, as global organisms, their workers, including designers and producers, may have such powers. Taking into consideration the

negative vision of the planet's survival perspective there is a need for a plan for the new world that is based on a responsible, sustainable scheme where all participants of earth's existence are taken under consideration while arranging the future reality. Thus, different actors of the manufacture stage are supposed to be addressed with accurate questions and actions to be analysed why and who is responsible for the next changes and what could be the mechanisms that would work for the positive transformation. CSR- Corporate Social Responsibility is perceived to be one of them.

Regarding the study area of this work, it is important to notice fashion industry expresses the fearsome state of the matters accurately. Although most of the global brands possess CSR policy, *fast fashion* is selling well and production and consumption of new garments each year are increasing (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company, 2016), where it is commonly linked by scientists and public opinion with unethical and unsustainable practices that escalate environmental problems. Current research points at ecological and ethical glitches harassing clothing design and manufacture but at the very same time failing to evaluate the right CSR proponents within garment industry. Such situation might be related to abundance of open interpretations of CSR and lack of clear scientific and practical solutions, what leaves a space for further research. Regarding dispute on new habits and novel ideas for design and production that should be absorbed by the fashion business, there is a shortage of studies devoted to this specific area, where scientists still try to untie the best, possible activities and actors that would work for the better changes and that would support CSR most effectively. As the planet itself has got limited recovery potentials, specialists, including the designers that work for clothing companies also have limited possibilities to cure the situation. However, they still do have these opportunities that can be performed in the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility. To enhance the impact of CSR practices, a new and more profound research shall be conducted, leaving space for innovative debates and studies on this topic. This work intends to investigate the missing breach in contemporary studies devoted to CSR application in design and production in clothing industry.

1.3 Corporate Social Responsibility Theory

1.3.1 Critical Approach to the Universal Definition of CSR

To introduce CSR- Corporate Social Responsibility and make the reader familiar with its scientific definition, it would be necessary to revise the literature concerning these imperatives and its official name introduction in the market and in science. CSR metrics is not that old; however its academic descriptions represent different standards and assist a variety of approaches. Although there is an abundance of studies dedicated to this subject, the reality of universal function of such theory is in process.

As Portney (2008) has claimed, CSR is not that new and it had been practiced before, but “it lacked such a sexy name” (p.262). However, the prominence of citations of Corporate Social Responsibility theory coming from Archie B. Carroll makes a kind of substance for the academic definition. Carroll (1999) has tried to embrace the theme with a discourse between company’s legitimacy, charity, its social obligations, morality and social consciousness. As he has advanced the topic with some reasons to be sceptical about recognition of perfect, universal framework for CSR:

The term [social responsibility] is a brilliant one; it means something, but not always the same thing, to everybody. To some it conveys the idea of legal responsibility or liability; to others, it means socially responsible behaviour in an ethical sense; to still others, the meaning transmitted is that of "responsible for," in a causal mode; many simply equate it with a charitable contribution; some take it to mean socially conscious; many of those who embrace it most fervently see it as a mere synonym for "legitimacy," in the context of "belonging" or being proper or valid; a few see it as a sort of fiduciary duty imposing higher standards of behaviour on businessmen than on citizens at large. (p. 1)

Such a definition is ascribed to Polonsky and Jevons (2009), who also have admitted that CSR is a broad concept that shields a variety of environmental, social, and ethical responsibilities of an organization, and there have been abundant, different descriptions of this phenomenon in the literature over the years. The authors have pointed at Corporate Social Responsibility as a crucial element of global business strategies that have evolved

during the last 40 years, during which time it has been misinterpreted and just treated as managerial device to improve company's reputation.

There are other voices that give doubts whether it is possible to create general description of CSR. Argandoña and von Weltzien Hoivik (2009) have been sceptical about universal CSR definition pointing out national differences, time contradictions and dynamics of history that influence the final account of CSR concept. The authors see CSR as an ethical idea, depending on historical, cultural, political and socio- economic conditions, what makes in their opinion global CSR standards unlikely. They also point out worldwide, distant structures as other negative factors to make one, global theory for CSR.

Saying that social responsibilities of a company are of an ethical nature does not contradict the fact that the scope and content of CSR changes along time and throughout places. It is the same relationship that we find between ethical principles and its application in specific settings: many ethical schools will recognize that the firms have duties toward the environment, but the detailed content of these duties will not be the same in the US, China, or Germany, or in any of these countries in the twenty-first century and one hundred years ago, or in a small rural area and in a big city, or in a chemical factory and in a travel agency. This is not ethical relativism. (p.230)

In contrast, Whelan, Moon and Grant (2013) have noted that “whilst the CSR literature is relatively diverse, there are some common themes. Most notably, the CSR literature is broadly concerned with conceiving, explaining, and/or prescribing, business and society interactions, and with understanding the impact corporate policies and practices have upon social goods” (p.780). Accordingly, the writers perceive the CSR literature as encompassing various business–society perspectives, corporate citizenship, corporate social performance, stakeholder theory and also obligations of businessmen, businessmen's decisions and actions to the corporation's responsibilities. Also it is noticed the topic might be treated as the capacity of a corporation to respond to social pressure as the corporation is placed in the centre of the discourse.

Following this stance, Rahbek, Pedersen and Gwozdz (2013) have likewise admitted that cultural differences influence the possibilities of defining universally CSR as they are

trying to figure out the CSR theory also conditioned by different types of attitudes: “What seems to distinguish mainstream institutional theory from the CSR literature is that the latter is open to responses beyond conformance and resistance. In fact, over the years, a number of CSR scholars have discussed typologies for the span of CSR approaches” (p.249).

Supporting such claim, Cacho-Elizondo, Loussaïef, Pettersen and Tobiassen (2012) have similarly highlighted that perception of CSR is conditioned by culture, politics and it cannot be separated from contextual factors that regard different nations. These factors are seen by the authors as affecting development and practice of CSR.

However, instead of variances and different points of view, while checking the literature most of the researchers relate to similar sources, consistent factors and mutual CSR history study what shall be expressed in following text. These definitions evolve and are enriched each day by new findings, but there is a clear impression, the basic description of CSR could be already clarified. While studying literature, there could be found a common denominator for most of the revised papers and quoted writers. Most of them have analysed Archie B. Carroll’s works on CSR and most of them cite Carroll’s definition of Corporate Social Responsibility. That implies assumption, that there is in fact one, regularly regarded concept for CSR, at least in a narrow, basic form, which could be developed or adopted globally.

1.3.2 Archie B. Carroll’s Definition of Corporate Social Responsibility/ Brief History of Corporate Social Responsibility Classification

While examining CSR history and regarding CSR name and definition beginnings, Archie B. Carroll has admitted that classifications of CSR opened in the 50-ties and started to really flourish in the 70-ties, by the help of main, most notable contributors to the definitional construct: Harold L. Johnson, Keith Davis, George A. Steiner, Richard Eells and Clarence C. Walton, S. Prakash Sethi, Lee Preston and James Post, and Archie B. Carroll himself. Carroll’s popularity and scientific fame of other eight writers that joined

his voice in CSR theory is indicated by a high number of credentials of scientists¹². This abundant group of experts followed Archie B. Carroll's description of CSR or integrated his opinion in their scientific works, marking his influence on Corporate Social Responsibility theory.

Following Carroll's popular classification, the writer has described Corporate Social Responsibility as company's social, environmental and ethical obligations that go beyond legal requirements and include interest of other stakeholders. "The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (Carroll, 1979, p. 500). Carroll has also developed this theory later on:

In my view, CSR involves the conduct of a business so that it is economically profitable, law abiding, ethical and socially supportive.

(...) be socially responsible . . . then means that profitability and obedience to the law are foremost conditions to discussing the firm's ethics and the extent to which it supports the society in which it exists with contributions of money, time and talent. Thus, CSR is composed of four parts: economic, legal, ethical and voluntary or philanthropic. (p. 604)

The author has related to opinion coming from Thomas M. Jones (1980) consistent with his perception of CSR theory:

¹² Argandon 2010, Hoivik 2010, Arrigo 2012, Axelsson 2015, Jahan 2015, Balmer 2007, Fukukawa 2007, Gray 2007, Bigne 2012, Curras-Peres 2012, Aldas-Manzano 2012, Fernandes 2013, Monte 2013, Pimenta 2013, Afonso 2013, Gupta 2012, Hodges 2012, Isaksson 2014, Harvey 2014, Jahdi 2009, Acikdilli 2009, Kit Yee 2012, Kozlowski 2012, Bardecki 2012, Laudal 2010, Maloni 2006, Brown 2006, Mohr 2001, Webb 2001, Harris 2001, Moon 2007, Nakakoji 1993, Paz-Vega 2008, Pedersen 2013, Poetz 2013, Polonsky 2009, Jevons 2009, Pomeroy 2008, Dolnicar 2008, Preuss 2009, Perschke 2010, Yun Bae 2012, Heide 2008, Grønhaug 2008, Van Geffen 2010, Van Tonder 2013, Roberts-Lombard 2013, Vuletich 2013, Wanderley 2008, Lucian 2008, Farache 2008, Filho 2008, Moon 2013, Witek-Hajduk 2014, Yin 2012, Zhang 2012, Witek-Hajduk 2012, Haas 2014, Brønn 2001, Vrioni 2001, Craig Smith 2003, DeWinter-Schmitt 2007, Gwozdz 2013, Towers 2012, Perry 2014, Wood 2014, Sheth 2010, Sethia 2010, Srinivas 2010, Arrigo 2013, Carrigan 2013, Moraes 2013, McEachern 2013, Gallego-Alvarez 2010, Prado-Lorenzo 2010, Rodrigues-Dominguez 2010, Garcia-Sanchez 2010, Searcy 2012, Lopez-De-Pedro 2011, Rimbau-Gilabert 2011, Vaaland 2008, Van Der Smissen 2012, Whelan 2013, Grant 2013

Corporate social responsibility is the notion that corporations have an obligation to constituent groups in society other than stockholders and beyond that prescribed by law and union contract. Two facets of this definition are critical. First, the obligation must be voluntarily adopted; behaviour influenced by the coercive forces of law or union contract is not voluntary. Second, the obligation is a broad one, extending beyond the traditional duty to shareholders to other societal groups such as customers, employees, suppliers, and neighboring communities. (p. 59-60)

As it has been revealed before in this paper, Carroll's characterization and such CSR theory identification is most often tracked in scientific papers. Although according to Iatridis (2011) a recent study¹³ counts almost 37 definitions of CSR, it could be therefore concluded from the writer that Carroll's theory is one of the most significant. However, it might be agreed with Iatridis it is still underestimated. What is significant to be noticed, Carroll himself claims that his theory and supporting him scientists' definition of CSR was not rejected by other writers and there were no other consistent and generally acclaimed definitions added to the body of literature till the late 90-ties. Carroll's (1999) confidence in his research article is clearly explained by the author himself, who claims that although his theory was developed by other researchers with new themes and directions, it was still consistent with his description of CSR theory.

In this sense, steady brackets for CSR theory are conceivable relating to Carroll's CSR explanation and its popularity in scientific world due to the fact in existing literature his description is recognized as a potential framework for CSR theory.

Other formalized schemes for CSR that would enrich understanding of this model and that are similar to Carroll's idea are significant to be marked. The European Commission identifies CSR- Corporate Social Responsibility as "A concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis (European Commission 2011)" (Kozlowski, Bardecki and Searcy, p. 18, 2012). Regarding the above, "voluntary" and "profit sacrificing" are likewise words that could be added to the body of CSR definition. For Portney (2008) the term "voluntary" is central, because there is no serious debate about CSR apart from focus on the things companies do that go beyond what is required under the rules of laws and regulations.

¹³ Dahlsrud, A., 2008. How Corporate Social Responsibility is Defined: an Analysis of 37 Definitions, Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, Vol. 15, pp.1-13

Following CSR doctrine based on phrases as: “beyond legal obligations or social orientation”, Bronn and Vrioni (2001) also claim the concept of corporate social responsibility was developed primarily during the 1960s in the USA taking under account that firms have responsibilities that go beyond their lawful duties.

Succeeding CSR definition development, the above fragment is also consistent with Carroll (1999), who writes CSR doctrine started to appear after II World War in the 50-ties, with publication of Howard Bowen’s book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessmen* (1953) that was referring to business obligations in the terms of objectives and values of our society. The scholar linked to the results of a survey conducted in a popular *Fortune Magazine*, describing social consciousness of the company management as responsibility for the consequences of their actions in the area somewhat wider than the one enclosed by their profit or loss statement. Bowen’s pioneering theory of CSR included an original, brief description of social responsibility area possibilities not as a remedy but as a truth that should guide businessmen in the future. “Bowen’s (1953) work proceeded from the belief that the several hundred largest businesses were vital centres of power and decision making and that the actions of these firms touched the lives of citizens at many points” (p.269). What is very important to mention, Carroll has named Bowen the “Father of Corporate Social Responsibility”.

Witek-Hajduk (2014) analysing CSR, calls to Elkington (1997) and the need to balance between social, environmental and economic boundaries of a company’s activity, where company’s performance should be evaluated by using both financial and social and environmental activities. The author has also adjusted to similar definition of CSR by referring to Carroll (1999) and Carroll and Schwartz (2003) “who proposed a non-hierarchical model consisting of three areas of corporate social responsibility: economic, legal and ethical, while philanthropic activity was incorporated into the economic and ethical responsibility because it could be seen as an activity motivated ethically or economically” (p.1172).

Continuing to study CSR history, the 60-ties brought a significant growth in attempts to formalize CSR name. Following Lopez-De-Pedro and Rimbau-Gilabert (2011) it was the

mid-sixties when the term Corporate Social Responsibility primary emerged within the context of business studies but also this time mostly by Keith Davis, who set his definition of social responsibility as decisions and actions held at least in part beyond the company's economical or technical attention. As cited in Carroll (1999), Davis (1973, p. 312-313) identified CSR as:

For purposes of this discussion it [CSR] refers to the firm's consideration of and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm (...) It is the firm's obligation to evaluate in its decision-making processes the effects of its decisions on the external social system in a manner that will accomplish social benefits along with the traditional economic gains which the firm seeks. (...). It means that social responsibility begins where the law ends. A firm is not being socially responsible if it merely complies with the minimum requirements of the law because this is what any good citizen would do. (p. 277)

Vuletich (2013) correspondingly finds the 60-ties as time when CSR was established at a systematic level, addressing the environmental and social impacts on the field and responsibility of business activities "Since the 1960's when CSR became a firmly established practice, most businesses approached their CSR policy by abiding by existing regulations and making incremental changes at the product and process level" (p.3).

CSR history is also analysed in the context of a whole group of stakeholders and happenings that not only create an environment for the business to act more responsibly but also for socially responsible consumerism. The history shows that after the *flower power* of the 60-ties the consumers drew more attention towards ecology, social welfare and animal protection. Analysing CSR it is impossible to avoid its performance on different actors and their meaning in the whole concept of Corporate Social Responsibility, where the influence of consumers is linked with corporate ethical performance.

The 70-ties made even better background for CSR to develop, in the context of consumers' support, what was expressed in Opinion Research Corporation, where two thirds of the respondents communicated a belief that corporations have a moral obligation to even sacrifice some profits to target a social development (Carroll, 1999). Remarkable, the need

for paying attention to corporate moral obligations was additionally suggested coming from social demands and potential additional profits derived from such acting, what was also pointed due to social and environmental movements of the 60'ties and 70'ties.

On the other hand Leonidou, Leonidou and Kvasova (2010) have connected CSR with the responsible consumer appearance, however much later, adding details about the phenomena actors and activity fields as animal welfare and environment.

The emergence of ecologically-conscious consumers was first noted in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as a response to the appearance of worrying signs (e.g., land degradation, animal extinction, atmospheric pollution) concerning the systematic maltreatment of the environment (Fisk, 1973; Kinnear, Taylor, & Ahmed 1974). Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s green issues were not at the forefront of consumer concerns, mainly due to better economic prosperity, spiralling oil prices, and tightening pollution control (Schlegelmilch, Bohlen, & Diamantopoulos, 1996). However, with the emergence of a new set of environmental problems in the 1990s (e.g., global warming, ozone hole, Exxon Valdez case), consumers began to seek environmentally friendly alternatives in their purchases. In the 2000s, the ecological sensitivity of consumers has skyrocketed, reflecting increasing public concern to halt, and even reverse, the negative effect of the human factor on the environment. (p.3)

Vowles (2000) has claimed “ the idea of ‘responsible consumption’ was first recognized in the 1970s but he points at the 80-ties to blossom green consumerism, due to economy boom and relating to that movement of people who transferred their attention towards other than monetary priorities in their lives what addresses new participants of the ethical process.

Along similar lines, Gan, Wee, Ozanne, Kao (2008) have also pointed out that in the 80-ties the consumers started to realize their behaviour contributes to ecological problems, making them a significant group of potential CSR influencers.

Vaaland, Heide and Grønhaug (2008) have likewise stressed out the role of other actors in CSR definition construct, marking the company's activities are designed and conducted

among other actors and on different fields that are potentially affected by negative influence of corporate activity.

Developing the discussion, Kibert, Thiele, Peterson and Monroe (2012) have enhanced understanding of company's ethical concept and impact, not only through corporate behaviour, but also through the other stakeholders it affects, freshly embracing detailed subjects impacted by the firm's conduct, what shall facilitate introduction for the next section of this work.

(...) an ethic of sustainability, like any social ethic, should address the question of rights or interests. A deontological ethic is more likely to assert that people (and perhaps non-human animals, plants, or places) have rights, while a Utilitarian ethic speaks of the interests that people or animals have in, for example, avoiding pain or seeking pleasure. In both cases, individuals and groups may incur duties or responsibilities in relation to the rights and interests of others. A coherent ethic must be clear about the foundational grounds for asserting the existence of rights or interests, the reasons for speaking of one or the other, the particular ethical claims that will be met, and ways of adjudicating between conflicting rights or interests. (p.79)

Conclusions

Summarizing, although CSR theories represent slightly alternating standards and the literature review assists a variety of approaches, where scholars still argue on the perfect definition of CSR, there emerges a model for the use of this research. It is a conclusion that a general theory of CSR could be based on Archie B. Carroll's description of this phenomenon, enriched with opinions coming from supporting him other authors. Although it leaves the theory still open to interpretation, a point of view could be secured where integration of world concepts for CSR is possible.

For the use of this work and also according to this research in CSR area a definition could be finally held, that CSR is such organization's internal and external activity related to ethical principles, where the main perceived subject- the company, consciously limits itself to reach also communal goals and includes interest of other actors in its business

operations. Regarding the withdrawn CSR theory, ethical corporate behaviour goes beyond legal obligations, embraces profit sacrifice and is run in the context of economic, lawful, ethical and voluntary involvement into welfare of other stakeholders.

It is an idea that is still being developed; including different participants' perspectives and considering it might be put under some fluctuations due to cultural differences, time changes and various CSR actors as the literature review indicates. Nevertheless, such description related to the definition expressed in Carroll's works and assisting him scientists is the mostly regarded and recognized in scientific literature, what makes a paradigm for this work.

1.3.3 Statement of the Problem

While exploring this incredibly fascinating phenomenon of Corporate Social Responsibility in garment industry, which allows for the broadening of knowledge in a cross-disciplinary, multi-theme, culturally diverse, and global way, a hidden obstacle was faced, namely the gap that struck regarding the unsatisfying impact of this concept in practical life. It was difficult to comprehend that although publications devoted to this topic are available and a number of existing companies challenge the CSR policy, sustainable, global clothes manufacture in general does not function.

By observing the market and collecting data from the media and scientific papers, one gets the impression that CSR is underestimated and capitalized by theoretical approach. What is more, in reality it does not follow its academic guidelines. Sadly, a fundamental contradiction can be noticed—although CSR is articulated in professional publications and correspondingly manifested to the public by the companies, the concept is still vague to many individuals that work in this sector, not to mention how mysterious it appears to the majority of consumers. Researchers suggest that CSR seems rather a peripheral issue in the whole design and production process globally, and it does not bring spectacular market effects that could otherwise be expected from such a decent activity.

However, what is most significant for recognizing the problem is that the current research seems to suffer from unclear answers regarding the effective CSR tools and actors. The

discourse on CSR is likewise full of polarized views on different main stakeholders such as management, consumers, or designers, which deepens the chaos in understanding the concept of CSR and makes it difficult to work out satisfactory and practical solutions to its implementation. Various papers focus on isolated, different actors, which leads to the misperception of which fashion players truly contribute to brands' ethical practice.

What is curious and cannot be ignored is that the main functioning model of CSR that is observed both in scientific publications and brands' CSR communication, either concentrates predominantly on the customers' perception of CSR, or is analysed through the companies' performance and marketing lenses, while the designers are left in a theoretical wishful zone of attention and operation.

This provokes additional questions about this state of affairs, which needs to be investigated as the final conclusions in the mentioned papers are left open to different interpretations and create an image of unanswered inquiries, not recognizing clear solutions to the studied phenomenon. Therefore, there is a gap in the subject of the perceived objects of CSR operation in the fashion business and the actual policies of the selected best performers, their industry commitment and practical input.

1.3.4 Research Aims and Objectives

As CSR in the fashion does not seem to be explored sufficiently by the academic, neither business community, the research herein attempts to find revolutionary answers to question such as: how ethical policies in the apparel industry could be more effective; who really is responsible for taking the big decisions on the CSR-related design, production and implementation; whose position among stakeholders is the dominant one in the CSR application; which actors contribute to the CSR performance most prominently. An appropriate study should adopt an inter-stakeholder approach and thus ask if these are the company's managers, the marketing specialists, the customers, or the designers, and additionally revise what the relationships between them are regarding the introduction of moral principles into the garment industry.

By collecting and combining data on the subject, this dissertation is supposed to answer queries that would lead to innovative solutions in the CSR area in fashion design. Its main objective is to find the gap in the CSR application, leading to novel answers that would support the CSR practice in garment industry. The planned outcome of this work is to reach a renewed, original CSR understanding and to propose new and different approaches and tools that would contribute to elevation of this phenomenon. What is also significant, this research will try to discover the most effective actors of the ethical concept as well as it will attempt to study the connections between them, as current publications lack such data. By finding out about the key performers and the way they commit to ethical conduct, and by gaining novel, organizational schemes of CSR, this thesis would hopefully be beneficial to responsible fashion management, design, and manufacture, positively impacting the involved stakeholders in the context of three CSR application areas: environment protection, human rights, and animal welfare.

1.3.5 A Brief Description of the Methodology and Research

To find the gap in the CSR application, the investigation herein required studying the CSR definition by filtering it through a synthesis of Corporate Social Responsibility's theory, its historical background, and academic understanding. The CSR definition was x-rayed through three fields of CSR operation: human rights, nature protection, and animal welfare. The dissertation was conducted through examining the ethical practice of main stakeholders: the organization itself, marketing managers, consumers, and, finally, designers, investigating their potential in the CSR implementation as well as their prospective effective role in ethical conduct. In order to gain an adequate understanding of the matter in question, this work is based on a thorough literature review as well as the radical insight into the environment of the profession through a survey among experienced, practicing designers as the involved stakeholders. It is hoped that such research framework could find a unique space for debate on fresh patterns of the CSR as well as will bring substantial, novel results to the CSR procedure in fashion industry for the sake of improving the promotion and practice of this noble concept.

1.3.6 Research Outline/ Thesis Plan

This document consists of six main parts: the Introduction that includes Theory and History of Corporate Social Responsibility; Corporate Social Responsibility 3; Corporate Social Responsibility in Fashion; the Marketing Role in the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility; the Company's Role in the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility; the Customers' Role in the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility; the Designers' Role in the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility; Research Design and Methodology, Field Work, Data Analysis, Report Results; Final Discussion; Conclusions. They are designed as a dynamic and comparative dialog that is then summed up with brief conclusions at the end of each part.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Problem Characterization

Corporations as a Perceived Object

Corporate Social Responsibility Theory

The beginning of this dissertation gives a background of how the phenomenon of CSR was created and it also provides a detailed overview of the CSR concept through its academic systematization and definition that are collected from both scientific literature and market practice.

The next sections involve: identifying the problem or 'gap' in the research, the aims of the project, a brief description of the methodology and research, as well as the outline of sections and the thesis plan.

Chapter 2 - The Literature Review

This section is devoted to the qualitative research approach, investigating current findings on the CSR and CSR implementation in the fashion business, as well as the main CSR actors' performance. It provides wide perspectives on the CSR key agents, their limits and potentials in the ethical policy implementation, which is grounded in arguments and counter-arguments that emerge from selected publications.

Corporate Social Responsibility: Three Areas of the Concept's Application.

CSR 3 - Environment, Human Rights, Animal Welfare.

This section is devoted to a novel, more integrated CSR approach. It associates three significant elements of ethical conduct and traces the conditioning of the CSR application that has not been recognized to date. It summarizes the CSR theory by touching on not only its basic theoretical definition and stakeholders' scientific approach, but also the elementary, inseparable areas of its operation, which are: environment protection, human rights, and animal welfare. This part reaches the conclusion that CSR is successful on condition that it is equally and honestly practiced on these three levels with regard to the company's or products' specifications and their subsequent ethical impact.

Corporate Social Responsibility in Fashion

This section explains the fashion industry in the context of CSR and expresses the need for ethical studies of this design specialization. It also explains why the clothing business makes for a good environment for novel CSR implementation solutions with regard to its complex nature, popularity, the involvement of many stakeholders in the design, and manufacture process. Repeated references are made to the questions of human rights, nature protection, and animal welfare.

The Marketing Role in the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility

This marketing section describes the first group of actors analysed in this document and their contribution to CSR performance. It exposes the potentials and limitations of marketing as a CSR tool, as well as studies its principles in ethical practice, which offers the first critical approach in this discourse.

Assessing the Company's Perspectives on Social Responsibility

This section provides information on companies' CSR objectives and the advantages and disadvantages of the company's leading role in the decision-making processes regarding the ethical conduct. It studies the firm as a leading agent in CSR, further exposing the attitude differences between CSR as run by the company's head managers or marketing specialists.

Looking at Corporate Social Responsibility through the Role of Customers

This part describes other CSR actors, namely the customers. It examines consumers through various issues, leading to assumptions regarding the boundaries of their role in the CSR application. This section is important for the research as it makes a turning point in understanding the reasons for the malfunctioning of CSR in the fashion industry and adds new questions to the discourse regarding the gap in the CSR application.

The Role of the Designers in the Implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility

This part addresses designers as the subsequent stakeholders of ethical conduct, and delivers data on the professions' impact on the CSR outcome. It gives another glimpse on the failure of CSR in the fashion industry. It also seeks more information through case studies of CSR strategies performed by several biggest world retailers. It provides new arguments, doubts and traces the gaps. It creates the capital for questions that lead to a survey followed by a framework for further research.

Chapter 3 - The Research Design and Methodology

This chapter explains the research inspiration in detail as well as how it was planned and conducted. It also provides the adjustment of the study quantitative and qualitative methods so that they reach the research goals.

Chapter 4 - Field Work, Data Analysis, Report Results

A section devoted to the quantitative research approach, i.e. the survey, which is part of the study. It presents the designers' outcomes in numbers and charts. It examines the data and delivers a report on the findings based on information gained from the survey carried out among one hundred international designers.

This chapter likewise includes the qualitative method data- designers' opinions derived from the interviews with selected, professionally active designers.

Chapter 5 - Discussion of Results

CSR as a Perceived Object

Designers as Actors that Perceive

Contemporary Introduction of Corporate Social Responsibility by the Clothing Industry

Organizational Context of CSR Application

Collective Meaning for Fashion Designers

This chapter is a summary of the findings from the previous sections and all, used in this study mixed methods of research. It gathers the collected argumentation into groups of issues, in which all the actors are analysed through the filters of different factors that condition the CSR application. This part x-rays and compares the stakeholders through aspects that were the common denominators or leading topics for all the studied CSR performers, thus determining the strongest ethical conduct operator.

Chapter 6- Conclusions, Recommendations And Future Research

Designers' Commitment

Industry Adaptation of CSR

CSR Implementation and the Company's Dimension

Future Research

Final Remarks

2. The Literature Review

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility: Three Areas of the Concept's Application.

CSR 3 - Environment, Human Rights, Animal Welfare.

By analysing the history and theory of CSR, the literature review has given a framework for its definition; it is now significant to sum up the fields and stakeholders it concerns. The introduction chapter provided a first approach on philosophical and imperative basis for understanding the idea of corporate moral responsibility, focusing on the corporate behaviour and its attitude towards other stakeholders in the manufacture process.

The idea of CSR is defined and explored in publications with regards to the ethical design and production, consumerism, marketing, or management. The researchers' studies lead through many filters, concentrating on moral obligations of the company that go beyond the law and include profit sacrifice to provide ethical standards for other stakeholders. However, it can further be noticed that the corporate ethical strategy is also presented in the context of the same, oft-repeated three areas: environment protection, human rights, and animal welfare. It gives the impression that these three issues should be considered together when exploring the CSR phenomenon academically or applying it by the organization. There is a strong reason to believe that CSR-related studies should identify the problems of ecology, human rights, and non-human beings' interest inseparably in the context of business moral policy. There is a record of scientific voices that would clearly state that CSR should be filtered and operated on these three fields holistically. Apart from looking into CSR actors and making suggestions as to the CSR definition, this work likewise discovers a 3-fields of application pattern that contributes to scientific and market understanding of the CSR phenomenon. For the purposes of this study—and as an innovative way of embracing this subject—it has been assumed that the CSR construct is not only about pro-ethical activity that shall go beyond legal obligations, but it also needs to embrace the three-dimensional approach, i.e. the environment protection, human rights, and animal welfare.

To deepen the topic, when exploring the first of the above-mentioned fields, namely the environmental concern, it is worth noticing that this area is about the direct influence of the production on the environment, which, in general, involves the amount of CO₂ emitted

during the production and usage of the objects and energy. It also includes, among others: the way the water is used, pollution emission in the manufacture process, waste management, waste utilization, and trash recycling possibilities. This concern for the environmental issues also touches on the planet's depravation for production as well as environmental inferences in natural ecosystems that might have been made during the production and usage procedures, e.g. soil degradation, deforestation with a special focus on the lost rainforests, or the negative impact on the natural landscape.

Second, regarding the question of human rights and the related work ethics in the context of the CSR, this is usually understood in terms of workers' rights, children's labour, working conditions, poverty levels, and differences in social classes caused by the product manufacture. More accurately, it is about salary levels, working time limits, safety and manufacture settings, and acts that secure employees' rights. This part revolves also around gender studies, sex equality, and the impact of the business on local communities and local culture.

Third, the question of animal welfare concerns the treatment and exploitation of non-human beings, including slaughter practices, testing, and maintenance conditions or materials derived from living creatures, especially those registered as endangered ones. This field also takes into account the loss of natural habitats of wild animals, wildlife exploitation, and environmental pollution that influences existence conditions of other species.

The diffusion of topics in the literature reveals that some authors present the connection between the environmental issues, human rights, and animal welfare with regard to the CSR application, while others write about these three fields separately and without marking the obvious interdependencies. However, numerous scholars do analyse Corporate Social Responsibility, ethical design, responsible consumption, pro-ethical marketing, and company's CSR strategy from such 'combined' perspective. What is more, there is already a wide variety of scientific papers which clearly state that these three elements are the unbreakable fundamentals of CSR and ethical strategy of an organization.

To support such point of view, it shall be referred to Carrigan, Moraes and McEachern (2013) who perceive corporate responsibility as a challenge that should touch on the above three subject areas, tracing a vast number of stakeholders. The authors have analysed CSR practices involving animal cruelty exemplified by inhumane factory farming for the purposed of the production of fur for coats. Then, the scholars combine the environmental degradation with workers' health damage resulting from the use of unregulated pesticides for cotton production, as well as with the exploitation of employees as a consequence of low wages, excessive working hours, and health and safety neglect in working conditions. The above relates to the topic of human and animal rights and environment protection. Thus, the authors' analysis embraces all three fields of the CSR application.

Along similar lines Cowe and Williams (2001) have analysed ethical consumers through concerns for the environment with the impact that the products have in the course of the whole manufacture process and usage. They have recognized the animal welfare problem, which is included in the environmental issues, as wild species are essential to nature conservancy. With regard to social concerns, the authors focus on labour rights and the businesses' influence on the local communities. Thus, it can be concluded that these authors too have embraced the three aforementioned fields.

Low and Davenport (2008) have undoubtedly contributed to such a three-dimensional CSR hypothesis in a direct way, for they stress that ethical consumption should encompass environmental and animal welfare matters, and be combined with social justice. The scholars have said that, "Both the fair trade movement and the anti-globalization anti-sweatshop movement are part of a wider impetus to promote concern for human, environmental and animal welfare in social relations of production and exchange" (p. 98). They support their point of view by citing the Cooperative Bank (2003), which has stated that, "Modern ethical consumption encompasses an expanded idea of 'personal consumption where the choice of a product or service exists which supports a particular ethical issue – be it human rights, the environment or animal welfare" (p. 7). The authors have also referred to their previous work from 2006:

By contrast, an “ethical space”, as we conceive it here (see also Low & Davenport, 2006), is an environment in which the paramount concerns include some, or all, of the following: social justice, human and animal rights, and environmental welfare. (p. 105)

Gupta and Ogden (2006), although indirectly, seem to be close to the three-level CSR concept. To support their point of view, the authors have quoted in their environmental consumerism analysis of J. Ottman Consulting (1992) glimpse on this topic, which relates to lifestyle’s segmentation into three consumer groups, namely “planet passionates, health fanatics and animal lovers” (p. 200), which could be translated into the environment, people’s interest, and animal well-being respectively.

Likewise, Polonsky and Jevons (2009) have considered global CSR activities through “Poverty, environment, health, animal rights, child welfare” (p. 343). Although it does not clearly state human rights, poverty and child labour definitely relate to human welfare in general, which is one of the three elements of the suggested CSR construct.

Cervellon and Wernerfelt (2012) have followed a similar rhetoric by mentioning animal welfare in the same article in which they combine fair-trade with sustainability, thus underlining the link between organic and fair-trade products.

Barnett, Cloke, Clarke and Malpass (2005) have taken part in the discussion around ethical consumption that, to them, is defined through a variety of components, including “environmental sustainability, health and safety risks, animal welfare, fair trade, labour conditions, and human rights” (p.5). To conclude, they also seem to cover the three main problematic fields of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Young, Hwang, McDonald and Oates (2010) have cited Wheale and Hinton’s (2007) survey results, suggesting a hierarchy of importance of ethical drivers in the purchase decision-making process, where the hierarchy is a three-area construct. The environment has been rated as the most important ethical trigger during purchasing decisions, followed by human rights and then animal rights/welfare issues. Although it is interesting to find out that nature conservancy leads in the CSR values, it is significant to mark that these are still

the same three most significant fields of CSR studies that have been analysed in one document and one survey.

On the other hand, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) have conducted a research, from which a different conclusion emerges. The study has resolved that it is the animals and empathy towards them that is the core of customers' concern, other than priorities such as rainforests and working conditions. Nevertheless, the authors have been close to human rights and environment protection as well, which also indicates the three-dimensional perspective.

In this line of thinking, the three inseparable fields of the CSR construct have been clearly identified in Craig Smith's (2007) findings, where they have been distinguished in the CSR application, pointing out to animals along with human rights and environmental issues. The author has referred to the original ethical policy of The Co-operative Bank—which has already been mentioned by other researchers—that was formulated in 1992 on the basis of a survey research with target customers, the aim of which was to identify concerns about issues such as human rights, animal exploitation, and environmental damage.

Such approach has been shared by O'Neill and Spash (2000) as cited in Leonidou, Leonidou and Kvasova (2010), who have also recognized the topic through deontological filter, calling for the absolute right to life for humans, animals, plants, and ecosystems.

Carey, Shaw and Shiu (2008) have supported the ethical concerns regarding consumers' care for moral companies' standards, stating that ethical purchase relates to topics such as the environment, animal welfare, social matters, and business.

Cherrier's (2007) studies on the ethical consumption practices have pointed out to a certain problem, namely not buying "cheap items made in *sweatshops* to express their concerns about workforce exploitation, ride a bicycle to preserve the ozone layer, stop using chemical-laden toiletries tested on animals to protest animal cruelty, and purchase fair-trade coffee and organic vegetables to support environmental sustainability and human rights" (p. 3). All of the above are part of the general three-area CSR: human and animal

rights as well as nature conservancy problems.

Accordingly, Uusitalo and Oksanen (2004) in Awad (2011) have also specified issues that are included in the CSR problematic fields in question. Following the scholars, these are “unethical and unjust global trades, such as child and low-paid labour, infringement of human rights, animal testing, labour union suppressions, inequalities in trading relations with the Third World, and pollution of the environment” (Awad, 2011, p. 57).

Even more authors have directly included the three key components and encompassed the Corporate Social Responsibility-related issues through the three-area lenses. For instance, Allison (2009) has written that, “Nevertheless, ethical products can be categorised into three broad overlapping categories that address the concerns of consumers. These are human ethical concerns (HEC), animal ethical concerns (AEC), and environmental ethical concerns” (p. 3).

Furthermore, focusing on ethical concerns, Kibert *et al.* (2012) have explained the bond between social, environmental and animal issues:

One of the most important variables for thinking about the moral dimensions of nonhuman nature – and for human social life – is whether the main unit of concern is individuals or larger collectives. For some thinkers, the individual being is the only measurable unit that can be accounted for in any moral equations. This is especially true for many advocates of animal welfare, who focus on the rights or interests of individual sentient beings. Both rights-based (deontological) and utilitarian (consequentialist) approaches have been used in arguments about the moral status of individual nonhuman animals. Precisely because of this individual focus, animal welfare is sometimes considered an issue separate from environmental philosophy. However, animals’ moral status is linked to thinking about the value of nonhuman nature more generally, and thus it must be addressed in any consideration of environmental ethics. This is especially true for reflections on the ethical dimensions of sustainability, because sustainability entails economic and social issues in which the fate of nonhuman animals is inextricably caught up with that of humans. (p. 154)

What might be surprising is the fact that although the CSR practice in the three fields is not officially sanctioned—nor is it strictly advised in professional literature for designers or

clothes manufacturers—the food industry seems to have discovered this inseparable relationship in the CSR application much earlier, which is expressed in the CSR in food industry analysis, and sanctioned by professional certification in this area. Starting with Carrero and Valor (2012):

CSR labels can be classified using several criteria. One is the issue covered, and here we can differentiate between environmental (e.g. organic), social justice (e.g. Fair Trade) and animal welfare (e.g. cruelty free) – in short, “planet”, “people” or “animals” (Hartlieb and Jones, 2009)” (pp. 629-652), continuing with Hatanaka, Bain and Busch (2005) “Private standards, labels, and certification systems are crucial for providing information to stakeholders, allowing them to diverentiate agrifood products by the attributes that concern them, such as animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and worker welfare (Deaton et al., forthcoming)”. (p. 631)

Similar point of view has been shared by Maloni and Brown (2006), who have accordingly presented the CSR application in food industry as a unique construction of animal welfare, biotechnology, environment, fair trade, health and safety, labour, and human rights.

Studying the Whole Foods case, Johnston (2007) even asks an open question, which is, “Does Whole Foods offer a new opportunity for shoppers to become citizen-consumers who can have it all – pursue their interest in delicious food, while feeling good about their responsibilities to other people, other species, and the environment?” (p. 230). This also relates to the three fields of the CSR construct.

Finally, the aforementioned Carrigan and Attalla’s (2001) narrative on ethical consumers and socially responsible firms has clearly summed up priorities that confirm a pattern in CSR performance, where environmental issues, human rights, and animal well-being have been integrated in one work.

Conclusions

The analysis above explains that there is a supplementary background to form concerning the ethical strategy of a brand. It adds a fresh suggestion to the body of CSR theory that

CSR performers need to understand that a moral company's policy cannot be treated through a selection of matters and only be based on CSR actors' duties. The issues that relate to the responsibility of an organization are combined together and include various stakeholders, and they are to be inseparably applied on three levels: environment, human rights, and animal welfare.

The analysis of the literature review and other researchers' contributions reveals that companies' strategy, acting and production—as well as ethical consumerism—should be analysed and practiced through these three aspects in order for them to be effectively applied to the Corporate Social Responsibility idea.

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility in Fashion

2.2.1 Fashion Manufacture Global Footprint and Stakeholders' Impact

Both fashion design and garment production are powerful parts of the contemporary industry. Highly industrialized, intensified, and organized all over the world, they combine all features of present-day design, fabrication, and marketing. The manufacture of clothes involves many actors: designers, producers, marketing managers, fashion buyers, art directors, company's owners, and customers. The clothing industry has a huge impact on our environment, culture, people, and also non-human beings. Since it is related to the above-mentioned issues on a large scale, it provides a good space for the discussion devoted to the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The prominence of the fashion industry in global CSR practices is well expressed by Laudal (2010), who has claimed that the complexity of the fashion industry is of the international character and that it also faces government regulations as well as employment conditions and payments, which forces companies to challenge legal and moral standards worldwide.

Kozlowski, Bardecki and Searcy (2012) have similarly agreed on how great the responsibility of the apparel industry is based on its cultural and economic significance, which, in their opinion, makes the companies address the negative impact of the apparel products, especially regarding their life-cycle.

According to Black (2008), fashion is about life-cycle and global “travel”. As the scholar has related the story of one particular fashion garment, it becomes clear how universal, international, and multidisciplinary it is. The author has said:

In 2001, Fran Abrams and James Athill (The Guardian journalists) tracked a pair of 20 pound Lee Cooper jeans sold in a high street store in the UK on its global journey of 40,000 miles by land and sea, starting from the fibre grown in Benin in West Africa to the manufacturing in Tunisia.⁹ This is a summary of their findings. The jeans label could have said "Made in Tunisia, Italy, Germany, France, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Turkey, Japan, Korea, Namibia, Benin, Australia and Hungary", as all these countries were involved in some way. Distributed to the UK from a centre in France, the jeans were made in a town called Ras Jebel, Tunisia, which had three factories owned by Lee Cooper. The oldest one had been making jeans for 25 years, and employed 500 women in its eight production lines. (p. 72)

As can be seen, there are large numbers and concrete facts that express the economic power and the impact of the clothing business, which is even more important when studying CSR. Globally, the textile annual turnover amounts to 726 billion USD in total, while the luxury fashion is around 340 billion USD. Children’s fashion is worth 185 billion USD, male fashion is 402 billion USD, and the female fashion industry makes the turnover of 621 billion USD a year. The Adidas itself creates the income of around 18.8 billion USD per annum (Spetzler, 2016). Compared with these massive amounts of money earned by the apparel industry, the textile factory dressmakers receive much less. For example, 38 USD is an average textile worker monthly payment in Bangladesh; in China, the compensation for the same job is 1,26 USD per hour; and in Poland a seamstress is paid at least 2,5 USD per hour. The disproportion is so overwhelming that the reflection of injustice comes as a natural and obvious occurrence. Other than the circumstances of the economical abuse of employees in the fashion business, there is also much controversy

around child labour that pertains mostly to the textile manufacturing sector. For instance, there are around 40 thousand children's hands that work in the cotton commerce in India alone, mostly on plantations (Płonka, 2013).

People are not the only beings affected by the apparel industry. The clothing business also generates the problem of animal use and abuse. The smuggling of exotic, often endangered species is the next most profitable business in the world—right behind the military trade and trafficking— and is often driven by the clothing trade practices. For the fashion sector alone more than 33 thousand endangered species are killed illegally every year, making a turnover of 19 billion USD a year. Furthermore, more than a billion animals per year are slaughtered for their skins in order for new, leather outfits to be made for the next users. To these numbers we should add 50 million captive animals slayed annually all over the world only for fur. Such statistics give a wider image of the tremendous impact of the fashion industry on the plane of ethics (Płonka, 2013).

Correspondingly, significant is the fact how strongly the fashion manufacturing affects the aforementioned human rights and animal rights issues even indirectly, namely through the influence on the natural environment. Garment business produces not only clothes, but also future trash. Million tons of clothing and textiles are thrown into the rubbish bins annually, while only a quarter of textile waste is collected for recycling or re-used otherwise. Also, deforestation—an important factor causing changes in the climate—is stimulated, among other causes, by the fashion production. In this light, 67% of forests that are cut down in the whole world or destroyed with the aim of turning the areas into fields for the cattle that are then also bred for leather. Other than this, 2,5% of the global usage of the most precious natural resource, i.e. water, takes place within cotton plantations. Moreover, 3% of the globe's farmland is used to grow cotton. Following the issue of chemicals used for cotton production, this part of the fashion industry is responsible for 16% of the world's pesticide usage. The production of one kilogram of cotton takes an average of 5.44g of pesticide. Since garment industry is fuelled by a huge number of cotton fibres and textiles, it is crucial to know that 7-29 thousand litres of water are utilized just to manufacture 1kg of conventional cotton, while in 2009 and 2010 around 22 million tons of fibre were produced globally (Płonka, 2013; Saicheua, Cooper, Knox, 2011).

2.2.2 Aesthetics, Individualism and Social Positioning through Fashion

As was illustrated, garment industry involves the way the commodities are produced, the environmental impact of the production process, and the abuse of other living creatures. It is also measured by the human dimension. What is more, fashion is likewise deeply rooted in the aesthetics related to the given cultural profile (Von Wedel-Parlow, 2015). Apparel manufacturing is not only about figures and evidences. Aesthetics, group relations, individualism and personality, internationalization, democratization, and globalization are keywords that determine how the fashion world is organized. They all influence the shape of this business and its ethical performance.

As Rahbek, Pedersen and Gwozdz (2013) have stated, “Fashion is about both function and aesthetics; that is, we wear clothes to meet physical/functional needs, adhere to social norms, demonstrate power and indicate group relationships” (p. 246).

Also Eifler (2014) has been unambiguous about this matter when she has claimed that the importance of fashion comes from social distinction, where individuals establish their public position through aesthetics located in space and time. According to the author, fashion is a skill to “perform in self-staging”, which is also an expression of self-management in a postmodern society. He has elaborated on the subject by saying that:

The individual habitus, such as social, ethnic and gender identities, is also expressed through clothes as a form of nonverbal communication (Malcom, 2002; Wolbers, 2009). This complex double significance of the individual intimate relationship on the one hand, and the external visibility of clothing on the other hand, creates its own peculiarities. These factors are not only interdependent but also have to be seen in their respective context. Fashion supports the effort of the individuals to aesthetically situate themselves within a community. (p. 153)

It might be assumed there is no other part of design that encompasses so many ethical design and manufacture principles as fashion does, as well as various areas of needs, and social questions that the industry involves. Garment innovation and production includes all what we are and what we want to express, thus it is one of the best “battlefields” to

practice the CSR implementation.

Following aforementioned Eifler (2014) that fashion is not only about social aspects, but it is inextricably linked with self-presentation, social importance, and external visibility, Carey, Cervellon and Harms (2012) have also seen fashion as personally pertinent, where the consumers involvement is based on contribution and relevance to the self. Textile industry by its strong visual aspects and visual communication by aesthetic values becomes a kind of guarantee of social acceptance based on the individual self-concept. Garment industry should be seen through the lens of self-image projected through objects that we possess or wear (Norman, 2004). It is a conclusion that shall be useful in the CSR analysis further in this work.

2.2.3 Fashion Democratization

Apart from such main features of the apparel industry as individualism, self-perception, aesthetic values, social positioning, and public expression through clothes, fashion should also be studied in another context.

Contemporary style is also about democratization and globalization of fashion design and production so that more people can have access to numerous, not expensive goods, and so that extra customers can purchase new clothes. It is not exactly about giving the freedom of choice to consumers, though; it is conditioned by economic motives. The democratization of fashion appears to stimulate the market to make higher revenues, likewise through the promotion of *fast fashion*. The democratization of fashion could be also perceived not as an act of kindness but as the constant lowering of the average price of textile items in order to boost the sales. What is more, democratization is related to globalization through the process of making an easy access to cheap fashion products and by distributing them all over the world. Fashion has become global even though not every branch of industry is so successful worldwide. Thus, the importance of apparel business is even bigger when analysing the CSR application for fashion design. Perry, Fernie and Wood (2014) have summed it up by saying that:

Major changes have occurred in the fashion retail environment over the past 30 years. The main drivers of this evolution in the late 1980s and 1990s included the rise of the retail brand, its increasing internationalisation, as well as the further segmentation of the market. By the late 1990s, more significant changes were occurring as affordable style was increasingly appearing on the high street. To a significant degree, this was driven by retailers such as Zara and H&M; marking a departure from an era where well-made, stylish clothes were only the preserve of affluent consumers, with fashion increasingly regarded as having been 'democratised'. (p. 1)

Also, Black (2008) has pointed out to the democratization of fashion even in the luxury goods sector, which, in her view, is achieved through price competitiveness, wider markets, and the global access to these products.

This said, democratization in fashion is not only about the easy, global access to the product or to a better, luxury-related design. As indicated before, democratization is strongly related to *fast fashion*, which constitutes the mainstream in the contemporary clothing industry. Such state of affairs could be explained twofold. First, it is because of global changes in the way clothes are being produced. Since after the Second World War new markets have been reached in the so-called developing countries and ex-colonies, which created conditions for shifting the production to cheaper manufacturers. *Fast fashion* is made mostly in states of the *Global South*, which often belong to rising democracies that offer attractive tax and law conditions for incoming businesses. They are described in the media and literature as causing social inequalities, destructions, corruption, animal and human abuse, and environmental damage. Nonetheless, and what is even more imperious, these countries welcome clothing companies with a promise of very short production terms. The negative context of *fast fashion* as well as its method and manufacture cycles have a major impact on the ethical judgment of apparel industry.

2.2.4 *Fast Fashion* in the Context of the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility

Pesendorfer (1995) has explained how *fast fashion* is created and what the psychological grounds for this were. The said scholar has put a great emphasis on the role of the designers in that process. According to the author, at the beginning the designers create a product formed for A-type social items. After some time, the same product is sold to non-A-type customers to make bigger profit coming from the same design. This way the unique and elite design starts to be mass produced and mass popular, making it unattractive for the A-types. Therefore, the designer forces the market to demand a new fashion product as well as to create a new design that would distinguish the A-types from other groups. As the access to the design elite becomes easier and the elites need more and more new things to feel different from the other groups of consumers, *fast fashion* is likely to strengthen its popularity and commit to the constant lowering of the prices, which affects the fabrication conditions.

There is yet another stimulant for *fast fashion*. Since most of the global garment manufacturing was offshored to low-cost *paradises*, the *fast fashion* hegemony in shops worldwide has been set up. As Pesendorfer (1995) has said, the cheap, short production cycles mean smaller incomes from one design, which implies the advantages of creating more shorter production cycles and inventing new fashion. The cycle seems mad, as the author has stated:

The model predicts deterministic fashion cycles of fixed length. For large fixed costs, fashion cycles are long. To recover the fixed cost, the designer has to sell the fashion at a high price, which in turn requires that the design stays fashionable for a long period of time, and hence sufficient time must pass between innovations. If the fixed costs are small then the cycle is short. In the limit, for zero fixed costs, the designer will create a new fashion every period. (p. 772)

Banz (2015) has also underlined the meaning of prices in the contemporary fashion industry, where the capital translates into cheap manual labour. This, in turn, might heat the spiral of employee abuse, lower safety, and financial cuts.

Also Vuletich (2013) has expressed her view about the negative meaning of price-lowering in the context of supporting *fast fashion* by saying that, “Unlike the textile manufacturing industry, the construction and production of two dimensional fabric, into three dimensional garments, is all done by humans and not machines, hence the need to look for the lowest possible wage option for it to make economic sense to the brand” (p. 4).

Regarding the price issue in *fast fashion*, Perry, Fernie and Wood (2014) have enumerated several brands that have held down wages, imposed inhumane working conditions and huge factory discounts, or asked for prolonged payments. Among them they enlisted Marks & Spencer, Gap, Nike, Laura Ashley or Monsoon Accessorize. The authors have summed up *fast fashion* as a system that was changed not only based on the innovative and organized cheap production in the *Global South*, but also due to the scheme of the market from “company-push” towards “demand-led”:

At the same time, the fashion supply chain was transformed from a manufacturer-push to a demand-led pull system; The trend for timely fashion has resulted in a reconstruction of international supply chains as high street retailers have had to adapt to the simultaneous challenges of downward price pressure, higher product variety and shorter product life cycles. The shift to offshore sourcing has been a key feature of fashion supply chains more widely over the last 20 years as Western based retailers seek to reduce costs but maintain flexibility in their influential role within retail buyer-driven supply chains. (p. 1)

There is also another factor that feeds *fast fashion*. Obsolescence and boredom stimulate new design and clothes production (Norman, 2004). By making a bad publicity around old garments by rendering them old-fashioned, useless, unstylish or outdated, the market is driven towards continuous fresh supply to customers. Clients are continually given a lesson that the yesterday’s outfit is not matching the today’s reality and the social status of the wearer. The user is trained to become uninterested in objects that already belong to the past by being bombarded with intensive advertising of new styles. To support such policy, the fashion industry produces more garments and more collections in shorter cycles. All of the above points sum up in the concept of *fast fashion*, and fast sales encourage fast money-

making. Banz (2015) has been one of the authors who has seen obsolescence as one of the characteristics of *fast fashion*:

Fashion boosts consumption like nothing else. There is no other segment of consumer goods in which the turnover of goods depends less on wear and tear and more on fickle changes in taste, since constant transience is one of the essential characteristics of fashion. Because of their dependence on seasons, fashion cycles outpace other goods cycles, and this speed is further exacerbated by 'fast fashion', which can feature up to 12 collections per year. Frequently changing product ranges and supposedly new trends lure consumers into shops 20 times or more per year on average. (p. 25)

All this into account, we might assume that *fast fashion* is a significant feature of the contemporary apparel industry as well as it strongly influences the ethical performance of any clothing brand. *Fast fashion* inflicts damage to people and to the environment through boosting overconsumption, making the businesses responsible for the negative impact of garment production on a number of issues, causing its problematic character to be even more important for CSR studies.

2.2.5 Misunderstandings and Inconsistencies in the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Fashion Industry

Fashion industry makes it interesting to study CSR not only because of its huge effect on the environment, people, and non-human beings. Economy is also bound to be revised through the ethical lens due to the aforementioned inconsistencies in literature about the definition of Corporate Social Responsibility as well as the practical approach specifically in this design and manufacture area.

Although the body of research on CSR theory and application provides good fundamentals for assuming a universal definition of this ethical concept, I would like to come back to the ongoing discussions between scientists and professionals about what CSR really involves and what its definition is. Moreover, there seems to be a misunderstanding about ethical

practices in fashion, especially the perception of human rights and ecological solutions in the clothing industry, and the responsibility for animal welfare within garment manufacturing. For instance, Black (2008) has begun the debate with doubts:

To many, eco-fashion means buying natural materials like cotton and wool, and avoiding synthetic, oil-based materials such as nylon and polyester. This sounds like common sense at first but, upon investigation of the ecological and environmental impact of these fibres, and the ethical issues involved in their production, the case is not so straightforward. (p. 105)

While finding many ways towards CSR application and studies, customers, businessmen, and even designers tend to be lost in the CSR application, terms, and even the interpretation of the very concept. One of the more common errors in thinking—and a consequence of the programmed knowledge—is the perception of conventional cotton as something healthy and good for the environment as it is a natural fibre. Nothing can be further from the truth; the industrial cotton production is one of the largest ecological problems globally, causing damages to the nature, people, and animals. It should be enough to look at the satellite photos of the Aral Sea; it has disappeared almost completely during last 15 years due to the surrounding extensive cotton plantations. The mischief includes not only landscape damages, but also the disappearance of the Aral Sea fauna and flora as well as the collapse of the local economy caused by decreasing numbers of jobs as fishermen or cotton plantations workers. What is more, the very same cotton plantations often violate human rights, e.g. the use of child labour. Also, apart from deforestation for cotton farms and desertification of lands—both being part of this business—conventional, non-organic cotton production includes hazardous chemicals procedures. During the process of bleaching, dyeing, and final finishing of the fibres, the material is treated with toxic substances, including formaldehyde among others (Płonka, 2013). This example clarifies the potential hazards of the misunderstanding about which CSR practices are good and which are not, even on the technological level.

Some writers seem to confuse the terms or ideas related to CSR, or they bring questionable findings to the table. For example, while analysing sustainable solutions in apparel

business, Payne (2014) has quoted surprising examples from Nike, which she claimed had changed into a world leader in social and environmental responsibility. Although the author first admitted that previously Nike had struggled with bad reputation based on child labour and *sweatshops*, what could be treated as an abuse of such title.

Sometimes the wrong perception of a company's ethical policy, or an incorrect estimation of some brands' performance regarding CSR, might result from a lack of accurate and up-to-date information on the status of the subject, as well as from false information, which is mostly related to the process of *greenwashing*. While citing examples of such brands as Hermes, Kerring, LVHM in the context of local production, protection of artisans' skills, and responsible exotic skin suppliers, Perry *et.al.* (2014) has included the last ones as elements of these brands' sustainability strategy. The author pointed out that the mentioned companies have assimilated exotic skin dealers and exclusive tanneries in order to be sustainable contractors of high quality raw materials. This stands in stark contrast to generally accessible media information and PETA (2015) investigations that have clearly accused Hermes of workers and animals abuse taking place in their alligators' farms, including reports of environmental damage. This illustrates a gulf between scientific theoretical knowledge and common practices that might be revealed in less scientific but still credible sources, like NGOs.

The misapprehension of the concept of CSR and its elements is not avoided by Graça Guedes and Roncha (2011), who have analysed and enumerated pro-ethical brands in the context of their allegedly sustainable and ethical performance. The writers have concentrated on the advantages of the 'Somewhere' brand CSR practices, among which they include the usage of recycled cashmere. Although the idea of recycling is noble in itself and included in CSR application practices, cashmere fibre is not exactly coherent with the CSR principles, especially in the context of the protection of nature and in the animal welfare field. Among the issues are the extensive animal farming practices in the developing countries, which cannot guarantee proper animal protection due to poor official regulations, as well as environmental damages. Cashmere production contributes to soil degradation, water shortage, and desertification of lands, which is an official problem of cashmere agriculture in Mongolia among others (Business of Fashion online article, 2015). Nowadays, the replacement solution for Cashmere that is promoted in professional media

is Alpaca fibre, which is related to more effective production and smaller environmental impact as a result of better physical features of alpacas.

Conclusions

All this said, the reality of CSR application in the fashion industry seems to be still suffering from narrow CSR approaches and not thorough investigations. The current research is not consistent with practice and does not always provide satisfactory and coherent information. Confusion and misunderstandings with regard to CSR-related details pertaining to different companies' strategies can be recognized in existing papers, thus highlighting the need for more profound theoretical and empirical studies in this area.

In conclusion, it seems fair to state that fashion design and production is an essential part of CSR studies since garment manufacturing includes a variety of actors: designers, customers, managers, manufacturers, and suppliers. Apparel industry influences the environment we live in on a global scale, including animals and people all over the world. The production is stretched worldwide and it clearly has a global impact. The characteristics that are elements of contemporary clothes' design and manufacture begin with aesthetics, which, obviously, is important for the designers, as well as include social positioning, democratization, obsolescence, dominance in fashion design, spiralled production cycles, *fast fashion* and its ecological impact, and economic issues that translate into peoples' lives. Furthermore, financial and public commitments of the clothing industry are vast as they affect many different stakeholders and generate numerous ethical issues. Corporate Social Responsibility implementation makes sense for each and every part of industry, but fashion design and manufacturing is such an influential part of economy—and both of our personal and social lives—that it cannot be ignored in comprehensive CSR studies. CSR research in this area is required and the one that would give reliable and adequate reflection of the current state of affairs on the subject matter in question.

2.3 The Marketing Role in the Application of Corporate Social Responsibility

The previous sections described the CSR definition used in scientific papers, which briefly states that CSR covers a company's behaviour that goes beyond legitimate obligations, that is voluntary and includes the sacrifice of profit for the sake of well-being of other stakeholders in the whole production process.

The deep analysis of the theory of Corporate Social Responsibility also draws a novel, among general picture, CSR theory which indicates a need of three main areas of its application, namely the environment protection, human rights, and animal welfare. They consolidate the ethical idea in the company's holistic strategy as integrated through the three-dimensional activity.

Earlier texts mentioned the CSR performance actors, among which there were the marketing managers, the companies and their owners, the designers, the customers, the companies' suppliers, and other industry workers. All of them are important stakeholders of the fashion manufacture process, along with art directors, fashion buyers, and various cooperators. The exploration of the CSR concept without its main players is valueless as they are central contributors to the social spectacle of the organization. The stakeholders are those elements that actually make the CSR machine work. As they perform CSR on different levels and they have diverse professional duties, they also have some kind of ethical impact on the business. Within many scholarly investigations there are various approaches that verify who the most essential and persuasive performers of CSR are. The value of their acts is crucial for understanding who is really responsible for the most effective CSR operation and who contributes to ethical, more reliable conduct of the business. The sections that follow will try to study different attitudes to the CSR implementation and re-investigate the main actors of Corporate Social Responsibility in the context of fashion industry as transnational commodity design and manufacture chain.

2.3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility as a Marketing Tool

One of the commonly found approaches to CSR is through the marketing lenses. Marketing is a business technique that helps to target the markets through a market

analysis, segmentation, and finding methods of influencing the clients' choices. It consists of verbal and non-verbal communication that provide the customers with product information. There are advantages of such connection, which is based on building a relationship and information platform. The bridge that marketing creates between the company and the customers, apart from potentially financial benefits to the organization, helps to achieve materials and status needs or desirable existence standards by the shoppers¹⁴.

Current research illustrates abundant practices of CSR as a marketing mechanism, claiming that CSR is actually treated by the market as a part of marketing performance. On the other hand, different documents frame CSR as a separate activity that cannot be related to promotion, and they adopt a negative interpretation of such diffusion (e.g. Gallego-Álvarez, Prado-Lorenzo, Rodríguez-Domínguez and García-Sánchez 2010, Vaaland, Heide and Grønhaug 2008, Jahdi and Acikdilli 2009, Bronn and Vrioni 2001, Jones, Comfort and Hillier 2007, Sanclemente-Téllez, 2017, Maignan and Ferrell 2004, Astara, Mitoula, and Eleni, 2015). Thus, it is significant to review the literature in order to find whether Corporate Social Responsibility should be performed by marketing actors, for the existing literature is insufficient in providing satisfactory and clear answers. The main question is whether the CSR application might be successfully practiced through such strategy and if it could be accomplished by representatives such as marketing managers or advertising specialists.

2.3.2 The Positive Aspects of Marketing Usage of Corporate Social Responsibility

The point of departure for the discussion about whether marketing is a good trajectory for CSR execution should be the question about how such field could be used for the implementation of social values. If marketing was to be treated as lifestyle politics, it might be used in a positive way to form ethical fashion patterns and new, responsible behaviour templates. Marketing power to perform CSR could be valorised as a challenge for the marketing agents to create new, better popularity of ethical ideals within a purchase area.

¹⁴ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/marketing.html> [Accessed February 2019]
<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/marketing.html> [Accessed February 2019]

The apparel industry is status-loaded and lifestyle-based, with both supported by strong advertising, which could be used as a stage to create pro-ethical habits among customers. Through its procedure, marketing is persuasive. Advertising is based on encouragement and treated as a space of choice. The same technique could be used to motivate the consumers to purchase fashion products more responsibly and ethically. Ideally, it could be used to help people in making the right selections. Brands, created also through a smart advertising strategy, have the power to change people's lives, so it might be assumed they might transform the reality into a better one by renovating purchase habits.

Talking about the potential of marketing in the CSR application, Kibert *et al.* (2012) have supported this point of view, stressing that marketing might be helpful in creating the well-being of the community as well as it could advocate a corporate culture that has a responsibility background.

Along similar lines, Laroche, Bergeron and Barbaro-Forleo (2001) have lobbied for marketers to be important agents of green products purchasing, who maintain the authority of marketing to educate and convert consumers' perception in an affirmative way towards sustainable goods.

The marketing method in the CSR application could also be embraced as "the heart of the sustainability debate because of its interface between the forces of production and consumption" (Carrigan and de Pelsmacker, 2009, p. 5). Ethical marketing could be treated as a bridge that connects the world of those who manufacture our outfits and those who wear them, which could be seen as a result of an effective communication of ethical ideas coded in the produced apparel.

Carrigan, Moraes and McEachern (2013) have contributed to this stance by referring to Smith (2010), who has argued that marketers do have the power to influence consumers' choices and, therefore, they are morally obliged to co-craft the responsible consumption.

When reviewing positive aspects of the joint venture of CSR and marketing, voices can be heard that see this phenomenon as hypothetically beneficial and a win-win outcome not

only for the customers, but also for the company (Brînzea, Oancea and Bărbulescu, 2014). Such judgment involves the benefits for the organization that come from a better reputation based on the social involvement; as to the benefits for customers, these relate to being better informed and directed towards better purchase options, e.g. with the consideration of sustainability.

There might be another optimistic feature included in the marketing approach to the CSR implementation which, this being a competitive advantage of running a pro-ethical strategy within a company. It has also been recognized by the aforementioned Carrigan and Pelsmacer (2009) or Bronn and Vrioni (2001). The latter authors have noticed that, “Having a pro-social agenda means having a powerful marketing tool that can build and shape a company’s reputational status, make a differentiation in the market and give a company a competitive edge” (p. 218). This means that not only does the company improve the business through promoting ethical policy, but it also gains positive points by distancing itself from the rivals through moral principles.

There are other researches who add their voice about a huge potential of advertising as a platform to communicate ethical values, but a more thorough analysis reveals that the practice actually benefits the company. According to Gallego-Álvarez, Prado-Lorenzo, Rodríguez-Domínguez and García-Sánchez (2010), CSR is mainly a source of competitive advantage that might bring a better financial outcome and reputation among customers and investors.

As has already been said, the merging of marketing and CSR might help the company. It might be considered in terms of valorization of the CSR policy service for the company’s reputation, its influence on financial result of the brand, or in the context of passing information to customers about responsible products. However, we lack statistics or detailed data confirming this state of affairs. As is argued in the case of People Tree, the sustainable apparel brand used mainstream marketing techniques to leverage the company in the fashion market, which was expected to strengthen its sales and media feedback. However, the result does not prove that using advertising as a CSR approach was the main reason behind the company’s success, as People Tree is well-known from its sustainable

character and its DNA is clearly CSR-based (Goworek, 2011). The conclusions drawn from this example might be questionable. Is it marketing that helped the company to create its image? Or is it the company's deeply-rooted pro-ethical profile that aids the marketing of its products? The sustainable image of People Tree is so strong that it is difficult to determine whether it is the skilful promotion that creates the achievement here or the initial concept for ethical design and production that has resulted in success.

Regarding the potential aspects of practicing CSR by marketing agents, there are many other assisting thoughts involved in the discourse. They include, among others: the incredible share that marketing has in gathering and transforming resources into products, methods through which this purpose is realized, the manipulation of the consumer, the guilt of paying to the negative and lavish side of consumerist society, the performance of buying and exchanging (Carrigan and Atalla, 2001). The above provides a point of departure for a more in-depth discussion of whether marketing could be an effective device for the application of Corporate Social Responsibility.

2.3.3 The Negative Aspects of Marketing as the Key Agent of Corporate Social Responsibility

The assessment of the positive meaning of marketing in the CSR application is contrasting with other reflections of scientists on this subject. As was mentioned before, there is no countable data that confirms the effectiveness of marketing in the social values application. Rather, the analysis of contemporary research raises more doubts and questions.

Contrary to the earlier positive thinking, Portney (2008) has stated that we do not know whether such attitude to CSR makes anybody successful. The scholar has treated such evaluation of ethical company's performance as an unbearable mission due to the impossibility of calculating the company's detailed revenue, and the lack of evidence of success of the CSR movement for the organization.

Moreover, one of the H&M's CSR managers—a company considered one of the biggest suppliers of organic cotton apparel and recycled fibres clothes—admits that although they have many people in the CSR section and in marketing department who are thinking hard about sustainability and CSR, surprisingly it all should be improved as the customers do not know enough about it (Newbery and Ghosh-Curling, 2011). In this sense, one of the most recognized world retailers draws the image of the marketing failure as a CSR tool; at the very least, it should be significantly improved.

Regarding the question of handling marketing as a channel to perform CSR, Vlieger, Hudders and Verleyne (2012) have also expressed distrust in the effectiveness of such acting. Referring to the authors' investigation, marketing is a missed tactic due to the problem of a variety of consumers, who represent different levels of green involvement.

According to the scholars, the customers seem to be the first obstacle for the CSR application. Responsible for this is the clash of consumers' needs and the planet's needs due to the hedonistic life attitude and egocentric culture of the clients, which is in line with the generally perceived philosophy of marketing as clarified by Carrigan and de Pelsmacker (2009):

Consumers worldwide resist giving up what they feel to be either an established high quality of life, or the promise of one, and this is not helped when choices are presented by some sectors of the media in a stark 'either-or' scenario between the benefits of modern life or saving the planet. (p. 11)

The above voices another problem of the CSR communication, which is when its application relies on advertising and is put in the hands of marketers. It lacks the right communication and relies on "either-or" scenario, which does not speak of the products' advantages and spectacular ethical performance, but is more about a battle of choices between the standards of life we have now and the standards that help to preserve the planet. In this context, they are often related to pejorative words such as: reduction, reuse, mineralization, saving, etc. Therefore, we can once again doubt whether marketing is

useful in announcing CSR as advertising campaigns still do not reach the consumers, or the consumers simply do not pay attention to this kind of information (Eifler, 2014).

Further analysing marketing as a CSR tool, other researchers too seem to regard it as an uncertain device with poor communication outcomes. As Isaksson, Kiessling and Harvey (2014) have written:

In contrast, to be strategic, CSR must be “hidden but easily found.” If a corporation markets their CSR efforts in the same fashion as their products and services, it is counterproductive and at best perceived as solely self-serving. Sub-optimally planned CSR communication might not benefit the corporation but instead risk skepticism and cynicism among their customers and investors, which defeats the communication purpose. (p. 69)

Skepticism might be treated as another occurrence in recognizing negative aspects of the CSR implementation through marketers as its main agents. The consumers are sceptical to the companies’ pro-ecological and pro-ethical statements on a higher level in comparison with other advertising messages. The motives behind the practice of marketing ethically-oriented goods are perceived by the consumers as manipulative and tend to be just a smoother, better planned and more cunning way of grabbing their pockets.

As Newbery and Ghosh-Curling (2011) have concluded, green marketing is seen as a cultivation of the company’s green image, with the rhetoric far outweighing the real company’s accomplishments. The authors have found out that the consumers often perceive the company’s motives in this area as merely attempts to preserve a positive image.

Mcbride Mintz (2011) has contributed to such doubts about marketing as a CSR tool, emphasizing the irreversible cynicism of the company regarding falsified green claims that lead to consumers’ scepticism.

The manicuring of the corporate image through marketing, and its CSR application, has also been well-pictured by the aforementioned Kibert *et al.* (2012):

CSR has been criticized by some as a form of ‘greenwash’ whereby companies adopt this framework as a strategy primarily to improve their public relations. The operations and products of some companies, for example, chemical companies, oil companies, weapons manufacturers, and tobacco companies, to name but a few, seem to be incongruent with CSR and sustainability. Some critics argue that CSR is simply a means of allowing companies to reduce their social and environmental impacts voluntarily when what is truly needed are strong government intervention and regulation. (p.27)

Haytko and Matulich’ (2007) research has fortified the above judgment as it has shown how ineffective the desire and idea of green marketing is in solving sustainability issues. According to their research, consumers perceive green advertising as deceptive, exploitive, and protecting companies’ reputation. Green marketing is deemed unnecessary and seen by the consumers as exploiting environmental issues instead of addressing them. The majority of the respondents in the above research had an unfavourable view of green promotion. It seems that green marketing is not about to start influencing and educating them, making this business area unprogressive for the CSR implementation.

Marketing as examined by Jahdi and Acikdilli (2009) has definitely a face of cynicism, with “play-acting dressed up as CSR”, because it is frugal and profit-driven. It should not be surprising, though, as the main aim of marketing is good public relations and sales revenue.

Regarding marketing limitations in the ethical strategy application, there is one strong aspect which might make the promotion ineffective in the CSR operation. Marketing is a profit-making tool, which is its elementary nature. Advertising meets the requirements of sale and production-driven capitalistic system rather than that of social values. Combining the above arguments leads to an assumption that it might be a wrong field of the CSR application.

Thus, a conclusion can be drawn that marketing—apart from how it is noticed by the scientists and how it operates—due to its origins might be a mistaken arena of the CSR application in the first place. Marketing just seems barren as a CSR tool due to a vague and cold welcome of such performance by its main recipients, i.e. the customers.

2.3.4 Marketing as the Wrong Field for the Performance of Corporate Social Responsibility

Marketing feeds the market-driven needs as well as it stimulates the soft dictatorship of consumption. It is particularly visible in *fast fashion*, where constant promotion and hyper-intense production cultivates the never-ending totalitarianism of purchase.

Since marketing is status-loaded—particularly so in the garment industry—promoting the aesthetization of lifestyle, comfort, and pleasure, and since it is based on cloning the free—market consumption habits, it could have a tempting inclination towards elevating things that sell easily and give quick pleasures to the consumers rather than supporting them in more ethical purchase choices. In the existing literature there are studies dedicated to the reflection that marketing could be seen as conflict-coded in the CSR application provided that it cannot modulate the customers towards the dematerialization of their desires or in the direction of socially-focused products. The main marketing strategy is to sell hedonism and comfort-related goods for individual use. Expecting it to change its political interest might be an idealization.

Marketing's subsets in the form of communications vehicles are the tools by which it can strive to achieve CSR objectives (Jahdi, 2006). However, defeatism and resignation to accepting the perceived negative image of marketing does not help to dispel what is to some extent a myth, i.e. marketing is the cause of certain societal problems/evil. Marketing has undoubtedly been responsible for a wide variety of social ills; nevertheless, there are socially responsible companies that employ ethics successfully as a marketing strategy. (Jahdi and Acikdilli, 2009, p. 104-105)

This quote contributes to the belief that the exception proves the rule. Although there are some ethically-oriented corporations that are able to do this (Stella McCartney, Edun, People Tree, or Marks & Spencer as the most recognized fashion brands in the CSR-related literature), the very same authors have considered marketing as a failure area in the application of public values due to the fact that advertising uses symbols and elements of promotion such as pornography, fear, anxiety, jealousy, disrespect, or hedonistic conformity. Therefore, the question for prospective lobbyists of marketing as a CSR actor could be how a tool that is used to deceive the customers and promote pornography could

also be used to “mend” the world. Although a hummer can be used for repairs, at the same time it can actually be a lethal weapon.

According to Carrigan and Attalla (2001), “Marketing ethics and social responsibility are inherently controversial, and years of research continue to presents conflicts and challenges for marketers on the value of a socially responsible approach to marketing activities”(p. 1).

A similar reflection on marketing as a CSR application filed is manifested by Johnson (2007), who has pointed out that it is commodity and pleasure that are easier for advertising agents to promote more than responsibility or citizenship.

Isaksson, Kiessling and Harvey (2014) have called it “a push approach” that is strong in communication, forceful, and with the income as the actual purpose. Their research shows that, generally, traditional promotion based on big budgets should result in the revenue in sales; however, using the same concept for the CSR implementation might bring opposite results, causing distrust and nihilism among customers. According to the authors, CSR used as another marketing tool would be mostly perceived as the cynical allocation of benefits in the company, but not in the other stakeholders. It will thus be treated with suspicion and recognized as the profit-maximizing activity of the organization. As traditional marketing directs its attention to the product custom features and visual aspects, the CSR communication relates to certain values that need a different verbal and non-verbal expression. As Isaksson, Kiessling and Harvey (2014) have confirmed, “Fifth, past research illustrates a direct relationship between the amount spent in marketing dollars (for example in the form of advertising) and sales revenue; this is not the case for CSR marketing” (p. 69).

Conclusions

If marketing is attributed with the power of creating lifestyles, it could be used to blend the company’s commercial interest, with the creation of green hyper-reality. Such practice might be grasped as another type of construction of the hyper-sales-based world through pro-ethical messages, thus manipulating the customers and other stakeholders. From its

elementary concept, marketing is not to be objective or to run truthful public rhetoric in ethical talks due to the fact that honesty in advertising is not the most important credit.

In conclusion, the investigation above heads towards a reflection that treating marketing and its agents as main CSR politicians in the fashion industry might be a naïve approach. Of course, it would be unreasonable to underestimate the meaning of marketing as one of CSR performance elements considering its supremacy to spread information and to shape consumers tastes. In an idealistic perspective, such tactic could benefit the promotion of ethical values, but it might also be close to advocating a utopia.

Marketing fails to be *the one* CSR performer as CSR includes non-market principles, which automatically creates a certain contradiction. These two components—CSR and market promotion—cannot be truly reconciled, because marketing tends to meet the requirements of the liberal capitalistic system more than those of citizen welfare and ethical values. The ideological imbalance between the CSR and marketing makes their merger a questionable and uncertain option.

Considering marketing as a Corporate Social Responsibility determinant makes not only the CSR theory risky and flexible in interpretation for the advertising purposes, but it also contributes to a wrong logic. Such approach, which is unsurprisingly based on pro-material and pro-sales imperatives, leads to a capitalism-based solution in the form of “voting with your dollar”, which is a fundamentally built-in market theory and not a social prerogative. Marketing is in service of general interest of international economies, mechanically reorienting the communal values and the CSR towards commodity-based principles. Promotion and advertising are just populist appeals that enhance business upshots and hyper commodification of our world as well as its physical ideals.

Furthermore, as has been shown above, marketing fails as a field of CSR application due to the very character of the concept and the fact that companies use it to manicure their image for their clients, attributing themselves with more ethical achievements than they accomplish in reality. The promotion of green messages is not heartily welcomed by the customers, resulting in scepticism, if not disbelief. As to the customers, they also are not

easy targets for the marketing managers due to their different involvement in green consumerism as well as varied education levels. The commercial marketing hegemony, which is a common mechanism in the contemporary economy, loses power in the battlefield of the CSR application. The above points draw a picture of too many conflicting demands between these two concepts to be reunited in order to make marketing the main CSR application area.

The dynamics of this discussion leads to the conclusion that marketing meets the requirements of a sales-based system rather than those of citizen values. Although there certainly are ethically-oriented corporations, it seems that the CSR application through marketing is, unfortunately, a sterile and abstract concept due to its basic economic structure. It is not that the idea is complex. It is simply unachievable. Therefore, this sections—which was devoted to the marketing approach in CSR performance—extends my contribution to the discourse and continues with the question about what other business actors would be more successful in the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility in the fashion industry.

2.4 Assessing the Company's Perspectives on Social Responsibility

2.4.1 Company's Approach and Marketing Approach Differences

The previous discourse dynamics led to confirmation, that Corporate Social Responsibility is such an ethical concept for business, where enterprise's moral principles are strategically put beyond legal obligations and are also related to profit sacrifice. It was shown, that CSR is built on three elements: environment protection, human rights and animal welfare. The CSR concept and its application are generally assumed through diverse approaches and varied actors: companies, customers, enterprise managers, marketing agents and designers. An analysis through such filters is significant for the research, as the impact of each CSR player depends on its specific operation or situation in the manufacture process and also in the context of the mentioned three fields.

In order to discuss CSR actors more profoundly, they should be studied through their primary interest in ethical manner and their basic reasons for application of Corporate Social Responsibility. The ground for that is a conjecture, that the targets they could achieve by means of an ethical policy might be different.

While examining further players of corporate ethical performance, one naturally focuses on the company's activity in this field. As in the previous case the influence and the meaning of marketing in CSR implementation were analysed, there naturally appears a question, if it should not be a company included in the same section with advertising influence on CSR introduction to fashion industry.

According to authors previously spoken, marketing does not seem to be the best arena to address CSR implementation. Nevertheless, this is not this research's concern, but to understand the relative positions and influences of different actors inside the broad process. Although marketing is one of the tools functioning in organizations, it is intended here to distinguish the company's operation in CSR field from promotion zone. In order to analyse CSR through company's performance instead of joining it with marketing activity we should comprehend, that the two subjects might have diverse objectives in CSR practice, dissimilar methodology and unlike results in ethical policy usage.

Thus, at the beginning of this section the attention is directed towards the prominence of a company represented by its CEO's and directors in CSR application in comparison to marketing and marketing managers, who apparently act in the name of the company, but the reception of the responsibility strategy from both of the above actors might be varied due to the motives' background and business goals they would like to reach specifically in announcing and practicing CSR.

The previous section highlighted that marketing in CSR application is mainly focused on sale and financial outcome, what is obviously in line with the company's similar requirements and its main goals. Truly, there is a common denominator for the company management and for marketing professionals, as, according to Philip Kotler the main company's objective is to achieve as good financial results as possible, which also covers the marketing department targets. However, on the other hand, the scholar admits Corporate Social Responsibility is a promise to recover public well-being through optional

commercial practices and donations of corporate resources (Kotler and Lee, 2004) which softens the company's profit-oriented image.

There is a lot of research on corporate ethical performance, that makes it an abundant field of dissertation. The companies' ethical performance might include various characteristics and hold polarized opinions concerning companies and marketing CSR practice. Thus, the introduction to the below analysis of CSR drivers for the organization needs a brief explanation of a distinction between the marketing and company's assignments.

As it is explained by Baker (2008), marketing is one of the company's elements and it constitutes an operational apparatus, one of many of the enterprise's mechanisms of performance:

A marketing strategy is most effective when it is an integral component of corporate strategy, defining how the organization will successfully engage customers, prospects, and competitors in the market arena. (...) As the customer constitutes the source of a company's revenue, marketing strategy is closely linked with sales. A key component of marketing strategy is often to keep marketing in line with a company's overarching mission statement. (p.27)

Furthermore, according to Baker (2008), marketing is an ingredient of the company's performance, where the corporation itself creates a different body of upper, more universal policy for its existence. The company's strategy is simply communicated and prolonged by marketing, as one of its operative arms. Marketing charms the customers by effective communication of the company's products. It brings its prizes in the company's revenues, what makes marketing concentrate on money results and transaction process. However, it is just one of the company's instruments, that make it financially successful in the market.

The corporations' objectives are not that narrowed. At the very same time, besides money-making, the brand's important aspects are their name and status. Reputation might appear to be strategically put in the company's main policy, thus consciously adding to its profit-driven targets, what shall be explained below.

2.4.2 Corporate Social Responsibility as Company's Reputation Leverage

To begin with, Bracey (2012) claims that reputation of a corporate is crucial to its survival. He claims, that having a good reputation can profit the company in a multitude of ways including clients' support for an organization in times of crisis or disagreement, consumers' appreciation and the future worth of an organization in the marketplace. The author says, that the reputation of an organization can allow a firm to distinguish its goods on extremely competitive markets and still to have superior pricing. It could constitute the ultimate factor, whether a client chooses to support this specific brand over another. The scholar reaffirms his point of view by stating that "maintaining a positive reputation is fundamental to the profitability, relevance and existence of your business". The author strongly points out the links between the company's internal values and its stakeholders with the reputation of the organization. According to Bracey (2012), organization's status is selected as one of its strategic aims and distinctions – to be apparently also achieved by skilful announcement. Following the author, the main components of company's reputation cover issues of: ethics, employees, leadership, management, social responsibility, customers, quality, reliability and emotional bond.

Feldman, Arellano-Bahamonde and Velasquez Bellido (2014) add their positive point of view on that topic, saying that the corporate reputation is now reflected a key variable in refining the brand's appeal and its ability for holding both shoppers and financiers. The authors somehow see the role of business changing its perspective from profit concentrated towards shareholders, stakeholders and community in the context of the company's name, what also contributes to Kotler's reference on the same topic.

This way, the above paragraph suggests that the company's reputation is a large scale project leading towards business triumph. Marketing and communication contribute to that, but they are one of many tools of company's general performance. The above logic would donate to a notion that the company is not only specifically focused on money making as Friedman's theory states (1970) and what is generally perceived as corporate main objective. As it was explained previously, organizations also move towards focusing on other aspects of business as building relations with its stakeholders, promoting ethical

values and structuring its reputation based on strong relations with the market representatives.

Speaking about the values, as it was conducted earlier in this work, one of the mostly recognized gears for structuring the organization's name is the application and communication of ethical standards through Corporate Social Responsibility. Following the discussion, whether the company could modify its capitalistic nature and principal ideals and whether it could be a main CSR agent in comparison to other stakeholders, one might be directed to an assumption, that companies are transferring towards changing their primary production role into a shared creation of ideals, based on reputation motives and more responsible design.

Morelli (2007) supports such opinion by writing that “business companies are becoming *organizers of value creations*, shifting their role from principal or sole actor in the production system to co-producer of value” (p.8). The scholar notices, that the corporations might blend materialistic aims with unmaterialistic ones using CSR as a platform and in the meantime influence their name in beneficial way. Such policy could be additionally understood as part of perceived advantage of the product.

When linking the brand's reputation with CSR values and welfares resulting from that, Bronn and Vrioni (2001) claim that: “The most obvious link of CSR to overall corporate performance is through the reputation aspect” (p.209). Following the secondary sources (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990) good reputation is strongly related to the stakeholders, higher prices (bigger income), better investors and co-operators. The authors advocate, that conducting social welfare by an organization brings a better reputation to it. Thus, it leads to a hypothesis; CSR could be a firm motive for the company to support ethical conduct and this way become a good CSR protagonist.

Elkington (2004) relates to such thinking, additionally calling CSR as becoming a tactical labelling instrument, strongly linked to stakeholders' role. He suggests two ideas for CSR performance: one as profit bringing for the brand and position strengthening and the

second one – relations consolidating with the stakeholders by inviting other participants of the production chain to create such ethical policy.

Moreover, Vaaland, Heide and Grønhaug (2008) see the company's social responsibility as an obligation towards the society in general, nevertheless also conditioning it with the stakeholders' prior involvement, which might be a natural logic.

Polonsky and Jevons (2009) similarly are positive that CSR performed by the organization becomes a central ingredient of the trade mark. They also point at different features conditioning CSR practice, marking a positive impact of CSR policy on its reputation, other stakeholders' attitude to the brand and its general perception.

Likewise, it is assumed by Moon (2007), who admits that CSR is adequate to firms in terms of benefiting from it thorough reputation, attracting investors, satisfying the personnel and bringing modernization to the organization.

Correspondingly, Isaksson, Kiessling and Harvey (2014) definitely find CSR as the organization's strategy to win the marketplace. According to the authors, brand image can polish firm's performance and CSR is accurate for that. CSR also increases a company's credibility, which besides its status, delivers a formula of insurance (reputational capital). They grasp CSR as a benefit area, however securing the opinion with declaration, that it reinforces the legality and status of a company. Among the other reasons, they cite better desire for the products by the customers, and in a strategic perspective, see it as a win-win result, supported by a market growth and income of the organization.

Although there is a lot of confidence towards companies' success when running CSR, there are voices that shake such statement. Portney (2008) disagrees with the above mentioned opinions. He doubts: "If CSR is, in fact, good for business, it would be nice to be able to point to some strong evidence that supports this point. However, such evidence is scant"(p.266). As he continues:

It is hard to deny that firms engage in CSR, defined as systematic overcompliance with environmental, occupational safety, and health or consumer product safety regulations, or that they frequently make philanthropic contributions at the local, regional, national, or even international levels. Moreover, the explanation almost always given for these actions is that “it’s good for business,” because such CSR activities ingratiate firms with one or more of their customers, employees, neighbors, shareholders, or regulators. It is much harder, however, to determine whether CSR really is “good for business” because the empirical evidence on strategic CSR is quite mixed. Some studies suggest that CSR is associated with above average financial performance, while others find no such effect. As indicated above, the most careful review of this evidence suggests that CSR may have a small positive effect on firms’ bottom lines, but that it may not be worth pursuing in light of other uses for firms’ funds. (p.274)

Likewise, Vowles (2000) adds to such suspicions, also claiming that there is no solid proof that businesses gain an advantage from green activities, like from the enlarged acceptance of environmental management schemes and the proactive communication of environmental enterprises to the public, via channels such as environmental declarations.

Valjakka (2013) similarly hesitates, distinguishing the calculating issue as an obstacle. According to him, the problem is placed on the absence of consistent rules to measure CSR effectiveness which disables comprehension of the phenomenon in both, corporate and public areas.

Once again it is important to come back to the money-based motives of a company’s existence. As Portney (2008) stresses the profit and CSR related issue “that companies can build an entire business strategy around social responsibility by seeking out areas in which they can be profitable” (p. 271). Therefore, lack of calculation and thus lack of countable benefits could weaken the CSR navigation by the company, due to the impossibility of measuring the CSR influence on the company’s profit.

Concluding, the companies might carry ethical values to the market and in the very same moment, they are said to possibly benefit from that in the context of better consumers’ reception and gained market reputation, that is also related to investors’ involvement.

Nevertheless, what we can extract from the above discussion, is a strong polarization of different research outcomes, that would clarify whether the company really revenues specifically from the CSR policy or not. Although there is a lot of feedback for the opinion that an enterprise returns from CSR performance by creating a better identity in the market, the problem here lays in the polemics about reliable calculations, whether CSR could be indeed lucrative for the organization. Thus, there is still an open question if reputation could be a predominant factor to make the company the most motivated and the most effective proclaimer of Corporate Social Responsibility.

2.4.3 Governments' Regulations vs. Corporate Ethical Conduct

As CSR is about promoting and supporting ethical values within the organizations area, the company is often linked in scientific literature to official regulations and secondary role played next to the governments in moral standards elevation (e.g. Hardjono and de Klein 2004, Moon 2007, Carrigan and de Pelsmacker 2009, Laudal 2010, Vowles 2000, Iatridis 2011). Corresponding to the discourse of corporate-governmental relation in the context of CSR application, there are questions to be asked. First, if a government could secure the social well-being from companies' potential greed and structural aim of existence, which is profit-making, what has been referred to earlier in this work. Or maybe these are the companies that actually could give a hand to the governments, especially in extending the area of democracy, where structuring moral business model is still on? Could the brands possibly be agents of law improvement through their CSR activity, thus reshaping the realm in which we exist? Could the organization be a co-creator of communal principles leader next to the legislative authorities? Such inquiries as well need analysis in the more profound study of the company's role in CSR application.

Relating to the administrative supervision and feedback for corporate ethical conduct, Hardjono and de Klein (2004), firstly approach the topic with the key word of democracy, marking circumstances of an unbalanced absorption of power and control in the hands of different groups of society, who are far away from autonomous guidance. In the context of such problematic the writers point at the corporations as obligation-driven towards laws

and regulations, with the part of backup for these characteristics, seeing the organizations' CSR as providing welfare to the society with the help of the legal authorities.

Likewise, supportive for company's caring role next to the governments is Moon (2007), who notices that there are many countries, especially the unindustrialized ones, although not entirely, where there is an enduring governance gap in the area of social well-being. However the author sees it rooted in lack of will to do so and due to missing implementation tools. Within the discourse of responsibility, Moon brings a conclusion, that there exists a certain space for companies to improve public welfare through, for example, workers' rights and to serve in the area of health and education, where governments are failing to do so.

As it is also caught with affirmation by Lopez-De-Pedro and Rimbau- Gilabert (2011):

The social system of norms can be seen as the result of past actions of individual agents, but also as the normative base for their future behaviours (...). Consequently, in addition to being affected by a set of socially accepted rules, the isolated actions of a company can contribute to establish, reinforce, undermine, or eliminate certain socially accepted rules governing actions and relationships. (p.153)

Carrigan and de Pelsmacker's (2009) deduction is similar to the above, broadening the additional, next-to governments' role of the corporation towards the customers and citizens at the same time. While governments have a role to perform in teaching the consumer what is the right thing to do, retailers are at the forefront too, because they have direct interaction with their clientele. The writers mark, that the consumers turn towards brands to request education, information and support on ethical issues. Following Carrigan and de Pelsmacker's suggestion these are the companies, next to governments that should carry pro- ethical, educational task.

Nonetheless, it is not always that optimistic. Although similarly, didactic role of the corporation and its moral duty towards its clients is marked by Eckhardt, Belk and Devinney (2010), the writers additionally notice the customers to be ignorant about CSR and education coming from that topic. The authors emphasize the brands' difficult role in

green training of the receivers of its products due to ideological and organizational challenges.

Likewise, according to Reed's (1999) generally favourable analysis of the management's role in CSR application, management requires at least acceptance of the character of a democratic administration in order to act according to the demands of the provisions of law. However, the very same author also realizes many obstacles by titling the corporation the main stewardship of ethical values. He sees ethical concerns to be applied with difficulty through administrative ways, for example *dura lex* due to the possibly long process of law, in case, where time is crucial for solving the problem. Thus, there might be an assumption that the companies might be more ethically effective if they do not support legal regulations coming from the governments.

Moreover, also Argandoña and Weltzien Hoivik (2009) raise more doubts about the possibilities or limitations of a company as a key actor when it comes to the application of CSR. The authors identify abuse of this concept on dogmatic or dishonest grounds by an organization. The scholars are of the opinion, that the associations between the business and society shall be determined by legal context and by historical and socio-economic one. As they notice, CSR performed by a company is often threatened by rational, political or even personal motives.

What is more, if we appoint the organization to be the guardian of ethical standards, it would mean that the company's ethical performance could be a reflection of the society's education level and also its private, moral choices resulting in doubtful ethical standards, for example. Argandoña and Weltzien Hoivik once again highlight, that it could be also used as an instrument of politics. In such case the company might potentially manufacture products demanded by demoralized parts of the society, uneducated or even criminally organized circles.

On the other hand, concerning the role of the state administration in controlling or supporting the corporate ethical conduct, other worries come from Laudal (2010) who claims, that governmental regulation for companies' activity is needed: "We get a picture of which part of the international CSR standards companies run the greatest risk of

violating and of which structural issues intergovernmental actions should address to reduce the potential for violating CSR standards” (p.1).

Such suspicions, whether the company could be left alone in estimating its behaviour and moral canons are solidified by Vowles (2000) who admits, that “It would be naïve to suggest that this could be a natural progression, given the restrictions imposed. Thus, it is now apparent that intervention is required from the Government” (p.4).

On the other hand, Iatridis (2011) advocates against leaving to the governments the supervision of corporate ethical conduct. As the scholar claims, the states fail to protect the market from unfair operations. The author further maintains, that current research provides enough arguments to believe the governments do not succeed in their monitoring of CSR application, leaving space for the organizations to act opportunistically.

Such theory is fortified by Klein (2007), who remains clear that:

The ultimate goal for the corporations at the center of the complex is to bring the model of for-profit government, which advances so rapidly in extraordinary circumstances, into the ordinary and day-to-day functioning of the state—in effect, to privatize the government.

The role of the government in this unending war is not that of an administrator managing a network of contractors but of a deep-pocketed venture capitalist, both providing its seed money for the complex's creation and becoming the biggest customer for its new services. (p.12)

Elkington (2004) strongly doubts, that whether organizations are strong enough by official regulations for inventive responsibility policy application. In his opinion policies and regulations intended to empower businesses to obey minimum environmental standards are insufficient for reassuring the original, socially responsible entrepreneurship desired to change new and more sustainable procedures of wealth formation. The author suggests, that without creative and true involvement of the organization, the governments cannot influence their ethical behaviour that much.

Beer (2013) gives even more hesitation, specially stressing the risk of violations of the law not only by the companies, but even by the governments in developing countries. He mentions the risk of a situation in which governments make only uncertain strategy changes and when they do not treat the consumption problems in their primacy program. Beer claims that the consumers' reaction to these changes could also appear as an intrusion to their independence.

There are scholars indicating that social concern shall be treated by an organization as its core interest, as organizations are perceived as united elements of society. This means that the chance for evolution, success and existence is reliant on the condition of the society of which they are a part (Hardjono and de Klein, 2004). However, if we literally put the responsibility of ethical behaviour trustfully only in the hands of a corporation without clear limitations coming from governments, it might not bring that spectacular changes in CSR implementation and instead of that confusion or perhaps a decline in ethical production or design. Such point of view was intensely described by Naomi Klein in her book *No Logo* (2000), where the journalist exposed the destructive power of corporations in situations of their uncontrolled authorities mainly in developing societies of poor countries of the *Global South*. As Klein uncovered, the governments of rising democracies seem pretty soft towards business pressure, in some cases supporting abuse and even breaking the law or by adjusting it to the corporate hegemony.

Even in circumstances, when the governments represent concrete support for civil improvements and they attempt to control the corporate ethical impact on the society, it does not mean, that the firms would obey it or such obedience really would bring positive changes. In the situation when there is an administrative control coming from the state, the companies are able to find adequate, crafty solutions for themselves.

Such a hazardous situation is expressed on H&M case, where H&M's Environmental and Social Responsibility manager explained it in a video interview devoted to fair trade and *fast fashion* in textile factories in Cambodia- Mrs. Ingrid Schullström on commented the average salary of Cambodia fashion sweatshop workers, that if “ (...) Cambodia would

come up to 70 USD today, tomorrow there would be no business”¹⁵. Just to mention, the discussion regarded the living wage salaries of garment staff, which at that time were around 45 USD a month. The above information could be treated as an exit-explanation, which presents a hidden threat of shifting the production to another country in case of “uncomfortable” business conditions.

Similar cunning activity by the corporations could be noticed in another example, in Polonsky’s and Jevons’ (2009) CSR studies, where the scholars describe a case that took place in Pakistan. After child labour protecting law was introduced in Pakistan, it unpredictably resulted in ... many fabricators shipping their jobs to other countries, what was reasoned by the new law implementation.

Concluding, the governments themselves might appear not to be that solid guardians of CSR application, as they happen to be submissive towards the companies and their capitalistic appetite in some cases. Additionally, in the current literature both the companies and the governments are also linked with treatment of communal issues as a field of administrative, political and instrumental activity through CSR door. Finishing, a regulation and self- regulation are needed from both sides, as on the hand the company is supposed to be an elevator of governmental social principles, and on the other side it could also malfunction or deprive public standards.

2.4.4 Executives and Subjective, Monetary Driven Corporate Social Responsibility

Apart from investigating CSR in the context of reputation leverage and governments’ notion, while providing arguments of pro or against the company’s performance in ethical sphere, there appears a discourse whether corporations shift towards CSR activities provided CSR funds perform likewise traditional funds and bring profit. As it was outlined before, one of the main cores of the organizations’ activity in general treatment is to be money based. Thus, in a potential situation, where CSR is seen as profit-making, it could contribute to strong motivation for enterprise’s main role in CSR appliance.

¹⁵ *Modiga Hjärtan Utan Reträtt*, Nilson A., Portnoff H., Zita N., Sverige 2005, Solfilm

Wishfully thinking, Portney (2008) sees that in such case even “agnostic about CSR” investors would direct towards CSR oriented capitals in case of hope for higher returns. However, does it mean in practice a truly satisfactory effect would be achieved for the subject of this discussion? It could be interesting to analyse firm’s social performance through such filter. Might CSR actions or might they not bring funds similarly as the money-based ones? Could CSR be treated by the managers as cash-rising and thus contribute to the essential movement of the business whose main purpose is a better annual report? Could such eventual situation stimulate the managers to push forward the ethical operation standards?

As it was also shown earlier, the society expects from the companies and their management new solutions in organizing the companies under social, economic and ecological terms (Hardjono and de Klein, 2004).

Following that, Argandoña and von Weltzien Hoivik (2009) give a chance to the opinion, that managers might be good advocates of ethical conduct within an organization due to their morality. On the other hand, the authors analyse other, external factors, like “geographical, social, political, cultural, ideological, philosophical, scientific, religious” that could vary and influence the outcome of such performance.

Managers, as the company representatives might also play a crucial role in the company’s performance according to Isaksson, Kiessling and Harvey (2014), who claim CSR is a hopeful addition to managers so as to advance their commerce through “value-creation, survivability, and growth and improve their performance, as the majority of corporations approach CSR opportunities strategically” (p. 68). However, the scholars indicate the CSR directors do not exclusively have the decision-making power, despite being executives. The scholars’ study exposes that “CSR is mostly an upper management or an executive task in 67 percent of the companies”, what brings a conclusion; the CSR specialists are somehow separated from power to act as the last one is left to the head of the organization. There is another question regarding the authors’ discovery, concerning other CSR actors. The remaining 33% percent of competence to introduce CSR seems a weaker, less significant field of moral principles operation. There appears a natural inquiry aiming at defining, what are the shared proportions of the CSR conduct in the left piece of CSR cake.

Furthermore, following the writers, almost half of the studied companies treat CSR as a firm concept for the company's strategy and they try to trial formal procedures regarding social responsibility. Nonetheless as the researchers notice, these activities are focused on winning the customers through better product and service connection. Such results lead to another conclusion that CSR performed by the company is not excluded from customer orientation, assuming money revenues are expected from such activity.

Continuing, a negative voice to the polemics comes from Haigh and Jones (2006) who appeal to research where managers are exposed to grasp CSR as "ancillary to the main game of economic performance". The authors see "CSR reports were functionally separated from accounting departments" and relating to their opinion CSR was isolated from the strategic and bookkeeping process, what might contribute to an unfriendly welcome of such activity.

The paradigm simply prevents widespread improvements consistent with social welfare. Problematic here include the intersection of CSR with managers' personal values attached to remuneration packages based solely on economic performance; the need to estimate the net economic impact of a proposed CSR strategy even in the absence of clear and transparent metrics, and the resources, capabilities and leadership to fund and administer CSR strategies. (p. 2)

The above-mentioned Haigh and Jones (2006) appeal to numerous problems with CSR application through the company's leadership, distinguishing among them the management's attitude to business as first and seeing social considerations as secondary plus treated in an operational and private way.

Personal values of company's managers are similarly marked by Reed (1999) who refers to issues of individuality and self-understanding that make CSR application by the corporations contextual and thus questionable.

Developing the discussion on the company and its management's role in CSR application, it shall be referred again to Hardjono and de Klein (2004), who notice that organizations

have no will, consciousness or purpose; nevertheless they consist of personalities that express their values. Following, their ethical outcome within the organization could be a result of a democratic procedure or an effect of a deliberate choice. Although the scholars claim so in the perspective of showing, that the company is somehow a part of society as it includes society members, what seems important are personal values of managers influencing the company's CSR performance. believes

Coming back again to the aforementioned Haigh and Jones CSR management's analysis, the writers also point out lack of consistent and equal education that could give a global base for CSR and that might avoid actions, that are declarative and taken from personal experience of the managers. They refer to "a mockery of the ethical lineage of the CSR concept".

In sum, CSR momentum acting within the firm is unlikely to promote more than superficial expressions. Structural and legal environments admit only instrumental forms of CSR. (p.3)

Fundamentally, while some CSR initiatives might generate positive or mitigating effects on externalities, they cannot fundamentally alter the externalising engine that powers every business firm and is the primary source of capitalist pathologies. (p.3)

The authors express criticism about capitalism in CSR context and in the background of the general theory of the enterprise, which is an institution with financial priorities demanded by capitalistic rules. They also state, that companies treat CSR in an instrumental way, exposing serviceable attitude of business towards CSR. The writers see law conditions make such situation even stronger, leaving CSR as nothing but shallow declaration.

Balmer, Fukukawa and Gray (2007), when studying the topic of CSR performance, present capitalism in a more balanced way, relating to Adam Smith: "Capitalism is driven by individual greed and company profit maximization. However at the aggregate or system level, it results in a much wealthier economy where all its members benefit to varying

degrees” (p.2). Concluding, the main objective of business is to earn and to increase the wealth of all its business participants. Nonetheless, it is uncertain, whether such outcome is right for the whole society and whether it would be possible that the company’s capitalistic paradigm could be transformed into creator of collective wealth.

When talking about capitalistic archetype of the company Hardjono and de Klein (2004) see it: ”Social, ecological and economic concerns, have the characteristics of a ‘resonance’ ”(p.100). The authors insist that CSR performance for the company is only motivating when profit-driven, risk reducing and improving reputation. The authors discuss the natural conflict lying in the organization’s capitalistic nature, calling to secondary sources:

Two years before the Club of Rome report, Toffler (1970, 1980) had published his book “Future Shock”. In that book, but even more convincingly in his second book “Third Wave”, he elaborated on the dominant paradigm of managers and economists; the unlimited need for maximization, centralization, concentration, specialization, standardization and synchronization. Although contributing a lot to human prosperity, Toffler showed that this dominant paradigm of managers and economists would also produce problems, if the limitations of it were not recognized. Now, after 30 years this paradigm, still dominates managerial, economic and political thinking. Strategies, policies, both at governmental and company level are still based on this paradigm. (p. 100)

More opinions regarding capitalistic nature of the company and its management come from Perry, Fernie, and Wood (2014), who state that the main motive for the global move of manufacture to developing countries is cost, given the labour-intensive nature of apparel production and the huge discrepancy in employment tariffs. With regard to this, it would be honest to ask a question, how we could believe there would be a reason for the company’s managers to converse such situation towards more fair-trade, honest salaries, if the companies’ main reason to exists – meaning to earn, especially in *fast fashion* is based on cost reduction.

As it is accurately summed up by the aforementioned Haigh and Jones (2006) “(...) the hegemony of economic rationality (Gorz, 1987) and its colonisation of non-corporate

institutions (Deetz, 1991) means that capital has already won the discursive battle, although not necessarily through the Trojan horse of CSR itself'. (p.6)

Summing up the arguments against giving the leadership of CSR practice to the organizations' managers in the context of their subjective interpretation of that phenomena and system deprived attitude to CSR, as it was mentioned in scientific papers, the executives might block development of such strategy. Firstly, the managers are shown unwilling towards CSR and filtering the concept through private beliefs. The studies present them as non- objective and financially focused when approaching CSR. The capitalistic nature of the enterprises they run conditions CSR application negatively. The company executives' very first plan is management, prioritizing the production in organizational meaning and taking care of distribution solutions, sale ratings and accountings. The capitalistic character of managers' professional position impacts ethical conduct, where tricky and instrumental approach towards CSR has a strong possibility to appear.

Thus, it could be assumed the managers' are not the best ethical standard proponents, as their private considerations and cost-causing perception of CSR phenomena might reshape the CSR strategy not in the finest way.

2.4.5 Complexity vs. Company's Corporate Social Responsibility Performance

While assessing the above arguments I would like to refer to another problematic within corporate ethical conduct application, that is the issue of complexity.

So far the research data in many papers has advocated that ethical brand practice is effective when applied to the whole corporate body. CSR is advised to be injected strategically into the entire company; otherwise its potential could be wasted (Isaksson, Kiessling and Harvey, 2014). As it was likewise demonstrated earlier, CSR should be implemented on three fields of: environment protection, human rights and animal welfare (Płonka, 2013) and to relate to multitude of involved or affected subjects. So here comes the complexity of CSR application by a company to be analysed.

Starting from Bigné, Currás-Pérez and Aldás-Manzano (2012) who connect to the above point of view, signifying CSR should be “a strategic mission” and “transfer throughout the all the organization”. The authors highlight accurately complexity of an organization as possibly to be one of its most risky areas in CSR appliance. The writers advice strategic, all over company attitude to CSR. According to them, contrary approach would result in deterioration and ineffectiveness as they are briefly presenting it on a case of Tiger Woods Foundation, where in their opinion all the money given by a garment or sports textiles producer to the Tiger Woods Foundation to Empower Youth would be unusable, if child work were practiced in its factories in South East Asia.

Once again calling to Polonsky and Jevons (2009) who also notice weakness of CSR application by the organization correspondingly due to the complexity of the firm. Here the authors highlight the difficulties in conducting CSR by a company on global scale. Considering that, it seems logical that on world-wide measure, the numbers of workers, co-operators, suppliers and subcontractors make it edgy to control. Polonsky and Jevons also see it pretty challenging for a corporation to fulfil CSR, as it needs to be treated as a new corporate philosophy implemented on all company’s levels, whether the employees are ensured about such new thinking and all workers support “re-established corporate values”. According to the authors it is not unachievable, but time, determination and capital consuming.

With reference to this, also Hardjono and de Klein (2004) mark the meaning of ethical responsibility in context of reaction of other members of the spectacle. It should be not only about injecting ethical values into the whole body of an organization, however about taking charge of other stakeholders in the process. “The motivation for Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility is that one is responsible for their own behaviour and for the behaviour of others, as sustainability cannot be explained in cause and etc. relations” (p.104).

While talking about the stakeholders, CSR realization by the brand needs additional support coming also from the customers. From complexity perspective, Devinney, Auger

and Eckhardt (2012) feed such argumentation when studying CSR related CNSR-Consumers' Social Responsibility correspondingly in relation to CSR, write:

The task of incorporating CNSR into the organizations strategic calculus is daunting. It requires completely rethinking the design of products and services from the ground up; i.e., moving away from simply bolting onto existing products and services social branding or "cause related" marketing components or covering the firm with a "green" aura. It requires persuading and enticing and educating and nudging consumers over long periods of time so that they come to understand the utility of the social aspects of their consumption. It requires getting the pricing right, rather than simply assuming that the social components are things consumers will automatically value and pay for. (p.231)

Concluding from the above, the consumers make the CSR performance by the company even more struggling, due to challenges of educating them and changing the whole strategy of communication in order to get their attention and appreciation, as they are important components of CSR application.

The discussion whether complexity of an organization could be negatively defining the enterprise's possibilities in CSR navigation, it is studied in an example of a wealthy company, that has funds and tools to apply CSR policy- Adidas Group. The brand is one of the biggest sportswear retailers in the world. It sells clothes and shoes worldwide; however it outsources 96% of its production from Asia Adidas shoes for example, and produces its products internationally in 61 countries, cooperating with more than 1100 suppliers in total (Spetzler, 2016). The numbers are incredibly high, showing the company's market position, production potential and financial power.

However when analysing their matter carefully, this features could be understood as serious disadvantages in the background of CSR implementation and a complex matter. Taking into account so many different stakeholders and also issues of transparency, there emerges a serious doubt (Spetzler, 2016) if the company would manage to practice fruitfully moral principles everywhere and on all levels of it goods production. Even apart from its noble will and pro-ethical declarations, the brand's complexity of structures,

production chains and numbers of people that should be involved into the ethical policy makes it not only very tough, but rather idealistic.

Assuming, it would be brave to take for granted that such a global corporation might be able to control ethical standards among all its co-operators and guard successful CSR implementation due to thousands of kilometres of manufacture net and thousands of people involved. Even despite best CSR professionals and effective communication, the scale of Adidas enterprise and complexity of its clothes and shoes production work against its CSR policy. Matters regarding complicated system of producers, employees, different legal regulations and geographical distances from its central office in Germany shake such concept. Complexity is a key word working against the company in this discourse. It might be assumed, even 16 billion of Euros of Adidas Group annual turnover would not make its CSR policy satisfactory on realistic level.

As it results from the literature, the complex structure of a company might be the problem for CSR implementation, as there are just too many elements to be organized – both production stages and ethical conduct participants.

2.4.6 Companies' and Consumers' Marriage

To explore the potential of and organization as the leading agent in CSR application, it would be necessary to study the effects of brand's ethical policy on one of its stakeholders-the clients. The consumers are assumed to be the main company's driver for its activity. They might also play a role of significant factor for company's ethical conduct. Nonetheless, could the consumers really guide the companies' ethical conduct? What impact might they have on CSR practiced by the organization? In the existing literature there is a lot of attention devoted to the customers as elements influencing the company's ethical performance. The discourse meaningfully drives towards the consumers, as an integral part of enterprise's social performance.

From some studies, corporate ethical conduct seems significant for the consumers. Niinimäki (2011) comprehends those ones seeking help in corporation while making ethical choices. According to the scholar's research, the customers even wish the majority of social responsibility to be moved towards corporate hands.

Once again the key word of reputation emerges, here as a bridge between customers' and companies' on the field of CSR application, as Isaksson, Kiessling, and Harvey (2014) say:

(...) corporations with a high level of strategic intent had a high rank of CSR and high performance. A high ranking of CSR provides important positive side effects in addition to the other potential benefits in the form of spillover effects. The creation of spillover effects emerges from the customers' view that a reputable company is both a company of higher quality and a company that provides better CSR. (p.69)

According to Eckhardt, Belk and Devinney (2010) corporate responsibility is inseparable from consumers, ironically not due to the morality of the clients but also regarding their ... commercial capital. Although Eckhardt *et al.* expose the "mainstreaming" character of corporate social strategy rooted regrettably not in the social activism of the consumers but rather in their market significance, still they do point at the clients' power in influencing corporate ethical policy.

As stated by Mohr, Webb and Harris (2001) any company or marketing manager shall take into account the fact, that many research data shows positive impact and higher evaluation by the clients of the company while representing CSR in its practices. "Each year since 1993 at least 80 percent of those surveyed reported having a more positive image of a firm if it offers support to a cause they care about" (p.49).

Craig Smith (2007) also links CSR effects with reputation, in the context of the consumers' concern, thus it could be easily concluded, that the customers might make positive drivers for the company's ethical will.

Adding another supportive voice to such articulation, Allison (2009) likewise underlines the consumers to influence pro-ethical brand's performance by avoiding unethical products and selecting the ethical ones, thus sending signals to the market about the objects that should be manufactured or should be not be.

Carrigan and Attalla (2001) enhance more argumentation to the above, stating marketers are stimulated to perform in an ethical manner because information about a firm's ethical behaviour is believed to influence product sales and consumers' appearance of the business. However, they point out that although noticeably customers have more confident attitudes towards companies that act ethically, than companies which act unethically, they underline it might be more complex. According to a study data about ethical and unethical action, they seem to have an unequal stimulus on approaches, "(...) such that vices detract from attitudes more than virtues enhance them" (p.5-6). The authors highlight that customers are more likely to punish unethical companies, instead of gratifying the ethical ones. "Unfortunately, it is neither as simple nor as straightforward. Indeed there are reasons to believe that there may be very little commercial reward in terms of consumer purchasing to be gained by behaving as an ethical marketer" (p.2).

Similarly, a question about trust-in-clients attitude while supporting the company's ethical values application emerges from Cooperative Bank 2005 Report which declared, only 5% of consumers admitted their shopping is ethically filtered. The statistics seemed poor for the financial outcome of the organization and it might be assumed 5% could be not enough to motivate the company's ethical conduct and change the face of the market.

Some doubts come from Mohr, Webb and Harris (2001) where consumers are also reported to believe firms to guard the environment and behave ethically what seems to direct the clients' responsible purchase declarations, however with no established reviews of such outcomes. It is hard to count the number of people, whose consumption activity is affected by the superior diversity of behaviours condensed by the idea of CSR.

Already mentioned Valjakka (2013) also relates to a conflict on effect the CSR policy has on consumer's behaviour. The scholar's study expresses his fear if the society understands

CSR and hence his study questions the actual impact of CSR on shoppers.

Even bigger polarization comes to the discussion from Eckhardt, Belk and Devinney (2010) who claim the consumers' primary demand from a company is not ethics, but other values and factors of typical market characteristics.

The same is pointed by Portney (2008), who underlines, that firms can build the CSR policy however only if their pro-ethical products are enforced with classically economical agents: aesthetics, profits and competitive prices, which are the main purchase drivers for the customers.

2.4.7 Distrust in Corporate Social Responsibility

While revising the literature, one may notice that in many of papers it is included, that companies use CSR as a cosmetic treatment and appearance tool. Although CSR activities might be grounded on decent purposes, that does not mean, that in practice they are actually building a modification and that they are socially responsible (Fernandes, Monte, Pimenta and Afonso, 2013). Additionally, according to the writers CSR schedules are not always derived from good believes but from calculated strategy. Companies choose the issues and the social primacies from fields favourable to them, due to the brand's strategy and image, what is also detected by their clients.

According to this, Albayrak, Caber, Moutinho and Herstein (2011) come back with already mentioned in this work scepticism, that appears next to CSR analysis in the context of the customers' influence; the authors view CSR often presented as an illustration of corporate cynicism. Following them, inappropriate company's behaviour or untrue motives hiding behind green acting are tracked with disappointment and disapproval of the clients, which negatively affects general consumers' feedback for corporate ethical performance.

Similarly, Şişman (2005) while analysing company's ethical policy emphasizes the deceiving character of CSR handling by the corporation, referring to "deceptive jargons that are used as convenient covers for conducting business as usual" in context of green

labelling and sustainable issues.

Contributing to that, Valjakka (2013) cites in his work a study of Bhattacharya (2006) where CSR initiatives by a company are presented to be controversially perceived just as propaganda. The enterprise's CSR performance might be lacking strong influence on clients' purchase choices due to blur, false company's statements and coming from those misgivings.

Polonsky and Jevons (2009) mark cunning attitude towards CSR implementation in the hands of businessmen. They describe it as a slippery ground for givers, resulting in critical reaction by the receivers: Although some organizations do incorrectly attempt to custom CSR in a "superficial tactical fashion", which can often be understandably disapproved as being "opportunistic rather than meaningful" (p.329). The same authors highlight the risk of rooting the corporate ethical policy in customers' satisfaction, as they point at appearance of disappointment and criticism coming from consumers whose expectations towards ethical corporate performance had not been fulfilled.

Following others, "A caveat is that companies that promote themselves as socially responsible need to be prepared to deal with criticisms of any irresponsible behaviour they are seen as committing" (Mohr, Webb and Harris, 2001, p.69.), what is an entrance to negative approach to both companies running CSR with mistakes and towards the customers who are unwilling to forgive such failures.

Apart from the problematic of criticism and scepticism appearing while studying the relation between the company and its client in the field of CSR due to errors made by the brands and disbelief coming from the consumers, when talking about consumers influence on corporate ethical conduct, Johnston (2007) elevates something new. She says it might be challenging to provide such market space, related to ethical conduct, in which limiting clients egocentricity and consumers selection would work in the name of collective good.

(...) it is not clear what happens to self-interest—the fundamental principal of market theory that assumes an optimal outcome is produced when individual consumers maximize their "utility" by prioritizing self-interest (Slater 1997:28–9). How and when is self-interest trumped by a concern for others, or for the social and ecological commons? (p.245)

Following Johnston's doubts, there appears an inquiry if the company is ready to give the power of decision making to the customers, who in the most consuming, developing countries of the wealthy western world are brought up in pleasure-seeking, neoliberal climate. Could the company democratically make them responsible for shaping the world by judging it through their self-interest and utilitarian attitude? How would the social and ecological concerns look like then, if they were formed by hedonism coming from unrestricted consumerism?

Neoliberal governance actively promoted the idea of consumer choice in the market as a worthy complement to, and even substitute for the citizenship ideal of democratic participation. (p.246)

Interestingly, Johnston also expresses her hesitation around possessing the total right to profile ecological concerns by both corporations and customers due to threat of privatization of environmental issues and distance of the state towards social imitation.

What is more, Albayrak, Caber, Moutinho and Herstein (2011) claim that green policies done by companies could only expect a feedback from the customers, if they are built on altruistic principles and trust-based marketing, what the authors suggest would lead to a kind of revolution of management. In such case the writers suggest the company to change the shape of surrounding us products and services. While talking about environmental policies, for example, the authors also say that "This would represent a total management paradigm shift – the adoption of new management practices driven by the needs of stakeholders and a marketing philosophy totally driven as a consumer agency" (p.194).

When we expect the corporations to act in a different, more ethical way, it might cause confusion and conflicts (Balmer, Fukukawa and Gray, 2007). For both companies and customers under the environmental protection, for example, there is often a political or economic factor hidden (Portney, 2008). There is a general suspicion, that environmental concerns expressed by companies or clients in the area of energy saving, recycling or reusing are driven by intentions of savings but not worries for the planet. If economic grounds for CSR implementation are so frequently quoted in scientific research in the

context of company and its clients acting, there might be no reason we should so trustfully provide these actors with responsibility for CSR implementation, as it might not bring reliable and honest CSR performance in the end.

There is some enthusiasm about polishing CSR by the company's practice, also with the customer's assistance. However, as it is gathered from the analysed research papers, there is lacking a firm scientific data, that proves that the customers are on the same page with the organization in supporting and appreciating ethical conduct. What is even more, the customers are suggested to make more rational choices, that do not relate to ethical values that much, but rather to aesthetical, quality and prize related ones.

There are many misgivings around the companies to gain the consumers, as its allies in CSR application, also due to noble, but empty customers' pro-ethical statements, not later expressed in their purchase choices. The honest diagnosis also shows that brands are seen by the consumers as dressing up CSR prior to their issues of financial interest or even acting with false intentions. In case of communication, reliability or effectiveness gap in the relation between manufacturers and receivers of the products is created; it causes criticism and scepticism among clients making their ethical bond with the company even thinner.

The customers come out to be fragile supporters of corporate ethical strategy. It is rather unlikely that they would motivate or sustain the business in uplifting moral standards within the organization, hereby making the company's position in CSR implementation vaguer.

Conclusions

Collecting information from this section devoted to company's navigation role in CSR, as it was put at the beginning, does not lead to a negation of the opinion that CSR policy might be beneficial for the firm. CSR as a corporate tool contributes to winning the marketplace and brand image increase. It is said, that the society expects the companies to be guardians of ethical standards and to obey the law. It occurs as undeniable, that CSR

donates to the company's reputation and thus subsidizes to the brands position in the market. It becomes clear, that the companies could be motivated to implement CSR into their main strategy and production as the organizations are said to benefit from that on the name and status area.

However, having profoundly analysed such concept for the dominant role of the company in CSR application, the above deeper research leads to a deduction, that there is no agreement around confirmation. The above optimism rarely stimulates the company to do good, as solid empirical evidence of CSR positive influence on companies' financial results is lacking. Assessing the research data, it could be seen that there is a certain gap in scientific statistics, that would approve positive outcomes of company's CSR strategy on consumers' buying decisions. However, as it was stated previously, ethical conduct contributes to a respectable company's name and theoretically its customers' appreciation of such behaviour, regrettably the customers are identified to be more declarative, than active in support for the ethical goods market implementation. They are unwilling to put forward their positive opinions into their purchase choices, which is another discouraging issue for the company. Thus, the organizations which are profit-oriented from the beginning lose basic reason to implement ethical values, due to their economic nature.

Company's managers always do count, however, as it has been clarified, responses from the customers plus related numbers in revenues are missing. Accordingly, executives are appointed in the literature review as the actors to see CSR cost causing. They are perceived as unwilling to this idea, due to the circumstances CSR brings from the theory "profit sacrifice" instead of direct currency. These are meaningful factors that work against the company's affirmation for CSR, regarding its uncertain profit perspectives. Lacking economical drivers for managers in CSR application puts this concept at risk also referring to the fact CSR acts do not perform and do not bring funds the same as the money-based ones.

The nature of the firm is crucial for understanding, why a company itself could be not the best proclaimer of CSR policy. Although companies have financial and operational possibilities to change the surrounding through their ethical conduct, CSR cannot modify its capitalistic pathologies – commonly noted monetary driven values.

Of course companies might choose to serve not only their shareholders, but also their stakeholders. Nevertheless, such shift is not natural and keeping the balance between the company's interest and stakeholder's wellbeing is difficult. Companies are not CSR indicators from their origin and character of existence. They are organizations concentrated on revenue maximization and bringing wealth to their owners and shareholders. The critique here relies on the fact that we cannot expect these subjects deny their original purpose of existence. It is the companies capitalistic DNA to charge the world for what they do, not to distribute their wealth and the income they collect. For business to work and to survive it means to grow in economical meaning. Bringing money into the company is the essence of its foundation. If the company is perceived as the main actor on CSR stage, then we should take under consideration facts, that it is always driven by hegemony of materialistic validation, which comes from regular capitalistic theory of an enterprise as an organism with targets to collect profits. Even on ethical field, the economic rationality of the firm's behaviour cannot be avoided due to the basic foundations and organization which are profit making. Regarding parts of CSR established theory which is "profit sacrificing", a natural conflict occurs, which makes the company a poor CSR ambassador.

Continuing the polemics, the literature study also indicates ethical company's activity and CSR performance by the managers is also based on their subjective perception. The CSR practice is certainly impacted by human factor, where managers are said to filter CSR through their personal beliefs and choices. The research suggests individual trusts and private religions determine CSR application in the context of management operation, which is not the strongest, but additional argumentation against the company as main CSR player.

Moreover, scientific papers often confirm instrumental approach to CSR by the managers and also false, untrue treatment of this concept. The former investigation also demonstrated the executives have the tendency to treat CSR as a mockery and as a tricky tool to deceive the customers with the aim to win their trust and to conquer the market. The above negatives result in scepticism and disbelief among the customers. Therefore the brand's clients are said to distance themselves from CSR related actions and grafts, making the CSR policy introduction for the company even harder.

Following the discourse, complexity becomes another argument in this polemics against corporate navigation of CSR among other stakeholders.

From one side, the role of a company in ethical conduct is important, obviously contributing to its reputation while enhancing its ethical strategy efficiency. If it is conducted honestly and correctly, it is also perceived positive in effects for the organization and other stakeholders as it was abstracted earlier in this document.

On the other side it is extremely puzzled, relating to other participants' reaction, level of their moral principles, involvement, understanding and their support for the company's CSR tactic. It would be rather hard for a company to be 100% morally accountable for the executives' role, due to the fact its plan depends so much on other manufacture members and side actors invited to CSR play.

What is more, as the today's fabrication process is spread globally, especially in apparel industry, the company and its top managers would have an incredibly severe role to implement and control CSR policy on all levels of its production and in many different countries. Geography works against CSR implementation here. It is crucial to recognize this obstacle, particularly due to the general scientific suggestions; CSR has to be put strategically and integrally, to be certainly successful.

Piling up the arguments, CSR cannot be treated as kindness act or individual decision of the company's bosses, but as a strategic, conscious reaction towards social inequalities and ecological losses resulting from aggressive capitalism and global, industrial production. The society might be different in different parts of the globe, not having adequate knowledge to make demands from the company or not having sufficient law tools in their hands to protect their rights. Thus it could be assumed the role of governments in controlling the corporate activity would be welcomed. However, as it was abstracted in this work, it might be idealistic as there are slippery areas in such thinking; governmental corruption, submissive position of local administrative powers to the corporations or inadequate law regulations towards the organizations. Likewise as it was observed by the aforementioned scholars, expecting that an organization as a company would play a role

similar to the government in setting up political and democratic rules or would take place of moral values protagonist connected with certain culture could be not only challenging, but even risky due to the basic, economic concern of the company and its capitalistic character. Obviously, regarding the above study, mandating a company to play a role of a citizen that would promote collective values related to citizenship is at least problematic.

Summing up the discussion against and pro the company to be crowned in CSR application, it is significant to mark, that CSR should be filtered as an unbroken marriage of corporations and customers mutual activity in this field.

In terms of CSR-consumers' relation, the shoppers' are the main targets of the company's motion and actually make the companies work. The results how these actors react towards CSR performed strictly by an organization come surprising.

According to previous analysis in this work, customers are demanding ethical standards implementation within the business. Naturally, the consumers are regulators of the market, with certain political implications, however if the companies are expected to support their moral responsibility with their clients' feedback, the results are pretty disappointing. Coming back to the facts, that the customers are sceptical about CSR communicates and misgiving with CSR actions of the companies. The literature review exposes consumers' choices do not seem to be an expression of collective thinking but rather a manifestation of self and hedonistic needs. According to the earlier deduction, the shoppers make more rational choices, selecting products of useful character, then the ethically upgraded ones. In practice, they do not choose the CSR related goods, although they imagine the companies to manufacture such ones. Summing up, the leadership expectations from the consumers towards the companies are raised; nevertheless the receivers of such guidance seem somehow CSR- proof.

Considering the above, companies, whose business spectacle relies firmly on the customers, might have no reason to cultivate ethical policy. One could suppose, when analysing clients' influence on the companies' CSR practice, the customers would rather not make the company CSR leading navigator, neither be a visible key performer of this phenomena, what is going to be studied specifically and explained in the following section.

2.5 Looking at Corporate Social Responsibility through the Role of Customers

While broadening the horizons of both CSR studies and the practice of this phenomenon, the attention of the discourse in thematic literature review is often drawn by the consumers. There are many stakeholders that are essential in the process of the CSR application: the designers, company's managers, manufacturers, marketing specialists, and the said brand's clients. Nevertheless, the impression is that most of the scientific research is devoted to the last category, i.e. the shoppers.

A record of the existing articles devoted to CSR reveals a customer-centred character of these practices as well as analyses their position in ethical design and manufacture from the consumer imposing perspective. The scientists consider the consumers with regard to social purpose and try to find solutions towards green behaviours of the brands' clients.

This situation demands further inquiry. Many authors who concentrate on that undeniably important factor simultaneously recognize inconsistencies and contradictions while taking a closer look at the target of their studies and outcomes of their papers devoted to the ethical policy application. Although there is a significant amount of attention devoted to the consumers, one might find a curious pattern where the scientific research is often summed up with a misunderstanding, a declaration of certain needs in order to deepen the research, and, finally, the necessity of continuing the scientific work in order to enhance the comprehension of the users' ambivalent behaviour patterns in the CSR context.

It is therefore crucial to look at the consumers with criticism in order to find out where the paradoxes and doubts come from as well as respond to the question about whether the consumers should have the moral authority in ethical decision process in design and manufacture of the commonly used goods.

At the outset of the discussion, it should be stated that consumption is a significant process that creates our lifestyles as well as impacts the surroundings, including other stakeholders and environments. Nowadays, however, desiring and purchasing objects is shaping new forms of existence as well as communicating and creating relationships with other members of the society. In the context of searching for the best CSR application practices and their agents, it should be noticed that consumption is generally assumed to work for

both the consumers themselves and social affairs as well. However, as Eckhardt *et al.* (2010) have said, “Categorizing consumption is a difficult task” with regard to the framework of CSR application, however the act of purchase always has a social dimension.

The consumers are crucial to the consumption process and as such form the way in which this mechanism operates. Brînzea, Oancea and Bărbulescu (2014) are affirmative about the shoppers’ prominent position in the whole company’s life, claiming that, “Consumers are one of the key stakeholders of organizations in the marketing exchange process, because the customers represent the lifeblood of every business” (p. 50). The authors see the CSR process transforming into a reputational factor, because, when it comes to social issues, consumers want more than ambitious proclamations.

Mcbride Mintz (2011) has also recognized the meaning of consumers’ contribution to the CSR performance due to the fact that consumers tend to demand from the companies more socially-responsible choices, e.g. through spending money on brands they consider more ethical.

Argandoña and von Weltzien Hoivik (2009) have shared this opinion by saying that consumers may be a kind of a “wake-up call to the conscience of the owners, managers and employees, confronting them with the firm’s responsibilities” (p. 225).

Similarly, the positive reflection on clients’ role in ethical conduct is embraced by Vowles (2000), who has presented the consumer as one standing at the gates of a new social order through exerting pressure on the corporate.

Correspondingly, Craig Smith (2007) has pointed out to consumers being a vital trigger of corporate responsibility, along with employees and investors.

Argandoña and von Weltzien Hoivik (2009), who have been mentioned before, have pushed the optimism even more forward as they venture to name the consumer “a king” with the total power to move the market.

Consumers might be perceived to be valuable co-creators of social meaning, who have transformed from a role of the recipients of commodities into co-producers of moral standards. “Customers are no longer actors external to the value chain, but instead part of a value-creation constellation” (Morelli, 2007, p. 19).

Niinimäki (2011) has made a similar point, indicating a former, traditional role of the consumer, taking into account their changing position in the process due to the appearance of new design strategies that give them more active position. The author even claims that the clients possess the chance of co-constructing the values as much as innovative design plans do. As she has asserted, “The consumer begins to be a value creator” (p. 94).

The affirmative attitude towards the role of the consumers as value creators is also supported by Carrigan, Moraes and McEachern (2013). As the scholars have explained, “Value is created through use so that when consumers ‘use’ a product, they become an operant resource (i.e. a coproducer) as opposed to an operand resource (i.e. target) and therefore are inherently involved in the co-creation of value” (p. 1281).

However, for the purposes of the dissertation herein it is crucial to appeal to Isaksson, Kiessling and Harvey (2014), who have questioned whether the customers should be the focus of the CSR discussion. In contradiction to the other authors, these scholars state that most companies seem to commit the same “crime” by picking up only one subject of their CSR strategy, namely the clients. Rather than aiming all CSR participants, the companies wrongly target clients’ good behaviour expectations.

In relation to the above-mentioned doubt, when filtering the debate of CSR through the clients’ paradigm, Devinney *et al.* (2012) have claimed that the customers are not such a strong trigger of the CSR implementation. However, according to the authors, the companies will eventually have to include the consumers in their tactical planning if they want to be successful. The scholars explain the strategic position of the clients in the CSR policy by saying that, “Because of consumers pre-eminent position as the ultimate evaluator of corporate strategy, corporations cannot ‘do well *by* doing good’ without consumers also ‘doing well *and* doing good’” (p. 230).

Following this stance, Brinkmann and Peattie (2008) have said that, “Within a market economy, business behaviour is not independent from consumer behaviour and consumer acceptance. Perhaps, there is even some justice, i.e. that businesses get the consumers they deserve and vice versa” (p. 2). As the authors correctly notice, there is a strong conditioning included in both sides of the cooperation, which then influences and shapes them through their behaviours.

Exploring the characteristics of those that seek or purchase CSR-related products is the basic need of the enterprise due to the fact that, according to Brînzea, Oancea and Bărbulescu (2014), time and capitals invested into understanding the customer’s viewpoint will always be a good asset, which could build solid customer relations, which, in turn, should lead to long-term success.

As can be seen, the consumers are considered significant actors in the CSR performance. Nevertheless, in order to study the CSR application successfully in comparison with all its players, such as managers, designers, manufacturers, and marketing professionals and consumers, it is crucial to define the specific features of the latter ones in the background of the ethical performance puzzle. Thus, it would be vital to study what kind of customers the enterprises target with their ethical strategy, as well as what types of clients respond.

2.5.1 The Ethical Consumers- The Better Educated and Well Earning Cougar

As was stated and explained in the section devoted to the CSR theory, CSR and ethics in business may be performed by different stakeholders: company owners, marketing managers, manufacturers, designers, and consumers. According to the literature review, the CSR strategy should be practiced on three main topic fields: nature protection, human rights, and animal welfare (Płonka, 2013, The Co-operative Bank. The Ethical Consumerism Report, 2005).

According to Vowles (2000), green consumerism is not a unique remedy to global problems and environmental issues, but it has the potential to facilitate the greening up of the business and society. Vowles has observed that there is some proof of such

development and growth in different dimensions of social and ethical affairs.

Cooperative Bank report shows that about 54% of people surveyed in the Ethical Consumerism Report agreed with the declaration: “As a consumer, I can make a difference to how responsibly a company behaves”. Disagreement with this statement came only from 17% of the respondents (Craig Smith, 2007).

This creates an optimistic perspective on the engagement and profile of the consumers in the moral context; they see themselves as being aware of their social potential and ethical power as shoppers. However, other studies suggest different outcomes.

Although de Pelsmacker, Driesen and Rayp (2005) have written that 46% of European shoppers declare to be eager to pay substantially more for ethical goods, when we start to distinguish these products it turns out that the Americans accept only around 7% of price increase for green products in comparison with the French consumers, whose contribution seems greater due to their willingness to pay even 25% more for clothes that were not made by children. However, in the same article we may find that actually it is only 1% of market share that relates to ethical products such as organic food, products free from child labour, fair-trade production, or legally acquired wood. This adequately conveys the state of affairs in this regard.

The data has been confirmed through another research, this time by Carrigan and de Pelsmacker (2009), who have said:

However, while purchase penetration across the population has grown rapidly, and the desire to buy more sustainable goods clearly exists, it must be recognised that the share of today’s ethical or environmentally friendly products although significant, remains small. In the UK, these products are estimated to account for under 4 percent of total consumer retail spending in 2007 (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2008), and while fairtrade sales growth is considerable, it remains less than 1% of global trade (Siegle 2009). (p. 4)

Adding more information on the statistics of ethical sale, purchase, and intentions, Craig Smith (2007) has observed the consumers’ behaviour and concluded that probably only 10% or even less of the population could be said to be engaged in ethical shopping.

Low and Davenport (2008) have supported such a sceptical thinking, especially considering that the consumers seem to pay little attention to green choices. What is more, the authors notice the consumers go even further by prizing unethical behaviours and punishing ethical business performance.

Furthermore, Haytko and Matulich (2007) have been worried that there is little agreement about ethical shoppers' constructing and identifying the character of green customers, especially with the apparent dissonance in their environmental beliefs on the global scale, where this kind of dissonance appears in different aspects of both individual and collective life.

According to that, McBride Mintz (2011) writes that the importance of understanding the green consumers should be emphasized in order to be able to target them effectively with ad campaigns. The author has noticed that different groups of consumers may react in varied ways to products and companies' activities. McBride Mintz has also suggested that the clients' choices are conditioned by a number of factors:

The same consumer may choose a green product in one situation but not another. This makes targeting these consumers an often frightful task as green buying behaviour hinges on more than the characteristics of the consumer. (p. 10)

Following this discussion on profiling green consumers, cultural differences is the issue that is frequently named by scientists as the most important dynamics that polarizes opinions on ethical consumers. Cervellon and Wernerfelt (2012) have stressed that, "The dominant perspective in environmental consumer research considers the environmental behaviour of the individual in isolation of her/his social network and her/his implication in the consumer culture" (p. 178). The authors give examples of such differences as illustrated by the Southern European clothing business clients, who perceive green fashion as not related to trends. On the other hand, they describe the Italian and French customers seeing it as boring and lacking beauty, whereas North Americans seem to be more positive about the eco fashion touch.

To quote the already mentioned studies from Carrigan and de Pelsmacker (2009), along with “social roles, gender roles, institutional structures, welfare expectations, laws and traditional rights”, nations also make alterations in the description of green consumers. If we take under consideration specific topics that direct the customers’ attention to certain problematic purchase choices, be it problematic or positive, then, for example, climate change seems to be important for Brazilians, the Chinese, and the Indian people; for Canadians green products are to be selected instead of organic chocolate, while in Italy it is the opposite (Carrigan and de Pelsmacker, 2009). The aforementioned authors also speaks of China, where clients do not appreciate efficient washing machines due to the custom of washing by hand as well as low costs of energy kept by the local government.

Another area of studies on ethical customers concerns their demographics. Here the research is surprisingly unanimous and the results are quite similar and they identify comparable types of green consumers.

To begin with, Cervellon, Rinaldi and Wernerfelt (2011) have pointed out to only small inconsistencies in constructing the frames for age and sex of the receivers of ethical goods. Referring to gender, age, and wealth level, they notice that most scientists agree on a certain pattern of the CSR-related client; they are most likely going to be well-educated females.

Also, Laroche, Bergeron and Barbaro-Forleo (2001) have claimed that studies on environmental consumerism could be traced back to the early 1970s, providing a portrait of ethical consumer as a pre-middle-aged female who is well-educated and with “above average socioeconomic status”.

Along similar lines, it has been observed by Leonidou, Leonidou and Kvasova (2010), as well as McBride Mintz (2011), that the green consumer is commonly a middle-aged female with a good living.

Furthermore, it has briefly been recognized by Cervellon, Hjerth, Ricard and Carey (2010) that the typical consumer appears to be a wealthy yet not sophisticated in her style lady in her 40s, who is sexy, chic, and self-assured. The same authors point out that men are not

that active in green consumerism, and this view has been shared by Irving, Harrison and Rayner (2002), Finisterra do Paço, Barata Raposo and Filho (2009), or McBride Mintz (2011). The latter one claims that consumers who are the least green tend to be men who are younger, not interested in politics, and less-educated.

To conclude, although green consumerism is assumed to be influenced by different cultures, the emerging profile of a green shopper is consistent and pretty universal. Trying to define the ethical consumer is not a difficult task, it would seem that she is the forty-year old, educated and well earning woman, who then contributes to the aforementioned ethical products' sale rating.

2.5.2 The Motives for Ethical Purchase- "Product First, Ethics Second"¹⁶

In order to study customers' role in the CSR research, not only is it significant to explore gender, age, and socio-economics, but it is also necessary to look into the motives that lie behind particular choices of purchase.

According to Carrigan, Moraes and McEachern (2013), who have referred to Bauman (2002), consumption can be seen:

(...) as socially constructed and as something that has historically evolved from a private, needs-oriented activity to a socially construed, desire sustaining activity. Therefore, given the influential position of those who consume luxury fashion, if they embrace socially responsible fashion brands, environmental signifiers have the potential to influence, normalise, and lead the diffusion of desirable, pro-environmental and prosocial behaviours – if conducive structures and factors are in place. (p. 1285)

In the analysis of the desires, needs, and motives that push forward ethical consumption, it shall be started from skepticism coming from Şişman (2004), who has referred to Hay

¹⁶ Brinkmann, J. and Peattie, K., 2008. Consumer Ethics Research: Reframing the Debate about Consumption for Good. *Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies*, 13(1), p. 10

(2005) and stated that although problems are getting more serious every year, the consumers of modern Western societies seem to practice shallow ecology and they do not express a strong need to change their private lives.

Even if they do attempt to consume more responsibly, the aforementioned Carrigan and de Pelsmacker (2009) have argued that the consumers follow mainstream patterns based on economic reasons that include, for example, saving money. As the authors explain, “Switching off lights, reducing heating thermostats, planning purchases, using public transport, increasing insulation and utilising low energy appliances are among the most popular ethical behaviours that involve relatively little consumer effort” (Carrigan and de Pelsmacker, 2009, p. 8).

The very same idea is expressed by Finisterra do Paço, Barata Raposo and Filho (2009), who have noticed that the involvement in green behaviours is not dependent on caring for the environment or, for example, triggered by ecological consciousness, but, rather, is related to economic factors such as saving electricity or water.

Similarly, the Cooperative Bank research on the ethical consumerism finds in a 2005 report that costs were the main trigger for the choices of ethical shoppers along with fashion, suitability, and accessibility.

When it comes to economic issues in consumers’ ethical purchase motives, Vowles (2000) has provided a valuable insight when he/she notices that higher premiums are demanded by green products, thus promoting discrimination between wealthy and non-affluent clients as well as causing economic factors to endure the primary purchasing determinant. The author has also stated that, “Higher premiums on green products may also provoke resentment from would-be green consumers who feel that they are being exploited for their beliefs” (p. 3).

According to Devinney *et al.* (2012), the typical features that are searched for by the consumers determine their selection. As the authors have stated, “Hence, the addition of CSR components to the business will alter the mix that the consumer is purchasing, either

directly or indirectly. This mix cannot be one, which reduces the value the consumers ascribe to the product” (p. 230).

Other than the reasons for CSR-related shopping, in a previous work Eckhardt, Belk, and Devinney (2010) have written that there is already evidence that social values could be incorporated into the product, but only if the main demand for elementary features—such as product functionality, brand, image, and availability—is fulfilled.

Along the same lines, price, quality, and brand are mentioned as more and more overarching ethical concerns by Low and Davenport (2008), who have also wrote that, “Consumers taking part in surveys do not cite ethical concerns as a central part of their decision-making unless the surveys directly prompt them about the issues” (p. 99). The aforementioned scholars notice there is a myth of an ethical consumer as existing in theory, but not in practice.

While analysing the main triggers for ethical purchase, there emerges another aspect that is crucial in order to understand what facets would draw the attention of prospective green clients. As many studies reveal—especially in fashion style—image and aesthetics are the key factors for customers’ selection.

In this regard, style over price, as well as availability, are magnets for potentially ethical consumers, which we can find out from Gupta and Ogden (2006).

Furthermore, while exploring ethical consumerism, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) have also mentioned fashion trends along with price, value, and brand image as the elements that are more important than moral principles for customers’ product estimation.

According to this line of thinking, as it has been briefly summed up by Brinkmann and Peattie (2008), “Product First, Ethics Second” (p.10). However, the authors specify that if two products have the same typical market value, the one that benefits the society will more likely be selected by the brand’s clients.

There is yet another reason behind ethical purchase behaviours and it relates to common consumers' motives. The CSR stands for noble and ethical intentions, which—when supported by clients—is also perceived by scientists not only as satisfying users' practical needs, but also as greatly indulging the buyer's ego and enhancing their self-perception.

Contributing to that, Eckhardt *et al.* (2010) have suggested that the motivation for the clients to choose green products is also rooted in narcissism and self-interest, where dignity is both a side effect and a positive outcome. Nevertheless, the authors admit that, “It does not mean that it does not have a socially responsible component” (Eckhardt *et al.*, 2010, p. 229).

Self-interest has also been mentioned by Craig Smith (2007) and—independently—by Johnston (2007) as factors even when the ethical values within purchase action are put aside and the CSR-related selection isolated from purchasing behaviours.

Accordingly, Allison (2009) has illustrated that consumers make ethical buying choices in order to improve good feeling about themselves and enhance their self-estimation. The author claims that ethical consumerism is not rooted in the awareness of the effects of the purchase activity on society. Rather, Allison mentions the conflict between consumers' activity and their individuality with the well-being of communal matters. To cite the scholar, “Criticism, of rampant consumerism, is that consumer culture emphasizes materialism to the detriment of the spiritual well-being of society, and that excessive individualism is promoted, thus destroying collectivist values” (Allison, 2009, p. 2).

This stance has been shared by Sheth, Sethia and Srinivas (2010), who have stated that “Caring for community is essential for collective well-being, but it is also closely tied to individual well-being. Excessive consumption is detrimental to the common good as it is to personal well-being” (p. 28).

Still in the topic of consumers' motivation for ethical purchasing, other studies show that the green shoppers are strongly driven by things that actually impress them personally, which favours a typical market conditioning of product purchase.

A detailed clarification is presented by Carrigan and Attalla (2001), who have asserted that the level of interest in eco consumption is dictated by the direct impact on the involved stakeholders. They underline that if unethical behaviour influences the consumers negatively, their reaction to immoral position is bigger. The authors illustrate how customers' participation in social issues is related to their own interests, areas of their life activities, their feelings, and their moral standards.

As indicated, personal matters, beliefs, and problems seem to be a strong factor in shopping choice with regard to the CSR strategy. The more the ethical code included in the product relates to personal feelings, the more it influences and drives the attention of the consumers. It is exemplified in animal welfare, which is one of the CSR components. It could be assumed that due to the fact that many people have pets, they have more in common with animals than with, for instance, workers in *sweatshops* of the so-called developing countries. Interestingly, academic papers confirm that to most clients animals seem to be the most reactive factor towards the CSR issues.

Following such logic about the construction of CSR application that should touch on three fields, i.e. environment, human rights, and animal welfare, Carrigan and Attalla's study brings curious notes to selective ethical choices of green consumers. The authors have stated the following:

One issue that did engage sympathy from the respondents was animal rights, particularly the idea that animals suffered due to corporate behaviour. In fact, exploitation of animals seemed to engender more indignation than human exploitation. This topic did create a lot of debate, and it became clear that the respondents only cared about certain kinds of social issues. For example, the rainforest and working conditions were low on their list of ethical priorities, while the idea of animals, (...) did matter to them enough to affect their purchase behaviour. So much so that it emerged they valued this issue enough to pay a premium and actively seek out a product that had been produced in an ethical manner. (p. 569)

In conclusion, green consumers cherish the typical market characteristics of the products as much as everybody else does. They pay special attention to economic, status, practical, and

aesthetical aspects of the purchased goods. It can be assumed that this state of affairs creates a conflict situation, since the CSR theory is about profit-sacrificing and equal targeting of other stakeholders' well-being, and thus it cannot be about pricing or drawing lovely pictures of the environment. As can be seen in the literature review presented above, ethical consumerism seems to be driven by self-esteem, narcissism, and the need to enhance the shoppers' ego rather than by deep ecological awareness. What is significant to notice is the fact, that green consumers move towards ethically-coded products, but they do not do so because these goods are better from the moral angle, but due to the fact that these products relate to the clients' personal feelings and tastes first, which is illustrated in the example of harm done to animals. It might be easy to follow, as many people keep pets at home, but only few of them have seen a deforested post-rainforest area that was burned to the ground for industrial cotton production of their T-shirts.

2.5.3 Ethical Consumerism in Fashion Industry- "Aesthetics Trump Ethics"¹⁷

While exploring the area of the CSR application in fashion with the special focus on the significance of customers, it seems in order to begin with the fact that contemporary fashion seems to have lost its primary meaning, i.e. that of objects that are there to isolate people from difficult weather conditions. Rather, nowadays fashion primarily communicates the individual status or cultural origin predominantly. As Black (2008) has stated, "The way we bring individual meanings and personal feelings to dressing, sets it apart as a social and cultural activity, far removed from the original purpose of clothing for warmth and protection" (p. 78).

The process of 'greening' of the fashion industry takes place on many different levels of its production. As this sector of economy is embracing more and more business issues such as design, management, fashion purchase, education, charity, or lobbying both nationally and internationally, fashion as a phenomenon starts to be incorporated not merely as fun, economy or individuality, but as the expression of care for the future of the planet as well as the move towards more decent life (Black, 2008).

¹⁷ Joy, A., Sherry, J., Venkatesh, A., Wang, J. and Chan, R., 2012. Fast Fashion, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands. *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 16(3), p.286

Fashion customers are perceived as key players due to their core role in the clothing business as they are the ones to be final recipients and evaluators of the produced garments, as well as they are the ones who pay for the manufacture of the goods. When exploring the CSR topic, it would also be significant to study fashion consumers' reasons for ethical choices specifically, as well as their characteristics in the purchase process.

Recognizing the immensity of this issue, Chan and Wong (2012) have noticed that, "Fashion consumers' ethical consumption decision-making process is highly complicated and is difficult to be predicted" (p. 194). The authors' comprehensive study leads to conclusions that the choice route is not really different from that of a typical consumer actually interested in ethical goods. What can be learnt from these scholars' analysis of ethical shopping is, first of all, the importance of price and style priority. Second, the study exposes new, additional problems regarding the feeling of sacrifice while buying ethical and more expensive products. According to the authors, the consumers expect the ethical clothes to be sold at a lower cost. However, "The attributes such as price, quality, and product design" were the most frequently mentioned elements and seem to be valued above social benefits of ethical consumption among the clients of clothes brands, which did not differ from the performance of an average green consumer.

Furthermore, similar stance has been expressed by Saicheua, Cooper and Knox (2011), whose study in apparel business has provided conclusions about how ethical issues happen to have small influence on the decisions of purchase, illustrating that the fashion industry customers are leaning more towards ordinary quality and price advantages of the product. Also significant is the higher price of the CSR-related goods. According to the authors:

Sustainable garments currently appear to be more expensive due to the higher cost of organic raw materials and higher wages paid to a „fair trade“ labour force (...). However, consumers do not see an environmental aspect as a value added (...) and do not want to pay a "green" price premium. (Saicheua, Cooper and Knox, 2011, p. 6)

Knowledge of consumers' ethical choices in fashion is expanded by Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang and Chan (2012), who have maintained that in this case, as they have

said, “Aesthetics trump ethics, at least for the time being” (p. 286). According to their study, the shoppers tend to buy eco-fashion on condition that it is absolutely stylish. This leads to the conclusion that making the green garments pretty makes them also market successful.

Style seems to be a strong motive for fashion purchase even in the case of separate and specified studies on green consumers. As seen in the above-mentioned Chan and Wong’s exploration of this theme (2012), there is perception of green fashion as unstylish and out of date, which the authors emphasize many times.

Along similar lines, Cervellon, Hjerth, Ricard and Carey (2010) have revealed that—according to the respondents of their study as well as literature review—green fashion is considered as dull and not following the trends.

In this sense, style might appear to be a an obstacle in choosing ethical garments, although many brands, their management and designers started to pay more attention to the aesthetical values in ethical collections production and attempt to find innovative looks and technologies to satisfy also this part of their consumers’ desires (Black, 2012).

Furthermore, Haigh and Jones (2006) have claimed that consumers express classically economic attitude towards green purchasing and they valorise the product through typical market characteristics.

Summing up the discussion on ethical responsibility among the clients, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) have provided a study on ethical consumers that, sadly, leads us to conclude that the CSR exercised by the customers had little to do with the value of the concept itself.

When asked outright did a company’s record on the environment or social responsibility influence their purchase decision, almost all respondents said that it had no influence on their decision, and that they did not care how well companies behave. One did say that it might affect about “5 per cent” of their purchase decisions. (p. 569)

What is more, a problem appears of finding out about the actual motives for eco-consumerism in fashion, since there are certain inconsistencies about what the consumers declare and what they actually do. Surprisingly, the above-mentioned authors collected from their surveys some positive declarations about how bad behaviours of a brand would disturb the clients' purchase intentions. However, the same respondents admitted that although companies as Nike, Gap and McDonald were publicly exposed because of their unethical behaviours, this did not make them discontinue their purchases. They say that, "In terms of these products it had made no difference to their purchase behaviour: I like Gap clothing, McDonald's tastes good, and Nike looks and feels right" (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001, p. 570). Thus, it is important to notice the difficulty in profiling the green consumers due to the incoherence of their answers with the actual consumer activity.

Supporting this claim, Craig Smith (2007) has said that there is a break between what consumers claim to believe, what they say, and what they actually do. The author admits that there is a certain "desirability bias" in how the respondents answer based on what they think they should in fact say. Thus, social expectations influence the respondents' answers, transforming them into wishful replies that have little to do with the real purchase behaviour.

A similar explanation is provided by Devinney *et al.* (2012), who have stressed that, "General statements about values and intention have no relationship to real world outcomes". Such view has also been supported by McBride Mintz (2011), who has written that, "Intentions do not always gravitate towards behaviours. What people say they feel is not always predictive of the choices they make" (p. 9). This last author recognizes that being green is socially well-seen, so the consumers' self-perception is expressed in a declarative way, resulting in a huge inconsistency between their claims and the translation of the willingness into the actual achievement.

As can be seen, the green consumers in fashion can be pleased with an appropriate style and fashionable garments; it is therefore important to design and manufacture products that would embrace both the typical market features and ethical principles. Due to some discrepancies between what the customers say in the surveys and to what they later do, the questionnaires should be designed carefully and made for only a part of a broader study.

However, even more significant is the need to find out whether the shoppers would actually care about the CSR-related problematics at all.

2.5.4 Neutralization- Exciting Ethical Responsibility

Following the aforementioned debate as illustrated by Carrigan and Attalla (2001), the discrepancy between the level of involvement declared towards ethical products and the actual purchasing behaviour might be a consequence of the consumers' justifications and rationalization of their passive behaviour through helplessness or cunning reasoning of their ethical neglect.

While exploring the possible role of the consumers in the CSR world, it would be necessary to mention the process of neutralization, which is closely related to the discussion above. This part of the dissertation will therefore familiarize the reader with the fact that, according to findings, neutralization is used to justify consumers' selfish purchase goals and can be used to explain the act of choosing unethical commodities (Chatzidakis, Hibbert and Smith (2006).

As has been defined by the abovementioned scholars, who have carried out an extensive exploration of the phenomenon:

Neutralization theory represents a conceptual approach that has been applied to understand how individuals soften or eliminate the impact that their norm violating behaviour might have upon their self-concept and social relationships. (p. 694)

The authors' extensive and effective diffusion of knowledge on green consumption includes explaining neutralization as balancing the consumers' internal tensions between their own needs and wishes with their ethical behaviours. According to the scientists' research, neutralization consists of numerous elements that determine customers' escape from ethical decisions, responsible choices, and prospective acquisition of the CSR-related products.

Therefore, there are several components of neutralization: Denial of Responsibility, where the customer might reject an ethical choice based on the rejection of responsibility for made mistakes; Denial of Injury, where the customer isolates themselves from the ethical choice due to allegedly insignificant harm; Denial of Victim, where the customer justifies their unethical choice through admitting that the harm needed to be involved; Condemning the Condemners, where the guilt is assigned to those affected by the consumer's irresponsible choice; and, finally, Appeal to Higher Loyalties, where violating the ethical norms is warranted by higher values or priorities.

Summing up, the phenomenon of neutralization should not be underestimated, since it reveals yet another aspect that questions the consumers' position in the CSR practice. It is said to be commonly used by the shoppers in different ways in order to justify unethical choices and achieve selfish goals. Despite the general consensus about how consumers are the determining players in the CSR implementation, neutralization can be perceived as the factor regulating the conscious purchase culture, eventually rendering the CSR concept somehow dehumanized, making the clients' moral conduct situational and unhealthily deactivated.

2.5.5 *Greenwashing*- Manicuring the Corporate Image

While continuing the discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of considering the customers as the main actors in the CSR practice, it is necessary to involve *greenwashing* and mistrust as potentially significant factors that trigger the consumers' role in supporting the CSR practice, which has already been mentioned in this dissertation in the section devoted to companies' performance with regard to CSR. Since green advertising began in the 1970s with regard to the oil crisis, it has continued to grow through eco-marketing, eventually transforming into power that made customers—who had previously been unwilling to pay higher prices for eco products—actually do so (Haytko and Matulich, 2007), thus making it a populist appeal.

Nevertheless, green marketing might be identified as a slippery ground for the CSR implementation due to an unfriendly welcome from the consumers as well as its common correlation with *greenwashing*. Green marketing is generally assumed to be causing mistrust and denial rather than meeting with positive reception. According to Black (2008), green marketing might be a hazardous practice relating to a chilly reaction of a brand's clients.

Delight and desire are the key motivations in the fashion mainstream market, rather than doing the right thing. However, there is evidence in the press of the beginnings of a backlash in attitudes to green issues, which can be criticised as niche, middle class and pretentious; the subject of superficial 'greenwashing'. (pp. 78-79)

Also, Mcbride Mintz (2011) has defined *greenwashing* as superficial eco marketing and empty statements that are inconsistent with actual business practices. The author claims that environmentalism is often used by marketers just as an advertising tool, which often makes the consumers confused about eco products, consequently causing their cynicism and ambivalent behaviours.

According to the theory of *greenwashing* by Ramus and Montiel (2005), "*Greenwashing* is disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image.—10th edition of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*" (p. 1). Therefore, from this angle *greenwashing* is the act of deception through cunning, pro-ethical and pro-ecological messages that have very little to do with the reality.

A satisfying classification of *greenwashing* comes from Strähle, Will and Freise (2015), who have written about what can be concluded as the capitalization of eco values for indecent purposes.

Greenwashing has become an international, negatively associated expression to illustrate actions of companies who position themselves as 'green' and use 'green claims', even though there is no sufficient evidence for sustainable sourcing or even though there is an entire absence of credible certification. (pp. 74-75)

The mistrust for green marketing and the tendency to transform it into greenwashing is also mentioned by Carrigan and de Pelsmacker (2009), who have completed the critical definitions above by looking at this concept as one of key barriers in supporting the CSR by the customer.

Along similar lines, “confusion, cynicism and exit choices” are enumerated by Haigh and Jones (2006), who have presented the customers unsupportive of the CSR as actors caught in the marketing actions net, which leads to the above-mentioned negative reaction.

The appearance of such a negative reaction towards green communicates is so frequent that, as has been observed by Cervellon and Wernerfelt (2012), some companies decide not to communicate anything eco-related at all, even if they have appropriate contents for such a message. According to the authors, due to the fact that shoppers are suspicious about the brands going green for many reasons—and mostly because of the commercial character of such activity—it should not be surprising that many companies do not publicize their green outcomes in order to avoid being accused of *greenwashing*.

The critique of corporate *greenwashing* practices might be greeted by the consumers in a more active way through boycotting the selected brand. According to Johnston (2007), the first boycotts were recorded in Ireland in the 19th century, when labourers formed a union and rejected to crop the oats of Captain Boycott, demanding better wages and working conditions. As the scholar has said, “The boycott has subsequently been used by unions, political activists, and individual consumers as a way to enact political preferences through anticonsumption behaviour” (p. 236).

As Carrigan and Attalla (2001) have written, it is a fact that more and more companies are being exposed to boycotts due to the alleged increase in ethical activism on the part of consumers. The scholars recognize the positive appearance of customers’ engagement through their rejection of those commodities that do not live up to their expectations with regard to the ethical side. On a more positive note, then, it sometimes happens that the consumers are refusing to purchase certain products in order to act responsibly and reach goals that are socially significant. The authors give an example of Nike and Gap, both of which are among those fashion enterprises that are most frequently targeted with boycotts

on a global scale. However, Carrigan and Attalla also highlight that this state of affairs takes place thanks to the power of the Internet, from which one might presume that it might be an effect of collective actions and shared values of the majority more than an individual reaction towards social injustice.

Interestingly, then, boycotts could actually be used in favour of the CSR. They might bring real outcome and in this way support ethical goals due to social and economic pressure imposed on a brand by its clients. As has been demonstrated by Rahbek, Pedersen and Gwozdz (2013), the boycotts of fashion companies that used fur in their collections resulted in several of them having to exclude such products from their subsequent offer.

However, such a successful culmination of consumers' action does not make a rule, as is shown by the example of the Benetton global boycott (Płonka, 2013). Although the clothing brand was exposed to massive criticism and protests from the consumers all over the world due to their usage and cruel manufacture of fibre, the company refused to exclude *mulesed* Australian wool from its collections and continued to cooperate with unethical subcontractors.

All in all, it is nonetheless comforting that—with the boycott pressure—consumers do seem to have some power and influence over the shape of companies' responsible design and production. Nevertheless, while analysing the CSR in fashion through its main agents, the shoppers are once again presented as weakened in their ethical performance, which this time is due to the practice of *greenwashing* that brands engage with, followed by clients' mistrust and nihilism.

2.5.6 Consumers' Education versus Corporate Social Responsibility- The Everyday Men's Taste, the Everyday Men's Ethical Design

Extending the discussion about scepticism among consumers that is caused by both *greenwashing* practices and neutralization, McBride Mintz (2011) has suggested that the more the consumers know and apprehend, the less sceptical and mistrusting they are towards the green claims.

Studies have shown that the level of green awareness and knowledge on ethical products and manufacture is essential for the consumers to support—or not—Corporate Social Responsibility. The current research points out to the dependence of consumers' education on their involvement in the ethical shopping choices as well as their feedback towards social practices of the companies. However, the scientific debate about the context of green education and information possessed by the shoppers creates a rather gloomy picture of these CSR actors.

Gan, Wee, Ozanne and Kao (2008) have found out that both businesses and the consumers are responsible for the natural environment and its resources. Therefore, the major ecological problems are also caused by consumptive actions of the clients themselves.

Carrigan, Moraes and McEachern (2013) have concurred with this claim, saying that the consumers participate in the harm through purchasing products manufactured irresponsibly and in an abusive way. Thus, it could be assumed that the consumers should feel responsible for their impact on the ecosystem and well-being of others.

It can be noticed that in order to assume responsibility for the effects of the manufacturing process, the shoppers need to have a wisdom platform, where they could recognize goods that are produced responsibly, which they could base their judgment on. Some amount of knowledge is essential to be able to make final, ethical choices, thus becoming truly involved in the CSR practice.

As has been concluded by Cacho-Elizondo, Loussaïef, Pettersen and Tobiassen (2012), consumers often lack knowledge on ethical and social issues. The authors' research has revealed customers' low awareness of the CSR, connecting it with the broken relationship between the users' attitudes and their purchasing behaviours.

Cervellon and Wernerfelt (2012) have explained this lack of awareness among fashion consumers through basic absence of the 'green' information from their recognition, as well as the lack of clear definition and understanding of the meaning of simple terminology as

green, organic, ecological, etc., what too could indicate shortages in the shoppers' eco education.

More clarification on this issue comes from Carrigan and Attalla (2001), who, while studying ethical consumerism, have discovered that, surprisingly, the clients are not that willing to even search for information about the products. According to the authors, consumers are lazy ethical ones with no activity towards ethical purchase. When they do try to gather some facts about the products they are planning to buy, the media seem to be their main and only information source.

Perhaps it is about being indolent and uninformed, but the fact remains that, as has already been mentioned in this document, consumers do not seem to root their purchase selection in thorough knowledge. Rather, they act based on typical neoclassical market patterns, shifting towards goods of more practical and esthetical value. As has been briefly summed up by Black (2008), "After all, most people just want to buy something nice and not too expensive" (p. 243).

Expanding on consumers' knowledge regarding ethical purchasing—and the resultant involvement in the CSR issues—Eckhardt *et al.* (2010) have explained that the consumers are confused and stressed from sustainable choice exercise, to which they are not looking forward. The authors mark that the clients' role in sustainable development is a constant struggle with different issues that are additionally seen by the shoppers as time-consuming.

Accordingly, Oates, McDonald, Alevizou, Hwang, Young, and McMorland (2008) have been openly critical of consumers' engagement in the search for valid information on ethical products. The scholars are unanimous in claiming that, as they have said, "Self-declared green consumers are not equipped or motivated enough to make decisions on which issue is the most significant for each purchase and they alter their purchase accordingly" (Oates, McDonald, Alevizou, Hwang, Young, and McMorland, 2008, p. 14). The scholars point out that the users lack time to find the correct information due to their busy lifestyles. Additionally, the clients are presented as inexperienced in the matter of

production cycles, which makes it impossible for them to distinguish the meanings of social issues in the manufacture process. The chain of values becomes so fragmented that it is impossible for individual consumers to decide, which is why another level of approval or certification should be added to support them in their ethical choices.

While considering both advantages and disadvantages of the customers being actual CSR determinants, yet another approach emerges from Low and Davenport (2008), who have explained that the consumers are wrongfully put in a vastly problematic situation, in which the burden of decision-making is placed on their shoulders. The authors have highlighted the inequality of such encounter, “in which individuals are pitted against ‘global institutions to solve global problems’ (Low and Davenport, 2008, p. 99). Low and Davenport have seen this phenomenon rooted in the strategic transferring of responsibility for shaping the ethical market from companies to consumers, thus expecting the individuals to be the ones to “do the right thing” (p. 99) and to pay the final bills.

Haigh and Jones (2006) have disapprovingly pointed out that such shift is related to neoclassical economics with no possibilities of success. They present the consumers as agents that have not that much to say about the commodities they purchase, and even less on the issues of the process of goods’ manufacture. The authors expose the malfunctioning of such model with regard to its economic nature and the fact that purchasing practices seem to be in natural conflict with ethical issues.

Following the discussion, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) have contributed to this debate when they have said:

It was also clear that consumers have little specific knowledge about individual firms, but rather view ethics on a macro basis in terms of “general” business misdemeanours. Without any clear ethical differentiation perceived between and among firms, consumers have little on which to make their judgements. (p. 566)

Similarly, Devinney, Auger and Eckhardt (2012) have highlighted the need for education and persuasion as well as the constant encouragement the consumers should receive in order to understand their ethical responsibility in consumption and social service.

Additional reflection on this matter has come from Beer (2013), who has seen the education level as influencing the involvement into environmental issues. However, the scholar also suggests other factors that impact the green consciousness of shoppers.

Still in the subject of education, McBride Mintz (2011) has asserted that consumers should be constantly trained in order for the change in their attitude towards responsibility and the feeling of “moral obligation” to be ingrained. The author believes that there is a possibility of change provided that the clients are coached over a longer period of time. What is more, McBride Mintz has called for the transparency of the CSR-related communicates, pointing out to the marketers’ role in such training. As the scholar has said, “Marketers should be tasked with finding green consumers and educating them about the environmental values and processes the product shares with their beliefs” (p. 10).

Accordingly, it has been advised by Shen, Wang, Lo and Shum (2012) that the companies should program the clients ethical awareness and “take initiatives to educate consumers so as to ensure the success of their newly-launched ethical fashion products” (p. 234).

To conclude, the voices in this debate present the consumers as lacking valid data concerning ethical products and related subjects. These actors of the CSR practice are said to be in need of training and green education, which would also have to come from companies.

Then, the point of departure for the next part of the discussion should be whether the consumers are reasonable targets for such effort. Following the considerations of the average consumer’s intellectual capacity to judge ethical design and production—and thus effectively support the CSR policy—there should be another inquiry into whether the energy invested in educating the consumers would really make them better CSR players.

Summarizing the consumers’ capability to the CSR conduct, an additional voice appears,

suggesting that giving the consumers an absolute power to decide about the ethical shape of the product, as well as the freedom to stimulate the design by their private choices, might not be good for the future of ethical creation. As a CSR executive from H&M points out, customers are not likely to buy in order to be good. Newbery and Ghosh-Curling (2011) have provided us with an opinion on the above matter coming from the CSR manager from H&M. As they have said, “Schullström stresses that the objective of increasing sales of ethically-sourced goods through mainstream channels is less likely if customers feel they are ‘making a sacrifice buying’ or ‘buying this to be good’, because ‘that is not what consumers do’” (p. 41).

Along the same lines, other doubts arise. Considering the ideal of giving the shoppers the crown position in the CSR practice, is it possible to educate the consumers on such an adequate level so that they are fully equipped with knowledge as much as, for instance, the designers are? Would the customers be able to transfer moral principles into design, manufacture, and purchase mechanisms? Would this group of CSR stakeholders be able to channel the face of the designed products towards ethical directives more effectively?

Regarding that, there is an interesting diagnosis coming from Norman (2004). The scholar has presented the argument that the consumers’ best will to apprehend green knowledge will bring no success. According to the author, high design, and applauded art in general, is not welcomed warmly by regular people. As he has said, “Many well-acclaimed serious works of art and music are relatively unintelligible to the average person” (pp. 96-98). The scholar considers an average person as positioned in conflict fuelled by the clash between common tastes and artistic, intellectual flavours. Norman perceives the regular consumer as lacking abilities to judge, comprehend, and appreciate things of a higher value. He points out to human-centred products as being of worse sort due to the fact they were prepared following the demands from the masses. The academic recognizes the essential role of a designer, who is an individualist that is pushed by his/ her own talent and creativity to achieve better products with a wider portfolio of characteristics than products manufactured because of the crowd’s needs.

In agreement with this stance is Şişman (2005), who has expressed doubts as to whether the industrial design should rely on mainstream ideas. The author is uncertain about the

possibilities of changing the public manner towards more environmentally-focused ways. What is more, Şişman's observations are consistent with Norman's critical views on creativity in the hands of consumers. As he has noticed, "Neither autonomy nor creativity works during the process of consumption" (p. 44).

The above-mentioned works conclude the comparison of the professional design with the average market. What emerges is the eternal clash between creativity and professional qualifications, and the taste and education of the masses. The majority of studies and literature present the customer as uninterested, lazy, stressed, and lacking dedicated time to search for information about ethical products. The crowd is summed up as mediocre and not educated enough to make the right, ethical choices. It is clear from the present-day literature that the consumers do not possess sufficient competences, nor are they prepared appropriately to make the right pick and thus support social bond with the corporations on their CSR strategy. Such pattern of thinking also channels the criticism towards issues of education possibilities for the crowds on the global scale, additionally taking under consideration their demographical differences. The democracy dictates the equality also in the area of purchasing choices. However, such attitude raises a question about whether it is realistic to train the multitude of clients so that they have substantive competence to make an ethical selection worldwide. This is not the only challenge to respond to on the way to responsible design and production, for the CSR analysed through the lens of consumers as its main agents means responsibility of the masses, which creates other problems.

2.5.7 Collective Responsibility - Does Democracy Really Work Here?

With regard to the aforementioned democratical choices in consumption, the consumers are usually said to vote with their money, which takes place through their purchasing choices. However, Şişman (2005) has thrown this stance into doubt; the author has recognized the conflict between the consumers' role in the CSR application as fundamentally rooted in the market economy, and the democratic freedom of their choices. Since the hierarchy of consumers' behaviours is based on the monetary system and—as was said—the average shopper perceives ethical goods as too expensive, the

aforementioned point of view is not in consistence with moral standards, for the clients are likely to lean towards cheaper and unethically produced goods. The author points out to cunning solutions of eliminating problems from the production process through the glorification of consumption, thus shifting the responsibility from the brand onto the masses and justifying it with the democracy of choice. This optimistic role of the consumers' in promoting social matters is explained by Şişman through the belief in the power of consumers as crucial stakeholders, who—by being targeted as external recipients of the goods—could also be democratically included in the process of development. However, and coming back to the mistrust in the clients' position in the application of ethical values, the author has summed up his argument in an unfavourable way:

Even when the difficult work of application of the above mentioned principles and implementation of the strict environmental necessities into product development and production are considered, there seems to lack the concerns on the other end of the bridge: the consumption. (p. 24)

More criticism about the whole group of consumers as social evaluators and determinants in ethical design regarding the introduction of CSR has come from Johnston (2007). First of all, the scholar has appreciated the mistake of targeting the clients through the corporate responsibility strategy, which is due to the development adapted to the character of this strategy. Second, Johnston has emphasized the consumers' concentration on pleasure, their individual selection as well as the status differentiation, which principally distances the clients from ethical ideologies. Johnston has implied that the “citizen-consumer hybrid is not only difficult to achieve, but may be internally inconsistent in a growth oriented corporate setting” (p. 229). The author feels negative about such logic, in which consumers are presented as pushing aside their desires and giving priority to social outcomes in their buying activity. As Johnston has concluded, “Ethical consumer discourse contains a marked ideological conflict between consumerism and citizenship” (p. 241).

Such pessimism about the customers as meaningful actors on the CSR stage who are democratically responsible and not limited in their choices, but still ethically responsible

has been strengthened by Devinney *et al.* (2012), who have described the problem as follows:

In examining the role of the consumer in social consumption over the last decade we have come to the conclusion that the consumer is highly unlikely to be the driving force behind corporate social responsibility. Its impact has been and will continue to be small and sporadic with occasional examples where the influence appears to be more salient. This is not meant to negate the importance of social entrepreneurship, even in the corporate context, but the reality is that consumers will generally be reactive in this realm. (p. 234)

Along similar lines, more critique of the consumers as the CSR leaders comes, once again, from Black (2008), who has claimed that such massive changes in the regular person's choices could be highly problematic, especially in the so-called developed and rich Western countries. Black presents the consumers as unwilling to modify their comfortable and hedonistic lifestyles in favour of more ascetic choice of ethical design and production, which, again, provokes a reflection as to whether they should be given the full responsibility to shape the CSR and ethical design at all.

This aid, one might assume that the consumers, although given democratic power to their choices, are not that eager to contribute to the CSR strategy and the commodities and design related to it. It is also doubtful that the market could be created in which the satisfaction with their individual and practical needs is combined with the well-being of the collective.

All in all, not a very positive image is presented of the shopper's abilities to transform the realm in question through their support of more responsible design and production. The above-mentioned literature review casts doubts, whether even as it is present, having the democratic freedom of commodities selection, the crowds would actually react towards civic matters properly and whether they would be able to carry the burden of social responsibility.

As has been aptly summarized by Şişman (2005), "Decisions about the purchase of goods are strategically too important to be left to unconditioned customer choice". (p. 36)

Conclusions

As was shown, throughout the above-mentioned literature review there is a dominant understanding of the consumers as significant but not key actors in the CSR performance. The academic research promotes a general approach to the customers as final recipients and evaluators of the products, who in this way co-create ethical values. As was stated at the beginning, in terms of the general vision of the consumers' role in the application of CSR, the customers' type and their reaction to this phenomenon are essential to be defined in the ethical conduct spectacle. However, despite a wide array of articles on these stakeholders' participation in moral behaviours, they seem to remain a difficult target for the CSR practice.

Profiling a green consumer does not seem to be a complex task. However, it appears that a universal framework of how to reach and treat them has not been created, as well as no idea as to how to influence their engagement in the CSR has emerged.

Some researchers suggest that there can be no universal green consumer due to the relativity of their choices on the one hand and cultural alterations on the other. When trying to create a perfect CSR leader in fashion, the detailed targeting green consumers in garment industry is extremely challenging, which is not because of the lack of knowledge about their demographics, but rather due to the inconsistencies in the shoppers' declarations regarding ethical matters when compared with the actual choices they later make and what they spend their money on. The statements that are collected from the consumers are vague, if not false, due to this dissonance between their declarations and actions. The declarations do not match their purchase behaviours, but, instead, reflect the expectations that the consumers believe they should meet when responding. This situation could be treated as an obstacle for shoppers to be acclaimed CSR agents due to the fact that their testimonies are unreliable and the inconsistent behaviours make this target of ethical design and production difficult to achieve, if it is possible at all.

Nonetheless, the discussion points out to a certain type of the consumer that is more open to ethically-related commodities, which appears to be a well-educated, middle-aged woman who makes a good living. Contributing to the discourse about the consumers'

prospective leading role in the CSR application, the emergence of the aware and affluent female could also be treated as a counter-argument due to the fact that such a detailed profile of the CSR-devoted actor allows for a limited design directed to this group specifically. Making products to satisfy these particular agents' needs could result in a poorer project distribution, due to smaller, demographical group.

Taking under scrutiny the users as prospective main CSR agents, the study of ethical purchase motives reveals disadvantageous and serious problems in the CSR performed by the customers, namely the economic and aesthetic limitations of their purchase selection. Consumers' ecological choices are presented as based on rather stereotypical market and economic grounds rather than deep, pro-environmental concerns. Behind the consumers' ethical behaviours there is a lot of hard reasoning, where regular product characteristics dominate the taste of the judges.

From the literature review a conclusion emerges that ethical goods are usually claimed to be more expensive. Studies reveal that such situation contributes to a sense of inequalities between the customers as well as provokes the unwillingness towards green consumerism's development. This seems to be yet another detail that shakes the idea of the CSR' and clients' joint venture.

What is more, while going through the literature and checking the objects of green consumers' focus, it turns out that the eco-oriented shoppers—especially in the fashion sector—condition their choices with the style factor first and foremost. The study leads to the conclusion that no matter how ethical the product is, the shoppers' attention will be directed away if the item is not following the trends and is missing the expected aesthetics. Moreover, the eco selection is claimed to be dominated by typically featured garments with good look, price, and value. A civic thinking pattern emerges regarding the fashion consumers, showing them active in the CSR area only when the goods' surface is trendy according to the users' values.

Still in the subject of the motives for ethical purchase, studies expose another argument against the clients, namely narcissism and self-interest that are placed behind green

purchase decisions. As can be deduced, through ethical consumption the clients want to publicly show their noble identity and enhance positive self-image rather than change the world into a better and more ethical one. What is more, the theory that the customers are generally incapable of taking care of the common good is confirmed through many analyses, in which the users' egocentric and individualistic nature is marked as conflicting with moral principles in green shopping. It is clear that the customers satisfy their individual needs first before possibly leaning towards greater, ethical issues.

Individualism in the shoppers' green CSR analysis can also have another facet. It is additionally observed that the consumers are more likely to react to unethical behaviours if they touch on their individual problems and relate to them personally. The research shows that the consumers do attach importance and take action regarding ethics provided that it is in their own individual interest. Taking under consideration that the greatest part of the global fashion production is shifted away to the so-called developing countries, the customers—through being physically distanced from the CSR-related problems—might appear to be blind spectators of the CSR performance.

Neutralization is another key word working against the consumers in the debate about the main CSR actors on the ethical conduct battlefield. Once again, the consumers seem to be a weak point in CSR implementations as they use neutralization to distance themselves from the problem and responsibility for their behaviours. They deny their guilt or try to reason and not to worry about the consequences of their unethical choices in order to justify their irresponsible purchasing practices. In other words, the consumers seem to legitimize their practical decisions through mind-softening techniques, which puts even bigger question mark over them as CSR agents.

Still, the consumers could be reliable at least in stimulating CSR outcomes. However, their private opinions and beliefs are caught by the companies and passed through marketing machines, thus transforming CSR into a cynical tool for more profitable consumer choices. As the above literature research indicates, due to these factors, CSR practices are not always that easily welcomed by the clients. Consumers react in an ambivalent way to eco products due to the *greenwashing* practices of the corporations that use this environmental strategy to polish their image and collect more clients through apparent, but false, eco

behaviours. The aforementioned cynicism, mistrust, and misunderstanding come both from *greenwashing* practices of the companies and their tricky, marketing attitude towards CSR. As was concluded, in practice consumers react inconsistently with their declarations, sometimes using neutralization techniques to avoid the burden of responsibility. It is important to mention that, in the *greenwashing* context, the appearance of reactions like boycotts seems one of the very few positive arguments working in favour of the consumers as CSR agents.

All in all, many authors are critical of the customers in the subject of their abilities to understand CSR matters and thus make proper purchase decisions. Research exposes the consumers as lacking valid data and knowledge to judge products as unethical or ethical. The clients are uncovered as uninterested and lazy in searching for green information, thus not equipped to support CSR practices. When we sketch the consumers on the CSR background through their abilities to evaluate the design and production from the point of view of ethics, the challenges seem unbearable. Although the scholars point out to the need to educate the regular people, an assumption emerges that the consumers would not be able to carry the burden of saving the world, which might be grounded in the opinion that making all the people worldwide equally motivated and similarly educated is a utopian thinking pattern.

Even if trust in the consumers as the liberators of the unethical consumption who could save the world and if we called them the CSR best orators, the act of ethical sculpturing through voting with their dollars would support the typical capitalistic machine of monetary principles. Ethical decisions should not be money-driven, for combining these two components does not make CSR morally autonomous, but, rather, profit-oriented. Improving the world through buying seems a company-benefiting concept as it works in the best interest of corporations. However, it makes the CSR practice financially conditioned and dedicated only to a narrow group of people that could possibly afford to shop decently regarding the aforementioned fact that green products are more expensive than the regular, unethical items.

The literature review also exposes a certain tendency, namely the burden of responsibility being on the consumers' shoulders, which is illustrated as a cunning move of the companies. Although the consumers do have a choice and might influence the ethical impact of the produced commodities, making them responsible for the manufactured goods unreasonably shifts the responsibility from the companies towards the final recipients of the brand's activity. Such disorientation procedure smartly distances the corporation from its market behaviour results, but at the very same time makes the CSR practice weaker, as the customers are deprived of management and production tools.

Furthermore, when the ethical design is concerned, some scholars question the pragmatic nature of the consumers' society and the deceitful, democratic dictatorship of capitalistic, ordinary taste of the masses. The earlier study points to the conclusion that democracy in such context might not work due to the limitations of regular people: missing professional qualifications, lacking green engagement, and having average taste. It creates a question about whether the mainstream population possesses enough valid knowledge and critical potential to prejudge how the morally embraced design should look like. Although democracy in consumption sounds positive, the shoppers might not be able to be the key players in the CSR implementation only because they make for the majority of among other stakeholders. Following Chapman (2005) it might be compared like "(...) giving a Ferrari to a four- year old" (p. 65), what could be explained as passing wonders- making power to the hands of immature agents.

It could be assumed that the quintessence of the denial of clients' prominent role in the CSR lies in the problematic freedom of choice of uneducated people, who are unprepared for such important choices. Mainstream motives behind the consumers' picks win with the question of ethics. The collective work in the CSR as performed by the shoppers might look good on paper, but in reality the challenge of gaining a certain level of training as well as expressing ethical awareness through purchasing responsibly designed and manufactured items seems nothing more than an idealistic fairy-tale. No matter how well we coach the consumers, we seriously risk the majority of them to remain uncommitted and obscure assembly in the hands of the marketers, designers, and company owners, which is also due to so many inconsistencies between the customers' declarations and

behaviours. As a result, it is observed by the researchers that the magic potion of an ethical user and a civic values proclaimer is not working.

Therefore, the honest conclusion does not generate enthusiasm about, and trust in, consumers' CSR-shaping abilities, although they are not deprived of a voice and participation in the phenomenon. Regarding the consumers' prospective service in favour of social matters, the academic diagnosis is more about doubt, impossibility, and unreliability, as was explained throughout this section in detail.

2.6 The Role of the Designers in the Implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility

The discussion about who in fact should be responsible for the CSR implementation in the fashion industry addresses a number of questions. This business' paradigm does not only require understanding the systematization of CSR in the context of environment protection, human rights, and animal welfare. As this phenomenon serves many stakeholders, it is also significant to find out how different participants of that process behave in the ethical business area.

According to the body of research which has already been explored in the section devoted to the history and theory of Corporate Social Responsibility, the debate has been developed regarding actors such as the companies, the marketing managers, and the customers. It is now suitable to analyse the designers with regard to their CSR practice possibilities. The following section is going to map different perspectives on the designers' position among other stakeholders in ethical conduct, as well as it studies the creators under different categories in order to understand how they relate to the practice of CSR introduction and whether they could contribute to the CSR concept meaningfully.

2.6.1 What is Contemporary Design?- A Corrosive Profession

Starting the discussion about the role of designers in ethical conduct in garment sector, it should be investigated how this profession used to be perceived in the past and how it is judged nowadays. The existing literature review seems to provide a rich coverage on the status of the current design and the general role of designers in the industry. It could be

begun with one of the most acclaimed design theorists, Victor Papanek (1971), who has said:

All men are designers. All that we do, almost all the time, is design, for design is basic to all human activity. The planning and patterning of any act toward a desired, foreseeable end constitutes the design process. Any attempt to separate design, to make it a thing-by-itself, works counter to the fact that design is the primary underlying matrix of life. Design is composing an epic poem, executing a mural, painting a masterpiece, writing a concerto. But design is also cleaning and reorganizing a desk drawer, pulling an impacted tooth, baking an apple pie, choosing sides for a backlot baseball game, and educating a child. (p. 3)

Findeli (2001) has entered the discussion, mentioning that the occupation of a designer is not a profession but an approach that refers to a certain lifestyle, a spiritual recognition based on the intellect, sensibility, and imagination. He has called the design a transformative tool of visions into reality, a mental exercise that adjusts creativity to the world of today as well as of tomorrow.

The transformative character of the profession has also been caught by Dell'era and Verganti (2009), who have written that, “Traditionally, designers are responsible for creating breakthrough product meanings by acting on the semantic dimension of products” (p. 874).

Along similar lines, Şişman (2005) has embraced the design in the context of the oratory of change through the creators’ labour that transforms their profession into choices towards reaching certain qualities of the individual or public life, which could become “vehicles of argument”. The author says:

This proves design to be rhetorical i.e. designers, owing to their ability extend their rhetorical powers of persuasion about choices on living, have the opportunity to create alternative visions, implement them to their realm of responsibility in various fashions, and also have the power and the responsibility to publicize those to reach commonly shared values and inevitable practical principles in daily actions in such a way that paves the way to a betterment in the conditions of the world. (p. 63)

However, contemporary design is presented by some scholars as polluted with superficial values, leading towards obsolescence and money-oriented solutions. The very same author has disapproved of the design nowadays, considering it as a practice defined by economic factors and based on aesthetics. It relates only to ergonomics and material progress, and has the intelligence inherited from the 19th century, which results in a poor code of ethics based on culture of business contracts and cycles of fashion. The writer has accused such design of feeding the obsolescence and having its users as humans trapped in the customers' role. Additionally, the scholar has stated that design is in crisis that causes destruction and the economic interest of global capital supports this *status quo*; the contemporary design is full of instrumental reasoning and leads to the "human being framed by ergonomics and cognitive psychology" (Şişman, 2005, p. 60). Şişman considers design to be one of the heaviest factors contributing to unsustainability of the contemporary world also due to the aestheticization of lifestyle and the overconsumption.

Aesthetics seems to be a boomerang key word in the pejorative context that comes back in the discourse on contemporary design. A "cosmetic approach" to design has similarly been noticed by Chapman (2005) as a consequence of techno-centric creation that also causes stagnation, wasteful cycles, frustration among consumers, as well as provides a false impression of short-sighted progress.

The negative perception of the designers' work that is reduced to external looks and shape in the process of product foundation is not only a matter of scientific dialog, but also an issue of the perception that the majority of population has of the profession. As has been captured by Margolin and Margolin (2002), the public understands the designers' work as "an artistic practice that produces dazzling lamps, furniture, and automobiles" (p. 28).

The aforementioned Findeli (2001) has been in agreement with the other authors about how the contemporary design is unfortunately based on visual arts, product engineering, and marketing. As the scholar has stated, "An aesthetics based almost exclusively on material shapes and qualities; a code of ethics originating in a culture of business contracts and agreements" (Findeli, 2001, p. 6). What is more, he criticizes the design regarding its other aspects as manifesting instrumental determinism and economic framing that are

inherited from the past century. Therefore, Findeli has seen the need for a multitude of ill-created products to meet new, better requirements to be shaped by the designers.

The criticism about the designers' occupation as not updated to the contemporary reality has also been shared by the classic contributors to the dialog on design. Manzini, Walker and Wylant (2008) have perceived the problem of the present-day design as rooted in the beginning of the 20th century, when the profession was established and when it was coded with mass production as well as based on the "democracy of comfort" that continues to contribute to the "disabling solutions" today.

Already stated Chapman (2005) is among the authors who have not left much space for optimism regarding the status of industrial creators' profession. Expressing the disapproval of modern design as being oriented mainly towards usage and look, the scholar has been convinced that contemporary products are nothing more than decorations of utilitarian concept. Chapman has painted the picture of the industry that suffers from "global autism" due to the "resource-hungry existence", "human-centered utilitarianism", "packages culture" or "archaic product typologies" (p.5). The academic has understood the problem of sustainability as conditioned by the process of harvesting the planet's resources by the overpopulation of human beings, but also due to the failure of sustainability in design nowadays, which then contributes to the overproduction and overconsumption. The author has illustrated the contrasting nature of contemporary products and their users as another reason for overconsumption that seems nothing else but a search for new meanings that fit our expected actions. More of the authors' reflections have led to the conclusion that the contemporary design creates utopian, false promises of how the reality could look like, but does not. As he has said, "Products make claims that are hard to back up, promising the world to consumers from the safety of the shop window, bombarding consumers with a loud and colourful array of false claims" (p. 66).

This point of view has been shared by the already mentioned Şişman (2005), who has found out that the shape of contemporary design is wrongly sculptured by the consumers' needs. According to the scholar, the manufactured products became merely a self-expression through objects that define the status and meaning of someone's life. They

confirm the hegemony of the consumer-oriented design in place of a truly scientific and creative approach within this profession.

To conclude, the current design is exposed to major criticism. The orators of negative opinions have rooted their convictions in the cool estimation of modern design as coming from the past century, which has created the economic and utilitarian background of the profession. The scientist have accused the contemporary design of being aesthetics-driven and user-oriented, which, in their opinion, makes the occupation more of a decor or comfort rather than a meaningful contribution to our society and the world. The scientists have seen the relationship between the current design and its consumers as luxury cushion and a “dream come true” with dishonest promises that lead towards ill design and disabling solutions. Although such state of affairs has been presented in the literature review as contributing to unsustainability and overconsumption, the remedy for the wrong dimensions of design is assumed to be situated not that far away.

2.6.2 The Ethical Design Remedy- The Lasting Combat

As the dialog naturally leans towards the disenchantment with the materiality-oriented design, technocracy, the cult of aesthetics, as well as the overproduction and overconsumption caused by the economic triggers within the contemporary design, space should be made for the question about what exactly a better vision of this occupation means and what new imperatives the professions is expected to meet.

The above negativism on the current state of design is balanced with the belief that appears throughout the literature review in the designer’s ethical and sustainable potential that could cure the profession. Such eco and fair approach has been analysed by scholars who put their trust in solving the problems of modern design through responsibility and moral conduct injected in the profession.

Sustainability in the hands of designers could mean an impact of the job on the main CSR areas that I had discussed before, i.e. people, animals, and the ecosystem. Humans’ welfare is combined with the welfare of the ecosystem, where bonds between nature, people and

other living creatures shall be taken into consideration in the design process. As has been cited in Kibert *et al.* (2012):

Sustainable design is the set of perceptual and analytic abilities, ecological wisdom, and practical wherewithal essential to making things that fit in a world of microbes, plants, animals, and entropy. In other words, (sustainable design) is the careful meshing of human purposes with the larger patterns and flows of the natural world, and careful study of those patterns and flows to inform human purposes. (p.12)

The above shall be taken into account regarding ethical business performance, which, following a generally recognized CSR definition, goes beyond legal obligations and sacrifices in profits to achieve better moral standards. As had already been articulated in the section devoted to the CSR theory, this dissertation recognizes three areas of ethical practice, namely environment protection, human rights, and animal welfare. According to the findings—and what is crucial for this dialog—the ethical practice should involve different stakeholders of these three CSR fields.

As has been briefly summed up by Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang and Chan (2012) in the setting of apparels' design, “In the strict fashion context, ethical fashion refers to “the positive impact of a designer, a consumer choice, a method of production as experienced by workers, consumers, animals, society, and the environment (Thomas 2008: 525)” (p. 280).

Interestingly, the planet Earth, as impacted by sustainable or unsustainable design as well as a place of living of all CSR stakeholders, has been distinguished in current texts. Chapman (2005) has noticed that sustainability gives a chance to “radically rethink the way in which we engage with our material worlds”. As the author has suggested, it is a matter of how we actually treat our home planet, for the word “ecology” is derived from Greek noun “*oikos*”, which means “house”.

Sustainability has us nurturing the planet. The Earth does not belong to us, nor does it need nursing like some sick puppy; it just wants to be left well alone.

(...) Sustainable design must delve deeper still to the root of human consciousness, as this is where the solutions lie to what is a human-made environmental crisis. (p. 184)

Papanek (1971) has shared this view, marking that design should be about ecological responsibility and commitment to nature, biodiversity, which should be supported by consuming less and designing objects of durable character as well as by recycling the used materials in order to achieve socially responsible goals.

We are all together on this small spaceship called Earth, 9,700 miles in diameter and sailing through the vast oceans of space. It's a small spaceship, and fifty to sixty percent of the population cannot help to run it or even help themselves stay alive, through no fault of their own. (p. 71)

The sustainability theory for design has generally been found to be rooted in the Hannover Principles from 1992. In short, then, the Hannover Principles provided a kind of brief, pioneering directory for the designers on sustainable design in the form of the “conception and realization of ecologically, economically, and ethically responsible expression as part of the evolving matrix of nature”. As Kibert *et al.* (2012) have commented, the problems of sustainability are caused by poor design that is irresponsible both to nature and people. According to the scholars, the document was enumerating the concepts for socially responsible design, which were:

1. Insist on the rights of humanity and nature to coexist. 2. Recognize interdependence. 3. Respect relationships between spirit and matter. 4. Accept responsibility for the consequences of design. 5. Create safe objects of long-term value. 6. Eliminate the concept of waste. 7. Rely on natural energy flows. 8. Understand the limitations of design. 9. Seek constant improvement by the sharing of knowledge. (p. 22).

To summarize, the Hannover directives gathered ecological and ethical ideas as core issues of design, which has also been supported by other scholars in the discussion nowadays.

Along similar lines, Manzini *et al.* (2008) have presented sustainability in design as a strategic tool in creation, intentional, with well-articulated aims and characteristics in the

social context. Regarding their Design for Sustainability concept (DfS), the scholars have stated that, “Consequently the innovation that interests us here is a social occurrence, or rather; the social dimension of the desired phenomenon is greater than normally considered when referring to innovation and design”. The authors have pointed out to the complexity of the phenomenon that should be resolved on the system level, approaching various actors in order to achieve the desired results. Manzini, Walker and Wylant have seen sustainability as innovation-oriented, where innovation is of civil and public character.

According to Vuletich (2013), although the designers—and among them apparel designers—possess a growing awareness on sustainability, their approach to green design is still based on physical and manufacture features. As the author has said, “(...) such a limited focus misses the opportunities for new types of design activity for systemic change” (p.7). Vuletich has nonetheless seen design and fashion designers as possible architects of new types of acting in the profession due to sustainable design practices. However, the scholar has complained about the lack of fresh research and innovative design methods in this field. As the academic has noticed, “While the business model concept being proposed is not new, the method being proposed to develop the concept, led by the textile/fashion designer, is where the novelty lies” (p.1). She has also added that the role of design dominates over invention devices, because the fashion designers are asked “to use design thinking and prototyping, to create novel ideas for the fashion brand’s CSR policy” (p. 5).

Referring to the above, Niinimäki (2011) has suggested that the pre-manufacture stage is a moment determining design’s social shape. The author has seen sustainability as an occurrence of dimensional character, where the concept should be injected even before the moment of design, considering things more profoundly and with the purpose of a fundamental change. Discussing the aforementioned issue of aesthetics in design, she has suggested that sustainable design should be of the same style and look quality as the traditional one.

In a different way, Şişman (2005) has perceived sustainability in design as a model that should be filtered through two perspectives. One approach to sustainability in design has been seen by the scholars as of anthropocentric character, while the other one as appealing

to egocentrism. According to the author, anthropocentrism in environmental ethics is rooted in appreciating nature in line with its devise-like value for human usage and its transformation to suit people's commodities. In this view, nature is regarded as necessary for production recourses. Contrary to this, the second, egocentric stream concentrates on the welfare of the complete body of nature, including all of its stakeholders. It locates humans in the field with other actors in the natural system in which we live, making it inseparably ecologically and beneficially contextual.

Finally, Fleischmann (2013) has seen design as actually not causing problems that much, but as a call for finding solutions, among them the sustainable ones. The author has pointed out that, while disputing design, we should see this work more profoundly as having social and sustainable purposes; this would give possibilities of a better life and enhance innovations and improvements of our world.

To conclude, while exploring the field of ethical, sustainable remedy for the contemporary-judged as ill design- it would be constructive to see how the practice of sustainability looks like in realm. It would be helpful to take a closer look at whether a compromise between an economic, aesthetically-polished and consumer-oriented façade of the occupation on the one hand, and ethical priorities compromise on the other, is achievable, or maybe this combination would stay in the declarations area only. There are several studies of sustainable practices in the fashion industry that shall be referred to: Arrigo, 2013, Payne, 2014, Płonka, 2013, Graß, 2013, Cervellon, Hjerth, Ricard, Carey 2010, Polonsky and Jevons, 2009, Carcano, 2010, Newbery and Ghosh-Curling, 2011, Black 2012. The investigation of the existing material offers some interesting examples of detailed analyses of how some of the biggest fashion brands and fashion designers cope with the CSR challenges. They differ in the approach and dimensions that are applied to the ethics in business, so their outcome is not equal, but still valuable for the study of CSR practices and for the purpose of providing additional insight into the subject.

2.6.3 Different Case Studies, Different Practices of Corporate Social Responsibility

The current research generally refers to some of the biggest fashion companies, although the diffusions usually relate to one specific brand, which does not situate the analysed case in a wider context. In order to express the tissue of the CSR practice more adequately, such interrogation should be expanded through broader perspectives on more enterprises that are then to be looked into through the CSR lenses. The purpose of the research herein is thus to investigate various clothing retailers with regard to their adoption of ethical practices, as well as the critical review of their CSR conduct.

We should begin with the Gap case, which Arrigo (2013) has described as connected to environmental responsibility on all levels of the enterprise from garments production to their packaging. The company is well-known for its engagement with responsible practices and partners. The author has presented Gap Inc. as a “(...) good example of how the corporate responsibility management contributes to create a functional stakeholder relationships system and a superior global brand” (p. 182). In the same article, Arrigo has pointed out that the company’s collections are only partly designed by designers, since some of the design concepts come from external stylists. Additionally, the scholar has observed that the production is not made locally in the USA, but is almost entirely outsourced and completed from outside the country.

First of all, the sources of such positive claims are unknown and could be derived from the company’s official statements rather than independent reports. As was concluded in the previous sections, declarations lead a life separate from that of actual practices. Second, there are no existing neutral, scientifically-approved ratings of fashion companies regarding their sustainability agenda. Thus, such a positive view on Gap, and trust in its practices, does not seem to be justified.

What is more, if both design and production are outsourced by the brand, doubts arise about whether the company’s managers control the sustainability of the production and its other stakeholders. The distance that the clothes have to travel when ordered from abroad misses the point of eco policies. It is significant to indicate that the ethical policy cannot be involved in only one part of the production, treating the green strategy in a selective way.

Contrary to these findings, the sustainability agenda is more clarified in case studies coming from Payne (2014), who has presented sustainability in design in terms of fair trade relations. It has been shown by the example of the business performance of Nike through Higg Index, that is used by the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC). The index is based on sharing knowledge about the impact of individual manufacture elements on the environment. It also suggests green design solutions for the inventors and producers, simultaneously calculating their ecological and social impact. In the same place Nike has also been mentioned next to H&M and PUMA as brands that try to make their production transparent by publishing the full names and addresses of their sub-producers and counter-parties on their websites. The above reveals clearer and more tangible CSR-related practices evaluation.

In 2007, the British retailer Marks & Spencer launched 'Plan A', a campaign setting out one hundred responsibility commitments that were to be achieved within five years. Later on, the company introduced its new 'Plan A 2020', which consists of new, revised promises that are proudly expected to make M&S the world's most responsible major retailer. The brand's official policy is based on ecological goals and ethical priorities towards people, the environment, and animals. Following the green pattern, the corporation deserves a special recognition in its Environmental and Chemical Policy. As we can read on the website, in 2012 M&S signed up to Greenpeace's Detox 2020 campaign and worked with the NGO to develop new chemical commitments that have strengthened their pro-environmental practices. These practices embrace the non-use of hazardous chemicals such as alkylphenol ethoxylates and heavy metals commonly used in cover textile printers, finishing facilities, laundries, and tanneries, as well as dye houses. The company claims it would like to attain zero discharge from its own dye houses by 2020. Therefore, M&S understands that it needs to excel at water and energy management, chemical and dyestuff management, production efficiency, and effluent treatment testing and compliance. As part of the 'Plan A', M&S launched three eco-dye houses that have been used as test beds for new environmental concepts and technology. As a result, processes are now being undertaken in the M&S supply chain that reduce the negative impact on the environment, such as Cold Batch Dyeing, a development that, on average, uses 50% less water and reduces carbon by 30%. Within environmental protection, the retailer's actions also

include using recycled paper in packaging and certified paper for printing garment labels. The policy includes recycling, reusing or even reselling clothes. These practices are ran in cooperation with the external organization Oxfam, calling it *shwopping*. *Shwopping* with Oxfam has proved effective as M&S managed to hand over 7.8 million garments worth an estimated £5.5 million to the charity. As the company's website reads, "(...) By *shwopping*, we hope to achieve a dramatic reduction in the number of clothes sent to landfill in the UK—at the moment, it's around 1 billion per year, which is an average of 16 items per year per person. By collecting as many clothes as we sell—that's 350 million a year—we want to change the way we all shop forever (...)". But the biggest green actions by M&S are concentrated on its Carbon Neutral theme. Its carbon-neutral goal is implemented by the company through its support for the growth of clean and green energy as exemplified by projects in Turkey, where M&S is helping to develop two-wind farms. It has already been very successful and verified, attaining Gold Standard Certification. Next, it encourages sustainable farming and reforestation projects such as those in Kenya (also tree-planting programs in Borneo and the promotion of the use of sustainable farming against deforestation and soil erosion). Again, it is monitored by specialized organizations, i.e. the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and Climate Community and Biodiversity (CCB) Standard. In China, for example, Marks & Spencer supports a carbon-reduction project that uses agricultural waste as a source of renewable energy in rural Wuhe County. Materials such as rice husk and cotton straw are used there as a renewable source of biomass. This organic waste is bought from approximately 15,000 small hold farmers and used to generate renewable electricity through biomass combustion. Also, the project's funds help enable this renewable energy biomass plant to compete against cheaper fossil fuel alternatives. M&S includes wildlife protection elements in these projects, but it has a separate and precise animal welfare policy. The company does not use animals to test beauty or household products, and no individual ingredients used in M&S products have been animal-tested either. In fashion, the brand also claims to have never sold products with real animal fur, specifically fox, sable, mink, chinchilla, rabbit or Karakul. Further, M&S's official papers state that the company does not use any endangered species included in the list of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Also, Angora rabbit fibre is not allowed in any M&S textile or clothing production, and wool, cashmere and mohair must not be obtained from the live plucking of

animals. The same goes for feathers and down. What draws further attention to the company's practices is its internal ban on the design of clothes made from leather obtained from live skinning or live boiling or on cow hides sourced from India, the latter one provoking controversies connected with unethical cow maintenance and slaughter in that country. To support its pro-animal ideology, M&S works with suppliers and groups, including the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) in the development of the company's General Merchandise Animal Welfare Policy. As the corporation's attitude to the natural environment and animal products used in its production is claimed to be ethically standardized, it is also said to concern M&S workers and contractors. The company has honestly admitted that, "(...) Because our suppliers often have their own complex supply chains, it 14 would be impossible for us to monitor or control the working conditions of each individual who contributes to what ultimately becomes a Marks & Spencer product. However, we are determined to do everything we can to bring fair sourcing principles to all stages of our supply chain. We have therefore published our Global Sourcing Principles to set out our beliefs and standards and guide our suppliers (...)" M&S expects them to improve working conditions according to those promoted by the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), a collaborative group of companies, trade unions and human rights groups joined by M&S in 1999. These principles include enhancements on working hours and conditions, health and safety, rates of pay, terms of employment, and minimum age of employment. They are described in the M&S's Global Sourcing Principles. The company claims to regularly visit and assess all production sites. Results of the above are reported to ETI and summarized in its annual Plan A Report. Furthermore, within the brand's products there are garments with a Fair Trade logo, which is a world-recognized certification for ethical trading and production. To conclude, M&S is definitely a brand that tries to be very consistent and transparent in its CSR policy towards the environment, human rights, and animal welfare, which are the three essential CSR fields of operation. The company is honest in admitting which CSR goals have been achieved and which are still in progress. What else is significant is that the results of the brand's progress are exposed in detailed documents published by the firm and supported by its collaboration with recognized external institutions, a fact that strongly supports the company's CSR credibility (Płonka, 2014).

The example of M&S's success in sustainable agenda notwithstanding, the green efforts in fashion are not always met with appreciation, which is confirmed by the case of Esprit. As has been presented by Black (2008), the brand launched its Ecollection in 1992, which made it a pioneer in such type of actions. However, this project was unsuccessful due to financial losses, as customers appeared unwilling to pay higher premiums for such clothes and did not reward the company for its ethical efforts. The company ceased the project in 1995, not even mentioning it on its website.

Black has continued to analyse ethical practices as pursued by another global retailer, Top Shop, in the context of durability, anti-obsolence and anti-overconsumption in the company's operation. According to the author, "Enhanced design values are important to create a longer lasting relationship with fashionable clothes and, after they go out of fashion, well designed and cherished items often acquire a wonderful patina of age, a second-hand value and respect as vintage fashion-which, after an appropriate number of years, become desirable again in fashion cycles" (pp. 194-95). The scholar has concluded that, following such CSR scheme, Top Shop introduced their own vintage collection to the market, with which the company aimed to extend the life of fashionable clothes. Sadly, the outcome of this CSR-related activity has not been mentioned by Black.

Clark's- one of the biggest shoe brands, makes an additional research towards sustainable solutions, called Terra Plana. According to the aforementioned, the project incorporates recycling methodology as its sustainability core in shoes development. The shoes are partly made of recycled rubber and other reused materials. As Black (2008) has said, "In the interests of transparency, the company has developed an innovative matrix of symbols which give the consumer clear information about each product's ecological principles and manufacture, such as lighter weight, recycled materials, locally sourced, or using minimum glue" (pp. 220-221). Not only does this creation of new products give some materials a second life, but it also minimizes the usage of toxic substances and water.

Nevertheless, the fact that all of Terra Plana's production is outsourced from China weakens its pro-environmental efforts due the miles of transport involved in such manufacture solution, as was also highlighted in the Gap case. On the other hand, Black has defended the concept, saying that, first, the whole Chinese production of Terra Plana is organized in one area nearby and uses local materials, including locally used old tires.

Second, Clark has allegedly the habit of talking directly with the factories that are additionally claimed to be autonomously audited. The scholar has noticed that the company has offices and workers in the resident area, offering higher wages than the local minimum payment, as well as having good standards of operation. As Black states, summing up the description of this brand's CSR practices:

Sustainability is inherent to Terra Plana philosophy, but has not necessarily been a strong commercial benefit-the shoes have to sell on design first and on their artisan manufacture, which the company prides. Longevity is also important in achieving emotionally durable design that the user can respond to personally. Although transparency is key to the company operations, Clark is emphatic that new internationally recognised standards are urgently needed, managed by an independent body to set and monitor environmental performance and grading of products for an eco-label. (pp. 220-221)

Contributing to the clearer picture of the CSR practiced in the fashion industry, Payne (2014) has observed that during the last decade more and more companies have started to adopt green practices, which is exemplified by Puma, M&S, H&M or Nike among others. However, the scholar maintains that:

(...) the discussion of the breadth of social and environmental issues across the garment life cycle demonstrates, the challenge of fashion and sustainability is multifaceted and hard to quantify. Many brands may have achieved success in some areas of the life cycle, but ignored others. Similarly, their interventions may be perceived as tokenistic 'greenwashing', or making misleading or false environmental claims. (p. 35)

Newbery and Ghosh-Curling (2011) have been rather optimistic in estimating the state of contemporary sustainable design and production in fashion, pointing out to the Brandix Eco Centre as a leading example. Brandix Eco Centre is a group covering manufacture in Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh, and they mainly manufacture for Marks & Spencer. It has a rating of Platinum under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System of the US Green Building Council (USGBC). These 27 business units also provide fashion goods for brands such as Gap, Victoria's

Secret, Abercrombie & Fitch, Next, Lands' End, Old Navy, and Tommy Hilfiger.

Following the discussion, another clothes' designer and producer that might provide some interesting examples of the CSR in fashion is Stella McCartney.

Stella McCartney is commonly claimed to be one of the most recognizable and economically successful fashion creators on the style stage. A responsible approach to design based on an innovative, modern philosophy has been considered by her as crucial to the company (Cervellon, Hjerth, Ricard, Carey, 2010). What is important to acknowledge at the beginning is that McCartney seems consistent in her CSR policy, skilfully combining her ethical business strategy with high financial revenues that her brand achieves (Carcano, 2010). What is clearly visible on her website and in official statements is that her company's actions are based on CSR policies defined by the three main components—environmental preservation, animal welfare, and fair-trade support—combined with a merger with a lucrative business. According to her website statement—titled “Stella's World”—sustainability is of paramount importance to her and the enterprise's impact on nature is an essential trigger in the designers' creations. This includes ecological materials such as organic cotton, recycled fibres, and plant textiles. Moreover, she incorporates ecological packaging, such as corn-plant fibre biodegradable bags that have been invented for the purposes of the company specifically. Wood used in McCartney's shops' decor is FSC-certified, which means that it has been derived from sustainably-managed forests. Moreover, McCartney's CSR policy calls for minimizing water usage and CO₂ emissions in shipping, and LED lighting is placed in her stores. The company also organizes recycling events for customers and installs energy-saving devices in the boutiques, including solar ones. The use of hybrid cars for business journeys is another significant detail of the designer's environmental policy.

Then there is the concern about social problems, which is expressed by a declaration of careful choice of responsible contractors and formal control of suppliers. It is supported by the cooperation with independent fair-trade organizations, which makes the enterprise more credible. Moreover, the designer takes part in charity programs, providing work in those areas in Kenya that are on the poverty line. The Stella McCartney brand also cooperates with international institutions (Natural Resource Defense Council, Ethical Trading Initiative, International Trade Centre) that focus on improving working conditions

and reducing the environmental impact of industrial production. Although the actions and declarations regarding fair-trade issues are clear, there are glitches in McCartney's Corporate Social Responsibility practice. The brand belongs to the Kering Group, a holding company that had not been known as pro-environmental until it published its "Sustainability Targets Progress Report 2014", which might change its image and the common practices of the group.

In spite of many pro-ethical efforts, what brought negative attention to McCartney was her partnership with Adidas, especially a deal to provide U.K. team uniforms for the 2012 London Olympics, which were found to be produced in *sweatshops* run by the Adidas' Chinese suppliers. Even though the designer claims her production units are controlled places, manufacturing clothes in a country criticized by the public for breaking human rights and animal rights as well as polluting the world's environment with unsustainable production made the audience unfavourable, especially since the designer had previously said to the 'Above Magazine' that, "When we can make things better, we do ... (but) if we were too extreme it would get in the way of my job (...)" (online: abovemagazine.com).

However, for the designer animal welfare is another significant component of the three ethical fields. McCartney was raised as a vegetarian and animal activist, and her personal beliefs make a powerful CSR tool. She openly stands against using leather or any skins or natural fur in her enterprises, encouraging other designers to follow her example. Even her shoe collections do not include fish glue and wool that is used to prepare her clothes comes from suppliers that do not carry out *mulesing* on sheep.

The designer's CSR strategy is intended to be subtle for the general public. McCartney declares her wishes to make her designs considered as luxury clothing, but with the luxury she would like to sell a hidden message, a bonus of ethical standards, which is not so obvious to some of her clients. She prefers that CSR is concealed in the garments themselves for those who are not interested in responsible design. The idea is to make them positively surprised later with the ethical and esthetical quality of the things she designs in her own company. She would like to persuade the customers to be more conscious and responsible consumers, albeit in a gentle way. On the other hand, the designer also announces her ethical philosophy both on her website and in media interviews to a rather great extent, which does not leave any doubt about her life and business philosophy.

As recent research shows, companies that strongly proclaim their CSR strategy need to be

extremely transparent and reliable in their policies, otherwise they might lose customer trust and attract criticisms instead of appreciation (Polonsky and Jevons, 2009). In this regard, McCartney thoughtfully balances her expression of the CSR policy. She is publicly clear with her ethical views, but does not do it in a way that is intrusive or scares away clients unfamiliar with the topic. The designer is active with her CSR policy in all three of the most important fields, and mostly seems to be consistent with her pro-ethical design and manufacture.

Issey Miyake is a Japanese creator, whose constant and in-depth research into innovations in textile knowledge, clothes design, and construction is not only a business activity, but an act of art united with scientific and sustainable efforts as well. As the creator himself has stated, clothes' design is "a concept which explores not only the relationship between the body and clothing but also the space that is born between them". The designer is recognized in the market as an innovative maker and in 2007 he launched the 'Reality Lab', which is a separate section in his company designed for strictly scientific purposes. According to Miyake's website, he did so to develop "designs that reflect and address the way people live today" as well as to explore ways of making things that will renew "the possibilities of Japanese craftsmanship". This craftsmanship means putting pressure on local design and on cultural preservation. When analysing CSR activities, it is important to notice that taking care of native culture brings other ethical aspects. Local production means lower environmental impact of transportation. It is also often about using natural resources that are locally available, likely making production more in harmony with the surrounding environment. Also, the concept is not about global production, but about creating responsibility among the native society for the products they bring home. It includes working conditions that is better controlled when manufacturing is placed nearby. Miyake employs a Japanese crew and supervises the research himself. Not offshoring his production gives him effective tools for control as well as indirectly ties him to more fair-trade practices. Among many achievements of the 'Reality Lab' there are designs that allow for the opening of a single pleat to construct a three-dimensional model with smoothly curved surfaces that fold in three dimensions. The materials are made from polyester derived from recycled fibres collected in Japan, which recently started to be the main focus of Issey Miyake Design. The creator has been underlining his pro-

environmental policy in his media messages and has subsequently collaborated with a Japanese chemical company that developed specialized equipment to revert used polyester back to its original source material of dimethyl terephthalate. Miyake's brand teams up with many institutions in its quest for new ecological solutions in textile, clothes, and furniture design. One example is the IN-EI Issey Miyake lamp's Tatsuno-Otoshigo model, which uses recycled PET as the main material. The same material is then used in his collections. All of the above shows an interest in national culture and ecology, but not necessarily in animal welfare, which is a significant aspect of the CSR.

When conducting a careful inspection of garments produced by the creator throughout his career, one will find clothes made of fur. Sometimes these items are made of faux fur, but sometimes it is a real animal product. There are no statements on this issue on the designer's website or in the media, and Miyake has not joined pro-animal actions. Media commentaries on his natural fur pieces relate to neutrality, putting fur among other natural fibres that are good for customers and the environment.

Here it is crucial to notice, fur production is a significant issue in NGO's pro-animal campaigns; as we can read on PETA's website, fur production is one of the worst industrial animal abuse areas. Sometimes independent organizations conduct undercover investigations on both Western and Eastern fur farms, and publish reports that reveal negative activities and shocking facts concerning fur-bearing animals' living conditions and unethical slaughter practices (Płonka, 2013). The natural fur usage in the designer's collections is also controversial in the context of Miyake's enterprise that is advertised as pro-ecological. Natural fur manufacturing and its post-production are scientifically proven to be unfriendly to the environment. Since the scientific research, regarding LCA- Life Cycle Assessment, shows that it could be even twenty times more harmful to the ecosystem than the whole production process of similar faux item, there clearly appears an inconsistency in the designer's strategy (Płonka, 2013).

In conclusion, Issey Miyake seems to practice the CSR in a discreet manner as he does not abuse ecological slogans and does not make statements on ethics, but still manufactures products and sends information that can be picked up by CSR-conscious customers. So far, no violations of human rights within Miyake's company have been found or revealed, and there have been no scandals connected with jobs or product outsourcing as well as no *greenwashing* within this brand has been exposed. But it should be mentioned that to

ecologically-conscious and generally CSR-sensitive clients, Miyake's lack of open concern with animal-derived products in his company might seem improper and insufficient. Also, the lack of cooperation with independent supervisory organizations and certification of his ecological inventions might interfere with his planned—or unplanned—CSR efforts, making his company's strategy not clear for clients and, as a result, not that effective (Płonka, 2014).

All this said, the fourth clothing brand of interest in this analysis of ethical practices in fashion design and production is H&M. The choice of this company could be questionable as H&M has been constantly criticized by the media, independent organizations, and in many articles and reports concerning human rights in its manufacturing units (Graß, 2013). H&M's production is based on offshoring and on putting the main responsibility for working conditions on its suppliers, who are located mainly in China, Cambodia and Bangladesh, i.e, countries that have difficulty following the so-called Western ethical work standards. The issue of outsourcing the production to these countries also reveals the problem of very low pay for its suppliers' workers, which in Bangladesh is estimated around \$43 monthly. The company publishes several documents on its website that treat other areas related to the CSR. These include the Code of Ethics, Discrimination and Equality Policy, Harassment Policy, and Home Working or Human Rights Policy. In general, they report numerous themes concerning the integration of ethical rules among the employees and suppliers, including: the equality of all employees in terms of age, gender and ethnicity, respectful treatment in the workplace and duty to protect human rights, a zero-tolerance policy on bribery and corruption, "(...) a working environment free of harassment, victimization and inappropriate behaviour of all kinds (...)", usage of home work for some parts of the production process, human rights related to labour conditions, and women's rights. So far, the enforcement of the company's ambitious prerogatives listed above is folded into its suppliers' obligation to sign and follow the H&M Code of Ethics and the agreement with Union Network International. The brief document available on the H&M website was signed in 2004. As the H&M website reads, "(...) We underline our commitment to employee representation through our Global Framework Agreement with Union Network International (UNI). This declares that both the company and our employees regard the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Declaration on

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work to be the cornerstone of our cooperation. Our main contact point for this agreement is Handels, the Swedish Commercial Employees' Union, which is a member of UNI. [...] H&M also has got a signed agreement with the European Works Council (EWC) the aim of which is to bring together workers' representatives (usually trade unionists) from all the EU Member States the company operates in, to meet with management, receive information and give their views on current strategies and decisions affecting the enterprise and its workforce (...)"'. Moreover, H&M started working with UNICEF in 2004, providing funding and other support to help abolish child labour around the world. However, the exact shape of this cooperation is not revealed on the website. Regarding fair living wages for garment workers, the company expresses its concern with, and support for, payments that cover the workers' basic needs. H&M hopes that through its efforts the company's suppliers should improve pay structures in terms of fair living wages by 2018, and that it will affect around 850,000 textile workers. Taking into consideration about 1900 *sweatshops* that cooperate with this retailer—that does not have its pattern factories as, for example, Marks & Spencer does—H&M's plans seem very idealistic. What is more, these statements and plans are not covered by any official documents or assistance of independent groups. H&M does not mention any other NGOs, other than UNICEF, that would support its pro-ethical activities, nor does it refer to any specialized organizations that would certify the company, which might have the effect of making the corporation's stated practices less reliable. Extending the critical view, apart from declaring two community projects that include training for potential H&M workers, such as those organized for its stores in Saudi Arabia, or supporting the improvement of healthcare for workers in Bangladesh (in cooperation with USAID, i.e. the United States government agency) by providing cheaper health service, the company does not give examples of spectacular actions for its workers or suppliers. The above examples might be treated as not that significant for people involved in H&M's global manufacturing chain and may be counted as smooth PR actions rather than strong attempts to radically progress towards more ethical production.

While in the field of human rights H&M is still expected to develop, its actions in the ecological field are much more positive and the company might be held up as one of the best advocates of green textile promotion in clothing production. H&M is well known for its "conscious collections" that consist of more ecological garments than found in the

traditional mass fashion. The company has the biggest range of clothes made of organic cotton on the market (cotton grown without chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and one that contains no GMOs and is treated with more delicate substances in the post-production process). H&M also sells items made of recycled cotton. Although the brand does not always publish certification for its green cotton, it belongs to the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), an organization that, according to their website, popularizes better quality cotton. However, in the media the BCI is portrayed as an organization that supports cotton suppliers that, sadly, cannot meet certified organic cotton guidelines but still want to be perceived as more pro-ecological and better cotton producers. BCI is accused of causing the decline in the cultivation of organic cotton in India. As BCI's standards are lower than those for ecological cotton, its fibre is easier and cheaper to obtain and, additionally, by using green slogans but having a lower price, it is more competitive in the market.

What is significant for the sustainable part of the fashion industry is that H&M considers itself the biggest user of organic cotton in the world. Its actions seem to be the most important for the growth of market and, therefore, the brand may deserve appreciation in the CSR context. Apart from organic cotton, H&M has been strongly promoting the aforementioned conscious collections. These collections consist of recycled wool, organic hemp, organic silk and linen, organic leather, recycled plastic, polyamide and polyester or FSC natural rubber. The Forest Stewardship Council is an organization that supports and controls sustainable forest management, which in this case means that the FSC-certified rubber comes from better supervised tree plantations. Another pro-environmental achievement on the part of H&M is the introduction of Lyocell, a textile made of TENCEL® (eucalyptus) and MONOCEL® (bamboo) fibres that are claimed to have a lower impact on the environment in comparison to other fabrics. The H&M conscious collections are strongly promoted by the company with ecological-based mottos and are already well-recognized in the market. As H&M CEO Karl Johan-Perrson says, "At H&M, we have set ourselves the challenge of ultimately making fashion sustainable and sustainability fashionable".

Animal welfare in H&M's policies is also an important issue. As we can read on the website, the brand cares about animal well-being as well as endangered species. The corporation does not sell genuine fur and is a Fur Free Alliance-listed retailer, which makes its attitude to fur production official and can be treated as a guaranty of such policy. What

is more, H&M does not accept down plucked from live birds and does not use Angora wool. Furthermore, the merino wool used in its products must come from farms that do not practice *mulesing*. H&M does not sell exotic animal skins and its leather products come only from animals bred for meat production, in which case the company uses it as a by-product or kind of waste from another industry, not one for which the animals had to be specially farmed or killed. Also, the brand does not accept the hides of cows from India, a country that is criticized in media due to the unsustainable and unethical leather industry practices. To conclude, H&M follows the CSR policy based on two important responsibility areas, i.e. environment and animal welfare, but it still needs to progress in human rights issues. The enterprise is also short of transparency and confirmations of its engagement issued by independent organizations cooperation. It should also report its actions in a more detailed manner in order to fortify public confidence in its CSR intentions (Płonka, 2014).

Summing up these major and most commented in the market and in scientific papers case studies of fashion companies in context of ethics and sustainability, the Stella McCartney brand, with its complete take on the three CSR fields and clearly communicated CSR practice based on the main creators' personal engagement, might be treated as the leader of CSR in fashion. However, now the designer should be even more careful in its ethical conduct as the public will judge such a principled, strong brand more critically. Contrary to this, Issey Miyake does not reveal CSR policy in his PR announcement, but he expresses his interest in sustainable science and preserving local culture and craft. Although he is not that far from achieving good CSR priorities, an imprecise PR strategy in this matter and the selection of only two of the main CSR areas as part of his company's responsible management and design raises doubts as to whether these are conscious acts or just a coincidence, which might confuse the public. Regarding M&S, this brand emerges as another CSR leader as it is consistently active on all three CSR fronts. The company also smartly grounds its responsible practices in comprehensive communication, transparency, and reporting. What is important, the company also remains in cooperation with specialized organizations that make its efforts more credible.

The last company analysed here, H&M, also tries to cover the CSR environmental and animal welfare issues, but its pro-ethical efforts are welcomed with criticism due to human

rights problems. The H&M's CSR communication is strong, but is not supported by additional credible institutions and reports, as is the case with M&S.

To conclude, textile corporations and famous designers have different approaches to CSR and apply the ethical practices in various ways. CSR policies should result in green, sustainable and compassionate fabrication, fair-trade relations between employees and employers, supplier and recipient, and should exclude harm done to living creatures. However, the case studies reveal that the fashion market might be inconsistent in the perception of CSR. It might also be rooted in the fact that none of the brands indicates the key actors of such performance in their CSR policy, what makes more questions for the further study.

2.6.4 The Multidimensional Character of the Designer's Profession

Other than the criticism of the design profession presented in the earlier part of this section, there is a variety of supplementary voices to the discourse on the designers' role in ethical practice. As it had been noticed earlier in this thesis, most of the scientific papers devoted to green design and CSR implementation in fashion study the topic from the customers' or marketing perspective. Surprisingly, there is the noticeable tendency in the companies' attention to their CSR strategy based on the customers' judgment and behaviour, which is also exposed in the studies and in market practice.

Contrary to this point of view, there appears a group of authors that put their trust in the creators' sustainable orientation as a remedy to the contemporary design corrosion. In order to study the problem thoroughly and understand the designers' role in the CSR implementation, it would be crucial to analyse the designers' exact tasks within the company and to review the scientific reflection on their possibilities and limits in ethical conduct.

Although the industrial clothes designers stand behind the look and function that is sold in the shops, they remain anonymous to majority of the consumers, where it is the brand that is recognizable instead. Apart from that, there are also individual designers that work for their own name. Their input in the sold garments is more noticed by the clients.

The professionals that work for big retailers, as well as very experienced designers, may be promoted to a position of chief designers, design department head, creative directors, or work as supervising managers in the marketing, production or sale area.

Regarding the garment manufacture, fashion designers represent a group of the creators that strictly work in clothing industry, not extending their profession into other industry sectors. They design outfits, shoes and accessories that together combine esthetical, technological and ergonomic principles. Their professional skills cover artistic abilities, technology of textiles, knowledge of anatomy, history of design and fashion education, creativity, communication talents, graphic design abilities, computer operation, and decision-making.

Fashion designers' tasks are multiple and concern different stages of creative work and production. It is a complex process that covers numerous production phases and contacts with different stakeholders of the procedure. As to the beginning of clothes design and production, the typical design cycle takes six months—taking into account the changing of the seasons—starting from first sketches and closing up with final fabrication. However, the biggest retailers release new collections more frequently, i.e. even monthly in order to bust their turnover and be more competitive in the market, what is connected to rising *fast-fashion*.

The design and production process begins with studying the trends and contemporary styles, which is based on the designer's academic knowledge, private observation, and which is also derived from information acquired from professional trend books that are purchased by the fashion companies for their design departments. The trend books are developed by specialized groups of professionals linked with the social media, art, street trends, and marketing. The designers additionally analyse the competition's collections, which is another way of building awareness of the trends and the situation in the market.

The designers contribute to the themes of the collections by adding their ideas that are derived from individual inspiration based on their life environment, cultural experience, education, private preferences, and media that also shape their tastes. They additionally ground their design decisions in the briefings that are given by company managers, marketing managers, fashion buyers, sales representatives or subcontractors, which is

related to the internal organization of the company. Depending on the company's structure and character, the briefings consist of the description, amount and type of garments that should be included in the collection as well as the colours, materials and targeted customers' features.

When the creators' initial idea is expressed in mood boards, journal and technical drawings, fashion designers delegate a prototype sewing, which is made either of the right, final material or from a visceral textile. Regarding the materials out of which the garments are produced, the designers are also involved in the process of textiles selection as they pick up the materials the design should be made of. Additionally, they might visit the textile factories or textile fairs, during which they also collect information about accessories and technological innovations, after which they might suggest the choice of the material to the company they work for.

The sample model might be presented to the company's representatives, creative directors, marketing managers, fashion consumers, sales managers, and even other designers that belong to the company's team in order for them to be evaluated with regard to aesthetics, cost, and the market potential. The prototypes are also shown during trade fairs and fashion shows in order to be able to collect responses that will then contribute to the final decision about producing the chosen, best items.

Next, the garment is manufactured, while the final stage of the whole design and production process is the product sale. It takes place either in the existing traditional shops or the Internet and e-commerce area, from where the garment finally reaches the customers.

Summing up, the designers' position in the process of clothes manufacture is complex, multilevel, and spread over a longer period of time. No wonder they are perceived by scholars as crucial actors in the ethical performance (Margolin and Margolin, 2002; Black , 2008; Manzini, Walker and Wylant, 2008; Carrigan, Moraes and McEachern, 2013; Niinimäki, 2011; Chapman, 2015) and the CSR strategy implementation; they are involved in different production stages and connected to other stakeholders during the production.

2.6.5 The Designers' Wish List- Designers as Sustainability Main Performers

As a point of departure for mapping the creators' role in the ethical conduct implementation as well as analysing how the designers are expected to act in the sustainable performance and what the moral hopes and doubts directed to these CSR stakeholders are, I will begin with questions that come from Margolin and Margolin (2002):

What role can a designer play in a collaborative process of social intervention? What is currently being done in this regard and what might be done? How might the public's perception of designers be changed in order to present an image of a socially responsible designer? How can agencies that fund social welfare projects and research gain a stronger perception of design as a socially responsible activity? What kinds of products meet the needs of vulnerable populations? (p. 28)

Margolin and Margolin's inquiries remain substantial for the debate as they highlight the role and the significance of the designers through their taking part in the social research and translating the inventors' ideas into completed designs, which has a power to situate their creations in a socially-effective way.

The scope of research for social design includes public and agency perceptions of designers, the economics of social interventions, the value of design in improving the lives of underserved populations, a taxonomy of new product typologies, the economics of manufacturing socially responsible products, and the way that such products and services are received by populations in need. (p.29)

The above statements are not unusual in the literature review. As has been accordingly noticed by Black (2008), there are already several classics in design theory, such as Victor Papanek, Ezio Manzini, Michael Braungart, and William McDonough, who are unanimous in perceiving the designers as main social welfare contributors. As Black has said, creativity brings up living standards through the holistic rethinking of the world and the professional skills to change noble ideas into economic resources.

Furthermore, Findeli (2001) apart from censuring the inventors to stay too practical and even instrumental in framing ethics in design, adds that “design responsibility means that designers always should be conscious of the fact that, each time they engage themselves in a design project, they somehow recreate the world” (2001 qtd. in Black, 2008, p. 14).

Creation and recreation as well as novelty are frequently mentioned keywords in the discourse on how the designers impact ethical conduct in their occupation. Manzini, Walker and Wylant (2008) have written that, “The role of the designer in this instance is novel. It is not dependent upon the skill set of one particular design discipline; rather, it represents the use of design skills and design thinking in a more general sense” (p. 39). Hence, the scholars have asserted that it is the designers who are pushing social innovation forward thanks to their ability to operate in complex systems of socio-technical schemes. Manzini *et al.* (2008) have also pointed out to the role of the designers in involving many other actors in the process instead of concentrating on technological lab research. The authors have illustrated such shift as conflicting with the approved designers’ performance that we are used to nowadays, meaning a profession that improperly runs its activities focusing on the user and the company they work for. The designers are advised by the authors to work according to a new pattern, namely in a “network of actors”, where their main interest should be the act in favour of public institutions and authorities, so social welfare in general. As they have claimed, “Every solution and especially a sustainable solution, brings a complex set of relationships into play with new forms of collaboration between the various players involved. These forms of collaboration are not easy. In general, they do not come about spontaneously, but are the result of deliberate action” (Manzini, Walker and Wylant, 2008, p.3). Manzini *et al.* have had confidence in the designers as facilitators and builders of a mutual platform of social vision through ethical, responsible design that would be an outcome of the collaboration of different stakeholders:

To play this role, however, designers must have a new generation of conceptual and operational tools at their disposal. Such tools must provide everything they need to conceptualize, visualize, and develop scenarios and sustainable solutions within a framework of co-design that characterizes the innovation of contemporary socio-technical systems. (p. 3)

The authors have been rather convincing about the need to redefine the profession and its

functioning devices more towards social needs, since the role of the designers is crucial in responsible social conduct of the company. They have seen the limits of contemporary realm not that much as obstacles, but as factors that make the designers search for a new solution to how to improve the public wellbeing. As the academics have stated, “It is in this new complex, fluid, limited world that design must operate today. And it is in this complex, fluid, limited world that design for sustainability has to find its way and to define its concepts and tools” (Manzini, *et al.*, 2008, p. 14).

Payne (2014) has also enrolled the designers on the list of agents that could be responsible for softening negative social and ecological impacts of the fashion industry. The author has conducted research that focuses on the role of the designer in intervening in the product.

Accordingly, sustainability as crucial innovation in the hands of the designers has also been affirmed by Carrigan, Moraes and McEachern (2013), who have seen designers as the mechanics of creation that could change the companies’ policy on product, technology and general business scheme from the bottom to the top.

2.6.6 Designers as Social Brokers- Creating a Bridge with the Consumers

The debate has shown that the designers enter the discussion on the CSR implementation studies through their pivotal role among different stakeholders and as an alternative to the worshipped and distinguished customers. In the current studies they are seen as the ones that possess potential, creative and novel tools to bring dialog between various ethically-involved players through their profession. Contrary to the major voices of scientific elaborations that devote their space to the consumers, there are others that state the designers could play a significant role in connecting their expert skills to improve the occupation and the surrounding reality through sustainable innovation that would be already morally-coded to support ethical consumption.

Continuing the debate, Black (2008) has called for new strategies for design and production so that the consumers can make a difference in their purchasing without

necessarily making a conscious decision; where the research and innovative thinking for sustainability had already been built-in, by design, to the majority of products. The scholar has highlighted the importance of the pre-manufacture design, in which ethical issues could be coded so that the brand's clients can receive goods that are made with decency. Black has been convinced that it is the design that plays the imperative role and has the potential of joining different agendas in production.

Regarding the significance of the designers as brokers of social values with the focus on the consumers, Niinimäki (2011) has contributed to the above, promoting the leading role of the designers by marking the connection between design and consumption. The author has stated that the sustainable DNA of the product—especially with regard to its maintenance, durability of usage and post life disposal—is put in the commodity by the designer on the pre-manufacture stage. This way the design affects the consumption and the consumed products. As Niinimäki has explained:

Designers also have an important role in creating far-sighted and future-oriented sustainable design, which can change consumption behaviour towards more sustainable behaviour patterns. In this way design for sustainability can be a redirective practice. Accordingly sustainable design must include those ethics and values that promote sustainable consumption. (p. 90)

The author highlights the importance of pre-manufacture, pro-ethical decisions based on the fact that around 80% of environmental and social impacts of the product are carried out in the design and development phases. However, Niinimäki has noticed that, “The main challenge is how to design products added with services that encourage consumers to adopt more environmentally responsible behaviour” (p. 26). She has seen part of the solutions as grounded in leading the consumers into more sustainable ways of purchase; not by dictating them their consumers' behaviours, but by sustainably encrypting the product on an earlier stage.

As to the consumers involved in the designers' practice of moral principles through their work, Chapman (2005) has expressed criticism regarding the contemporary design's social

impact. The scholar has also claimed that designers are not exclusively responsible for altering the products, pointing out to consumers as those who also “render” human creativity. The author has observed that the designers are both creators and consumers, thus they should not forget to experience their profession and ethical mission through such lenses. Chapman has summarized the role of shoppers in sustainable performance of the designers and the companies:

Products then become talking points, linking consumers to producers through ongoing dialogues regarding the families of products that unite them - remodelling corporate culture away from a temporal world of one-off sales toward a reflexive domain of relationship management which symbolizes a fundamental change in the relationship between producer and consumer a shift from an economy of goods and purchases to one of service and flow. (p. 180)

Extending this point of view, Perry and Towers (2013) have stressed the importance of design and product advance scheme in the apparel supply chain, which is related to the social connection between the suppliers and consumers, as well as the significance of design and product in ethical innovation.

2.6.7 A Cross-Players’ Function of the Creators in Corporate Social Responsibility

It has been clarified by Dell’era and Verganti (2009) that among company’s representatives, marketing managers, customers and designers, the latter ones have the possibilities to shift the socio-cultural dimension of design within different sectors of industry. The scholars have profiled the designers, saying that they have the opportunity to integrate businesses and customers, and create by design a language that would bring the company and the customer closer. What is more, the authors have strongly defended the designers’ prominent position in the ethical policy through their capability of a cross-section, multilevel and cross-stakeholder dialog:

In a way unlike that of sociologists, designers analyse hidden and emerging socio-cultural phenomena in order to identify new, unexpressed and emotional needs. The opportunity to

collabourate with different companies in different industries allows designers to transfer design languages between sectors. By capturing, recombining, and integrating knowledge about socio-cultural models in different social and industrial settings, designers act as brokers of design languages and help in creating breakthrough product meanings. (p. 874)

However, the expectations that are piling up towards the designers in ethical conduct also naturally pose new questions and doubts, asking the limits of the designers' profession in the CSR field.

Kozlowski, Bardecki and Searcy (2012) can serve as a point of departure for such approach as they have noticed that the designers face complications on the system level as well as the lack of an appropriate agenda. The scholars have marked that the creators are becoming more aware and reflective of their role in sustainable fashion. However, the authors have highlighted a major need for the inventors to join different groups of stakeholders in order to achieve new solutions that would be beneficial to different actors. What is important to realize is the worry coming from the scholars, who have claimed that, "A common perception in the fashion industry is that once the product has moved into the hands of the consumer, it is no longer the responsibility of the designer and/or company" (p. 23). It could be read as a kind of designers' limitation. According to this line of thinking, any transfer of ethical values onto the consumers is risky due to the control lost over the product's environmental impact after it had been sold. It can be interpreted as another point that is against the consumers as those carrying the burden of moral responsibility and for directing the attention towards maximum ethical coding of the goods on the design stage.

The above doubts have been reinforced by Vuletich (2013) who has seen other boundaries that work against fulfilling the wishful list of the social leadership expectations towards the designers. Her point of view could be concluded by saying that although there are tendencies towards sustainable design, the fashion sector is still rather unfamiliar with this idea. Vuletich has perceived this grounded in narrowed strategies of both the companies and the designers, where textile industry social activity is underrepresented in the communal dialog.

Another argument in the heated debate is the cultural aspect that might be treated dualistically. Some scholars have identified this setting as not that influential with regard to the designers' ethical performance, while others have manifested a different approach.

To begin with, Chapman (2005) has observed that sustainable innovation is above cultural differences. The author has claimed that sustainability is an appearance that affects us all irrespective of local and private moral standards or political strategies. Chapman has seen in sustainability a chance to change the profession habits and upgrade the design in a multi-technological, creative, and transnational way.

The cultural aspect has also been mentioned by Papanek (1971), who has said that, "The designer by contrast tries to use associational values that are accepted and understood more broadly in a culture or subculture" (p. 46). It could therefore be interpreted that the designers have the potential to be cross-cultural transmitters.

However, Şişman's (2005) studies on the designers' role in responsible business operations have revealed that if the cultural aspects are not addressed and the value of differences between people from diverse parts of the world are not embraced, it might lead to the failure of the sustainability project. In order not to ignore the surrounding determinants, the author has concluded that, "Thus the design discipline may become less instrumentally pragmatic and more informed by the social, political and economic concerns central to cultural studies" (p. 41). The designers are also advised by him to think of the ethical plan as a way of introducing the ethically manufactured goods into the mass market in the context of a particular culture.

Knowledge comes as another turning point in the argumentation regarding the designers' role in the CSR implementation. As has been declared by Dell'era and Verganti (2009), designers are the ones who possess the greatest knowledge of how to conceptualize the product and put theory into practice. They are "knowledge integrators" or "knowledge brokers" that collect data from different areas and diverse stakeholders, as well as translate this knowledge into actual ideas.

The aforementioned Papanek (1971) has contributed to the debate on the education issue,

too, where he has seen the right knowledge as an important factor in the context of responsibility in design. According to the author, it is a helpful device in order to be able to build a bridge between the producers and clients and the rest of stakeholders in the market. However, he has criticized contemporary education practices, marking the obsolescence of the educational systems and material, self-indulging profile of the design studies nowadays:

It is unfortunate that our design schools proceed from wrong assumptions. The skills we teach are too often related to processes and working methods of an age that has ended. The philosophy is an equal mixture of self-indulgent and self-expressive bohemian individualism and a materialism both profit oriented and brutal. The method of teaching and transmitting this biased information is more than half a century out of date. (Papanek, 1971, p. 285)

If we speak of integrated design, of design-as-a-whole, of unity, we need designers able to deal with the design process comprehensively. Lamentably, designers so equipped are not yet turned out by any school. Their education would need to be less specialized and include many disciplines now considered to be only distantly related to design, if related at all. (Papanek, 1971, p. 295)

Papanek—although challenging the designers to work as communication bridges between team members, using their educational background to fulfil their social mission—has complained that such state of affairs is not always accurate. The knowledge of the designers’ has been highlighted by the scholar as a factor that makes the designer a “team synthesis” due to the fact other team members within this cooperation business group fail to have the potential and knowledge that the designer has or should have.

Regarding the academic preparation of the inventors for the implementation of CSR values through their profession, Black (2008) has been critical of the designers. The scholar has censured them for not being able to think carefully about ethics and not knowing enough about the eco-design methods, which could be due to problematic school programs or insufficient education.

Summarizing, although the general perception of the designers in CSR context in scientific papers seems pink-painted, the reality of fashion businesses looks different and a certain gap emerges.

While reading the interview with H&M's CSR manager in Newbery and Ghosh-Curling (2011), which concerns the brand's CSR practice, it cannot be left unnoticed that the manager, Schullström, has not enumerated designers as the company's social values promoter or a significant part of the brand's ethical conduct. Instead, Schullström has highlighted the marketing managers, fashion buyers, and the company's communication with the customers as CSR best subjects. There is no knowledge available of the designers being invited to the H&M's brainstorming sessions regarding ethical collections. The manager has said that, "We have a lot of people in our organisation, not just in the CSR department, but in buying, in marketing or other areas, that are really sitting down and thinking hard about sustainability and what it means for them and what are they going to do about it" (p. 40). As one of the biggest clothes retailers in the world and also a brand that strongly marks its involvement in responsible fashion, H&M might give a crucial insight into the real practice of CSR among different team members within the fashion enterprise. The conjecture about the designers being excluded from the decision-making process within the clothing companies that comes from the H&M's CSR manager's statement is not in accordance with the aforesaid conclusions and design theorists' reflections. Rather, they are contradictory accounts.

Contributing to such an important but rarely explored in the publications assumption, the aforementioned Vuletich (2013) has added that although the designers should be engaging various actors in the ethical process inside the business structure, in real practice it looks much different. Vuletich has asserted that the designers, although unquestionably very important for the CSR conduct, are not included in the center of the activity:

Within the organizational structure of a fashion brand, the fashion/textile designer sits within the buying team, which is separate from the CSR team. The designer's role is to design garments or textiles, and the designer is not included in developing the CSR objectives of the brand. (p. 7)

Conclusions

Summing up, the above literature and described case studies create many theoretical expectations towards the designers in the background of CSR application research. On the one hand, the dialog criticizes the profession, but on the other it allocates a lot of hope and trust in the designers as main ethical promoters.

In the accessible literature review, the contemporary design is negatively evaluated as malfunctioning and wrongly-oriented, charging the designers with the present-day bad state of affairs in the context of unethical production. At the very same time, the scientists direct their expectations towards this professional cluster as a group that through ethical practices might cure the contemporary design and production, thus improving the surrounding reality.

As the analysis of the scientific papers reveals, the condition of contemporary design has not been illustrated in a positive way due to several factors. The list of complaints against contemporary design is economy-driven; the techno-centric approach originated in the 19th century and led to the instrumental treatment of the profession. The issues of consumer-centred, material-focused, cosmetic- and beauty-profiled design, and the deliberately coded obsolescence in commodities are also added to the list of objections. The above charges against the contemporary design are claimed to lead to overproduction and overconsumption, thus contributing to the environmental damage and negative consequences on human and other living creatures' lives.

Nevertheless, although the state of contemporary design is recognized as ill-design, there are many voices marking sustainability as a cure to such state of affairs and indicating the designers as possible leading actors in the antidote to the profession's situation through ethical, sustainability-oriented practice.

The authors have often pointed to the designers as the ones to command in the CSR-related design and manufacture, which is based on the perception that they are appropriately educated and qualified to make the right choices in a creative and novel way. Although the

contemporary design education system has been treated by the scientists at least with reserve, the designers have been said to have the potential to avoid cultural differences and skip the national obstacles due to their transnational knowledge. The inventors are also believed to actually possess the power of decision-making due to the pre-manufacture coding of the commodities and novelty tools in their hands, thus contributing to influencing the consumers' choices and subsequent responsible consumption.

Moreover, what could secure the favouring of the designers' positions and might be vital for this discussion is the fact that the designers are seen as the key transmitters of ethical values within the company. They are profiled as those who could merge different stakeholders and co-operators during the design, invention and decision-making processes in order to achieve moral goals with the manufactured goods. The scientific papers have pointed to the designers as the ones to possibly run the dialog between different team members of the company, in this way attaining the CSR-related, sustainable, communal objectives.

However, there have appeared voices suggesting that the companies do not include the creators in the decision-making process, nor do they rest their CSR policies in the hands of the designers' knowledge and professional experience. The case studies of fashion companies do not reveal who stands behind the decision-making process and whether the designers are the ones responsible for the ethical profile of the brand they work for. Also, there come examples of companies that prefer to gamble with customers' choices or choose to accelerate their CSR performance and sales through their marketing departments, leaving the designers in the shadow.

To conclude, future policies should not disregard company's managers', customers and marketing departments in the context of the CSR application. We should not crown only the designers, while completely abandoning the involvement of other parties in the ethical conduct. Nonetheless, this document suggests that there is a certain gap between the sterile theory of responsible design and the wishful thinking regarding the role of the creators in the sustainable practices implementation, which does not seem to reflect the current state of affairs. This study and the research review reveal that—apart from the literature that

idealistically puts faith in the creators as enhancers of the sustainable and well-functioning design—the lack of clear policy still remains. The designers' accurate position and contribution in ethical practice remain vague and neglected by the system. The research should continue, unveiling designers' perceptions and identifying better policies and practices for the future.

Such reflections provoke questions of more detailed and practical nature that could clarify where the missing point of the CSR practice appears. As the designers are placed in the core of the discussion, it could be reasonable to study their position in the CSR implementation more thoroughly and to ask them directly how in reality the CSR policy and sustainable practice work or do not work in the context of their profession. The gap is obviously there, but there are no obvious answers to whether and how the designers' position in the CSR application is included. The designers' opinions and their industry contribution have to be measured more accurately and with accordance to the freshly tuned research goal: *What are the designers' perceptions and commitment in the context of CSR implementation in fashion industry?*

The survey below will examine in a detailed manner the designers' position and potentials in the practice of Corporate Social Responsibility. The international questionnaire should find responses to questions regarding competence and qualifications of the contemporary fashion designers in the clothing companies, to what extent their academic education influences the CSR performance, what the factors that stop them from ethical practices are, what the designers' relationships with other stakeholders in the background of the CSR practice are, which actors—in their opinion—push the CSR strategy forward and which actors block it. The answers to above points should clarify the gap between theory presented in the literature review and the actual state of affairs within the industry.

3. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter introduces the research methodology as a whole and identifies the purpose of the investigation, which is to study the designers' role in CSR implementation. It provides additional, significant information for the final discussion chapter which explores how the designers impact the CSR practice and what is their character in the whole CSR process. The findings of this section are integrated and concluded at the end of the thesis.

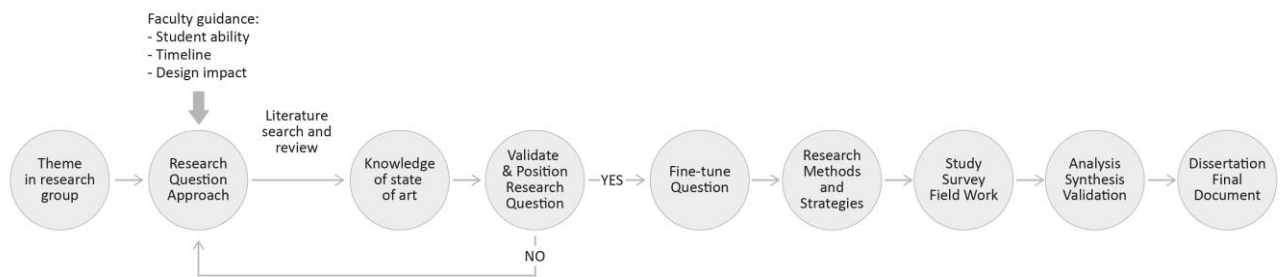


Figure 1 Establishing Research Question and Developing Empirical Process

Source: adapted from Poggenpohl & Sato, 2003

3.1 Literature Review

This research began with selection of fifty papers, and several publications and books devoted to responsible design, ethics in design, CSR in general and CSR in fashion business. The number quickly grew to over 300 papers and 9 books, as new issues were appearing during the reading that needed revision and confrontation with other views. The studied papers were in majority contemporary documents taken from internet editors' and conferences' pages, mostly under the condition they came from credible sources and had been published in scientific journals within last 10 years to ground the study on the latest, actual data. Several papers and books were older, regarded as literature classics in this topic. The selection of opinions and quotes from the documents was based on their value for the research but also on number of citations from their authors in other researchers'

papers, journals and after conference publications. The chosen books are one of the commonly appreciated in this scientific area. Their content and value were both very helpful in understanding the theme of CSR application in design and also gave me strong, scientific background and wide opinion perspective on the analysed subject.

3.2 The Elito Method

At a certain point there emerged leading themes from the documents. Using the Elito method, it enabled to divide the scripts into groups; the main subject lines, arguments and key words. Reasoning the choice of the Elito method which was developed by Alrutz, Singer and Wahlig in 2002 one might follow the authors of the study, who claim:

Our general hypothesis was that the Elito method would help human-centered designers move quickly from having a collection of raw observation data to forming a point of view about that data and then creating strong design arguments to support that point of view. (p. 10)

The Elito method is based on segmentation of parts of the papers and leading topics into organized groups of notes and parts of the papers on a wall, table or any other free surface, making a visual map of the picked up themes. There is an added gradation of importance of the issues in the visual placement of the records, which also helps to design an eventual narration of the thesis.

The Elito method is a rigorous synthesis method designed to help teams bridge the “ analysis-synthesis” gap- the “fuzzy” area where designers have to vacillate between analysing research data and articulating potential design ideas., while anchoring all design decisions to business directives. Ultimately, it helps to shape research findings into a series of fact-based narratives that connect the people for whom we are designing to promising design concepts.(Martin and Hanington 2012, p. 70)

At this moment of the study it aided to analyse briefly the papers, to synthesize the research, to collect the quarrels and to unite ideas from the most valuable publications. The Elito Method enabled to create the primary frame of this dissertation and the elementary scenario of this scientific dialog.

3.3 The Literature Review Main Themes

According to the very first findings in scientific studies, the substantial debate on the ethical performance occurred to be mainly valorised through such agents as the companies, marketing managers or customers, remaining some former assumptions untouched. From the first readings, the theory settings seemed capitalized by concentration on the organizations, on their clients and on CSR as a marketing tool among the above main directions. However, these publications have revealed empty spaces in the previous research and inquiries without answers. They presented contradictory points of view and gaps unveiled the need for new studies. This is how the research questions started to emerge from the cloud of the unidentified, of inquiries and varied ideas.

After investigating the topic, it seemed reasonable to believe these are the designers that should be mainly addressed in the common research on CSR in fashion area. The need of understanding the problematic led to more interrogations regarding the creators' role in ethical conduct. Thus, the vacancy in scientific papers directed to a more profound study on the designers analysed through moral lenses. There was a clear necessity to identify what the designers' academic grounds for CSR introduction are. What are their perspectives on the other main CSR actors? What is their orientation on the consumers, companies and marketing in sense of an ethical performance of an enterprise? More questions also regarded the professional skills of the designers, whether they understand the market demands on sustainable design, or if they recognize the clients' needs in this area. It was significant to study how the designers see themselves in the company's team in the context of CSR application, what is their position among the other professionals involved in design process and manufacture and what are their connotations in their working group according to green policy of the enterprise. Finally, to broaden the horizons, there appeared questions on the designers' potential within the organization in moral principles implementation through their qualified tools and expert skills they possess, and lastly, whether the designers are aware of their role in Corporate Social Responsibility promotion.

This previous approach enabled to fine-tune the research question: *What are the designers' perceptions and commitment in the context of CSR implementation in fashion industry?*

In the research work, measuring fashion designers' perceptions involves the evaluation of their social awareness or green consciousness and the way personal / professional and organisational stimuli are interpreted in the singular setting of the fashion and apparel industry. Perceptions in an organizational context have been addressed and adapted in a classical definition followed and disseminated by several authors (Aquinas, 2006):

- The perceived object, identifying CSR's features as observed – interpreted by designers in present days;
- The subject-actor that perceives, assessing the individual characteristics of the fashion designer profile, education and professional roles;
- The organisational context that coexists with the perception.

This is a procedure amounting to interpreting stimuli in order to develop a unified collective meaning for designers, “shaping a sense-making and sense-giving process” (Maon and Swaen, 2009; Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). “A major task ... is to foster and maintain a system of more or less shared meanings so that coordinated behaviour can occur” (Smircich and Stubbart, 1985).

This process could develop an identity and a strategy that may: 1) precede and inform organizational action, 2) emerge and evolve simultaneously with action (Ashforth & Mael, 1996). Further development is intended to enforce commitment defined as “the relative strength of an individual identification with and involvement” in which commitment is “characterized by a person's a) belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, b) willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and c) desire to maintain membership” (Reichers, 1985).

The present research process addresses specifically the gaps in knowledge and the elements of ambiguity or critical perspective unveiled by the literature review, and not all variables. Regulation is purposely left out of quantitative research either as a variable or as a framework and integrated as a part of latent opportunities.

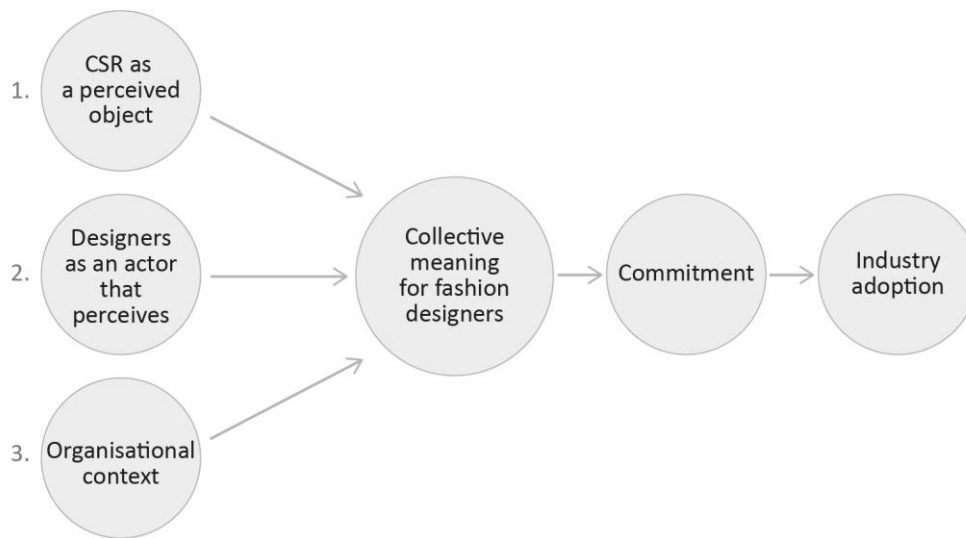


Figure 2 Perceptions- Research Scheme Organization

Source: own development

The development of a mixed methods question should reflect the procedures or the content and not include separate quantitative and qualitative questions (Creswell 2014, Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010). This suggests that there is some integration or linking between the study's quantitative and qualitative phases (Tashakkoria and Teddlie 2010, Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). As Creswell (2014) claims each investigator has a freedom of choice, meaning autonomy of selection of methods, techniques, and procedures of the study that best meet the needs and purposes of his/her research.

Truth is what works at the time. It is not based in a duality between reality independent of the mind or within the mind. Thus, in mixed methods research, investigators use both quantitative and qualitative data because they work to provide the best understanding of a research problem.(p. 40)

Following this approach, two research stages were defined, combining quantitative and qualitative methods:

- 1 – Quantitative analysis, mapping into CSR's collective meaning for fashion designers.
- 2 – Qualitative analysis, checking:

- Progresses on commitment
- Progresses on adoption and implementation

3.4 Research Setting- Quantitative Research- The Survey

The empirical part of this doctorate thesis is based on an Internet survey placed on The Survey Monkey portal: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6SFCTPL>. It is a well-recognized and approved instrument for gathering data on a preferred topic¹⁸. Due to the fact, that fashion industry has an international, global character and the field of this work touches the CSR topic based on its universal frame and application, the survey was conducted in many countries and was directed to professionals accessible to some extent from all over the world. The concept of the research is cross- national due to the fact, that most of the big retailers are global brands, operating internationally both in developed and in emerging countries, which is discussed in the thesis. Even in case of SME and locally functioning enterprises part of their jobs and products are often outsourced from global-south countries. The international character of the survey was linked to literature review findings, aimed to explore over cultural or national perception of CSR and to create a universal background for understanding CSR. According to that, the designers that replied to the survey research operate or operated professionally in such countries as Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, India, Italy, Japan, Qatar, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, and the USA. The above data has been collected from the participants' LinkedIn profiles and analysis of their public professional bio.

3.4.1 Respondents

The study was based on a convenience sample, meaning accessible designers, who wanted to participate in the research and to share their opinions. The 100 took part in the study because it was possible to contact them and check their minds due to their free will. There

¹⁸ <https://termsfeed.com/blog/survey-disclaimer/> [Accessed February 2019]

are thousands (18000 in the US only)¹⁹ of designers working worldwide that the study could address, however it would be impossible to access them all, neither to segment them. Nevertheless, this study aim was to provide perceptions, not numbers thus the chosen methodology and sample were evaluated as fitting the character of the research.

By using the convenience sample the researcher shall be aware of both its advantages and disadvantages. According to Bornstein, Jager and Putnick (2013):

Regarding its disadvantages, results that derive from convenience sampling have known generalizability only to the sample studied. Thus, any research question addressed by this strategy is limited to the sample itself. The same limitation holds true for estimates of differences between sociodemographic subgroups. As another disadvantage, convenience samples typically include small numbers of underrepresented sociodemographic subgroups (e.g., ethnic minorities) resulting in insufficient power to detect subgroup differences within a sociodemographic factor or factors.

On the other hand, Fricker and Schonlau (2002) defend such methodology:

(...) early in the course of research, responses from a convenience sample might be useful in developing research hypotheses. Responses from convenience samples might also be useful for identifying issues, defining ranges of alternatives, or collecting other sorts of non-inferential data. In fact, in certain types of qualitative research, convenience samples on the Web may be just as valid as other methods that use convenience samples. (p.8)

All of the respondents of the study were invited to participate in the survey directly, since the survey link was not public and it was only sent to chosen candidates provided they met several criteria. One sample group was invited to the survey based on the researcher's personal contacts and professional environment recommendations, whereas the second group was collected from LinkedIn portal.

The selection of the participants was based on the picked up fashion designers' bio or portfolio, where expert capability and actual work activity of the designer were conditioning the invitation to the research. Only professionally qualified and employed in

¹⁹ <https://fashionunited.com/global-fashion-industry-statistics/> [Accessed February 2019]

the industry designers were requested. There were no brand's type or limits of the company the designer works for, neither were there any restrictions in sample qualification concerning the sort of garment the company produces. Among the invited professionals there were those, who represent smaller, private ateliers that produce clothes for local market, middle size organizations' designers and a group of the creators that work for global brands manufacturing and selling their goods all over the world. The below citation supports such selection of the convenience sample for the internet questionnaire: " If a convenience sample will suffice for the research, then Web can be an excellent medium to use, particularly if the desired respondents are geographically diverse or hard to find/identify" (Fricker and Schonlau, 2002, p.17).

Nationality was not a variable of the study because most of the companies the designers had an experience to work for operate globally. The questions did not contain issues of nationality or sex; however the survey was checking the participants' age, education, job time in apparel industry, professional position in the organization and the type of the company the surveyed work for. The above were tightly connected with the thesis main themes and discussed key issues, enabling to confirm or negate the research assumptions.

According to the intended international character of the survey, the whole file was prepared in English and it was only directed to professionals who were able to understand it and reply in this language. Such skill was confirmed directly by the researcher or was based on the designer's LinkedIn profile presented in English on the portal.

3.4.2 The Questions

The questions came from the chosen research methods that were used in other studies. They strongly relate to the topics and discourse main themes that resulted from the literature review and that were defined as important to be more measured or deepened.

That is why the questions referred as following to:

1. CSR as a perceived object
 - a) Consumer's perspective

- In your perspective, what CSR's components are important for the consumers?
 - a) Human rights
 - b) Animal welfare
 - c) Environment
- According to your opinion, what are the reasons for buying clothes related to CSR?
 - a) Because they believe in brand's ethical values
 - b) Because they are well informed about the product
 - c) Social positioning
 - d) Following the group trends
 - e) Polishing self-perception
- According to your opinion, what are the reasons for customers for not buying goods related to CSR?
 - a) The CSR clothes are too expensive
 - b) They are not informed about the product
 - c) They do not trust in brand's ethical concerns
 - d) The CSR related clothes are not stylish
 - e) They prefer to borrow clothes
- In your opinion who are the most involved consumers into CSR?
 - a) With higher education
 - b) With secondary education
 - c) With elementary education
 - d) Youngsters
 - e) Middle aged
 - f) Oldest
 - g) Coming from emergent countries
 - h) Coming from middle income countries
 - i) Coming from high income countries
 - j) Male
 - k) Female
- In your perspective, to what extent has the fashion industry been taking in account consumers' role in CSR implementation?

Questions referring to:

b) Marketing's role

- CSR being used as a marketing tool.
- Ethical marketing as a link between manufacturers and users.
- Relation between marketing and CSR as a win- win solution.
- Correlation between marketing and social values application.
- Effectiveness in CSR communication through marketing.
- Marketing as a wrong tool to implement CSR.

Questions referring to:

2. Designer as a subject-actor that perceives

a) Demographics and knowledge

- Designer – respondents' profile
- Designer- education, training and influences
- In your perspective, where did you get your CSR knowledge from?
- In your perspective, to what issues did the knowledge/ education relate to?
- In your perspective, did the education you got at school on CSR prepare you for designing in this area?
- From your perspective, did it give you knowledge on different CSR actors?
 - a) Designers
 - b) Consumers
 - c) Producers/ Subcontractors
 - d) Company's Owners
 - e) Art Directors
 - f) Fashion Buyers
 - g) Marketing Managers
 - h) Sales Managers
 - i) None of the above

Questions referring to:

b) Designer's roles in CSR implementation

- To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation?
- In your present job and / or company, to what extent are the following jobs (or equivalent) really contributing to CSR implementation?
- In your perspective, to what extent shall the consumers' role been taken in CSR implementation by the company?
- In your perspective, to what extent shall the designer's role be reinforced in CSR implementation?
- In your opinion, are designers becoming more aware and reflective on their role in CSR dissemination and implementation?

Questions referring to:

3. Organizational context

a) Company perspective

- CSR as mainly company's reputation leverage.
- CSR as co-production of values by the companies.
- CSR as a tactical labelling instrument.
- CSR as an upper management or an executive task.
- CSR implementation as managers' individual choice.
- Companies following consumers' behaviour and predisposition towards CSR.

Questions referring to:

b) Other key-players' roles in the company

c) Company's progress in implementation

The survey responses were formed in a multiple choice closed scheme. Some of the answers were given importance progression, based on a harder 1-5 scale or softer, with

wider range 1-10 scale. The participants had the chance not only to make a choice between the answers but also to grade the answers' value regarding the specified question. Several questions had an additional open reply possibility due to the respondents' will to supply the study with more detailed information.

3.4.3 Data Collection

In total there were around 1100 designers invited to participate in the study and finally 100 finished the survey. Such number may cause questions regarding the limits of results due to a small group of respondents and the possible error percentage, according to a general number of active professionals in this position. However, as Christopher Peters suggests in his internet directory dedicated to designing and analysing a survey:

Most surveys are sent to a small subset of a larger population. Using such samples to make general statements about the population is called inference. Descriptive statistics are statements about just the sample; inferential statistics are statements about a population using a sample.

It's worth noting that inferential statistics with surveys is difficult and commonly impossible, even for experts. Sometimes you just can't generalize the sample to the population in a reliable way—you're stuck making statements about people who actually filled out the survey.²⁰

Regarding the statistics, that generally claim only around 10% of the invited respond to the questionnaires at all²¹, similarly 100 designers finished this questionnaire. The data was collected within a period of 1 month. The survey's approach was quantitative, based on numerical outcomes and their comparison. The answers were collected by the Monkey Survey portal, where they were automatically saved and summed up. The separate answers analysis was also possible due to the possibility of cross checking and additional study of individual responses of each designer. The data was archived and presented in the Survey Monkey both in tables, numbers and in charts.

²⁰ <https://zapier.com/learn/forms-surveys/design-analyze-survey/#howmany> [Accessed February 2019]

²¹ <https://www.surveygizmo.com/resources/blog/survey-response-rates/> [Accessed February 2019]

3.4.4 Reliability

The information collected from the quantitative part- the survey is a primary source, based on Internet survey that includes an IP link and contact data placed at the end of the survey. The questionnaire could be filled in only once from the same computer. As the survey had no open character and was directed only to selected participants it avoided random replies and answers from participants that did not meet the demanded research criteria.

3.5 Qualitative Research – Semi-structured interviews

The sample of interviewed designers was selected from the previous respondents set, according to their CV evaluation and included in it companies' recognition, taking in consideration more forward-looking and less advanced companies.

The chosen sample was, as in case of the survey, a convenience one and it resulted in 12 respondents that finalized the dialog and who wanted to participate in this section of the study. Here it would be significant to notice, there might be some limitations in results according to a not that numerous and not segmented sample, however, the researcher in this case had to be close to the respondents to get the answers in such choice of method, thus such selection of participants seems reasonable.

Although most of the participants of the interviews are Polish, what came as a natural occurrence due to the above mentioned reasoning of the sample, their knowledge on the industry and CSR application in cross-national context shall be valid due to the fact most of them have in their CV work experience for globally functioning enterprises. The participants' answers collected from the interviews regard international schemes in CSR introduction and general, not geographically or culturally limited textile industry perceptions because these companies design for global markets, produce their goods based on outsourcing and sale in many countries. Some of these companies also have their offices spread all over the world, where the designers work or used to work.

As the demographics of this sample was not previously intentionally described, neither the sample was segmented. In order to confirm reliability of their answers this sample dialogs

were divided into 3 smaller parts, according to a recommended check method by aforementioned Christopher Peters. The comparison of the interviews' separate group results came not varying from each other much, thus confirming the results to be valuable for the study.

The interviews took place by Skype or as phone calls, both being recoded. They were directed to clarify and to better understand the meaning of quantitative results and to evaluate:

- More and better latent opportunities to move into formal and informal adoption of CSR in the organization;
- More detailed approach on the potential conflict in incorporating more developed CSR thinking in the design process.

4. Field Work, Data Analysis, Report Results

The survey was conducted between 1st April 2017 and 2nd May 2017. The replies were collected from 100 professionally active designers from 24 countries. The data was automatically summed up in bars, charts and tables. The respondents could validate their answers through 1-5 scale (to achieve hard answers) and 1-10 scale (to collect soft ones) or percentage marking, which later on was additionally grouped into three scales of importance. Each part of the survey is presented both visually and in numbers. The data is later additionally cross- analysed and commented by the author.

| Characterisation of Survey Respondents | | |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| Indicator | Characteristic / scale | Number of respondents |
| Age | 20 - 24 | 5 |
| | 25 - 29 | 25 |
| | 30- 34 | 24 |
| | 35 - 39 | 18 |
| | 40- 44 | 8 |
| | 45 - 49 | 6 |
| | 50 -54 | 4 |
| | 55 -60 | 1 |
| | 60-70 | 3 |
| Education | PhD | 3 |
| | Master | 57 |
| | Bachelor | 35 |
| | other | 4 |
| Place of work | small size local companies and small brands of ownership structure | 34 |
| | local middle size company | 13 |
| | global retailer | 33 |
| | freelance service for different types of companies | 17 |
| Time of work experience | under 5 years | 33 |
| | 6-10 years | 38 |
| | above 10 years | 24 |
| Present job position | fashion designer | 97 |
| | artistic director | 21 |
| | manager | 27 |
| | fashion designer's assistant | 1 |
| | architect | 1 |

The Visual Look of the Survey

Survey for Fashion Designers

The Doctorate Research Survey

Dear Respondent, thank you so much for your participation in this survey. Your answers will be very helpful in research in fashion design area. Here are some useful clues before you start to give your replies.

1. This survey is not an evaluation of your professional competences. Please, do not get confused if some of the terms/questions are unclear for you.
2. Please, be so kind to fill in the whole survey at once, without back corrections.
3. Thank you for honest answers, not following the supposed survey's expectations or aspirational thinking.
4. Please, be so kind as not to check the data in internet. If it is possible, please, answer according to you actual knowledge and feelings. Only based on that, I shall collect true, valuable market information.

Thank you!

Magdalena Płonka

1. In your perspective, where did you get your CSR knowledge from? Mark the importance (1-5 scale):

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Media | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The school I graduated from | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other designers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Company I work for | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| External workshops | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Family | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (please specify)

2. In your perspective, to what issues did the knowledge/ education relate to? Mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Environment | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Human rights | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Animal rights | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

3. In your perspective, did the education you got at school on CSR prepare you for designing in this area?

- It gave me a general knowledge
- It did not prepare me for CSR implementation
- It influenced my private beliefs
- It gave me a detailed and profound knowledge

4. From your perspective, did it give you knowledge on different CSR actors? Mark the importance in the school program(1-5 scale)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Consumers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Designers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Art Directors | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Fashion Buyers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Marketing Managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Company's owners | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Producers/ Subcontractors | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Sales Managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| None of the above | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

5. In your perspective, what CSR's components are important for the consumers? Mark the importance (1-10 scale)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ecological values | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Human rights values | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Animal welfare | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

6. According to your opinion, what are the reasons for buying clothes related to CSR? Mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Social positioning | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Following the group trends | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Polishing self-perception | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because they are well informed about the product | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because they believe in brand's ethical values | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

7. According to your opinion, what are the reasons for customers for not buying goods related to CSR? Mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| They prefer to borrow clothes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The CSR clothes are too expensive | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| They are not informed about the product | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| They do not trust in brand's ethical concerns | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The CSR related clothes are not stylish | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

8. In your opinion who are the most involved consumers into CSR? Mark their share in the group.

| | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Male | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Female | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Youngsters | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Middle aged | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Oldest | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Coming from high income countries | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Coming from middle income countries | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Coming from emergent countries | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| With elementary education | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| With secondary education | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| With higher education | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

9. In your perspective, to what extent has the fashion industry been taking in account consumers' role in CSR implementation?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

10. According to your perspective, mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| In general CSR has been used as a marketing tool | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ethical marketing has been used as a link between manufacturers and users | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Relation between marketing and CSR is a win-win solution | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| There is no correlation between marketing in social values application | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| There is no effectiveness in CSR communication through marketing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Marketing is the wrong tool to implement CSR | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

11. In your opinion, in general, mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| CSR is mainly as companies' reputation leverage | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| CSR is part of co-production of values by the companies | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| CSR is a tactical labelling instrument | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| CSR is mostly an upper management or an executive task | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| CSR implementation is a management individual choice | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Companies follow consumers' behaviour and predisposition towards CSR | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

12. To what extent your job responsibilities are really contributing to CSR implementation, mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Studying trends | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| First sketches | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Analysing competition collections | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Contributing to collections' themes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Briefs from company's managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Briefs from marketing managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Briefs from sales representatives | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Briefs from art directros | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Briefs producers/ subcontractors | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Briefs from company's owners | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Selecting textiles | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Selecting accessories | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Selecting suppliers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Selecting technologies | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

13. In your present job and / or company, to what extent the following jobs (or equivalent) are really contributing to CSR implementation, mark the importance (1-5 scale)

- Art Directors
- Marketing Managers
- Sales Managers
- Producers/ Subcontractors
- Designers
- Fashion Buyers
- Company's Owners

Other (please specify)

14. In your perspective, to what extent the consumers' role shall be taken in CSR implementation by the company, mark the importance (scale 1 – 10)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

15. In your perspective, to what extent the designer's role shall be reinforced in CSR implementation? Mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Designing products or services that encourage consumers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Remodelling corporate culture | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Embracing differences in culture and in values from several parts of the world | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Influencing company's social values | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Running the dialog between different team members | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Creating the bond between the company and the customers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

16. In your opinion, designers are becoming more aware and reflective on their role in CSR dissemination and implementation, mark the scale (1-10)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

17. Please, be so kind to fill in the respondent's profile. Age:

18. Education

- Bachelor
- Master
- PhD
- Other

Please, place the name of the school here.

19. Time in the apparel fashion industry:

20. Present position in the organisation (job name and job description, time in the present position)

21. Description of the organization you work for:

- Global fashion company
- Local Fashion Company
- My own company/ brand/ atelier
- I work as a freelancer for many companies

22. Please, be so kind to paste your full name your contact data here (email). The below shall also mean that you agree to use information collected from your answers (apart from your name, contact data or name of the company you work for) in my scientific research. Thank you.

4.1 First Part- Survey Dedicated to CSR as a Perceived Object

Due to the fact that the thesis is discussing the definition of CSR, its potential, common, international application and the role in moral responsibility within the designers' profession, the first part of the survey intended to explore the fashion designers' knowledge on theoretical issues related to CSR. Its intention was to compare the scientific model with the inventors' academic and theoretical preparation for potential CSR implementation plus their understanding of ethical practice within garment industry.

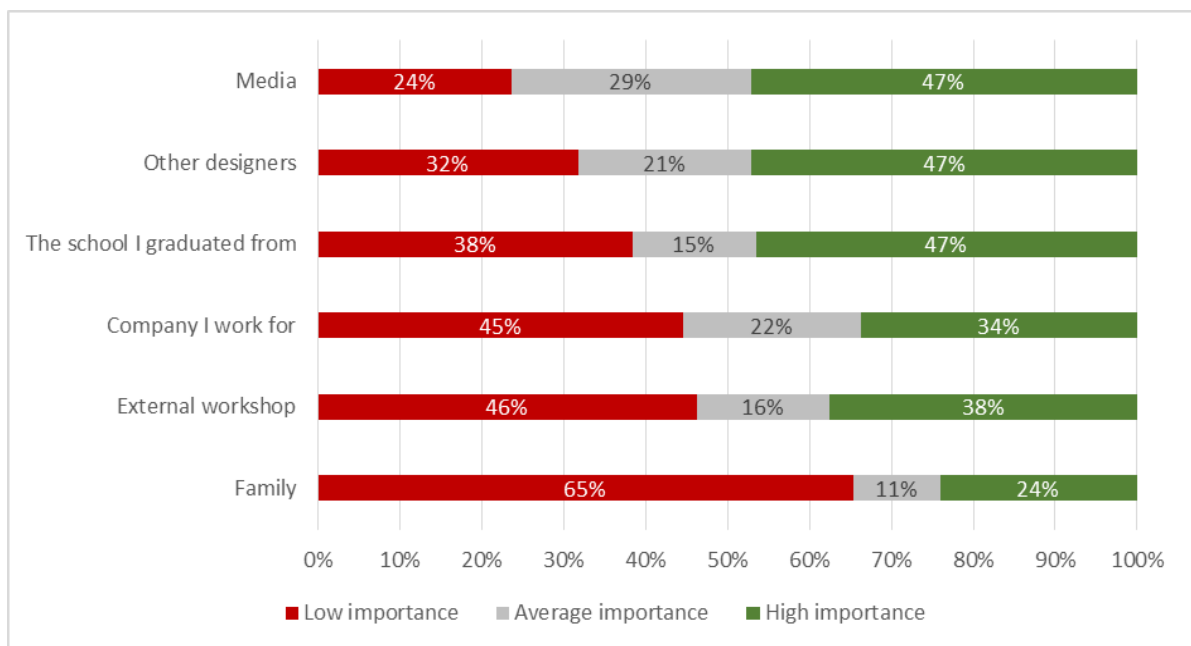


Chart 1: Q1. In your perspective, where did you get your CSR knowledge from? Mark the importance (1-5 scale); N=100; (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 1: Q1. In your perspective, where did you get your CSR knowledge from?
Mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | total | weighted average |
|-----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------------------|
| Media | 8 | 13 | 26 | 25 | 17 | 89 | 3,34 |
| Other designers | 9 | 18 | 18 | 30 | 10 | 85 | 3,16 |
| The school I graduated from | 17 | 16 | 13 | 22 | 18 | 86 | 3,09 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Other | 16 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 43 | 3,07 |
| Company I work for | 20 | 17 | 18 | 15 | 13 | 83 | 2,81 |
| External workshops | 25 | 12 | 13 | 18 | 12 | 80 | 2,75 |
| Family | 32 | 17 | 8 | 12 | 6 | 75 | 2,24 |

According to the replies of the professionals, the most important sources of knowledge are media, other designers and school – nearly half of the respondents marked them as 4 or 5 on the importance scale. The company the designers work for and external workshops have been marked as highly important by more than 1/3 of respondents whereas nearly half of the respondents had the opposite opinion about those sources. The source of knowledge with the least percentage of highly important answers (circa 24%) was family. Also there was an option to add different sources of knowledge and around 40% of respondents decided to do that. Other foundations were detailed in additional commentaries including: travels, private research and observations, personal ethics, friends and society. Such result could be read that the designers do base their CSR knowledge on private life area, where self-motivation is the platform for satisfying their CSR hunger. It seems that the importance of each source of knowledge is mostly based on individual experiences of each respondent and there are no solid institutional foundations of CSR training.

Concluding, the CSR data the creators receive is chaotically derived from various, mostly disconnected sources. As it could be understood from replies to this inquiry, there is no grounded, commonly acclaimed base of designers' CSR education. The choices made by them designers are not very distant from each other and the ratings of different CSR information origins present slight alterations among the participants' views. Surprisingly, the schools and the companies, which from some theoretical assumption shall be the first source of CSR information for fashion designers, were placed in the middle of the rating. The media, as an important contributor to our everyday life, are majorly grounded in the study results, being given by the designers the primacy on sculpturing the inventors' acquaintance of ethical conduct. Due to the fact, that the designers express in the survey their need for more knowledge by searching for valid data in their own way, it could only confirm the conjecture, that the knowledge they are given by the mostly signed sources as the media, other designers and the schools, is still insufficient. Moreover, as it was noticed

earlier, the creators base their CSR involvement on their private attitude and life area likewise. Personal relations with other people seem to be also an influential factor shaping moral standards within work and private field of the fashion designers, as they appoint other professionals and relatives additionally to be one of the CSR cradles.

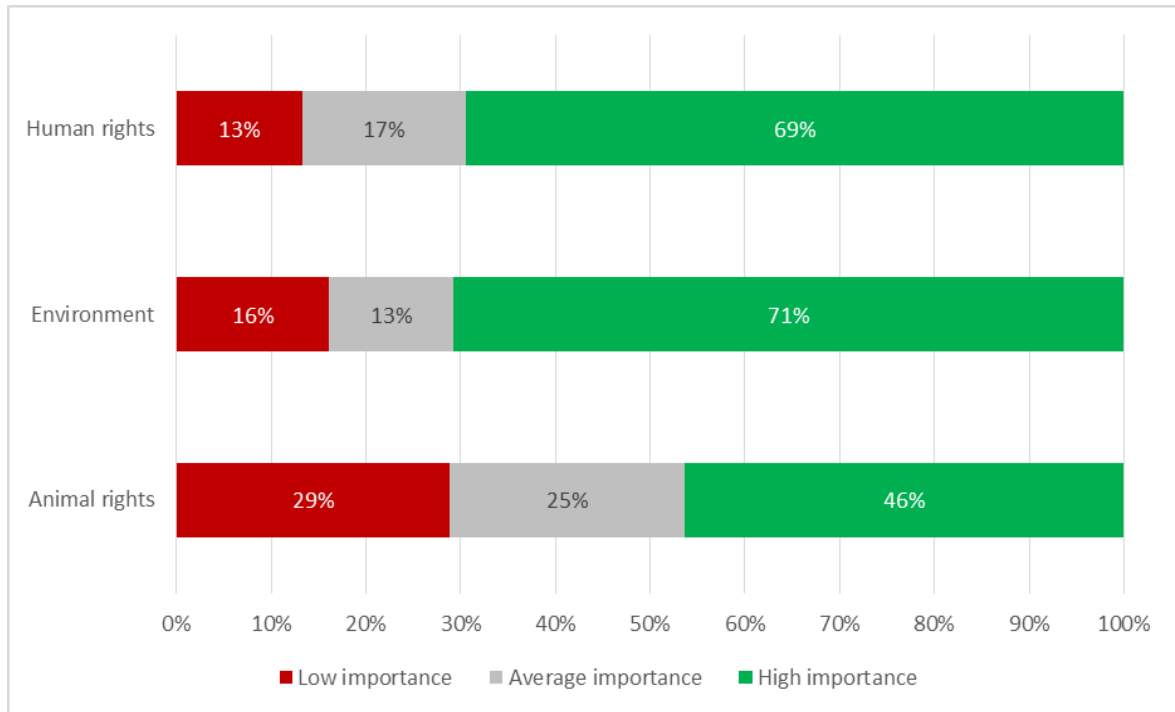


Chart 2: Q2. In your perspective, to what issues did the knowledge/ education relate to? Mark the importance (1-5 scale); N=100 (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 2: Q2. In your perspective, to what issues did the knowledge/ education relate to? Mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | total | weighted average |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------------------|
| Human rights | 5 | 8 | 17 | 17 | 51 | 98 | 4,03 |
| Environment | 9 | 7 | 13 | 22 | 48 | 99 | 3,94 |
| Animal rights | 11 | 17 | 24 | 16 | 29 | 97 | 3,36 |
| Other | 10 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 11 | 42 | 3,05 |

The outcome that was given to this question indicates a hierarchy of issues applied at schools the respondents graduated from, with human rights and environment marked similarly as highly important by about 70% of respondents and animal rights marked as highly important by 46% of respondents and 25% average importance outcome. It appears that there is a disproportion within what CSR education is related to.

Generalizing, it presents people and the ecosystem as the major subjects of ethical discourse in design schools, nevertheless the other living creatures are not left unnoticed, as they were placed in the survey’s responses not that far behind human rights and ecological values. It is important to mark, that there were additional topics signed by the surveyed as “other”, what shall be deepened in separate, individual interviews with selected designers.

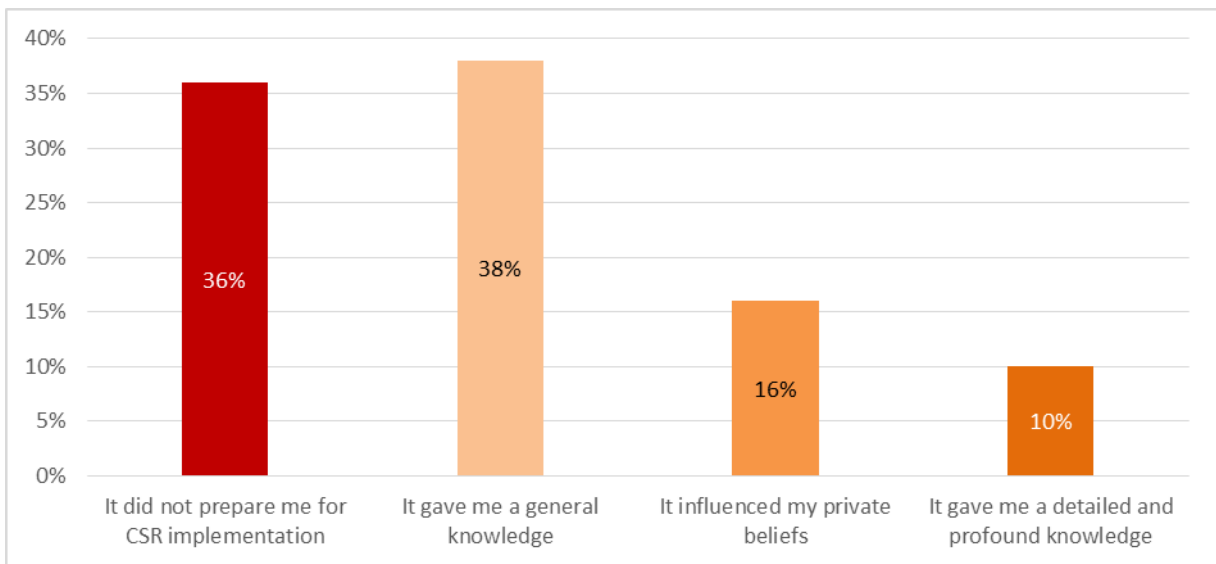


Chart 3: Q3. In your perspective, did the education you got at school on CSR prepare you for designing in this area?; N=100

Table 3: Q3. In your perspective, did the education you got at school on CSR prepare you for designing in this area?

| Answer choices | Responses |
|--|-----------|
| It gave me a general knowledge | 38 |
| It did not prepare me for CSR implementation | 36 |

| | |
|--|----|
| It influenced my private beliefs | 16 |
| It gave me a detailed and profound knowledge | 10 |

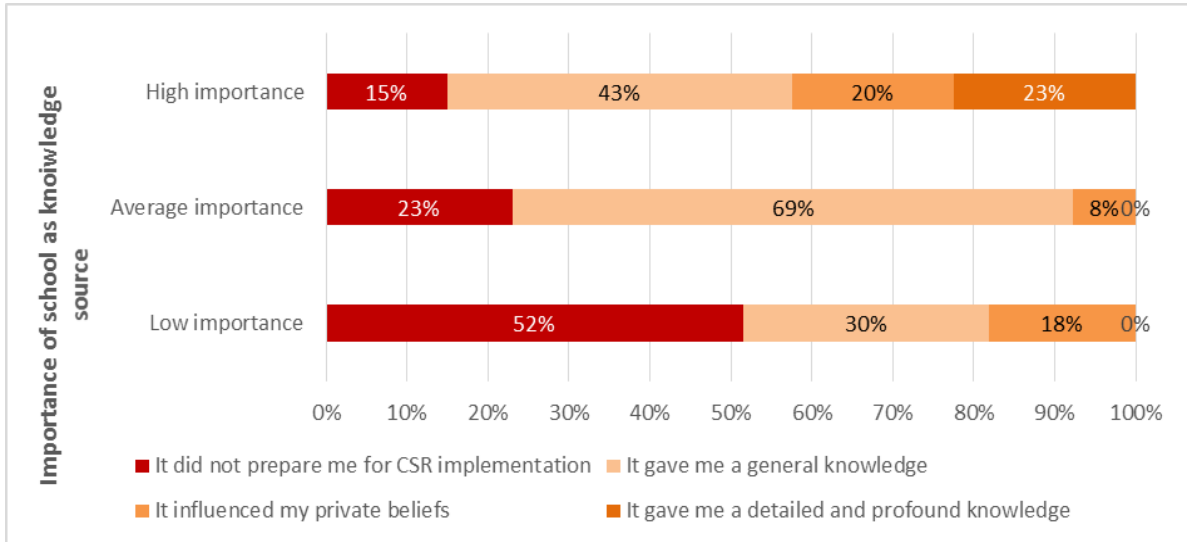


Chart 3.1: Importance of school as a knowledge source and the perception of CSR knowledge?; N=100

The estimation of the level of ethical education in design schools by their graduates seems to be one of the clearest in the whole survey. The judgments do not paint a positive picture of the academic system regarding preparation for CSR implementation. The professionals in majority replied that the school gave them general knowledge on CSR (38%) but it did not prepare them to CSR introduction in the business (36%). Only 10% marked that the school they finished gave them profound knowledge on that topic and 16% admitted the academic education on ethics influenced their private believes.

Assuming that from the designers' perspective, it is obvious, that there is a lot to be done in the area of CSR education on academic level. Designers' school education gives mostly general knowledge and rarely influences private believes or rarely stretches detailed and profound knowledge. While comparing these answers to the level of importance of school as knowledge source (Chart 4) it is clear that the more important role is given by the respondents to the school as a CSR source of knowledge, the more detailed knowledge they perceive it is.

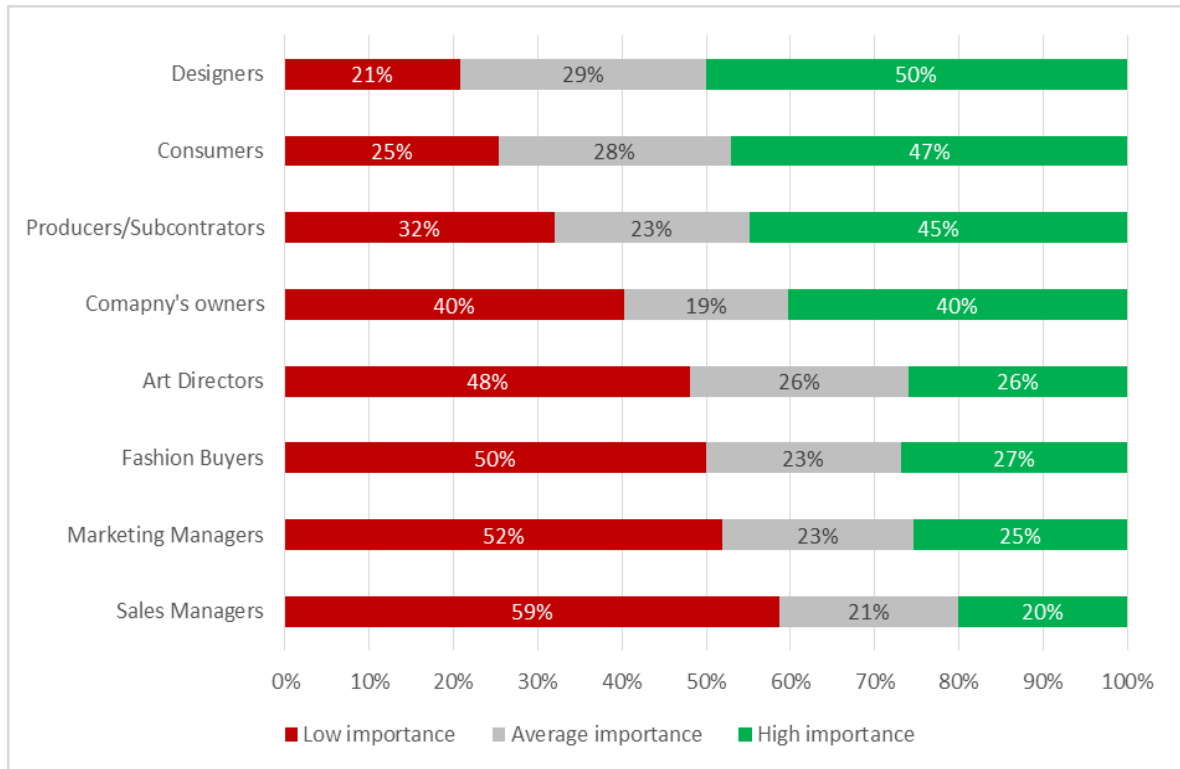


Chart 4: Q4. From your perspective, did it give you knowledge on different CSR actors? Mark the importance in the school program (1-5 scale); N=96 (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 4: Q4. From your perspective, did it give you knowledge on different CSR actors? Mark the importance in the school program (1-5 scale)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | total | weighted average |
|---------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------------------|
| Designers | 7 | 10 | 24 | 25 | 16 | 82 | 3,40 |
| Consumers | 10 | 11 | 23 | 21 | 18 | 83 | 3,31 |
| Producers/ Subcontractors | 13 | 12 | 18 | 21 | 14 | 78 | 3,14 |
| Company's Owners | 21 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 11 | 77 | 2,87 |
| Art Directors | 18 | 19 | 20 | 12 | 8 | 77 | 2,65 |
| Fashion Buyers | 19 | 20 | 18 | 11 | 10 | 78 | 2,65 |
| Marketing Managers | 23 | 18 | 18 | 14 | 6 | 79 | 2,52 |
| Sales Managers | 28 | 16 | 16 | 8 | 7 | 75 | 2,33 |
| None of the above | 23 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 34 | 1,76 |

The designers clearly declared their occupation placement among other CSR actors in the school program they were thought as to be the highest one. Half of the professionals

marked their job as highly important in the lectures they were given on ethics in fashion. Almost on the very same place they crowned the customers (47%) to be mostly studied in the CSR related academic education next to the designers. The producers and subcontractors are also appointed on high position in the knowledge, that is applied on CSR in design schools with outcome of 45%. Company owners were marked as highly important by 40% of respondents but nearly the same amount of respondents marked their position as 1 or 2 on the scale. There is an interesting notice concerning the rest of CSR actors, as fashion buyers, marketing managers, art directors and sales managers were appointed much below, with under 30% of highly important answers and usually over 50% of low importance answers.

Summarizing, the results indicate that the circle of CSR or CSR related education does not exceed three main players as designers, customers and manufacturers, neglecting the other actors in the school program. The company management, excluding the owners is obviously underestimated in the creators' academic preparation for CSR practice.

4.2 Second Part- Survey Dedicated to Designers' Perception on the Customers

The second part's goal was to measure the designers' perception on the customers, who in the current scientific literature are presented as significant, if not key actors of the Corporate Social Responsibility. The view on the consumers with the creators' eyes is neglected in the existing publications, thus in the context of this work such data was anticipated for the purpose of this research. The below questions were also supposed to check whether the designers understand the green consumers' needs, if they catch the market conditioning of responsibly produced garments and whether they have the right feeling of CSR sensitive shoppers' profile.

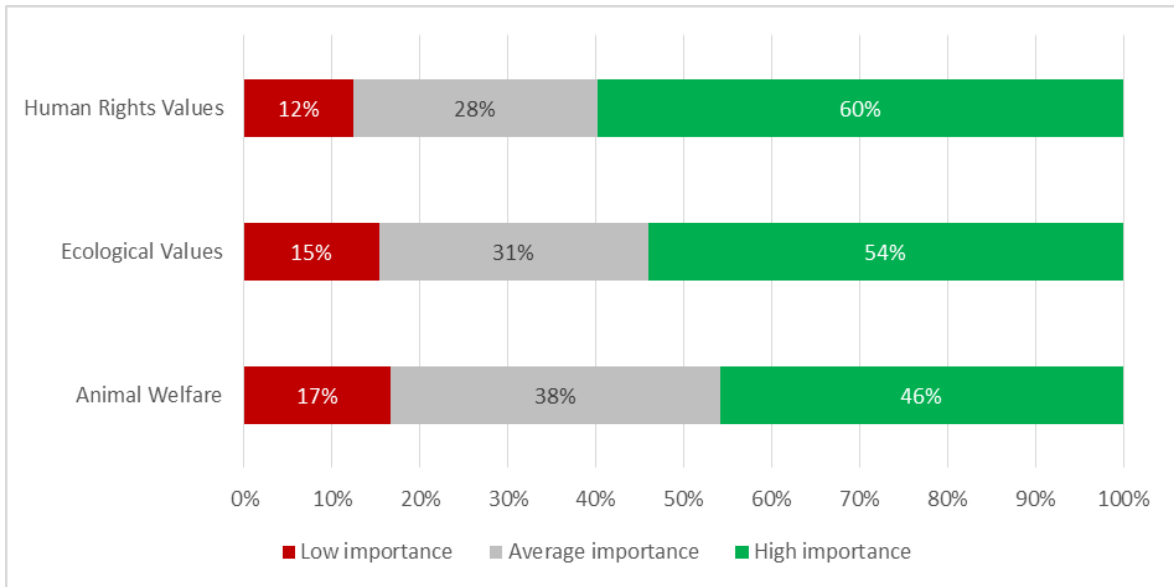


Chart 5: Q5. In your perspective, what CSR's components are important for the consumers? Mark the importance (1-10 scale); N=99 (1-4 Low importance, 5-7 Average importance, 8-10 High importance)

Table 5: Q5. In your perspective, what CSR's components are important for the consumers? Mark the importance (1-10 scale)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | total | weighted average |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------------------|
| Human rights values | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 19 | 15 | 24 | 97 | 7,43 |
| Ecological values | 6 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 14 | 21 | 6 | 26 | 98 | 7,20 |
| Animal welfare | 1 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 14 | 11 | 11 | 13 | 10 | 21 | 96 | 6,96 |

As the literature review favours the consumers in scientific studies, accordingly the question regarding these players had to emerge in the survey. The designers, when asked about the consumers' perception on CSR main operation fields, appointed once again the human rights values 60% as prior to nature conservancy 54% and animal wellbeing with score of 46%. It would be meaningful already to notice, that the results to this part of the survey strictly relate to the replies of question Q2, where the inventors declared likewise answering to the CSR topics in their academic program.

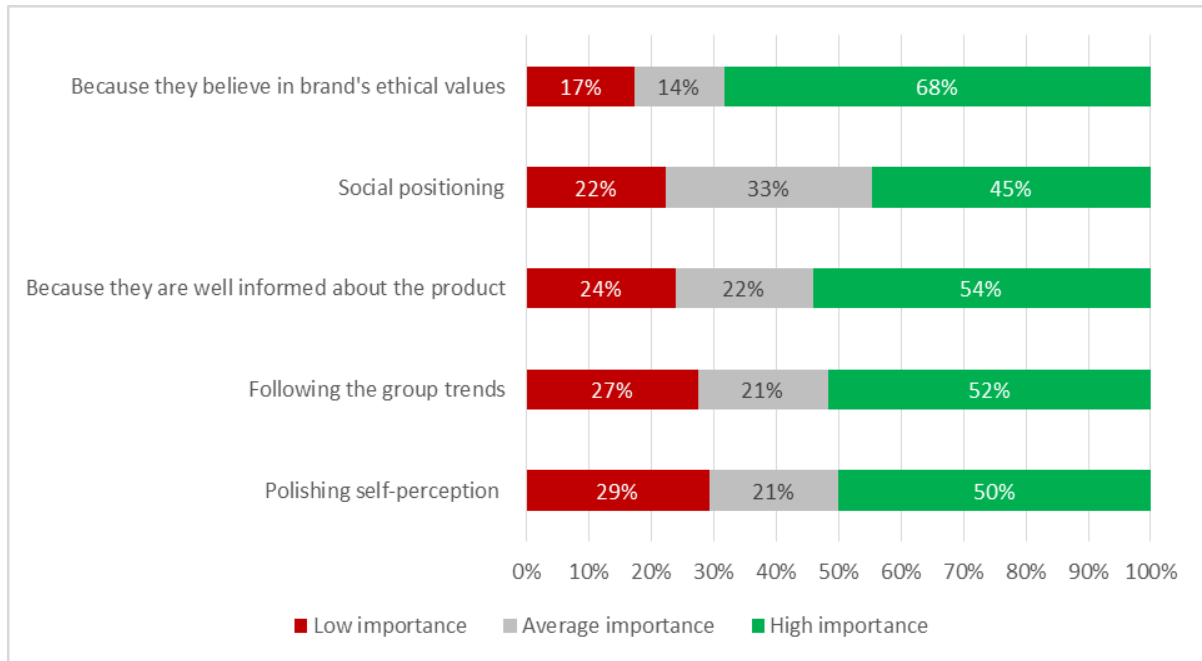


Chart 6: Q6. According to your opinion, what are the reasons for buying clothes related to CSR? Mark the importance (1-5 scale); N=100 (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 6: Q6. According to your opinion, what are the reasons for buying clothes related to CSR? Mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | total | weighted average |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------------------|
| Because they believe in brand's ethical values | 6 | 11 | 14 | 26 | 41 | 98 | 3,87 |
| Because they are well informed about the product | 8 | 15 | 21 | 24 | 28 | 96 | 3,51 |
| Social positioning | 8 | 13 | 31 | 14 | 28 | 94 | 3,44 |
| Following the group trends | 10 | 15 | 19 | 27 | 20 | 91 | 3,35 |
| Polishing self-perception | 13 | 14 | 19 | 24 | 22 | 92 | 3,30 |

The above results express certain and strong designers' believe on the clients' incentives to support responsible fashion, that is mainly trust in the brand's moral intentions. However, equal dispersion of evaluating the others, apart from confidence in the moral corporate standards purposes for the customers to purchase CSR related clothes among other motives enlisted in the survey leaves space to suppose, that from the designers' point of view all the factors listed for selection contribute similarly to customers' interest in ethical garments shopping.

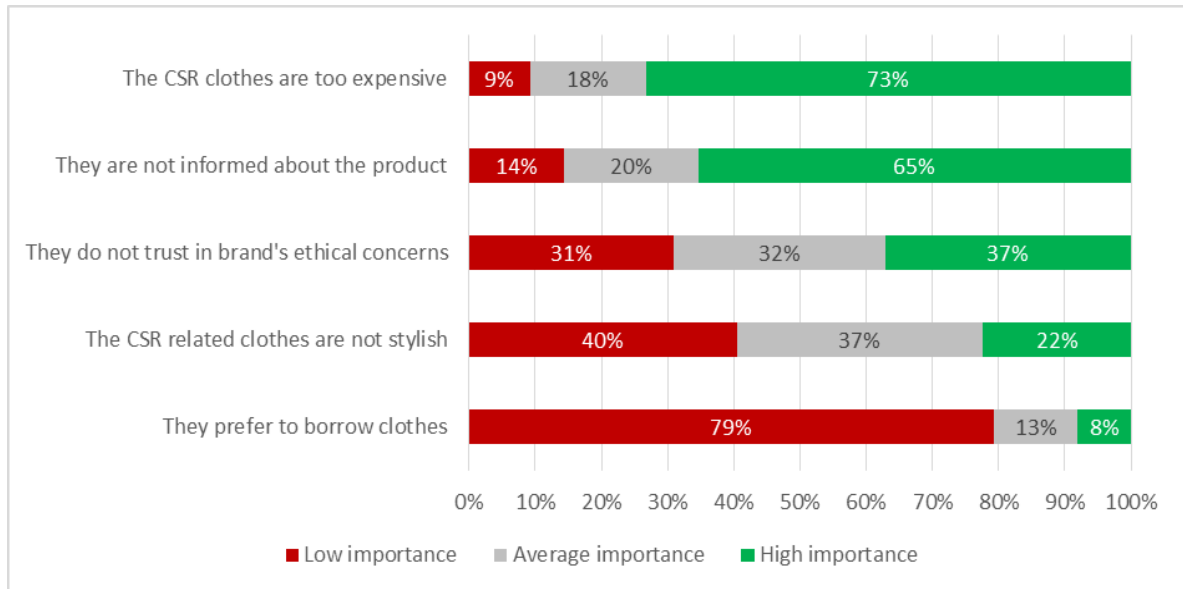


Chart 7: Q7. According to your opinion, what are the reasons for customers for not buying goods related to CSR? Mark the importance (1-5 scale); N=100 (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 7: Q7. According to your opinion, what are the reasons for customers for not buying goods related to CSR? Mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | total | weighted average |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------------------|
| The CSR clothes are too expensive | 5 | 4 | 17 | 36 | 35 | 97 | 3,95 |
| They are not informed about the product | 3 | 11 | 20 | 28 | 36 | 98 | 3,85 |
| They do not trust in brand's ethical concerns | 9 | 21 | 31 | 22 | 14 | 97 | 3,11 |
| The CSR related clothes are not stylish | 21 | 17 | 35 | 11 | 10 | 94 | 2,70 |
| They prefer to borrow clothes | 56 | 13 | 11 | 2 | 5 | 87 | 1,70 |

This question regards the literature review issues that touch upon the reasons for abandonment of ethical purchase. 73% of the surveyed designers marked the high price as the main obstacle to reach for ethical fashion. The problem of not being informed about the product, which matches to previous answers to Q6 and confirms them, was indicated as a second reason for not buying responsibly produced clothes (65%). The trust was signed to be a significant factor in purchase choice for 37% in the minds of the surveyed. The style

seems to be not that important to the customers from the creators' perspective – only 22% of respondents marked this reason as highly important. The habit of borrowing clothes was given the lowest rating among the motives for not buying ethical garments with only 8% of respondents marking this reason as highly important.

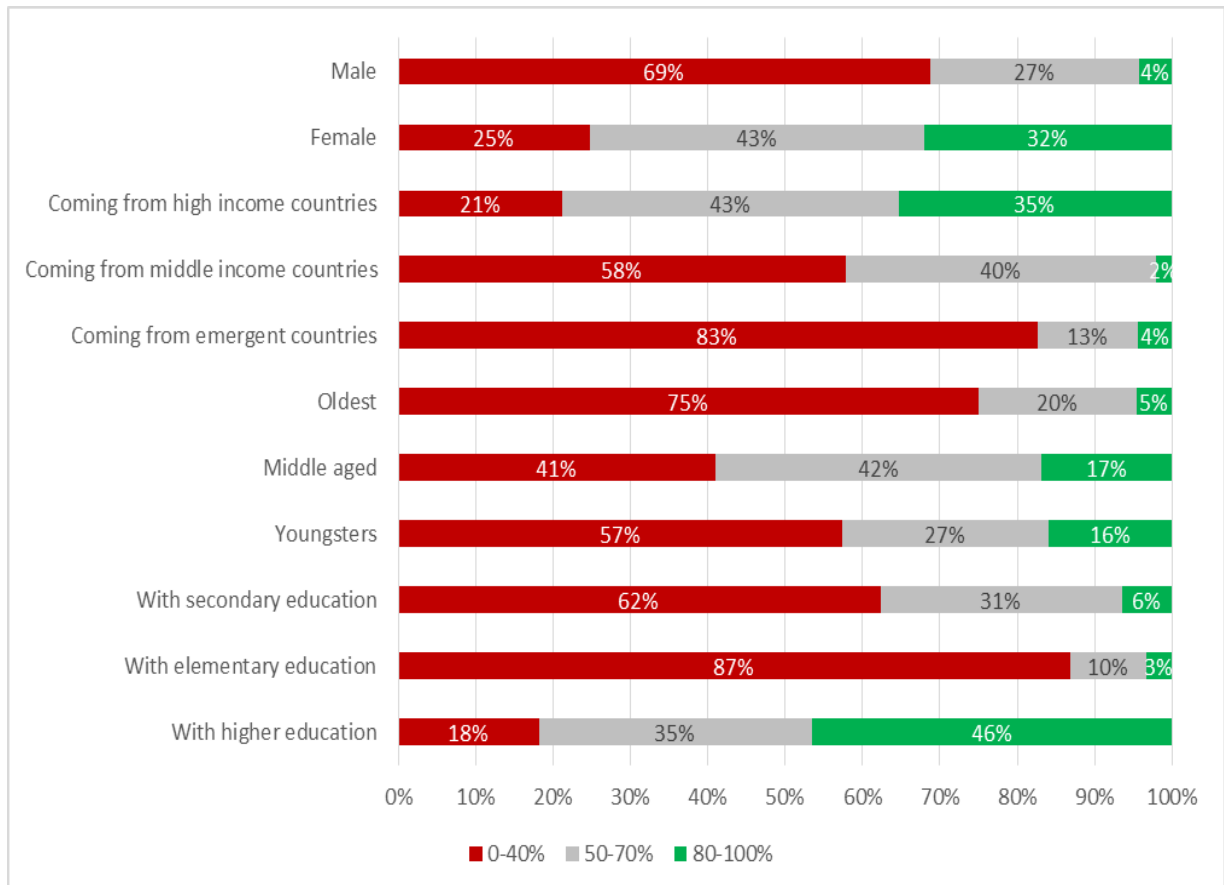


Chart 8: Q8. In your opinion who are the most involved consumers into CSR?

Mark their share in the group.; N=99

Table 8: Q8. In your opinion who are the most involved consumers into CSR? Mark their share in the group.

| Answer choice | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% | Total |
|---------------------------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| With higher education | 0 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 20 | 23 | 12 | 11 | 99 |
| With secondary education | 6 | 12 | 16 | 10 | 14 | 18 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 93 |
| With elementary education | 22 | 28 | 16 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 91 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|
| Youngsters | 5 | 11 | 16 | 16 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 94 |
| Middle aged | 0 | 7 | 5 | 16 | 11 | 13 | 18 | 9 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 95 |
| Oldest | 9 | 17 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 88 |
| Coming from emergent countries | 18 | 27 | 16 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 92 |
| Coming from middle income countries | 4 | 11 | 6 | 17 | 17 | 21 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 95 |
| Coming from high income countries | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 12 | 13 | 18 | 19 | 10 | 6 | 99 |
| Male | 4 | 13 | 17 | 19 | 11 | 18 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 93 |
| Female | 1 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 17 | 9 | 16 | 14 | 9 | 8 | 97 |

According to the respondents, consumers involved into CSR are most likely to be female, have higher education and come from high income countries. Also it could be considered that in the designers' perspective more young and middle-aged people are involved into CSR. The last appreciated subjects of this question were related to males, coming from emerging countries and having elementary education and probably being the oldest customers.

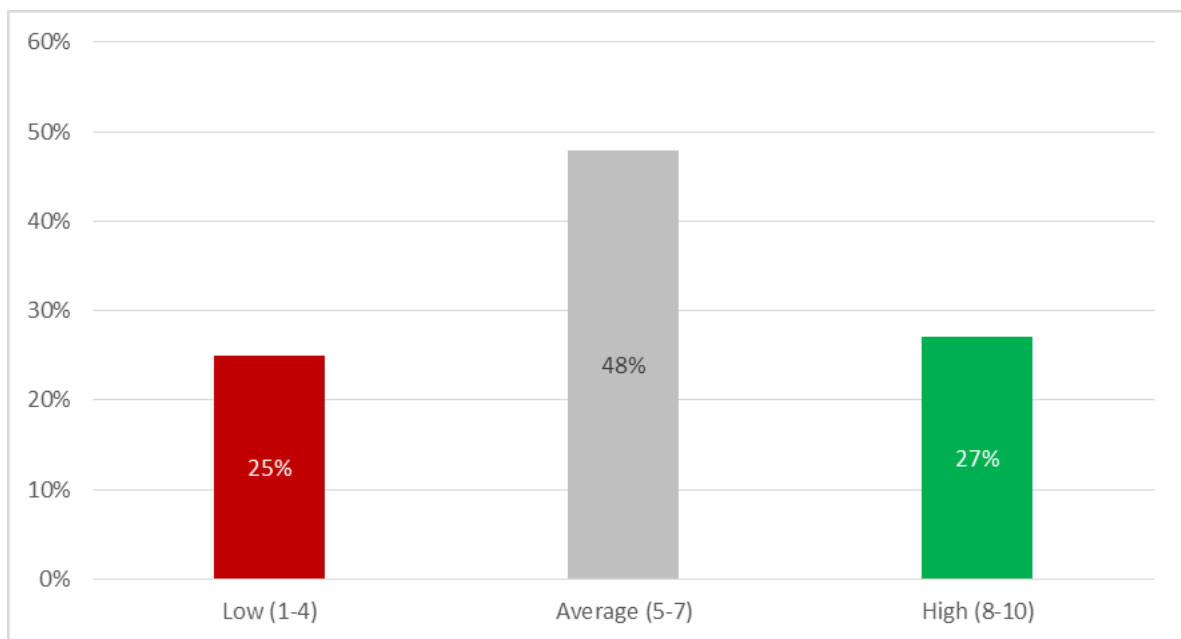


Chart 9: Q9. In your perspective, to what extent has the fashion industry been taking into account consumers' role in CSR implementation?; Mark their share in the group.; N=96

Table 9: Q9. In your perspective, to what extent has the fashion industry been taking into account consumers' role in CSR implementation?

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|----------------|---|---|----|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| Responses | 3 | 6 | 15 | 18 | 9 | 19 | 18 | 6 | 2 |

There are mixed opinions about fashion industry taking into account consumers' role in CSR implementation. Nearly the same percentage of respondents (around 25%) marked that taking into account shoppers' role is rather low or rather high. Almost 50% of respondents chose answers in the middle of the scale. This might show that although the fashion market already takes under consideration these actors, while injecting moral principles in the business, there is still a room for improvement in taking in account consumers' role in CSR implementation.

4.3 Third Part and Fourth Part- Survey on the Designers' CSR Perception in Context of Marketing and Company Operation

The third and fourth parts are supposed to analyse the designers' opinion on Corporate Social Responsibility in the context of marketing and the companies' ethical operation due to the fact these topics are widely studied in this thesis. The below part is dedicated to measure the creator's attitude and knowledge in comparison to literature review conclusions that pay significant attention to ethical issues performed by the organizations and advertising departments.

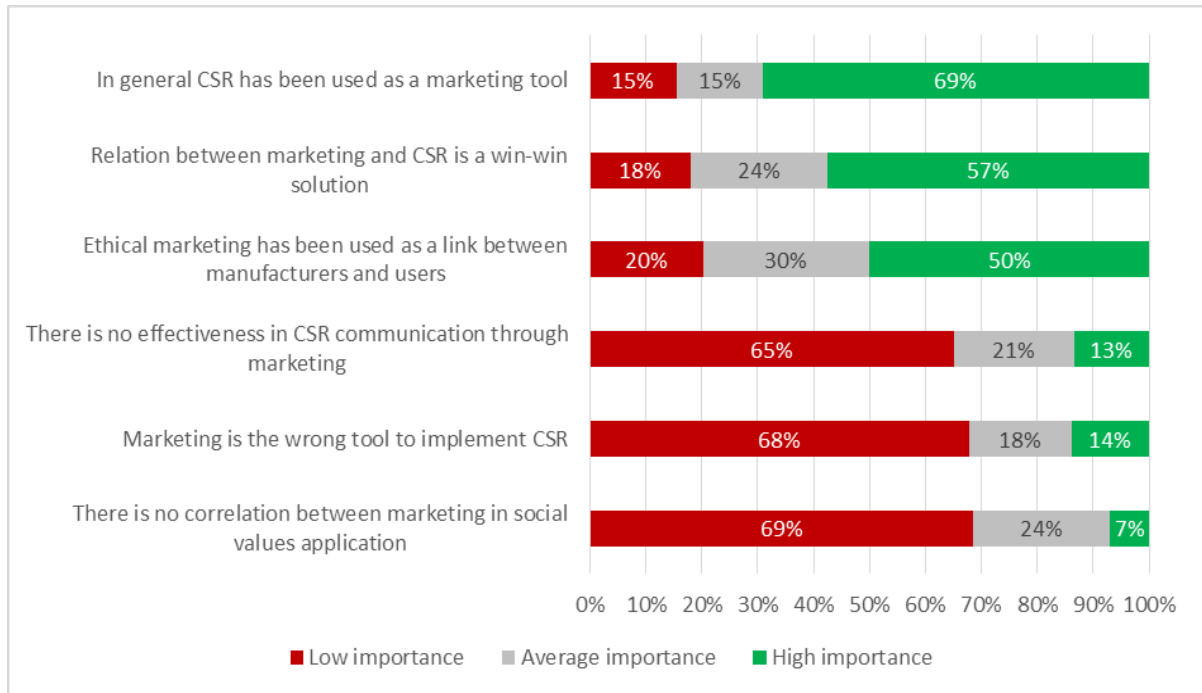


Chart 10: Q10. According to your perspective, mark the importance (1-5 scale); N=99 (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 10: Q10. According to your perspective, mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | total | weighted average |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------------------|
| In general CSR has been used as a marketing tool | 5 | 10 | 15 | 36 | 31 | 97 | 3,80 |
| Relation between marketing and CSR is a win-win solution | 5 | 12 | 23 | 36 | 18 | 94 | 3,53 |
| Ethical marketing has been used as a link between manufacturers and users | 8 | 11 | 28 | 32 | 15 | 94 | 3,37 |
| There is no effectiveness in CSR communication through marketing | 35 | 23 | 19 | 9 | 3 | 89 | 2,12 |
| Marketing is the wrong tool to implement CSR | 43 | 16 | 16 | 5 | 7 | 87 | 2,05 |
| There is no correlation between marketing in social values application | 38 | 21 | 21 | 4 | 2 | 86 | 1,97 |

As the literature review studied the CSR phenomenon in context of its application through marketing, the designers had also the possibility to express their opinions on that issue in

the survey. As it emerged from their replies they perceive CSR mainly as a marketing tool (69%). What is more, they see it rather in positive light due to high marking of a reply stating that this makes a win-win solution for such joint venture (57%) where the creators additionally estimated marketing as a link between manufacturers and users (50%). Critical opinions were expressed with a much lower outcome; only 13% of respondents marked as highly important that marketing is not an effective tool of CSR communication and 14% answered that marketing is a wrong CSR tool. Scarily 7% claimed there is no correlation between marketing and social values application.

The above expresses a certain state of perception in which the designers classify marketing as sanctioned and generally used for CSR introduction. They comprehend such marriage potentially successful and giving a chance to create a dialog platform among the producers and the buyers.

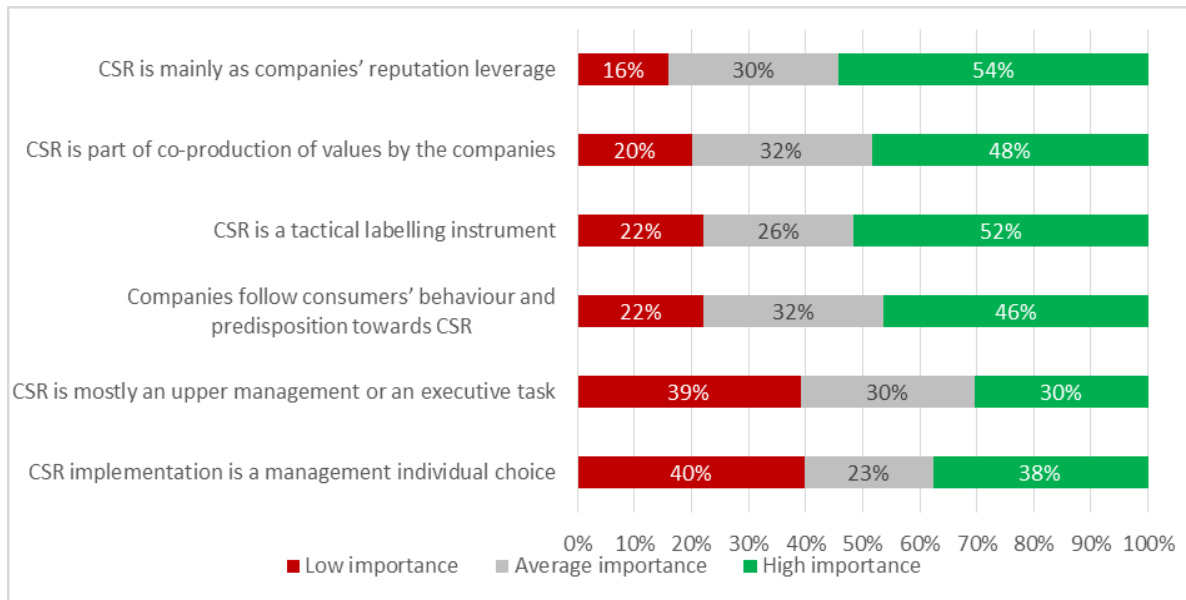


Chart 11: Q11. According to your perspective, mark the importance (1-5 scale); N=99 (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 11: Q11. According to your perspective, mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | total | weighted average |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------------------|
| CSR is mainly as companies' reputation leverage | 5 | 10 | 28 | 34 | 17 | 94 | 3,51 |
| CSR is part of co-production of values by the companies | 6 | 13 | 30 | 31 | 15 | 95 | 3,38 |
| CSR is a tactical labelling instrument | 8 | 13 | 25 | 34 | 15 | 95 | 3,37 |
| Companies follow consumers' behaviour and predisposition towards CSR | 6 | 15 | 30 | 29 | 15 | 95 | 3,34 |
| CSR implementation is a management individual choice | 17 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 14 | 93 | 2,95 |
| CSR is mostly an upper management or an executive task | 16 | 20 | 28 | 20 | 8 | 92 | 2,83 |

When asked about the role of the company in CSR performance the designers' replies appear to be pretty equal and without special polarization between the multiple-choice answers in the survey. 54% of creators understand CSR as companies' leverage. They also see CSR as a tactical labelling instrument (52%) and as a way to co-produce values by the firms (48%). In the inventors' judgment whether the companies follow the consumers' behaviour and predisposition towards CSR the respondents gave also a high position with 46%. Interestingly, the designers consider that CSR is mostly a matter of individual choice of the managers (30%) and a task that belongs to the upper or executive management (38%).

An analysis of the above creates a picture that the designers see CSR as a phenomenon that could be used as a way to support ethical values produced by the company and at the same time to let it benefit from CSR by improving its image and strengthening its label, where top company's managers are indicated by the designers as meaningful contractors of such decisions.

4.4 The Fifth Part- Survey on the Designers' job duties in context of CSR

The fifth part plays a meaning role in investigating the designers' self-awareness on their position in CSR implementation according to their professional qualifications, job duties and integration with other companies' workers within occupational tasks in ethical context. According to some literature review findings of this document the below questions and answers were supposed to extend the creators' position in the company and investigate their possibilities and limits in ethical conduct in the organization.

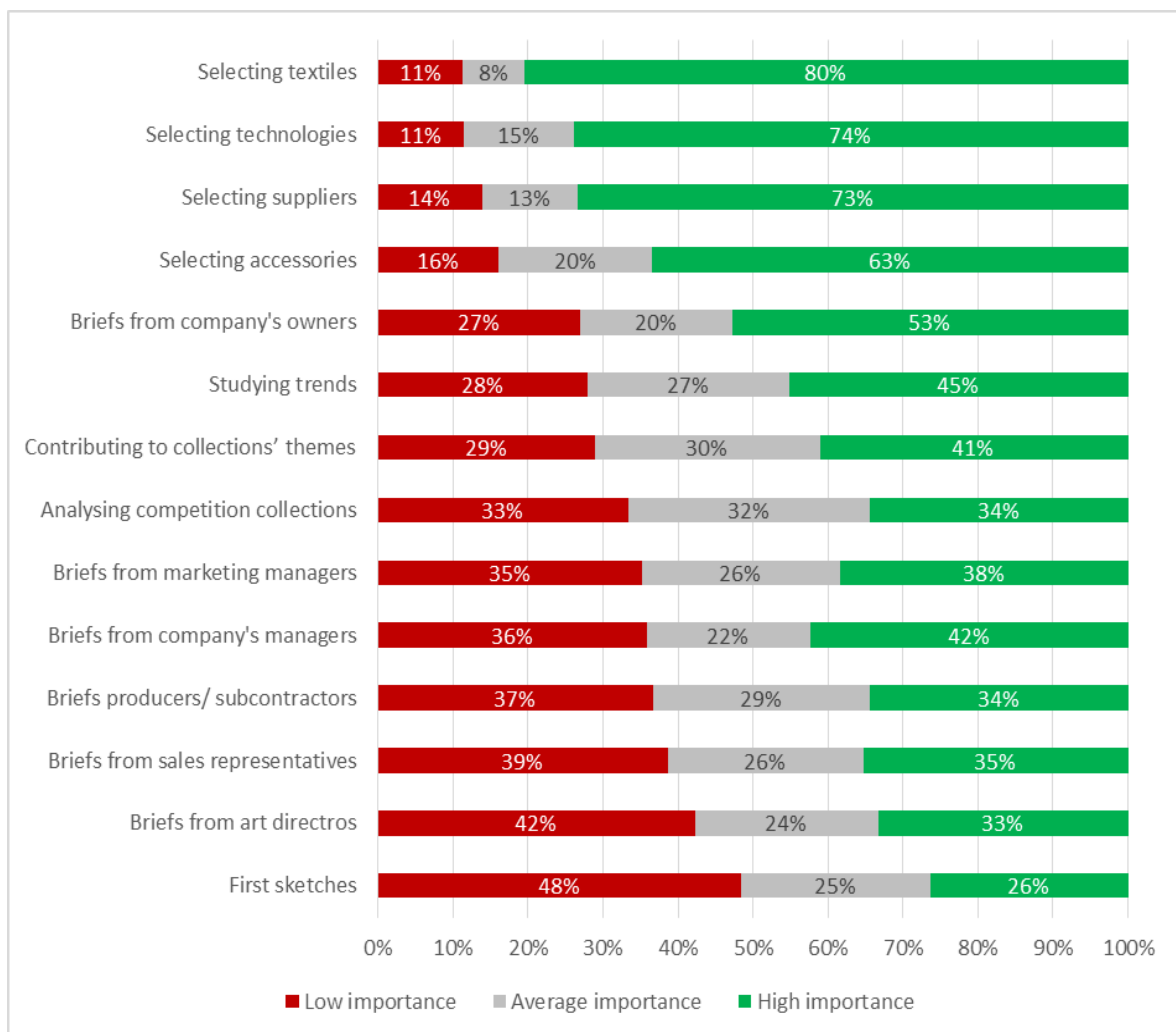


Chart 12: Q12. To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation, mark the importance (1-5 scale) ; N=99 (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 12: Q12. To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation, mark the importance (1-5 scale)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | total | weighted average |
|-------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------------------|
| Selecting textiles | 7 | 4 | 8 | 26 | 52 | 97 | 4,15 |
| Selecting technologies | 6 | 5 | 14 | 22 | 49 | 96 | 4,07 |
| Selecting suppliers | 6 | 7 | 12 | 22 | 47 | 94 | 4,03 |
| Selecting accessories | 10 | 5 | 19 | 26 | 33 | 93 | 3,72 |
| Briefs from company's owners | 17 | 7 | 18 | 24 | 23 | 89 | 3,33 |
| Studying trends | 15 | 11 | 25 | 24 | 18 | 93 | 3,20 |
| Briefs from company's managers | 13 | 20 | 20 | 22 | 17 | 92 | 3,11 |
| Contributing to collections' themes | 12 | 14 | 27 | 26 | 11 | 90 | 3,11 |
| Briefs from marketing managers | 19 | 13 | 24 | 20 | 15 | 91 | 2,99 |
| Analysing competition collections | 14 | 16 | 29 | 22 | 9 | 90 | 2,96 |
| Briefs producers/ subcontractors | 19 | 14 | 26 | 18 | 13 | 90 | 2,91 |
| Briefs from art directors | 20 | 18 | 22 | 17 | 13 | 90 | 2,83 |
| Briefs from sales representatives | 22 | 12 | 23 | 21 | 10 | 88 | 2,83 |
| First sketches | 31 | 13 | 23 | 10 | 14 | 91 | 2,59 |
| Other | 10 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 23 | 2,43 |

Referring to the main topic of the thesis which is about mapping the designer's role in apparel industry, asking the creators to evaluate their position in CSR application seemed to be one of the most significant inquiries. According to the inventors' professional duties at work, as it results from their answers, the designers perceive their contribution to ethical conduct more in the context of practical issues related to technological solutions, like selection of textiles (80%), selecting technologies (74%), choosing suppliers (73%) or picking up accessories (63%). The company as supporter of the designers CSR practice gained a pretty high position as the creators admitted these are the companies owners' briefs to influence their CSR performance (53%) and the companies managers' instructions to support their ethical outcome (42%). Studying trends is perceived as highly important by 45% of respondents. Supporting CSR through contributing to collection themes was marked as highly important by 41% of questioned designers, behind which there were placed briefs from marketing managers with 38% highly important marks and analysing competition collections with 34% percentage of highly important marks. Briefs from other

team members and stakeholders were validated with much lower importance than the previously mentioned factors that influence designers' CSR implementation. Briefs from producers/ subcontractors gained only 34%, guidelines from art directors were given 33% and 35% marked clues from sales representatives as highly important. Interestingly, first sketching of the design does not seem to have a bigger significance for CSR practice in the hands of the designers, as the creators gave to this matter only 26% of highly important marks.

Concluding, the designers seem to perceive their CSR performance more in terms of technological solutions, like selection of textiles, accessories, technologies and suppliers. Within the company they see their CSR practice feed backed slightly by being directed in ethical conduct through other team members, including rather only the organizations' executives as the firm owners and its managers, which acknowledges similar commentaries given to previous questions of this survey. Surprisingly, gaining current market data from studying the trends or analysing the rivals' collections was not distinguished by the designers as the first occupational duties that would support CSR policy, although these choices were located in the middle of the replies to this part of the survey. The most interesting outcome of the answers to this inquiry was enlisting first sketches almost on the final position among other replies regarding CSR introduction in the hands of the designers.

However, the most noticeable conclusion to this part of the questionnaire is the fact, that there is a visible break in the chart in importance given to the replies regarding significance given to the company's management section in general. The breach begins with company owners, although they still do possess a pretty high position among the replies, and visibly increases with next controlling positions as company managers, marketing managers, producers, subcontractors, art directors or sales representatives.

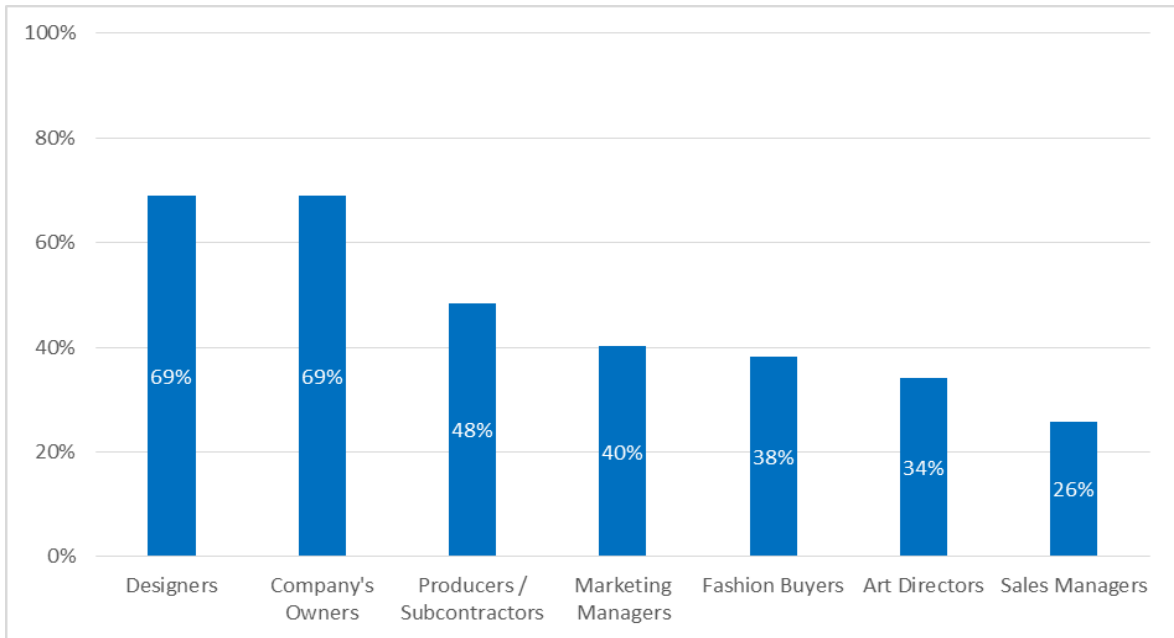


Chart 13: Q13. In your present job and / or company, to what extent are the following jobs (or equivalent) really contributing to CSR implementation?; N=97

Table 13: Q13. In your present job and / or company, to what extent are the following jobs (or equivalent) really contributing to CSR implementation?

| Answer choices | Responses |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Designers | 67 |
| Company's Owners | 67 |
| Producers/ Subcontractors | 47 |
| Marketing Managers | 39 |
| Fashion Buyers | 37 |
| Art Directors | 33 |
| Sales Managers | 25 |

Introducing the designers among other stakeholders of the process of CSR implementation was a core question of the survey, as creators' perception of other team members' roles in ethical conduct gave a thought-provoking light on the discourse. The designers, answering to this inquiry placed themselves on the same position in CSR implementation with the company owners, nominating both actors with equality of 69% of signings. Following them, there were the subcontractors and producers as next most influencing the CSR conduct (48%) and after them the marketing managers (40%). The fashion buyers gained

far less 38% of markings, art directors 34% and sales managers received only 26% of respondents' notifications. Once again the management, apart from the company's owners is underestimated from the creators' perspective.

To sum up the findings of this part, there emerge slight, but curious variations, when we look at the replies given to the previous questions of the survey. Answers to question Q12 put a bit more importance to the marketing managers' briefs than the producers' ones and were situated in the middle of the replies' hierarchy. Here in Q13, the designers located the producers and subcontractors pretty high, and this time the marketing managers were validated behind them. Curiously, in question Q12 ranking, briefs from marketing managers had a slightly higher position than the ones from producers what could indicate the earlier suggested technical solutions in CSR application, as the very important ones.

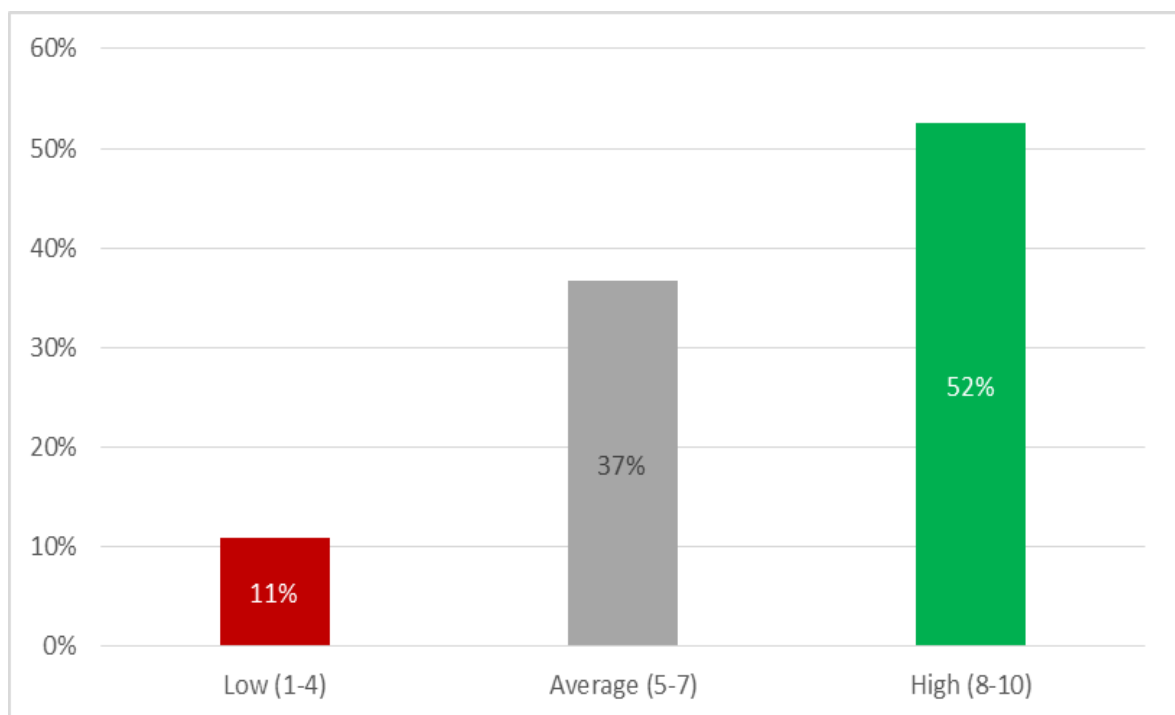


Chart 14: Q14. In your perspective, to what extent shall the consumers' role be taken in CSR implementation by the company, mark the importance (scale 1 – 10); N=98

Table 14: Q14. In your perspective, to what extent shall the consumers' role be taken in CSR implementation by the company, mark the importance (scale 1 – 10)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| Responses | 1 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 18 | 29 | 5 | 19 |

The perception of consumers in the designers' minds was once again checked, this time filtering it through the company's lenses. When the inventors were asked how far the organization shall take into account the clients' role in CSR practice, the shoppers were given a high importance mark between 8-10 by 52% of the designers, value of importance between 5-7 were given by 37% of respondents and the lowest values were given only by 11%. Finalizing, the above presents a state in which the designers express their positive attitude to strong involvement of the consumers in the process of moral standards implementation and their affirmation for the buyers as significant stakeholders of CSR performance.

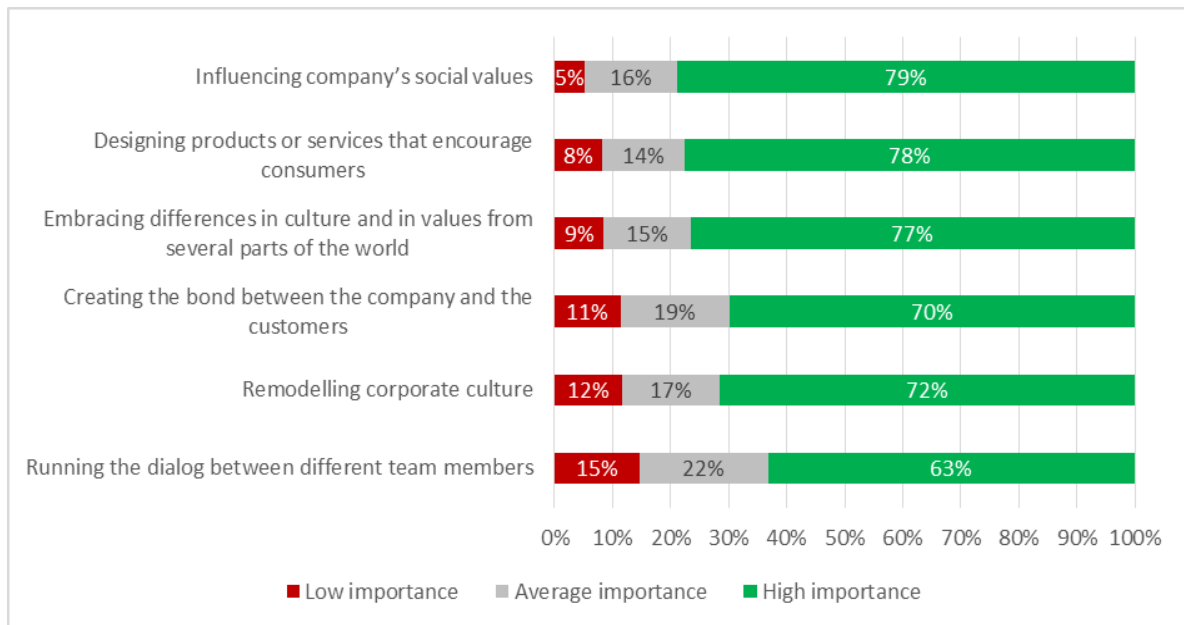


Chart 15: Q15. In your perspective, to what extent shall the designer's role be reinforced in CSR implementation? Mark the importance (1-5 scale); N=99 (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 15: Q15. In your perspective, to what extent shall the designer's role be reinforced in CSR implementation? Mark the importance (1-5 scale);

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | total | weighted average |
|--|---|---|----|----|----|-------|------------------|
| Influencing company's social values | 2 | 3 | 15 | 32 | 43 | 95 | 4,17 |
| Designing products or services that encourage consumers | 6 | 2 | 14 | 35 | 41 | 98 | 4,05 |
| Embracing differences in culture and in values from several parts of the world | 4 | 4 | 14 | 36 | 36 | 94 | 4,02 |
| Remodelling corporate culture | 4 | 7 | 16 | 32 | 36 | 95 | 3,94 |
| Creating the bond between the company and the customers | 3 | 8 | 18 | 32 | 35 | 96 | 3,92 |
| Running the dialog between different team members | 5 | 9 | 21 | 33 | 27 | 95 | 3,72 |

Once again the survey comes back to evaluation of the designers' position in the company by themselves, asking them, how their status shall be reinforced in CSR implementation. Definitely the designers declare that their point in influencing the company's values shall be improved – 79% of respondents marked this as highly important. Empowering designing products or services that encourage consumers got 78% of highly important answers and embracing differences in culture and in values from several parts of the world by 77% of respondents. The designers once again highlighted their connection with the consumers and emphasized their role in CSR implementation based on their linking with the clients worldwide, as it occurs, no matter of national alterations according to the responses. The survey's replies also express the designers' wish to be given more freedom on remodelling corporate culture (72%) and once again creating the bond between the company and the customers (70%). Finally, as the last one but still with about 63% of highly important the creators marked running the dialog with different team members. First of all, it is unclear whether the lowest rating of this matter, saying that the designers' position in CSR implementation shall be strengthened, comes from the fact that the designers perceive their authority as already strong enough or maybe they underestimate their role in moderating the dialog between different company workers involved in ethical conduct. Perhaps they just do not believe that such activity might meaningfully contribute

to CSR success. The above doubts create space for supplementary demands for individual interviews with the fashion designers.

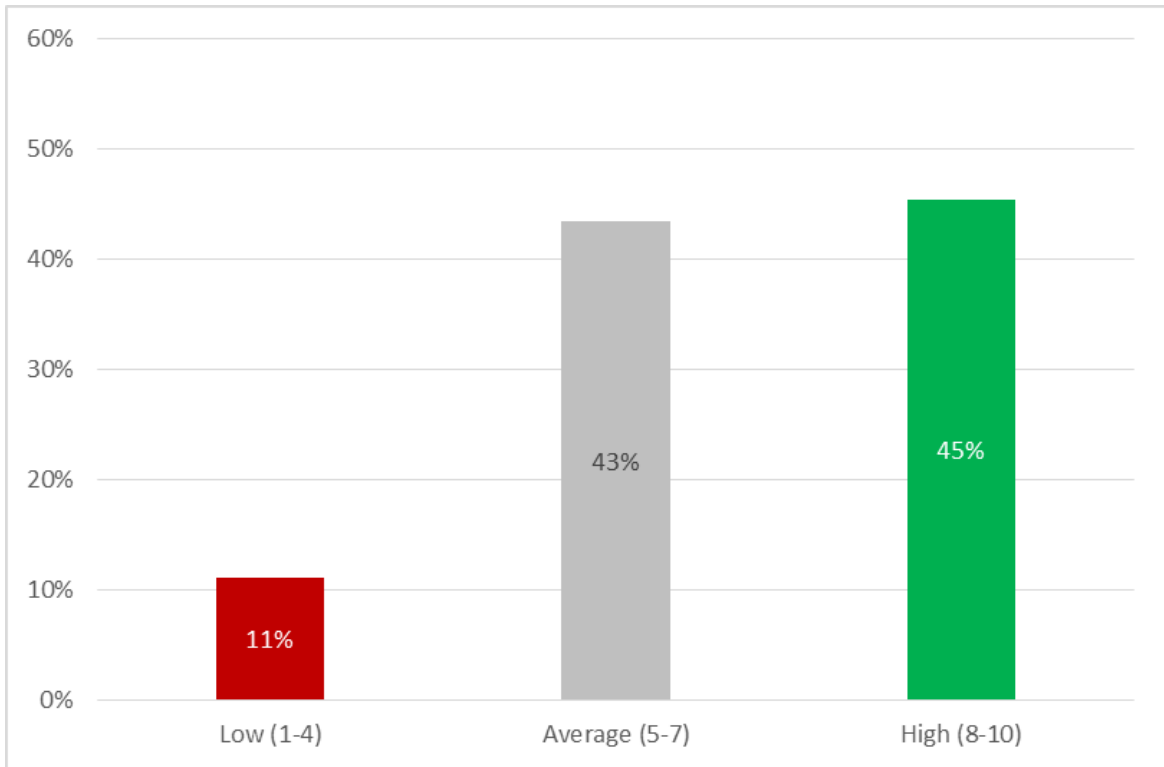


Chart 16: Q16. In your opinion, are designers becoming more aware and reflective on their role in CSR dissemination and implementation, mark the scale (1-10); N=99

Table16: Q16. In your opinion, are designers becoming more aware and reflective on their role in CSR dissemination and implementation, mark the scale (1-10)

| Answer choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Responses | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 13 | 10 | 20 | 22 | 12 | 11 |

The designers estimate themselves quite well in the context of their awareness of their role in CSR implementation. Answers with rating of value between 8 and 10 points in 1-10 points scale were given by 45% of respondents and evaluation between 5 and 7 points was expressed by 43% of the surveyed. The lowest grades were marked by 11% of the questioned designers. It is curious, as in the previous queries the creators expressed their need for enforcing their role almost in all mentioned positions and also, in the first replies

of the survey, they declared lack of academic education and accordingly lack of sufficient knowledge on CSR.

4.5 The Sixth Part- The Respondents Demographics and Work Place

The last part of the survey checks the respondents' data that grounds this study and brings information on the designers' education, the organization they work for in terms of its local or international operation and the inventors' age plus work time in apparel industry. Such description and discrepancy of the survey participants is dedicated to eventual differences of CSR implementation in case of SME or big retailers. Likewise the work experience related to time spent in apparel industry could indicate changes in the business recently. The last issues are given in separate, open commentaries what shall be revealed in the analysis of this chapter.

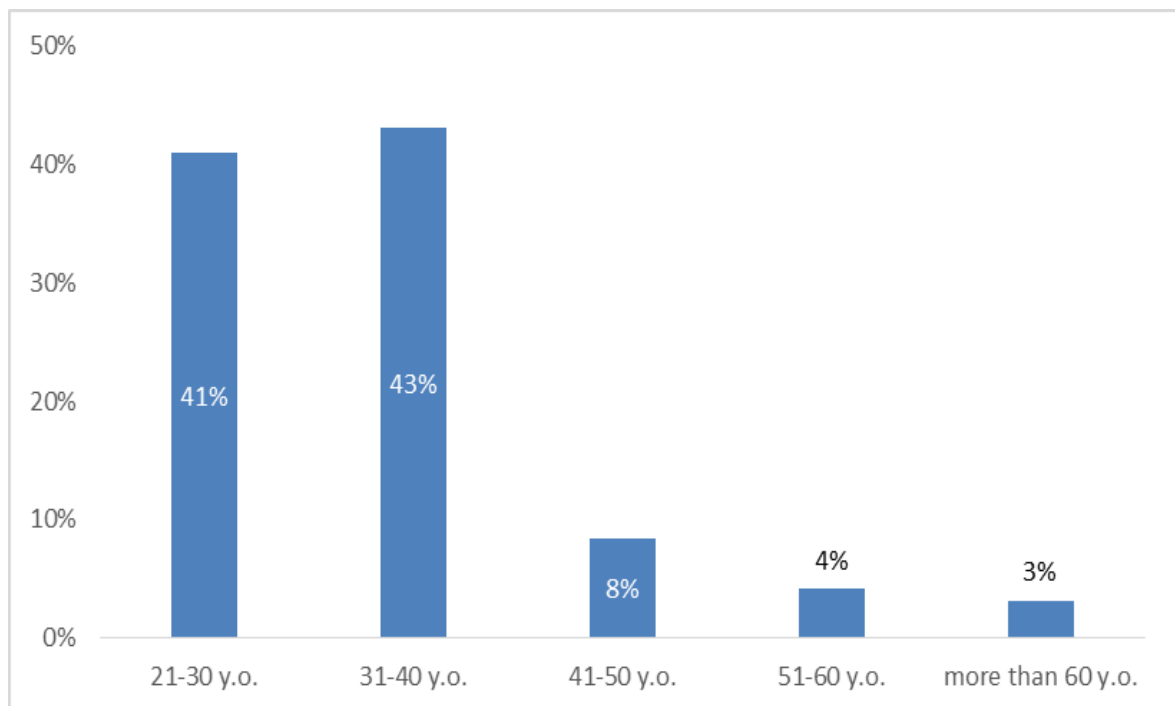


Chart 17: Respondents' age; N=95

Table 17: Respondents' age

| Age | Number of respondents |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 21-30 y.o. | 39 |
| 31-40 y.o. | 41 |
| 41-50 y.o. | 8 |
| 51-60 y.o. | 4 |
| More than 60 y.o. | 3 |

The demographics of the participants were checked due to their age and employment time, which reflects on their fashion design performance and clothing business knowledge. The respondents' average age was 37, where the youngest participant declared being 22 years old and the most mature 65 years old.

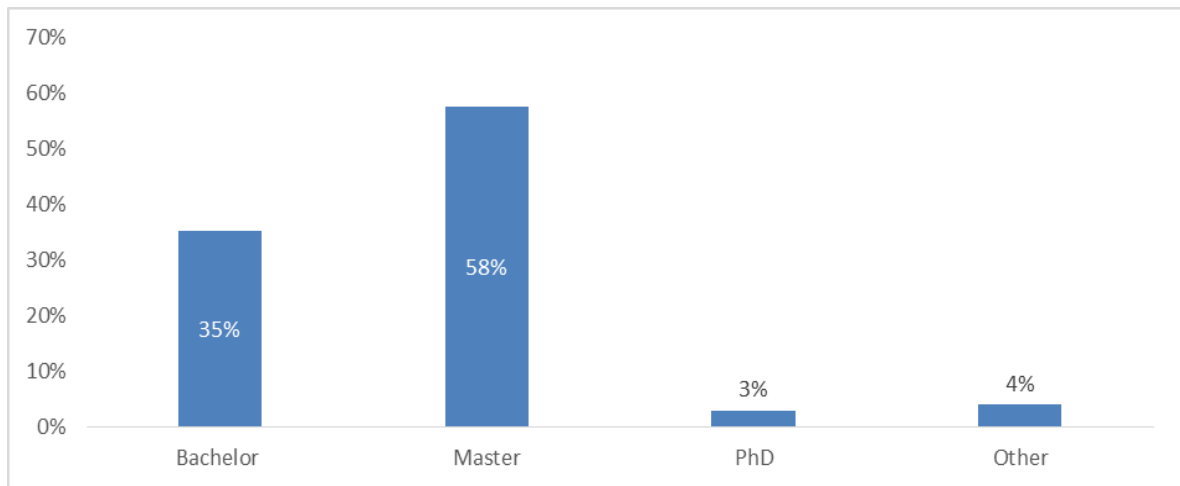


Chart 18: Respondents' education; N=99

Table 18: Respondents' education

| Choices | Responses |
|----------|-----------|
| Bachelor | 35 |
| Master | 57 |
| PhD | 3 |
| Other | 4 |

The respondents' education level in case of the master degree was mostly obtained from artistic schools, which gave a result of more than 57% of participants' replies. Above 35% of designers confirmed bachelor's degree and 3% possess doctorate scientific title. 4% of the replies had other type of educational level. Among the enlisted educational institutions that the surveyed declared, the departments from USA, Great Britain and Italy (based on the respondents' CV analysis) catalogued most often. The rest of the schools did not exceed 6 answers per one academic item.

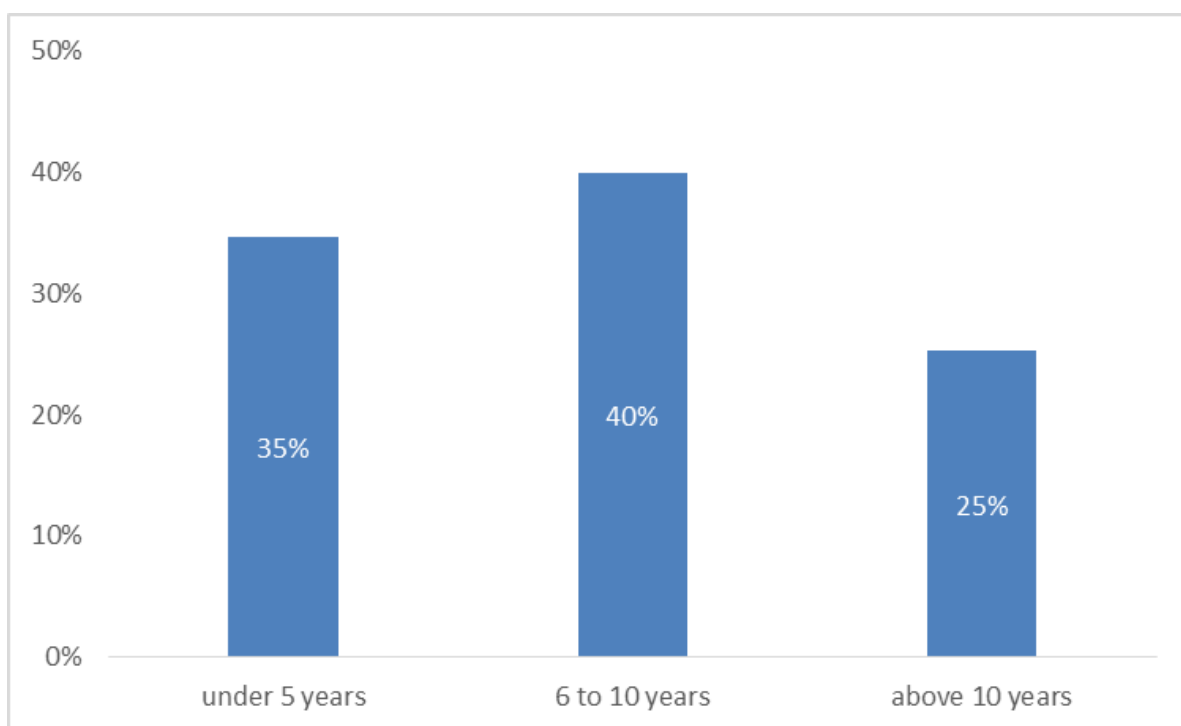


Chart 19: Respondents' work experience; N=95

Table 19: Respondents' work experience

| Work experience | Number of respondents |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Under 5 years | 33 |
| 6 to 10 years | 38 |
| Above 10 years | 24 |

Regarding the respondents' time of work in apparel industry, the studied clothes designers' answers gave an average of 9 years of work experience. The least practiced creator was

this year's beginner and the oldest veteran stated to have operated for over 40 years of time in the garment area.

The above demographics reflect well the selection of the designers invited to the questionnaire, as a representative group of qualified designers, whose answers shall be reliable and valid for this research.

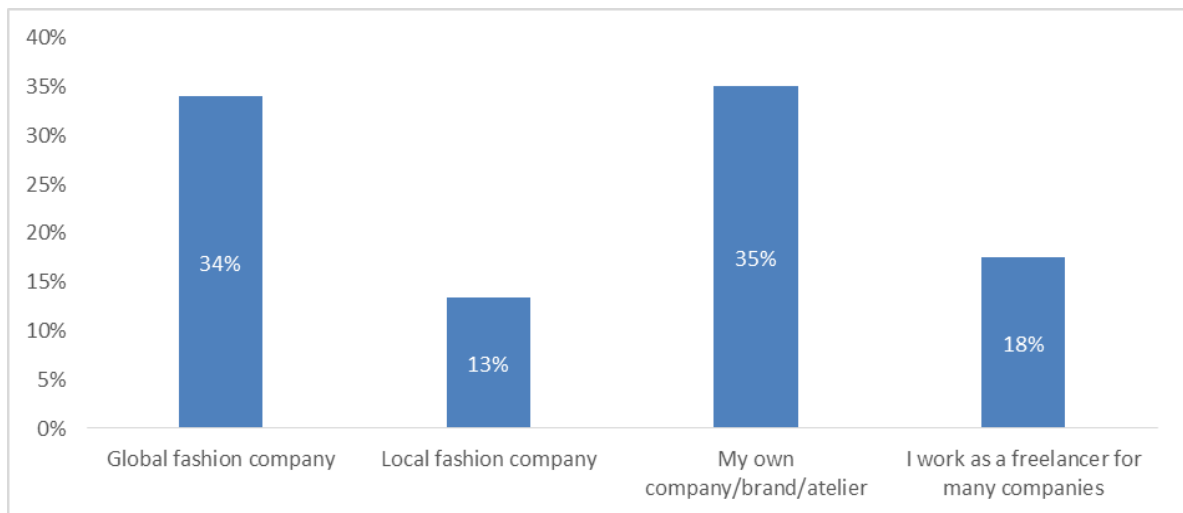


Chart 20: Organization the respondents' work for; N=97

Table 20: Organization the respondents' work for

| Answer choices | Responses |
|---|-----------|
| Global fashion company | 33 |
| Local fashion company | 13 |
| My own company/brand/atelier | 34 |
| I work as a freelancer for many companies | 17 |

Reading from the table numbers, 1/3 of the survey participants' work or have worked for big retailers. The same amount declared to have work experience in their own firms. 13% of the respondents declared to be employed in a local fashion company, and 17% to operate as freelance designers. Such mix of respondents' experience could be read as a wide perspective on CSR implementation in fashion industry, perceived from a range of different types of fashion organizations' designers.

4.6 Additional Cross-Analysis

The additional cross-analysis was conducted to measure alternations in the designers’ answers. Taking under consideration the type of organization they work for, the time of professional practice in the apparel industry emerged accordingly to detailed revision of the answers, where in the cross- analysis there appeared significant fluctuations among the answers of such divided groups of respondents.

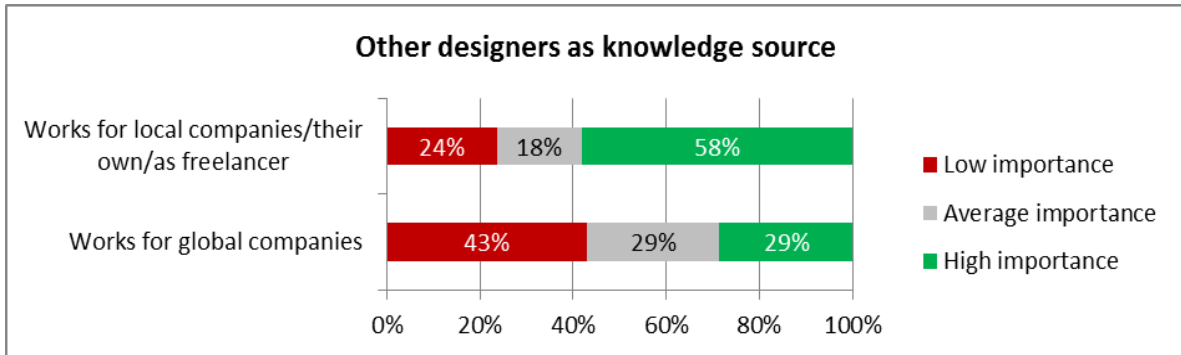


Chart 21: Importance of other designers as a knowledge source and company that designers work for; N=97; (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 21: Importance of other designers as a knowledge source and company that designers work for.

| Other designers as knowledge source | | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Works for global companies | 3 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 3 |
| Works for local companies/their own/as freelancer | 5 | 8 | 10 | 25 | 7 |

When looking at the knowledge source, designers that work for a local company or as freelancers perceive themselves as important contributors to CSR data source – nearly 60% of them marked other designers as highly important foundation, whereas only about 30% of respondents that work for global companies marked this source of knowledge as highly important. It could be assumed from the above, that global companies may rely more on themselves in CSR training in their corporate structure, where in contrast local

designers may look for news in CSR application by contacting and observing other inventors.

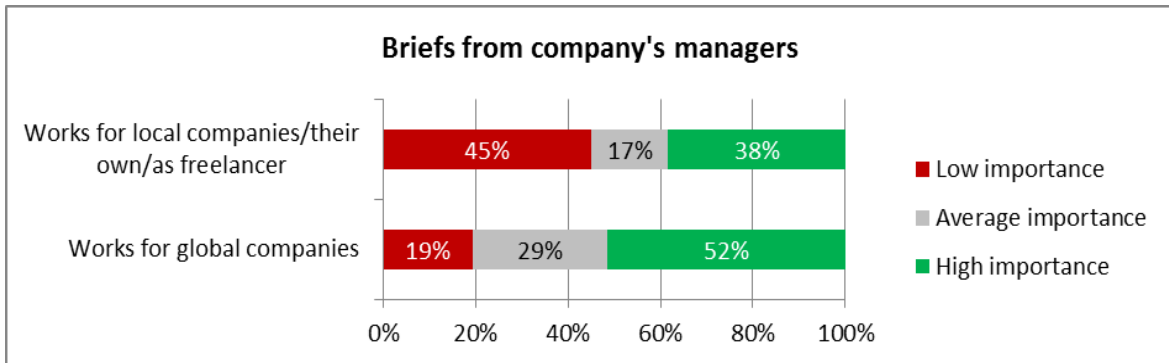


Chart 22: To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation and company that designers work for; N=97; (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 22: To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation and company that designers work for.

| Briefs from company's managers | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Works for global companies | 2 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 9 |
| Works for local companies/their own/as freelancer | 11 | 16 | 10 | 15 | 8 |

Also, for designers that do not work for global companies, briefs from company managers are not so important regarding contribution to CSR implementation - 45% of them marked the briefs with low significance, whereas, in contrast, only about 20% of designers that work for global retailers marked briefs from managers with low importance. Again, it might be the result of different work field, different organization of the firm and local designers less dependent on companies' employees hierarchy.

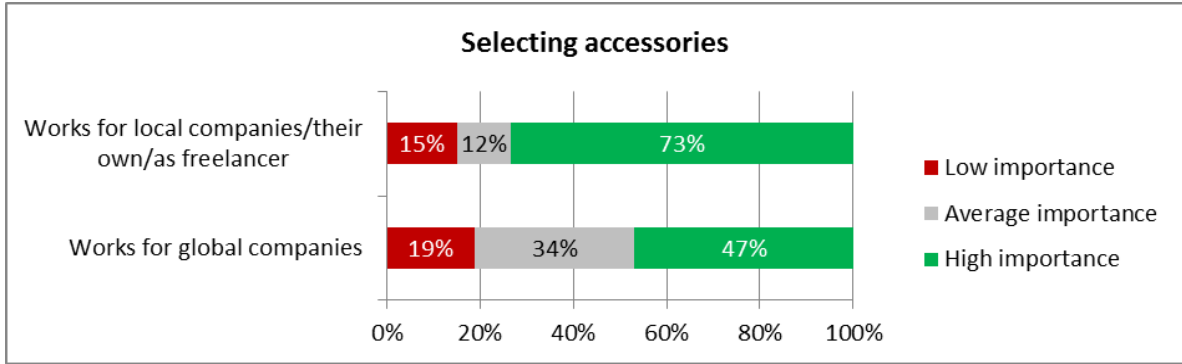


Chart 23: To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation and company that designers work for; N=97; (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 23: To what extent are your job responsibilities really contributing to CSR implementation and company that designers work for.

| Selecting Accessories | | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Works for global companies | 5 | 1 | 11 | 6 | 9 |
| Works for local companies/their own/as freelancer | 5 | 4 | 7 | 20 | 24 |

Another job responsibility that distinguishes designers working for different kind of companies is the selection of accessories. About 73% of respondents that work for local companies, for their own brand or as freelancers think, that this kind of duty is highly important in contributing to CSR implementation, where, in comparison, much less, 47% of designers working for global companies agree with that. It may be the result of different work responsibilities in general, but also of the fact that the brand owners or local organizations' co-operators are direct in decision-making. Such result of the survey could be once again a matter of corporate structure and internal arrangement.

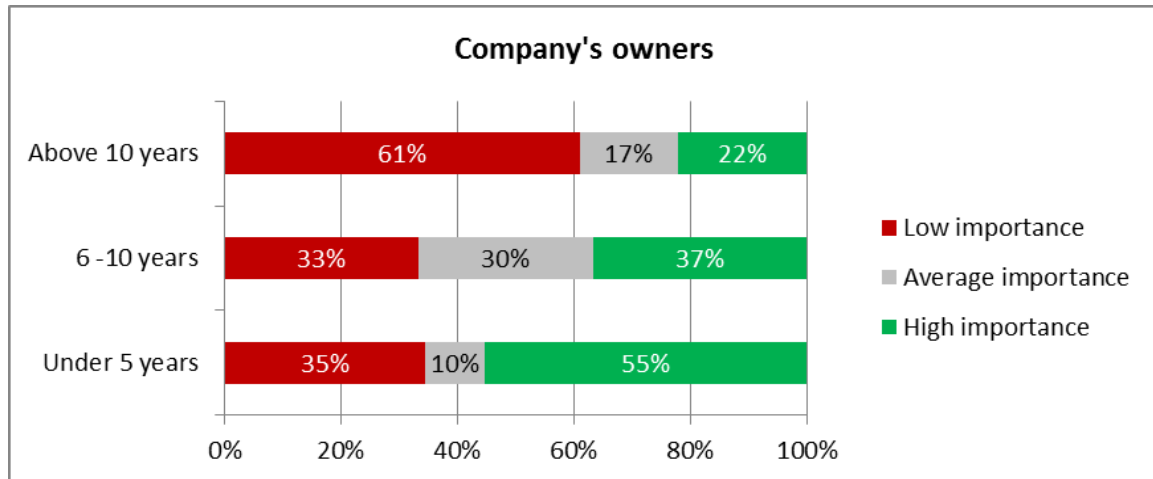


Chart 24: Knowledge on different CSR actors in the school program according to work experience; N=95; (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 24: Knowledge on different CSR actors in the school program according to work experience.

| Company's owner | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work experience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Under 5 years | 5 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 6 |
| 6 to 10 years | 6 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 3 |
| Above 10 years | 7 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 |

In this cross-comparison there is a difference in perception of the importance of particular CSR actors, especially the company owners, between designers with different length of work experience. It could be considered, that the longer the respondents work as designers the less knowledge about company owners is seen by them as important in their school program – about 55% of respondents with under 5 years of work experience said, that it was highly important in their school program and only around 22% of designers with over 10 years of experience shared that opinion. On analysing the survey results, work experience correlates with the times of the education. It might be possible that there have been some recent changes in school programs and it has become more common to focus on these stakeholders' perspective in academic lectures on CSR in design.

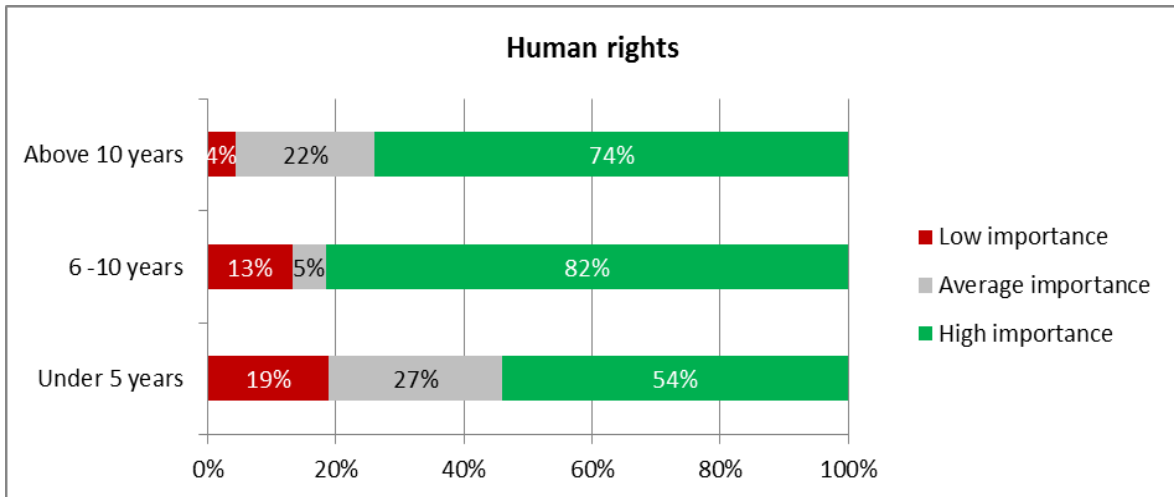


Chart 25: Issues concerning knowledge/ education related to work experience; N=95; (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 25: Issues concerning knowledge/ education related to work experience.

| Human rights | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| Work experience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Under 5 years | 1 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 13 |
| 6 to 10 years | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 24 |
| Above 10 years | 1 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 12 |

Regarding education, less respondents (54%) with under 5 years of work experience marked that the knowledge they obtained through education process was related to human rights in comparison to designers with 6 to 10 years of work experience (82%) and over 10 years of work experience (74%). The above results could also indicate, as in previous cross- analysis, program changes in academic institutions.

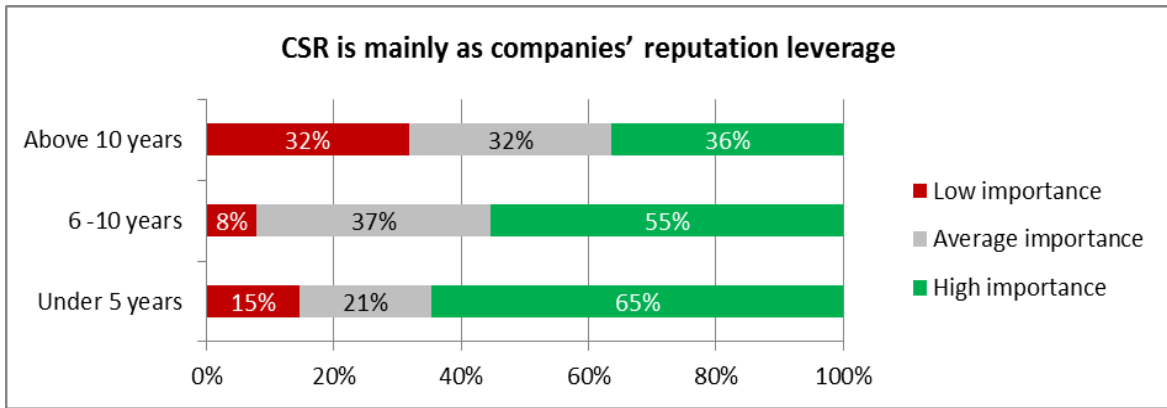


Chart 26: Statement concerning CSR and work experience; N=95; (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 26: Statement concerning CSR and work experience.

| CSR is mainly as companies' reputation leverage | | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|---|
| Work experience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Under 5 years | 1 | 2 | 7 | 13 | 7 |
| 6 to 10 years | 2 | 1 | 14 | 15 | 6 |
| Above 10 years | 2 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 3 |

When looking at opinions about various statements regarding CSR and different work experience we can see two significant differences. First of all, the less work experience, the higher importance perception of CSR mainly as companies' reputation leverage. Nearly 65% of the respondents with under 5 years of experience share that opinion in comparison with only around 36% of respondents with over 10 years of work experience (Chart 22). Secondly, from the perspective of the respondents with less work experience, there is a higher importance of management individual choice in CSR implementation (49%) than according to respondents with more work experience – 27% within group with 6 to 10 years of work experience and 38% within the most experienced designers. The above suggests, that reality and work practice change designers' perspectives on whether CSR could influence the corporate image. Secondly, it gives assumptions that, the organization's management is not the only and individual CSR performer.

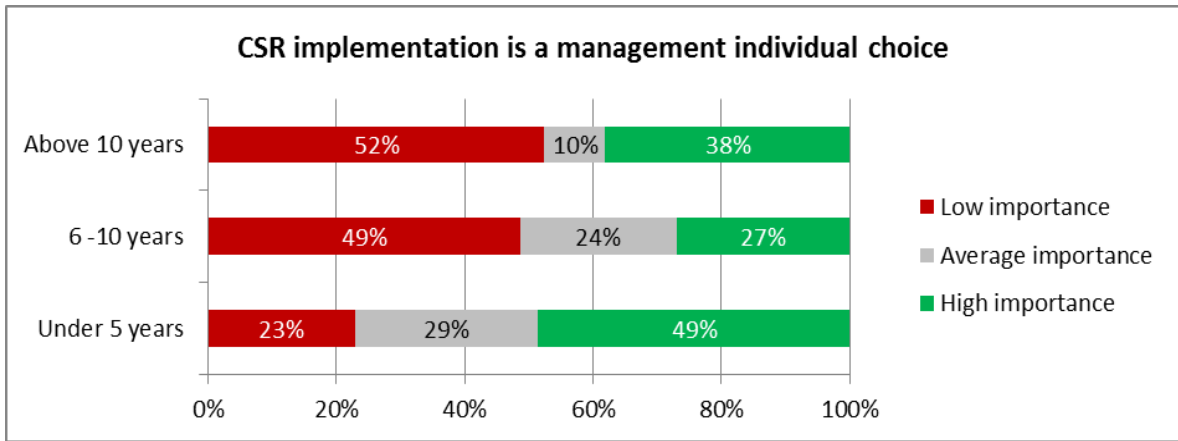


Chart 27: Statement concerning CSR and work experience; N=95; (1-2 Low importance, 3 Average importance, 4-5 High importance)

Table 27: Statement concerning CSR and work experience.

| CSR implementation is a management individual choice | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|----|---|
| Work experience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Under 5 years | 3 | 4 | 9 | 10 | 5 |
| 6 to 10 years | 10 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 5 |
| Above 10 years | 4 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 3 |

4.7 The Interviews

According to the findings during the questionnaire analysis, and also the mixed methods chosen approach for the benefit of this thesis, there appeared a necessity to ask the designers more profoundly on their perception of the CSR as an object itself, on the designers, as actors and to investigate the ethical conduct topic more in organizational context in order to measure their collective meaning in CSR application. So as to reach for additional, more detailed information, several previous survey respondents were invited for individual interviews.

The questions, that were directed to them included:

1. What are the steps of CSR implementation within the organization you work for and what is your position, role in it?
2. In your personal experience, what are the main barriers for implementation of CSR in fashion? Who are the boosters and who are the brakes?
3. What is the specific part of the management in supporting your role in CSR?
4. In what way do you get knowledge, background about customers' perceptions on CSR?
5. How do you see your role in connecting the customers and the managers?
6. In the future, how would you identify the roles of designers for further commitment? What has to be changed in the organization and in the industry?

The above requests were constructed in the aim of measuring more intensely the CSR strategies that are run in contemporary market and the designers' more profound reflections on their role in CSR practice. The quantitative approach presented the designers' position as prominent in CSR conduct, however it did not provide detailed material on how such policies are introduced to contemporary business and how the inventors are exactly involved in such performance.

The survey results suggested strong relations and impact of other professionals inside the organization in moral standards application, what could be a significant issue to learn more

about. Referring to the interrogation on different fashion industry job responsibilities mentioned in the quantitative research, question No. 2 was supposed to identify more genuinely the other professional positions in the company and their meaning for the designers' work ethics effectiveness.

Question No. 3 - this part of interviews intended to map the relation of the creators with management in context of responsible fashion, as the early designers' opinions from the questionnaire expressed the management and the executives' position and its bond with the designers' CSR outcome is strongly combined.

As the consumers were also treated by the quantitative study with great importance, questions No. 4 and No. 5 concerned curiosity on the designers' perception of these actors, and their role as an eventual bridge between the consumers, specifically regarding their affirmative attitude expressed in the survey, that apparel industry shall take the users more under consideration, while implementing CSR.

The last question unlocked the door for open conclusions and suggestions that were based on the designer's private and professional experience. The designers were supposed to give valuable proposals for improvements in CSR introduction in clothing industry.

The Interviews Participants' Profile

| Characterization | RESPONDENT NO. 1 | RESPONDENT NO. 2 |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Age | 25 -30 | 25-30 |
| Education | post-secondary artistic fashion school | high education in design |
| Nationality | Polish | Portuguese |
| Time of work experience | 5 years | 3 years |
| Place of work experience | global retailer and the designer's own, local brand | the designer's local brand |
| Present job | fashion designer and her company's manager | fashion designer |
| Country of operation | Poland | Portugal |
| Characterization | RESPONDENT NO. 3 | RESPONDENT NO. 4 |
| Age | 25-30 | 35-40 |
| Education | post-secondary artistic fashion school | high education in fashion design |
| Nationality | Polish | Polish |
| Time of work experience | 5 years | 15 years |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Place of work experience | global retailer | medium size international and local company plus her own brand of ownership structure |
| Present job | fashion designer | fashion designer and her/his company's manager |
| Country of operation | Poland | Poland |
| Characterization | RESPONDENT NO. 5 | RESPONDENT NO. 6 |
| Age | 30-35 | 40-45 |
| Education | post-secondary artistic fashion school | high education in fashion design |
| Nationality | Polish | Polish |
| Time of work experience | 5 years | 15 years |
| Place of work experience | local middle size company | medium size company of ownership structure |
| Present job | fashion designer | fashion designer and her company's manager |
| Country of operation | Poland | Poland |
| Characterization | RESPONDENT NO. 7 | RESPONDENT NO. 8 |
| Age | 40-45 | 25-30 |
| Education | high education in fashion design | high education in fashion design |
| Nationality | Polish | Polish |
| Time of work experience | 20 years | 2 years |
| Place of work experience | global retailers, small size local companies and small brands of ownership structure | small local brand of ownership structure |
| Present job | fashion designer | fashion designer and managing assistant |
| Country of operation | France | Poland |
| Characterization | RESPONDENT NO. 9 | RESPONDENT NO. 10 |
| Age | 35-40 | 30-35 |
| Education | high education in fashion design | high education in fashion design |
| Nationality | Polish | Polish |
| Time of work experience | 15 years | 8 years |
| Place of work experience | global retailer and medium size international company | global retailer and local brand of ownership structure |
| Present job | fashion designer and artistic director | fashion designer |
| Country of operation | Poland | Poland |
| Characterization | RESPONDENT NO. 11 | RESPONDENT NO. 12 |
| Age | 40-45 | 50-55 |
| Education | high education in fashion design | high education in fashion design |
| Nationality | Polish | Polish |
| Time of work experience | 15 years | 20 years |
| Place of work experience | global retailer, middle size local companies and his/her brand of ownership structure | middle size local company |
| Present job | fashion design lecturer | fashion designer |
| Country of operation | Poland | Poland |

Respondent No. 1

Several years of experience, both at a global retailer and in his/ her own local fashion company.

Referring to this respondent's replies, CSR strategy in a big company the designer works for is run by a separate, dedicated department, with specialized CSR managers. As it was stated, such policy concerns technological solutions, as reduction of textile usage on the stage of pilot product development and manufacture of early patterns. Moreover, this global corporation was presented to have noticed a need to shift back the production to the original, local place, at least at certain point in order to control the production conditions better and to fortify national economy. According to the respondent's view, the company runs pro civil rights CSR issues in such a way, that it cooperates with specialized items to achieve quality certificates relating to fair trade practice. The brand also cooperates with organization, that supervises the sustainable conditions of all the clothes' manufacturers in Asia, from which the organization outsources. The described enterprise was said to use ecological development in garment production to contribute to environment protection. The company the designer works for introduces CSR policy also through ban of natural fur, neither natural hide usage in their collections, what covers topics of animal welfare in CSR.

The respondent was sorry to admit that his/her position in CSR implementation is not taken under account in the company she/ he works for. As it was declared, the creators do not decide how the garments are manufactured or how they are promoted later on, indicating at lack of communication between the designers and the marketing department.

According to the issue of company dimension, it was strongly marked by the questioned, that CSR practice is different in case of a small, designer's brand, due to additional position and experience of the designer, as her/ his own company's owner. Citing the respondent: "In a small business you are all in one. I go through each stage alone. What I am communicating outside is only up to me and to the team that works closely with me. I do not see structural obstacles here. The owner's private beliefs are easily and directly

implemented in such brand. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of ethical performance in such case also depends on the costs. Communicating CSR activities for a small brand involves vast expenses and here is the biggest problem. Another issue is the implementation, and another communication”. The designer admitted, that small scale of small companies make their CSR campaigns less effective. They were said to have less power in promoting ethical values and lesser market impact through smaller clothes production and smaller number of such brands. The MNE were appealed to have wider possibilities here and were said even to use *greenwashing* techniques, through advertising green statements, although such ones do not cover with practice, mostly due to budget matters.

Furthermore, the main push forward in CSR application, referring to the given replies is in the fact, that the society is more and more interested in ethical issues in fashion. However, here the designer had ambivalent opinion on the consumers’ role in CSR concept: “There is definitely a group of conscious customers who are interested in this subject and it is best to reach them because only such customer who appreciates the garment produced ethically, will respect CSR efforts of a fashion brand. However, most customers just look at the price.”

Interestingly, the designer was rather convinced these are the big retailers that shall lead everybody towards more sustainable solutions, as the small companies and single, local designers due to their minor number have much smaller impact, if any.

Furthermore, while exploring other stakeholders’ role in ethical conduct, marketing departments were also appointed potential, good proclaimers of CSR, if such strategy is set up within the firm by the executives. Fashion designers, fashion buyers or product managers were said not to be pro CSR influencers, if such policy does not exist.

Continuing, the companies’ top management was evaluated by the inquired as to be good CSR proponents, if the private beliefs cover with CSR values. The contemporary executives were appointed by the respondent to evolve and to communicate better with the design departments, in case the CSR policy is run by the company and the executives are personally involved into it. In such circumstances, the designer said the executives seem to

be more aware of the problem and they appear to leave typical business thinking towards more empathetic, responsible philosophy of the brand. According to the respondent's accurate experience, the executives, if personally involved and believing in CSR, are great CSR proponents: "In my company they praise and point out that we have a CSR strategy. We organize conferences about how we work in this area and in such moments they personally engage there. They are no longer businessmen who do not know anything about it. Inside the company they are the ones who spread internal messages on CSR".

The designer did not deny her/his possible position in making a bridge between the executives and the users, but rather admitted to see no existing part in connecting the top management with the clients, according to lack of specific tools and organizational structures so far worked out in the fashion company for such role.

Discussing to perceptions on the clients, the designer answered that he/she gains knowledge on their preferences on her/his own. These are SM channels, private observation of the market and being a consumer herself/ himself.

When asked on the possible proposals of changes of the fashion industry and alternatives for the designers' position in CSR application, the respondent stated that the designers shall be more included in the decision process and in direct company actions. The designers shall be more involved into the production stages and to be let to have influence on how the garments are manufactured. The creators shall visit the production locations, to study the manufacturers' technological possibilities, in order to have better knowledge and understatement how to design more responsibly and how to code the product "with ethical spirit" from the beginning. According to the given replies, such schemes have already started to happen in some fashion companies.

What shall be additionally improved is the right communication of such sustainable practices inside and outside the company.

Respondent No. 2

Two years of work experience in his/ her own fashion brand.

The designer was confident in the creators' prominent role in CSR application in a small enterprise. As the respondent explained, ethical conduct is the designer's individual decision. With regard to this, the inquired stated the three CSR issues like ecology, fair trade and animal welfare are taken under consideration while designing and manufacturing her/ his clothes. The designer marked that, such practice is run through selection of proper technologies, like organic textiles for example and also through cooperation and communication of the ethical essences to the right publicity. As it was answered furthermore, pro ecological ideas are similarly included in her/ his brands' advertising. The designer revealed to educate the surrounding on CSR through trading the ecological look and pictures also in marketing layouts and movies, like landscape, nature elements or natural look of the model.

Referring to the question on the promoters and brakes of CSR application, the respondent sees the designers and marketing workers as its main agents. The respondent perceives too complex nature of the brand or too complicated decision process in the organization as enemies of CSR effectiveness. According to the replies, if there are too many people putting different ideas into the fashion concept, then it does not work. The concept shall be clear and coming mainly from the designer. The respondent was not sure whether to appoint the consumers as enemies or proponents of CSR, depending on their different market segmentation and level of identification with ethical principles of the company. "The consumers could be an enemy, depending who you reach. If this is not your target, they are bad. If this is my publicity, it will be good for my brand. They need to represent my brand's ideas".

On the issue of clients' tastes, the designer educates himself/herself through dedicated articles in the internet and grabs actual, useful information on CSR and on the consumers' opinions on eco fashion through social media and through internet magazines.

As future solutions for the apparel industry the respondent pointed at change of mass consumption habits, especially due to the problematic of *fast fashion* and wrong purchase behaviours. The designer was clear, that *fast fashion* overwhelming practice in the market spoils it, and also sizes CSR from success. As the cure the designer sees growth of small, local brands that are based on *slow fashion* and slow production: “That shall be changed. Small brands can present an alternative”. Creativity and uniqueness, were additionally said to avoid overconsumption of garments and also to make the fashion industry improved. Following the respondent, fashion firms shall base their manufacture on “Not the quantity, but the quality. It is about development of individual design concepts, to create local, micro economy, based on combinations of the old with the new, like recycling fabrics, reuse of clothes and redesign of them”.

Respondent No. 3

Several years of experience at a global retailer.

Referring to the first question of the interview, there is a CSR strategy in the company the designer works for, however treated as of secondary importance, mostly communicated outside the organization, and realized through industrial and marketing solutions. The respondent appointed her/his individual choice, especially regarding the selection of technologies and suppliers to determine her role in CSR induction. The designer marked, that she/he may suggest the subcontractors to her company, nevertheless it is not obligatory to be taken under consideration by the managers or executives. The respondent concluded, that the designers’ role in CSR implementation is underestimated.

Studying furthermore the decision power in CSR choices in design, the inquired said: “I have an impression it should be me, as I work on the project, it is me to influence the design and to have direct impact on it”. Interestingly, the designer presented an opinion, that the creators do have certain position in CSR context, in educating other company workers, as the interviewed admitted, other firm’s representatives are not aware how garments are produced and what are the environmental and civil consequences of outsourcing the production from developing countries. The respondent suggested, that

during intercompany meetings the creators could stimulate CSR actions through spreading information among other stakeholders and this way training them on ethical matters.

Referring to pro/against CSR agents, the participant pointed to the cost issues as the main barrier in CSR implementation within the fashion corporation, indicating a huge pressure on bringing profits by the organization. Moreover, what the interviewed highlighted was the position of PM – Product Manager and Sales Managers to size CSR from success. The Product Managers were said to direct the fashion design department, where the designers and also fashion buyers work. The PM was described as responsible for the whole group of collections – in terms where they are produced, with what cost and how they are sold. As it was added, the PMs represent the company's CSR strategy, however with their decisions concerning production organization and chosen technology, they may alternate the CSR outcome. The designer revealed, that these mentioned stakeholders act in order to cut costs, to earn more and reach for higher revenues and then for their premiums. As the creator concluded: “The sale side is the head opponent of CSR”.

What is more, the respondent said there is no relation between her/him and the management in CSR implementation. None of the top managers, art directors or marketing managers has a direct contact with the fashion designers in corporate, large structures. If any pro-CSR directives are communicated, they appear in general, inner company emails directed to all employees.

When asked about the clients' CSR perception, the respondent admitted to have contact with the customers occasionally during special projects, in order to make the workers spend some time in the shop with the aim of better recognition and understanding of the consumers. The designer said, that it is not the company, but the creators' curiosity and private searching through media, Facebook and Instagram to collect valuable information concerning CSR.

As far as the designers' possible mission on creating a bridge between the customers and company's management is concerned, the respondent estimated it to be fragile and rather

based on passing some information gained during private research on the green consumers' perceptions to the executives, if such opportunity occurs.

When the creator was asked about the topic of what shall be improved within the company on CSR implementation area, he/she sadly admitted CSR does not exist in the interviewed work on daily basis. The respondent admitted "The machine of corporation does not favour CSR actions". If ever, the actions are shallow and following actual fashions. What shall be changed is superficial ethical marketing into a true and honest CSR policy that is visible.

Furthermore, when it comes to the issue of CSR application in apparel industry upgrading, the designer suggested promoting and communicating CSR more, as companies generally are focused on promotion. However the respondent marked to advertise it in a different, clearer way, with fair focus on CSR. What is more significant, the designer stated, that the way of thinking on CSR by the management shall be generally changed, due to the failure, amounting to the fact, that the executives think about money and treat CSR just as another marketing tool.

Respondents No. 4

Several years of experience in cooperation with middle size international company, and also middle size local enterprises plus for his/her own brand.

Sadly, the respondent started the interview with the conclusion, that in most of the firms the interviewed worked for, CSR did not exist at all. There was no CSR strategy in the brands the designer was employed in. If it ever happened, it was treated just as marketing or as an image aspect. The respondent revealed the designers were not included in the decision making process.

Regarding the question on main barriers or accelerators of CSR in fashion, the inquired admitted these are the designers themselves that shall be main CSR proponents, as they are the only ones to be "sustainably aware". On the other hand, the respondent sees the

management as the main danger to CSR implementation, due to their focus on monetary aspects.

However, the situation was said to be completely different in case the owner being the designer at the same time. Such circumstances, according to the inquired, create different conditions for ethical practice. Small ownership companies were suggested much better in implementing CSR, because of minor complexity and direct translation of the owner's beliefs into action. In such case, the executives- the owners are perceived as good propagators of ethical conduct, if their opinions cover with CSR principles. The designer marked, that in small business the owners are more determined on design and creativity, where in large business the top management is concentrated on making profit and does not pay attention to moral principles.

As another brake in CSR performance, the designer appointed the Product Managers. These ones were called to take care merely of high revenues and low costs of manufacture. Referring to the replies, if the Product Manager eventually takes CSR under consideration, it is simply evaluated through reputation lenses, rather with fear of bad publicity than true care of ethical matters. Such example was given by the designer in case of natural fur usage, when companies exclude them from the production, not due to their honest involvement into CSR policy, but because of fear of spoiling their image by using this type of material for their collections.

Referring to the consumers' perception of corporate moral principles and their needs in green fashion context, the respondent admitted such recognition possibilities do exist, however, they happen in case of luxury brands. The opportunities appear during contracting of the collections, while meeting the VIPs during fashion shows, where the Collection Manager and the Head Designer are present, but there are no lower degree creators. The main designers may talk with the clients about their impressions on the presented collection and about their preferences. They find these moments as opportunities to grab information also on CSR issues, like for example ecological technologies used in the showed garments manufacture. As it was said, contradictory to these moments, when designers investigate the customers' reflections on their own, the companies do not

proceed with any additional research, neither market study on shoppers' ethical expectations. If organized, it was said the consumers' surveys concern the typical market aesthetical and functional topics only.

In case of big companies' management being linked with the consumers by the inventors, the designer admitted his/her role is possible, but rather in marketing area. The respondent highlighted, it is different in case of a small enterprises, where the designers' position between the executives and the consumers is stronger. According to a minor and easier to organize structure of SME, it was stated it is likewise easier to play such part. The designer was affirmative on the creators' role in marrying these two stakeholders' groups, what was reasoned by the respondent with the designers' obligation and possible position in educating the companies' owners on what the clients like and want. In the designer's opinion the management is money concentrated and just too busy to have time for ethical issues, and thus pointing at the designers to be the proper players to overtake such role.

When asked about the future role of the designers in apparel industry in CSR practice, the respondent admitted, it would be difficult as the work market is just difficult and the designers are concentrated on finding and maintaining jobs. However, the designer noticed it could be based on individual opinions of people working for the business, in giving behaviour patterns through his/her choices, what was presented in an example of a familiar product manager, who claimed to refuse a job offer for a famous fashion brand due the usage of natural hide as its main clothes' materials.

Respondent No. 5

Several years of work experience in a local, middle size clothing enterprise.

The interviewed admitted that the company he/she works for does not have any CSR policy. The management even has never heard about such concept and for the first time the executives were informed on that idea from the designer. However no more talks or actions were introduced later on in this area.

The designer said, that he/she has some micro attempts towards more sustainable solutions at work due to his/her private beliefs, but implemented irrespective of the company's formal decision on CSR.

The respondent stated that the management could have a significant role in CSR application, to set up and make such strategy work. Nonetheless, the interviewed added the designers' duties are separated from the management's tasks and there is no cooperation between them in any area.

On the issue of the clients' perception of CSR, the designer catches such data from other designers, mostly referring to technological solutions. Moreover, the respondent estimated the clients as uninterested in CSR policies.

According to suggestions on the future better CSR practices, the designer recommended bigger involvement of the media into publicizing CSR and promoting CSR related values. The bloggers were distinguished to be significant here, according to their most influential and opinion shaping role in contemporary mainstream communication channels.

Respondent No. 6

Over 15 years of experience in working for his/her own local brand.

In the context of the designer's role in CSR implementation within his/her own brand and his/her company, the respondent strongly highlighted his/ her position in ecological, pro-animal welfare and fair-trade issues. In more details, he/she said, that he/she manufactures locally, excludes natural fur usage from the collections and also runs recycling actions, e.g. makes the clothes from recycled fabrics or bags of converted materials, where the income is later on transferred to NGO.

According to his/ her CSR strategy, the designer was confident, that his/her private beliefs are naturally transformed into business behaviour in such type of the company with ownership structure. His/her concept for CSR is realized through dedicated projects,

careful selection of technologies and sustainable co-operators, what is intensely communicated later on in PR actions.

The respondent claimed to run CSR strategy through showing that fashion and ethics could be joined together. It could be achieved both through technological solutions and innovative, artistic ones likewise. Citing the inquired: “I want to show that ecological garments could be presented in the context of cool modern fashion”. However the designer admitted that the firm does not benefit financially from such strategy, which was launched rather as a PR operation, realization of private beliefs and a personal accomplishment.

Following the respondent, creators are rather strongly personally dedicated to such ecological trends and that is why they also react to pro CSR messages. The designer additionally estimated his/her role as a kind of inspiration for the customers by the way, and highlighted his/ her role in educating and communicating certain values to the consumers. However, the users were assessed as not always open to such content, judged rather as insensitive to responsible fashion. “But when I'm on TV, and I communicate my CSR activities, then actually there is a response. Some people even call me later on, but not the customers. Young people mainly, people who do something in fashion on their own, manually, at home, in recycling and ecology. They say, that my messages have given them faith”. The respondent once again criticized the shoppers to be driven mainly through aesthetical or price principles. It was added, that if any consumers ask about CSR related issues in the designer's brand, these are not the regular apparel consumers, but rather ecology enthusiasts.

As potential modifications for fashion industry the designer appointed reduction of mass clothes manufacture, due to global apparel overproduction. The respondent underlined, that the fashion industry wastes a lot of textiles and clothes, where instead, the system could be based on reduction, reuse and recycling and on designing new garments out of the old ones.

However, the questioned claimed, that in order to introduce such changes, certain conditions must be fulfilled, “The market that would have popular CSR, needs to be

mature”, what means to have good financial circumstances for that. The respondent stated that small, designer’s brands, contrary to big, rich corporations, have no such big economic background to invest into CSR, as their main priority is to survive and to maintain the business. “If you have a financial foundation and peace of mind that everything works well, then you have your head open for this type of activity. Otherwise, you lack the strength and motivation to do other things around”.

Though, what was the strongest interviewed proposal for the future CSR practice and following changes in fashion industry was the involvement of governments in ethical conduct of the apparel industry. The designer said that strong, governmental support is needed to boost ethical practice and give financial basis for the companies to take care of CSR. The designer was sure donations from the authorities for such actions, would be the best step towards successful ethical policy in garment industry.

Respondent No.7

Several years of experience working both for big, international retailers as for small, local brands and also ownership structures.

Starting from the question regarding the ethical conduct of the brands and the fashion designer’s part in it, the respondent worked for and in the role of the designer in CSR implementation in fashion companies, the creator admitted there were no stronger movements towards ethical issues in the companies he/she worked for and the designers had no role in CSR there. There was also no ethical creation due to time and cost limits: “There is no time here for anything”. The designers just do the “follow up” of upper directives. Their role in CSR is even harder in case of new work place, where “revolution is impossible”. According to the designer, such ethical standards implementation depends on the awareness of the firm. If the designer gets feedback from the executives, and from middle management as Product Managers, such policy “shall work like gold”. Nevertheless, as the interviewed noticed, it happens very rarely.

However, the respondent admitted the SME make a different environment for the designers' implementation of CSR, especially when they have a simple ownership structure. In such cases, the owners' private choices and ethical perceptions make rules, which are easily injected in the business. As the respondent highlighted, in such situation these are individual, private believes of the possessors that want to have such policy and that agree to listen to the designers. The small organizations were regarded as much more natural for ethical conduct application due to their uncomplicated system of passing information and direct contact with the executives, which gives good environment for the creators to insert ethical principles.

In the next reply regarding main feedbacks and brakes in CSR practice, the respondent once again repeated, that time and costs are the biggest obstacles in CSR implementation. Citing the designer: „For example, the product is great, but it is expensive, they can hang it, it can just easily die because of that”. Exceptions happen according to the questioned, due to private creative desire of the managers, like Artistic Director. If “he/she falls in love with this idea” it has some chances to be realized.

The respondent marked, that one of the pro CSR drivers is the status and financial situation of the company. Luxurious brands, which have huge revenues, can afford CSR strategy, however, it always dependents on the executives.

The middle managers like Product Managers or Creative Directors were estimated by the inquired as not hostile towards moral conduct, however conditioning their corporate behaviour in this matter based on individual choice and top management's directives. Here, the designer appointed the Artistic Directors as potentially very strong in ethical practice, due to their position and work competence in shaping the general concept for the collection.

The designers themselves were marked as open to CSR practice, and acting pro CSR through selection of the technologies and the way the garments shall be produced. It was said, that due to the fact, that the creatives have “a whole philosophy of their work” and

more sensitive, spiritual approach to the profession, as a result they shall be very good CSR proponents.

Referring to the question of the role of the companies' executives and managers for the designers' moral outcome at work, the designer sees them as principle givers and as coaches in this topic. Based on their position, if the management gives pro ethical directives, and if the executives organize dedicated trainings, it is easier for the designer to include ethical features in the design. However, the respondent regretfully concluded, that situations of management-designers bridge happen very rarely. It even appears that the executives discourage the Artistic Directors to get involved in ethical issues. It was additionally highlighted, that the first pro-CSR step is on the financial decision makers' side of the company and then there comes place for the designer in such ethical conduct, if allowed. In such case, "The designer is supposed to think creatively. If you have to push yourself with other people who bring the product into a tangible form, then you simply do not have the strength to do so".

Coming to the issue of information on the consumers' perceptions, the Product Managers were marked as the ones to possess such knowledge that they share with the designers, however not in ethical background. In this matter the designer has not heard about any special research. Regarding sustainable taste of the clients, the responded marked that such interest is dependent on the companies' profile, however the clothing brands were evaluated as not to be interested in measuring the shoppers' ethical perceptions. If the designer wishes for such data, he/she simply collects the needed information on her/his own in the internet.

As the future needed changes in apparel industry, the designer appointed the companies to change the way they operate in outsourcing issues, what was clarified as a need to x-ray the subcontractors and focus on ethical suppliers. According to the earlier mentioned main CSR obstacles which were costs and time, the designer claimed that adequate research on responsible fashion is needed, for which the companies have neither time, nor money. It was said in the interview, that there should be additional studies devoted to the sustainable part of the market, made by specially formed companies' departments that would focus on

CSR practice. Furthermore, the respondent suggested, it is also a matter of changing the strategy of the product developments, but such fluctuations shall come from the top of the organization – the executives. Another proposed solution for better CSR application was making pilot pro-ethical products that would be a satisfying way of checking the market response, without special financial loses.

Respondent No. 8

Two years of work experience in a local fashion company with ownership structure.

The respondent admitted there is no CSR policy in the company she/he works for due to lack of such directive from the company's owner. Any topics related to this concept were only touched during private talks of the respondent with the brand owner – the main designer at the same time. However, the designer had an impression there was no wish for CSR from the company owner.

Regarding the next question, the designer's role in eventual CSR implementation in this company was not set up and the company's management was not interested in any ethical policy, neither the designer's involvement into such issues.

According to education and general market knowledge of the inquired, there are no clear proponents or enemies of CSR in fashion firms, which is based more on private opinions and collected data that condition such ethical operation. In case of global retailers the designer from his/ her overall business conscience said that the top management constitute potential proponents of CSR, however provided they shall personally be involved in such policy, share similar individual point of view and appoint CSR strategy as a kind of "corporate, established culture". Without their deep involvement the designer said "the ethical principles will die a natural death".

Regarding the subject of the clients' inclinations, the designer replies that he/she reads reports and articles dedicated to the topic in order to gain information plus he/she derives the data directly from the customers while visiting the shops. The respondent was not

firmly persuaded, whether the common shoppers are hostile towards ethical practices, nevertheless the designer was convinced they do not search for any information on their own, neither have they presented an open mind to CSR messages. Furthermore, the designer evaluated the consumers as ignorant to CSR related issues and somehow reconciled with the dark realm of *fast fashion* and unethical corporate behaviour, due to the popularity of *fast fashion*. What is interesting, the respondent noticed, the consumers are also not such great respondents of CSR actions, as they react with disbelief towards any CSR messages, taking it more often as *greenwashing*, than true, responsible acts.

The designer said that his/her role in CSR implementation depends on individual interest and motivation, what directly translates into his/her activities. What is more, the respondent declared, the designers shall have an informative role, where in case of direct contact with the clients they could transport the ethical ideas in less corporate way, but more as a passage of certain values, and as a presentation of a more “ethically engaged design”. The inventors were claimed by the interviewed to show that such design has influence shaping the surrounding environment. The respondent once again marked, the designers shall have a role in presenting CSR as possibilities, not limits. Moreover, they were appointed to give example, how to implement an alternative way of thinking in fashion area, also pointing at other, successful, green brands, citing the respondent: “They shall also sell it as a trendy lifestyle”. Additionally the designer stated, that the creators’ role in CSR is preceded likewise through selecting the ways of manufacture and proper textiles, which should be presented outside as additional values and creation of positive changes.

Regarding the last question on the future, better ideas for CSR practice the designer suggested more investors in this area are needed, such ones who are educated enough to treat CSR as important value for them and a concept worth financing. Simple directives on sustainable solutions for executives are also an additional incentive constitution an educational possibility for the society. Once again, the interviewed marked the importance of systematic changes in education of the designers and educating other co-operators on responsible design and production. What is more, the respondent suggested to impact the

mainstream market first, through shifting from financial goals towards other values, like the ethical ones.

Respondent No. 9

Several years of experience working both for big, international retailers and for small, local clothing brands.

From the beginning the respondent was clear, that none of the companies the designer worked for had any official CSR policy. According to the replies, the companies' strategies were always concentrated on revenues and costs. Sometimes it happened that the marketing department touched issues related to CSR, like dealing with situation of controversial fur garments sale. However, according to the given replies, it appeared rather in the context of fear of customers' criticism and their potential, negative opinions. The inquired also remembered talks about fair production in developing countries, however in the form of unofficial worries, expressed by regular workers. Citing the respondent, CSR issues "were actions like baby steps" and "there were positive, pro CSR intentions, but they could be named just as unofficial talks behind the scenes". The inquired admitted that designers were not included in the CSR decisions process in the organizations he/she worked for.

As regards the question on the main pro and against CSR players within the fashion company, the designer was sceptical about the executives, claiming they treat CSR as a "caprice" that does not bring profits. The executives see no need of CSR policy, excluding situations of very rich companies, where their financial condition gives good environment for additional actions, naming CSR as luxury. Interestingly, concluding from the respondent's speech, in contradiction to the executives, there are some other workers who have "eyes wide open" to ethical topics and who are more aware of CSR need. However, although being open to ethical standards, the employees have no courage to force these ideas on upper level of the company. The designer highlighted CSR dries out in fashion brands due to the weakness of executives' engagement into CSR, and other denial of workers' access to CSR actions.

Moreover, concluding from the dialog, Product Managers and Fashion Buyers would be pro CSR agents, in cases such ethical directives come from the top of the organization. Once again the respondent marked, that if the moral principles in the brand are set up, the workers are not brakes, but followers. Nevertheless, the respondent underlined, “such ‘force’ must be shown from the executives, on similar level as other companies’ other priorities and values, as something very significant: “Something that actually builds the company”.

Interestingly, in this interview, the respondent was estimating the middle management’s role in CSR application as positive, specially, when ethical values were injected into teams and equally shared by team members. The designer stated, that the creators are vision makers, when middle managers, like Product Managers and Fashion Buyers are manufacturers of these visions. If they share the same priorities and have the same opinions on CSR, their performance is very significant. Quoting the respondent: “The Management of middle level has a huge role in CSR implementation, as people make and are the company values that could be also shaped”. Concluding from the dialog, the companies’ middle management is not aware of its potential in CSR practice, it is underestimated and concentrates rather on financial and organizational aspects, following the top executives’ directives.

When asked where the designer derives the knowledge on consumers’ preferences from, the respondent embraced it as “sniffing the customer on my own”. It was clarified as checking the clients’ opinions on social media, reading the comments on Facebook and talking to people outside of work. The interviewed admitted the companies do not run focus research on the clients’ ethical perceptions, as such studies are very expensive and also the brands are not interested in such type of customers’ purchase drives. If any research is organized, the companies do not check the clients’ green viewpoint, but typical market collections features.

Referring to the creators’ role in marrying executives with the consumers, the respondent was confident that these are the designers that show the management what the client needs. The respondent marked, that the designers have to be educated and aware so they can

spread this knowledge forward, even, if the outcome of such procedure is not sure. The respondent claimed the designers have obligation in imprinting certain values among other stakeholders, in order to make pressure. The word “pressure” was repeated once again and referred to the support of the media. The respondent was convinced the designers with the help of the media shall create an environment of pressure on the executives to move their conscience.

If CSR was supposed to work effectively in apparel industry, the respondent highlighted the need to educate the society, so “the bait has to be swallowed” and the public was “soaked with CSR”. The designer admitted, it would be very important there were much more people who “feel CSR” to make it really successful.

Respondent No. 10

Several years of professional experience for a global retailer and for a local fashion brand with ownership structure.

This respondent stated, that the fashion companies he/she worked for had certain CSR policies, however these ones were not prominent, neither strongly communicated.

According to the further commentary, the designers’ role in CSR implementation almost did not exist and if ever, it was based on selection of textiles only. As the respondent concluded: “The designer is such a meaningless subcontractor. The designer does what (he/she) is ordered. This (CSR) is not a major direction. First is the profit and then the ecology”. The respondent expressed astonishment with such market position to her/his potential pro ethical function, where the designer declared to believe in her potential in CSR operation due to control of the production and direct contact with the product. The designer also stated the creators could easily solve the ethical issues with technological and manufacture tools. Thanks to that, following the respondent, the designers could perform the maximum, with minimal operating capabilities.

Furthermore, the inquired noticed differences in CSR application between small and big enterprises. The designer claimed to be better supported in CSR policy in SME, where in big companies rather not. Citing the designer: “Now, when I’m working in a small, local company, I work directly with the person who manages it all. It is such a micro CSR, like the use of remaining textiles, recycled clothes, or just producing these small amount of clothing locally“. The interviewed added, CSR implementation in the hands of the designers means better production control and better contact with the client. It was additionally distinguished that small organizations have more human reflex, where the big corporations just operate with numbers.

Continuing, when it comes to big business, the respondent stated the manager is a very important person in CSR performance, because “the designer is let little to say (...). I cannot suddenly decide that we do not produce something, because it is manufactured in inhumane conditions in India. It must be supported by the manager's decision. The designer is rather at the end of the decision-making process. It depends on the decision of the managers. However, managers can be people who also limit it”.

According to the question on main CSR pro or against actors, the designer once again appointed the executives as the most influential ones in contemporary business. Marketing department was also distinguished here, however with the notification that the marketing managers need to be given such principles to be communicated from the top of the company, according to the company’s ethical strategy.

Furthermore, relating to CSR implementation obstacles, the Fashion Buyers were evaluated as the biggest brakes, who just work on the cheapest solutions instead of quality and ethical ones. Nevertheless the designer said, they usually change their attitude after visits in *Global South* factories and suppliers. Product Managers were estimated by the respondent as CSR supporters, conditioning their ethical behaviour with the right organization’s structure and good will of its executives.

Asking about the source of knowledge on the shoppers likes and dislikes in green area, the designer stated it is hard to verify without some market research. The respondent sees it

rather in terms of private observations of the business, how small brands and pro ecological companies are created each year and what is their number. For the respondent the shape of the market, the tendencies what is selling and what is not are a kind of market indicator. Additionally referring to this question, the respondent explained, that in large corporations, designers base their knowledge on internal sale rankings, what makes a big determinant in judging the consumers' taste. On the other hand, the respondent noticed that "In a small company the organization obtains direct feedback from the customers. Consumers will order something, then they will write an email. It does not necessarily have to do with ethics, but it's about direct contact with them and finding out what their opinions are".

When the respondent was interviewed on her/ his role in joining the clients with brand's executives, the designer admitted the creators are more forward to the real needs of the consumers. It was reasoned due to the fact they are to provide the clients with a great design of great quality, where in contradiction the executives are more about the revenues and cheap production. The designers were here acclaimed as a kind of medium that centres the both side's needs.

In context of the further changes in apparel industry that would shift towards more responsible fashion, the designer was clear, that the executives need to change their approach to ethical conduct, basing it on identification with existing injustice and through seeing evil consequences of the clothes' production.

What is more, the respondent suggested the necessity of creating an emotional bond with other stakeholders through individual experience, as to have better feeling of the situation, and to have empathic attitude in business operations. All the designers and other employees were advised by the questioned to develop ethical perspectives through personal observations, through direct contact with production locations and through visits and supervision of the factories. The respondent suggested in such way they would personally collect valid data on how the products are actually manufactured. The visits to suppliers, constant dialogue with them, even email contacts were appointed as compulsory, good CSR improvement tools. Citing the designer: "Even merchants on such trips are

beginning to change their attitude. (...) Something happens in the head when people see these problems with their own eyes. It's about creating emotion”.

Respondent No. 11

Several years of professional experience, both at a local, middle-sized company, global enterprise and also in his/her own local fashion brand.

According to the respondent, fashion brands rarely have CSR policies. The SME have none, probably due to their insufficient finances and lack of the executives' education on this matter, where the bigger ones were estimated to try to follow some market expectations and fashions on CSR issues. Referring to given replies the big companies sometimes use to take under account the designers' opinion in CSR practice. However, the follow up of such suggestions is not obligatory and is eventually welcomed in an unofficial way.

Although SME were said to have no CSR policies, the designer marked smaller organizations were much open to the designers' pro-ethical directives. Referring to the respondent's perception, the owners in such cases had a direct contact with the designers and used to take up the decisions collectively, elaborated with mutual agreement, what made a comfortable environment for the implementation of ethical principles. The designer sees his/her role as an ethical concept giver, a creator of sensitivity, that possess features that condition good CSR development. The inquired designer estimates the inventors as the ones who have the best grounds and skills to push CSR forward through imaginative and philosophical character of their occupation, through artistic education and also specific qualifications.

Apart from the Fashion Buyer the designer did not see any stakeholders that could be treated as obstacles in CSR implementation in fashion industry. The Fashion Buyers ancillary attitude was appointed by the respondent due to cost issues, what was reasoned as somehow natural behaviour for this position- guarding money during the purchase stage.

Furthermore, the role of the managers according to the respondent could be regular due to the official company's directives. If given, the managers shall follow the directives without any problems. The executives were estimated by the designer as, in general, ignorant towards CSR issues, concentrated on the revenues, time schedules and costs. However, the interviewed sees them not closed to changing their perceptions under the influence of the designers' suggestions on ethical principles, if it matches with the executives' private believes.

Concerning the client's perceptions on responsible fashion, the designer used to collect the needed data on his/her own and to read professional articles in the media. However, the respondent did not see his/her bigger role in connecting the management and the clients due to organizational obstacles and being excluded from such communication channel. What is more, the designer declared to see only a tiny part of the consumers interested in responsible fashion, thus did not evaluate them as important CSR contributors.

The future in the designer's opinion belongs to CSR, according to environmental catastrophic threats and general growing market positive attitude to responsibility of the companies towards the society. However, the designer sees the changes to be made mostly on educating the companies' executives and involving the designers into the corporate management and CSR implementation, what was reasoned with their knowledge and obvious sensitivity.

Respondent No. 12

Several years of work experience in local, middle-sized fashion brand.

Referring to the first question, the company the designer works for was said to have none CSR policy, however it tries to proceed with some ethical conduct elements. In fair trade area it is through selection of subcontractors and suppliers plus supervision of the fabrication places. In the field of animal welfare, the company excludes natural fur usage from its collections. The concerns for nature are none within the company the designer is employed. As it was concluded by the interviewed "In the face of profit-raising and market

fighting, there is no place for small businesses to run CSR. Companies should change their principles”. However, as the designer admitted, in case of SME, the organizations just struggle for survival among giant retailers, and in such situation CSR is not taken under consideration. Although the respondent admitted these are small CSR operations, in the fashion company he/she works for, the awareness of moral standards necessity within the organization is still growing. Conversely, it is strongly reasoned with fear of bad publicity, marketing logic and it appears more and more often in unofficial talks among the workers, then having a public shape.

Concerning the designers’ role in CSR, the respondent was confident these shall be the inventors, apart from the executives, who are the main decision makers, to instil certain ethical values in the company, mostly through choice of the right technologies that shall be used in the collection manufacture process.

In context of CSR proponents or enemies, the respondent appointed most of the team members (fashion buyers, product managers, marketing specialists and other employees) do not make a hostile atmosphere around CSR inside the organization. More specifically, according to the given opinions, implementing CSR values unofficially by employees is treated in terms of eventual bad publicity and also rooted in empathy towards external stakeholders. The labours seem to be presented as self-named CSR proponents, where there is no visible factor in the company to deprive them from implementing their individual, pro CSR attitude on their own. Quoting the interviewed: “It is mostly about empathetic feeling. This decision-making process on moral issues is organic and individual”.

The designer appointed the company’s executives as not unwilling for CSR implementation and as not against involvement of the creators in such process. However, the respondent estimated them as definitely concentrated on low cost manufacture aspects and not interested in additional, specialized themes as ethical conduct for example. Citing the interviewed: “These topics simply do not connect”.

Furthermore, the designer presented herself/ himself as open to run a leading role in CSR application, however he/ she judged his/ her position in this area as underestimated. Quoting the respondent: “I could have had the role if the boss was interested, but here there is no such thing. If so, I would have a certain part in education, in making them aware of the problem and to induce broader horizons on human beings’ and animal welfare issues”.

According to the question on the designer’s knowledge on the green clients’ preferences the respondent admitted these are usually “just presumptions” and collecting such data on his/her own, mostly through reading the commentaries on social media.

When inquired on the future policies for CSR, the respondent explained once again the companies shall work out their new priorities and include the designers in the dialog on ethical doctrines. The designer stated the management shall change their principles a bit, in order to drive CSR from contemporary micro scale. The designers shall have more educational role in ethical conduct and to be allowed more to use such solutions, which are embraced in the CSR concept.

5. Discussion of Results

The analysis of both the survey replies and the content of the interviews with the designers provides a field for scientific study and a wide context for discourse on the role of creators in the CSR implementation. The discussion below follows the thesis main scheme presented in the methodology chapter and addresses such topics as CSR as a perceived object, the designers as actors that perceive, the organizational context of the CSR implementation, and the collective meaning and commitment of fashion designers in ethical conduct.

5.1 CSR as a Perceived Object

Regarding the main theme of this work, which is devoted to the analysis of the CSR application and the search for its best implementation tools in the apparel industry, the reflections also touch on the construct of the CSR. The conducted interviews together with the results of the questionnaires indicated three components of CSR application, which are: the environment protection, human rights and animal welfare.

It is significant to notice that these elements appeared in the quantitative research through the multiple choice replies and were validated with certain results. However, in the qualitative study, where the questions did not include specific CSR topics or the hierarchy of their application, and where the answers were open, other conclusions were reached.

Although the designers marked in the survey all of the three CSR construct elements as almost equally substantial, with the score in general above 50% of validation (human rights and ecology received more than 60% of the importance), it seems from the gathered information, that the companies do not always run the CSR on the three fields equally as they happen to select the areas of ethical conduct practice. The interviews have suggested that the brands adjust the range of corporate moral standards either based on the consumers' perception of proper canons, on a general marketing policy related to the

current fashions, or in a more organic way, i.e. by private beliefs of the employees. It has been illustrated by the minority of the designers' interviews, that the CSR 3 is a construct valued and treated by companies in general. However, the three fields of its application are visible in both study methods and are almost equally recognized and weighed by the designers in the survey's responses.

Another finding that emerged from the comparison of quantitative and qualitative research studies on the issues of the CSR's three fields of application, has been the fact that though in the surveys the designers marked the civil rights values as the most important for consumers and also mostly stressed in the designer academic programs, the interviews direct rather higher attention towards animal welfare issues, which - in contrast - were placed on the last, third place in the CSR evaluation through the questionnaires. We can assume that the designers see animal rights as the most significant subject within the CSR practice of the organizations they have professional contact with. As it has often been singled out by the interviewees, the CSR practices of the companies the designers work for frequently tend to exclude the usage of natural fur or leather. Curiously, no other animal-related issues were distinguished, such as natural geese feather or *mulesed* wool usage, which are popular animal welfare problems, studied in the specialized media publications. Animal rights concerns were especially expressed in comments regarding the consumers' negative opinion on natural fur elements in the sold garments, and the worry it causes the companies' PR following the shoppers' criticism of such unethically perceived design. These CSR practices were additionally coupled by the designers with the feeling of compassion and empathic attitude that come from the company's employees.

As a common denominator of both studies, on the second place of importance the respondents placed the ecology as generally highly significant in the context of responsibility in fashion from the point of view of the creators themselves, the clients, and the companies.

However, as can be assumed from the obtained replies, nature protection matters were encompassed by the designers more in the technological aspects such as the usage of

organic or recycled fibres and the choice of sustainable accessories. It is vital to notice that no other pro-environmental practices—such as energy-saving, cutting down on water usage, CO2 footprint, transport distance reduction, or sustainable office organization—were mentioned by the respondents as green practices run in the fashion business. Furthermore, almost none (with one exception) of the quantitative or qualitative study results mentions a cooperation with NGOs or other institutions qualified to measure the environmental impact of the companies' clothes' production and check their pro-environmental activities. What is more, none of the respondents detailed the sustainable corporate behaviour in the context of the ecosystem preservation with regard to the locality in which the organization operates. The pollution emission or strategic, general waste management were not mentioned either.

With regard to the human rights issues, although in the surveys the designers marked social topics with the highest score in the context of their education—and the consumers' perception of ethical matters and contribution to the CSR through creators' selection of responsible suppliers—in the interviews these problems were situated differently, namely on the second place, along with ecological topics. Such concerns were expressed through the remarks on outsourcing the production, local fabrication issues, investigating the manufacture conditions in the so-called developing countries, child labour, and the pace of *fast fashion* production. However, only one respondent has marked that the company they work for cooperates with a specialized institution that supervises the manufacture process under sustainable, fair-trade conditions. Other civil issues, such as the sum of payments, working time limits, legal contracts or gender disputes, were declared as the elements not practiced within the CSR context.

What is interesting to notice is the fact that an extra cross-analysis reveals that the longer the work experience of the designers, the more they appreciate civil values in education. Those who have worked for more than ten years marked this question with 74% of high importance, while the creators that have been professionally active for less than five years marked the question of human rights with 54% of importance. This could indicate that the

designers are becoming more emphatic with regard to human rights issues with time, or more conscious of such problem with their growing work experience.

Taking this into account, it has been discovered that the CSR in the apparel industry is of a three-dimensional character, where the areas of its application cover topics in the following order: animal rights issues, nature protection, and civil rights standards. These, however, are applied in a selective and subjective way. As has been stated by the designers, the CSR strategies are considered on the market with regard to the above three groups of values, but in an inconsistent and diverse way. Although it could be reflected that there exists a certain pattern of CSR-related values and problems, the hierarchy of CSR topics is characterized by a choosy application of the matters favoured within each area of ethical conduct in the clothing business.

5.1.1 Contemporary Introduction of Corporate Social Responsibility by the Clothing Industry

Mapping an accurate CSR implementation in the apparel market from the designers' perspective points out to stimulating findings and topics that might cast new light on the CSR introduction into the garment industry.

First of all, as can be assumed from the dialogs with the creators, the contemporary clothing business does not turn much attention to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility. According to the results, some companies were claimed to be running official CSR programs, but then this practice did not appear in many of the responses. In contrast, other brands were thought not to perform ethical conduct, and in fact, they did not. There were also other cases, where an organization did not have any declared CSR policy, but certain elements were unofficially completed nonetheless.

It can be concluded that the last two groups constitute the mainstream within the designers' replies, pointing out to the lack of regular presence of ethical policy in the fashion market, its wrong application, or a misunderstanding. It can also be assumed that the main body of information shows a certain irregularity in the business in the area of CSR application, with a discrepancy between the following groups of the CSR introduction strategy: CSR official strategy, no CSR strategy, CSR elements applied without official strategy.

With regard to the first section of the research investigating the CSR practice in the clothing business, there are different ways of embracing the ethical conduct implementation in the apparel industry. In general, what can be concluded from both quantitative and qualitative studies, CSR appears as to be rooted in the company's strategic decision and in this case it is the top management that the respondents indicate as the main decision-makers and key players that condition such tactic. In other situations, where the CSR strategy is not formally set up, it is the company's employees, including the designers, who are marked to take over the executives' pro-ethical role in the case of lack of such policy on the official level, and who are said to be implementing moral standards through their individual choices within the organization. In this case the designers were the top managers at the same time, which happens within ownerships structures, and their role is considered as the most prominent one in the context of the CSR application. In the research there were also mentioned enterprises that do not run CSR in any way, be it officially or unofficially, and where employees are not involved in such activity at all.

Nevertheless, when analysing CSR as a perceived object, the situation is presented in the research to be different in the case of the personal involvement of the executives in such practice, where their individual engagement significantly translates into much more efficient application of ethical conduct in the organization. As can be deduced from the interviews, in case when the top management's interest in the CSR application is not driven by financial profits, but is rather based on their own beliefs that converge with CSR-related values, the ethical policy works much better. The implementation of CSR is then visible in the company's real operation as well as its communication. The collected data additionally reveals that the best environment for the CSR implementation is where these

executives are the company owners at the same time, or, even better, when the introduction of CSR to the company is directly connected with their personal preferences.

Although the majority of the respondents identify CSR as the co-production of values and moral principles that are manufactured with the goods naturally, both the questionnaires and the interviews confirmed that it was a more problematic and complex process.

Most of the respondents of the qualitative research revealed a certain market pattern, namely that CSR or related actions are more a random choice and side activity of the companies rather than a purposeful policy that is consciously communicated. Most of the participants judged the companies and their executives as measuring the CSR through commercial lenses and being reluctant to CSR, because it is seen by them as risky from the perspective of profit, time-consuming, and costly, and sometimes even as a whim. However, the criticism was expressed more towards bigger players than institutions with an ownership structure.

Major respondents' voice marked that CSR is run mostly under motives of fear of the so-called 'black PR'. Avoiding a bad name or following some green fashions were aspects additionally indicated in the interviews in the context of motives for CSR implementation. Summing up the designers' statements, CSR is viewed by businesses as an 'exit door' on controversial topics and an escape from unfavourable customers' feedback, which was confirmed in the quantitative study replies. In the case of smaller designer's brands such attitude was not mentioned and the owners were presented as treating CSR as a kind of life philosophy and extension of their private beliefs.

Next, but referring to the above, in both quantitative and qualitative methods of study it is visible that the brands use CSR as a labelling instrument and as a reputation's leverage, although this motive could be strongly related to the earlier reasons for the CSR focus.

Here, in the additional cross-check of the survey's replies, it turned out that the length of professional experience influenced the designers' perceptions of the CSR in this context

and, consequently, the least professional designers see CSR mainly as an idea that builds the corporate image. In the case of designers that have been operating in the market for more than ten years these replies change and CSR in their point of view is not such an important reputation tool. What could be presumed from the above is the fact that, although in general, CSR is presented or received in the market as a good reputation tool, nevertheless, with the designers' experience and deeper reflection, its potential might appear to weaken and not to be so influential.

Regarding the marketing approach to CSR, it was also measured twofold. It turns out that sometimes companies treat CSR as an advertising tool. Similarly in quantitative and qualitative research methods, the designers gave their noticeable feedback to marketing. Such attitude was reasoned by the interviewed as necessary due to the need of promoting ethical actions of the firm and the strong wish for communicating CSR both internally and externally to the consumers in order to give necessary responsibly-manufactured product information. In general, the designers see marketing as a quite helpful statement device to support CSR, which is beneficial both to the company and to the customers.

Although some affirmation for this type of realization of CSR was marked by the respondents in both research methods, they suggested extra threats to this sort of CSR implementation. What was emphasized, was the ancillary attitude of the shoppers to advertising ethical matters, which might be connected by the consumers with *greenwashing* and simply pro-sale practices. In the case of smaller companies or ownership companies, green advertising was suggested to be rooted in honest grounds and well-applied, but missing necessary finances, in order for it to be really effective. In the case of bigger companies, the designers suggested marketing as having a good economic feedback, although sometimes being abused and supporting false claims. Marketing was advocated by the interviewees to be good for CSR when used as an educational and information platform as well as a dialog instrument rather than merely a device to catch the consumers' wallets or to promote untrue contents.

Summing up, as can be derived from the above studies, there are standardized CSR operations that are practiced in the fashion industry and are considered in the quantitative and qualitative research topics. However, fluctuations are visible that suggest that CSR is conditioned by two factors: top managements' attitude to CSR and the size and type of the organization. As is clearly seen in the dialogs, the approach to CSR is different in the case of global retailers, the SME, or when it is run by ownership enterprises. The extent and complexity of the company was strongly highlighted by the respondents as CSR-influencing factors. The executives' or company's owners' approach to CSR was highlighted as stalwartly impacting the CSR performance and influencing other stakeholders' roles. Filtering CSR through the size and type of the company shows that the application of this phenomenon alters in many ways: the concept treatment, the operating shape, and the market impact. These shall be discussed further on.

5.2 Designers as Actors that Perceive

As the research indicates, the designers are aware of the importance of CSR, understand their role - actual and future - in the implementation of that concept and they are willing to participate and to commit. Their part in CSR implementation is indicated to be through their job responsibilities. However, in present days, these responsibilities are mostly expressed as technological solutions. As Table 12 states, the designers perceive their contribution to ethical conduct more in the context of practical issues related to technological solutions, like selection of textiles (80%), selecting technologies (74%), choosing suppliers (73%) or picking up accessories (63%). The managerial tasks developed as designers are less present in their perceptions. However, their cooperation with other team members, their perception of the consumers' minds and the creators' ethical and ecological consciousness are also well recognized and referred as fields with a large potential in the future.

Additionally the study indicates the designers' strong conviction they would follow CSR practice well, provided their position is unlocked and reinforced. Thus they are reliable and valuable commentators and evaluators of the CSR practice. Their perception of the concept

implementation is good, however the suggested model malfunctions and possible solutions are so significant.

5.3 Organizational Context of CSR Application

Referring to the designers' opinions on corporate ethical conduct, both quantitative and qualitative research indicated three differing CSR practices based on the dimension and sort of the company. Such polarization of the outcomes of the study was taken from the additional cross-analysis of the surveys and the extra content of replies given by the designers in the interviews. What is more, both methodological pathways revealed main actors who, according to the respondents' reflections, shape the CSR outcome and influence other players' ethical performance.

First of all, the environment of moral standards application in the fashion business turns out to be conditioned with the type of the company, either an international corporation, local or medium organization, or designer's brand of the ownership character. The company's extent and complexity of a fashion brand influence the organization's attitude to CSR, the responsible operation, the designer's CSR possibilities, the other stakeholders' impact on such activity, and their conjoint relations in the ethical conduct context.

5.3.1 Designers and Large Enterprises in Comparison with SME in the Context of Corporate Social Responsibility

Although in the case of big companies, market size, financial possibilities and amount of produced garments were described by the respondents as having a finer CSR potential due to general business impact and superior stimulus of CSR globally, in the research the designers criticized the big players. The complexity of big brands was a visibly outstanding factor in the replies of the survey's big and small enterprises' employees. Such contrast was also marked in the dialogs with the creators.

As the first disadvantage of a large retailer CSR practice, the respondents have selected the problems of too compound decision-processes, stating that it is too complicated and thus difficult. The setup of CSR internal communication between corporate employees has been judged as “limping” as a consequence of common administrative deficiency and CSR message schemes that are hard to manage in large structures due to the number of the workers and the amount of duties assigned to them. The designers pointed out that there are too many actors involved in the choice procedure in large organizations and accordingly long choice processes negatively affect the effectiveness of CSR. Additionally, the designers marked that in such cases there are too many other employees between them and the executives, which in general remove the creators from the cooperation on CSR topics. It could be concluded that the designers see the CSR procedure as prolonging, delayed and somehow melting in a corporate, large structure.

Regarding international bodies that produce and sell clothing worldwide, the designers additionally marked lack of time for CSR implementation and huge pressure for profit in capital structures as other negative factors. Such a state of affairs was ascribed to *fast fashion* generally used in global apparel industry, which is based on intense, short manufacture cycles, low cost production principles and outsourced fabrication. These two factors were highlighted by the designers as eroding CSR in the hands of big clothing companies.

Another characteristic feature of ethical conduct practice of CSR in more developed business structures was spotted in CSR decisions being made either on managements' level or through the company's employees. In the first case, CSR is said to have a more defined shape due to the education or highlighted personal involvement of the management and vastly assigned by the designers to the executives' role in implementing CSR. As can be assumed, the executives were appointed as possibly the most influential ones in the contemporary market, although too busy due to guarding the company's revenues and having no time for extra, i.e. ethical matters. The respondents declared that although the top management rarely is ethics-orientated, if such exceptional situation occurs, their involvement is significantly affecting the company's strategy due to the bosses' individual

beliefs and personal engagement. Curiously, the quantitative study data suggests that support for such belief slightly weakens with time spent working in the apparel industry. Around 38% of more experienced respondents declared high importance rating to managements' individual choice in CSR implementation, while their much younger colleagues from the same profession contributed to the research with 49% of great feedback to the managers' single role in such concept.

In the latter case of the CSR application, the company workers were also recognized as CSR meaningful performers who take over the CSR introduction; if CSR policy in the company does not exist, malfunctions or ethical directives are not formally passed from the top of the organization. In such cases, the other employees are seen by the designers as unofficial CSR orators, acting informally through their daily tasks, provided that their private beliefs match the CSR values. Interestingly, many participants singled out empathy of the employees as a motive for such support, a spontaneous behaviour that works pro-CSR. Additionally, individual decisions, like for example the refusal of work for a company that sells natural fur or the intentional selection of more sustainable technological materials without official company's directives were marked as examples of such personal-choice contributions to CSR.

When trying to find answers regarding the designer's role in CSR application, one of the most interesting conclusions from the study is the finding from both quantitative and qualitative research, namely, that in the case of global retailers the designers declared their will to support CSR and their position, if such a possibility appears. Regarding job responsibilities that contribute to the CSR implementation, the designers in the selected multiple choice questions of the survey evaluated themselves on the first place in the ranking. However, in reality the designers estimated their part in ethical conduct to be blocked. Such a state of affairs was explained with several reasons later on.

The other employers, e.g. Product Managers or Fashion Buyers, were recognised to be superior to the designers' corporate function and to be influencing the creators' role in the CSR practice. The briefs from company managers were evaluated in the survey almost

with the score of 40% of importance of input to CSR. What is interesting, in the additional cross-analysis of the quantitative study it was revealed that the importance of instructions from these managers grows significantly (52% of high importance score and 29% of average rank outcome) when the respondents' professional experience is based on work for large institutions, which emphasizes the meaning of other workers as factors impacting the designers' CSR operational possibilities in this type of organizations.

Furthermore, selected respondents marked the profession of Product Managers or Fashion Buyers to be sizing the designers' from ethical practice in cases when the company's strategy does not include ethical tactic. When company's executives' directives for the managers are set primary to lower the costs and facilitate the production, the Product Managers or Fashion Buyers were claimed to guard the cost and sale rates first. Unintentionally, however, the structural locking of the designer's role in the CSR implementation by the named professions was stated by the respondents based on cost issues and typical product characteristics that are pushed forward in the production process, not leaving space for ethical matters.

Following the analysis of CSR among bigger enterprises, the luxurious ones were likewise noticed as reacting more towards the CSR concept, referring to their stable financial position. What is more, it was suggested that in the case of exclusive trademarks CSR is treated as an extra activity due to the time and money possibilities of the firm. In such cases, the Artistic Directors were marked to support ethical conduct more willingly and cooperate with the designers on such issues.

Debating more findings, additionally in the case of larger companies the creators suggested that their situation in CSR implementation is that of the lack of dialog with the executives on ethical matters, which could be reinforced by the comparison with quantitative results, where the same participants stated that their role in running negotiations between different team members shall be strengthened. As it appears from the qualitative study, the inventors are rarely invited to a discussion with the top management on ethical principles in design. From most of the respondents' experience it could be assumed that the fashion designers

and the top managers do not connect on CSR topics. Such situation was explained by wrong communication patterns as well as different roles of these actors in the company. The management was presented by the respondents as money- and administration-concentrated, where the designers see themselves as reproducers of orders passed from the hands of Product Managers, Fashion Buyers, and Artistic Directors.

It is interesting to notice that the data collected from the surveys gave extra results, namely that the designers need their role in CSR to be reinforced, which was confirmed by the interviews with the creators. Although their role in the dialogs between different team members on CSR issues was evaluated by the creators rather high, with 63% of highest importance rating, in responses to another survey this part of CSR was placed as the last one on the list of professional activities regarding ethical corporate behaviour. During the conversations with the designers, an impression is made that it is the part of communication with executives that mostly malfunctions in the contemporary CSR communication, where other stakeholders were not mentioned as vital members of such a dispute.

Regarding the results from both the quantitative and qualitative study, which pointed at selection of textiles, technologies, suppliers and accessories as the most influencing CSR, designers' job responsibilities, one can combine with these findings a conclusion from the collected replies, that the designers feel underestimated in their role here. Although perceiving themselves most significant, the creators see themselves undervalued in position of choosing the right, sustainable subcontractors, what they expressed to be willing to share with the executives and the management. The designers assessed themselves in the interviews to be potentially proper or even best supervisors of the production conditions due to their responsibility on technology that is used for the design purpose and their expert knowledge on design, engineering and consumers' needs. Here, there were suggestions collected from the respondents, that a direct contact with the manufacturers and visits to the factories and creating a bond with subcontractors would influence the CSR, according to created emphatic feelings, also among other workers and understanding of the interest of other stakeholders.

What could be interesting to notice is a judgement from the survey, which presents lower rating of prominence of selection of accessories in case of designers working for global companies, with the score of 47% of importance in comparison to the outcome of 73% of significance in case of SME employees. It seems that the more complex the production process is, the more difficult it is to apply CSR even through the right technological solutions.

However, what could be clearly noticed in both the survey results and the interviews is an opinion, the designers see their job as eventually mostly contributing to CSR implementation, next to the executives position, where they point their part in embracing differences in culture and in values from several parts of the world. Remodelling corporate culture is likewise highly evaluated among the designers' replies, although from their perspective it could be stronger. Such concern is expressed not only in the interviews' commentaries, but also by the survey replies, where the creators put themselves in this context on the first place, just before the executives, as mostly donating to CSR implementation.

Other reflection on the variances in CSR performance between large enterprises and small ones is coming from combining both of the research ways topics that touch the customers' position in CSR implementation. The survey and the interviews intention was to find whether they are included in the process of CSR implementation, if they are an object that could be easily measured by the big players and to what extend they shall be involved in the concept practice.

Here additionally there came interesting findings. Although in the survey the designers rather indicated that the extent to which the consumers are taken in account in CSR implementation is rather on a mediocre level and could be higher, a deeper research through the interviews on general companies strategy pointed, that the big companies do not take under consideration green customers almost at all. Contrastingly, it could be implicated from the qualitative investigation, that big enterprises have problems in understanding consumers' minds in context of more responsible fashion. The MNE brands

were judged by the designers as typical product features oriented and thus following such outline in measuring even the 'green' clients' perceptions. It might be withdrawn the larger organizations do not contact the 'green' consumers and do not try to collect information on ethical shoppers' wishes. It was likewise indicated they do not possess understanding of such needs and thus the research instruments they use for checking their clients are not directed towards consumers' observations on CSR.

Therefore a question here appears, how the fashion retailers actually get any information on CSR sensitive clients, so they could direct dedicated communicates and products to this group of consumers? What could be remarkable for this part of the dialog is the fact, that the designers declared in both study methods to be becoming more reflective on their role in CSR implementation and to be increasingly sensitive towards ethical issues. The designers evaluated themselves as the unique ones that are subtle and emphatic towards the users, due to the character of their education and profession. The respondents likewise presented themselves to be the only ones truly interested in understanding the consumers' needs regarding responsibly produced goods. Due to the presented realm, the fashion designers' tasks are focused on the users' needs. Such role was marked as not officially assigned in large corporations, neither an impression could be grabbed from the creators' commentaries, such position is appreciated in the big structures. In the survey, around 70% of the questionnaire participants marked their role in creating a bond between the company and the customers shall be reinforced and even around 80% of participants chose a reply that designing products and services that encourage consumers likewise shall be fortified. This could be additionally linked with the answers where the designers appointed themselves to be the proper collectors of information on the clients, the ones that actually are qualified to investigate the consumers' perceptions. Furthermore, the designers in contrast to other cooperating with them company workers described themselves to eventually have an exclusively direct contact with the clients during visits in the shops, where they have the opportunity to talk to the consumers personally. The inventors reasoned this way their prominent contribution to CSR, as the ones that accurately know the consumers' minds and because they are the unique that possess qualifications and tools to collect data on the users' preferences.

It could be presumed, the designers' hunger for information on CSR and green consumers' preferences is caused not only because of lacks in administrative procedures in corporate structures, but also due to insufficient education they received in the schools they graduated from. As the respondents declared in the quantitative and qualitative study, during academic education, they were rather not prepared for designing in CSR context, although almost half of the surveyed marked on the third place after the media and other creators, these were the schools that they derived their CSR information from. As on the second place of the survey results these were other designers that were appointed by the respondents as the most significant CSR knowledge foundation, where in contrast the company was placed on the 4th place of rating. It is a suggestive indication, that external CSR sources are much more appreciated by the designers than the organizations they work for.

What is more, regarding the CSR academic preparation, the quantitative study also revealed it just gave the respondents a general acquaintance, with distinguished highest focus on the designers' part in ethical practice and on the consumers' role on the second place with similar level of importance rating. However, more profound research in qualitative study uncovered the designers to be more critical on the school education they received. Accordingly, from both of the research methods it could be assumed the designers are neither well-polished on CSR by the academic institutions they finished, nor, from their perspective, trained sufficiently on CSR issues by the companies they work for. Probably due to such a state of affairs, the designers assemble and analyse information on ethically focused consumers on their own, what was visibly highlighted by the respondents in both research methods.

As it could be concluded from the surveys and the interviews, such examination is run through the media, dedicated articles and thanks to social media lecture, focusing on the consumers' commentaries. In a much smaller, almost insignificant part, the respondents indicated external workshops or private family environment as potential CSR knowledge basis. In the interviews the designers had occasion to explain in a more detailed way, that their private market observation and direct talks to the clients also are substantial ways of broadening horizons on the consumers' perception. What the creators clearly stated, is to

have the role of natural seekers for needed data, which is gained just on their own and from their own initiative. Being main company collectors on the shoppers' CSR discernment was marked by the designers as an organic outcome, that is not formally established, however in reality functioning.

Following, on the second place, other designers' as a source of information on green consumers' preferences were also marked. Likewise here, as earlier, additional cross-analysis of the survey replies shows differences in the answers that were given by big retailers' workers and smaller enterprises' ones. There is a polarisation in respondents' views that indicates the SME workers perceive other designers as highly important CSR knowledge cradle (58%), when in case of global companies only 29% of the participants marked such option with high evaluation. It could be assumed, such situation is confirmed in valorisation of the survey's other answers, where the company as a knowledge foundation is given further place, however just behind the media, after the other designers and behind the schools the designers finished. There is an impression, such position of the inventors in collecting the data is shown in the research as special and exclusive in context of the whole company's organisation.

According to the consumers and understanding of their needs, especially by the designers in ethical context, the quantitative and qualitative study intention was to find data on the final users of ethical goods. Asking to the designers questions on the green customers' perceptions and on their market profile checked both the designers' knowledge on this topic and accordingly their recognition of the group of CSR sensitive shoppers. It was also meaningful in context of replies given to a question regarding the consumers' role in CSR implementation, where the designers expressed their affirmation on enhancing the shoppers' part in ethical conduct.

The presented in quantitative research demographics of green consumers did not alter in case of answers coming from big companies' employees or from the small ones. The designers were almost unanimous in summing up that the consumers mostly involved into CSR are the highly educated, middle-aged women that come from high income countries.

Contrary to that, the inventors avoided evaluating the mature men with elementary education, coming from emerging countries, what could indicate they could be ignorant to CSR. The check-up of the demographics also presented a middle group, neither CSR positively or negatively oriented. These were the female youngsters with secondary education, coming from middle income countries.

According to the general CSR definitional construct and the survey findings, three CSR components be it: human rights, environment protection and animal welfare are important for the consumers in general in the same way from the designers' perspective. In a deeper, more detailed study it was revealed more, that civil issues are perceived on the first place of importance for the shoppers, then the consumers from the questionnaire collected data are shown as taking care of ecological matters and on the final place the shoppers are seen by the designers to favour animal welfare. It is significant to notice, that the qualitative review exposed another market inclination, where the last field of ethical subjects in CSR practice was seated to be the most important one, however in corporate CSR behaviour. The same conclusion was withdrawn from the literature review. Although the alternations in the survey responses were not exceeding 8% of markings and 0.30 of weight of difference in given valorisation, this contradiction could suggests the companies have a slightly different approach to what CSR values are more important for the consumers, in comparison to the values appreciated by the clients, as seen from the designers' perspective.

When focusing on the ethically oriented customers, both the quantitative and qualitative approaches investigated the reasons for buying clothes related to CSR. Here the designers had more detailed replies due to the suggested answers in the survey, where such purchase is driven due to pretty similarly evaluated belief in the brand's ethical values, good product information the shoppers are provided, social positioning, following the group trends and polishing self- perception. However, during the interviews, which are a more spontaneous expression of views, the respondents marked providing sufficient product information and proper marketing of information, of CSR related collections described as pro consumers actions, encouraging these stakeholders for involvement in responsible purchase. What

develops more from the quantitative research method, the designers calculated marketing as highly evaluated relation between manufacturers and users and as a win-win solution both for ethical conduct and advertising, with outcome of 15% and 18% of highest rating. However, the interviews results' content indicates that marketing shall be treated as an information and education platform, not sale device in this case.

Following measuring the consumers as a perceived object, the designers additionally were interrogated on the reasons the shoppers do not buy goods related to CSR. Here, the creators, mostly the ones that have experience of working for big brands, meaningfully pointed at the high price of the garments as such negative factor. Especially, what was noticed in the interviews, in case of *fast fashion*, globally operating retailers, the price is a purchase determinant. What both research ways confirmed is the lack of information on the product that is another element that prevents selection of responsible fashion. Also other matters that impact negatively CSR related products choice appeared in the study. Lack of trust to the brand's ethical concerns was placed far behind the other replies in the survey with 37% of the highest ranking. Although not fashionable look of the garments was situated only with a score of 22% of high valorisation of importance, the issue of good style was additionally mentioned by the designers in the interviews, where they suggested, it as a typical purchase driver for all types of consumers, including the ethical ones.

Continuing to compare the study results about the consumers, as analysed by the designers, the creators expressed their more detailed opinions on the fashion consumers characteristics and preferences in the interviews. What could be concluded from the surveys and the interviews, the designers working for large structures confirm to see the consumers mostly driven by price, underling importance of typical market product features as the main purchase charm. What the respondents added, is that the consumers are often ignorant to CSR issues. However, on the other hand the consumers are presented as not reluctant towards CSR practices, provided they are well-informed on the products and well-encouraged to follow ethical purchase. As it could be summarized from both the quantitative and qualitative study, the regular clients' CSR engagement is determined with the approach their consumers' interest would not suffer while being delivered responsible produced garments, be it first attractive for them and not costly clothes.

5.3.2 Designers and SME in the Context of Corporate Social Responsibility

When analysing the CSR introduction in case of small brands and locally producing enterprises, the designers that base their judgments on work experience for SME noticed, that small brands have just smaller financial possibilities, thus their CSR operations might not be that spectacular as in case of larger structures. The designers that are or were hired by local companies marked such minor companies to have lesser market impact in context of moral standards implementation and suggested, that such smaller organizations be less meaningful in CSR effectiveness in general business analysis according to their only local influence and slighter amount of produced clothing.

Furthermore, although pressure for profit in context of CSR implementation was not marked in the dialogs with the designers in case of SME, smaller organizations were described by the respondents as struggling more for survival in the market among giant retailers, thus in such situation not taking under account CSR issues that much or sometimes not at all.

Finding more from the quantitative and qualitative research, one of the most visible conclusions when analysing the ethical concept from the perspective of a small or a big fashion brand is the relation between the designers and the management in CSR implementation. Although in case of smaller organizations CSR was estimated by the study participants as mostly treated unofficially or not treated at all, there were comments that added positive light on CSR operated in the hands of minor structures. The SME management was rather estimated by the study participants as not isolated that much from the designers in the CSR related decision process in comparison to global companies. The executives and company managers were claimed to be slightly more open to the designer's eventual suggestions on CSR, working closer to the designers and being more easily influenced by the designers' ethical orientation. It could be joined with an additional cross analysis of the survey replies, that point at briefs from the company's managers less important in contribution to CSR in case of SME, indicating at the designers more

meaningful position in communicating and deciding on CSR in such case in comparison to the surroundings of big retailers.

Continuing on the matters of communication in SME, due to smaller complexity, the creators' interviews suggested rather more flexible situation of impacting CSR through their dialog with the company workers in comparison to big brand's CSR practice. As it could be concluded from the collected interviews, the contact with the executives, the management and other staff was presented by the respondents as slightly easier in case of smaller structures, more natural and appearing in a more organic way.

Next, in case of designers' role and job duties in CSR area in SME, the respondents' commentaries did not leave a major feeling of being underestimated in selecting the suppliers or the right technologies, what was contradictory marked in example of large structures. As it was stated earlier in this document, these activities were emphasised in both research methods as highly significant in ethical conduct and in supporting enterprises' CSR. What could be substantial for the study, would be another distinction in CSR implementation that was revealed in additional cross analysis of the quantitative method and that was already mentioned above. There were additional issues in the survey participants' replies, that gave parallel to the qualitative study findings, that the designers gave much more importance to selection of accessories as a highly meaningful job responsibility in case of SME workers.

When investigating the role of the designers in small company's relation with the clients, the creators' replies gave a picture of a better, occasional, direct contact in the sale locations, gathering information during contracting of the collections and reading the consumers' commentaries in the internet. What is curious, is the fact that they also placed other designers as much more important CSR knowledge source, then large structures' employees in their replies in additional cross analysis. Moreover, similar answer discrepancies were found in case of replies given by the designers that possess their own brand and are, at the same time, company owners.

5.3.3 Designers, Ownership Structures, and Corporate Social Responsibility

In case of ownership structures of the company, where the organization does not only sell and produce locally, but also the holder is a designer that creates for his brand, the perspectives on CSR were even more original. First of all, in additional cross analysis, it was found that the longer the designers' experience in the market is, the lower is their evaluation of the knowledge they got on the owners' CSR role in the CSR academic program, what could indicate field practice gives other perspectives on the position of this job in CSR performance. What is more, in case the collections' authors and companies' executives function at the same time, the designers judged their role in CSR implementation as primary and strongly contributing to CSR strategy effectiveness. They claimed such policy to be an autonomous then, more natural and more easily business injected in comparison to other type of SME and to global corporations performance.

In such type of company construct the designers – owners defined their CSR involvement as a kind of mission and philosophical attitude that is likewise expressed through their business. Here, the designers that represented also their own brand in the research study, mentioned additional advantages and CSR contributing issues as calm and independent decision process, smaller complexity of the companies' structure, smaller number of people interfering into the choice process and free creativity in responsible fashion. Such respondents perceived their role as strongly attributing to ethical fashion design due to *slow fashion* character of their enterprise and free creativity both under aesthetical and technological meaning.

The designers claimed, apart from hard fight for their revenues and place in the market, their CSR to be honestly applied, with big personal engagement on many levels. It would be interesting to notice, according to CSR3- CSR three fields of application, the company owners that create for their own brand marked slightly different hierarchy in ethical values, what was expressed in the interviews. In such case, mostly animal welfare and human rights issues were placed on the first place of their CSR order, then ecology as the last one.

However, these alternations were pretty slight and did not influence a general picture in which all the tree areas of CSR practice were treated with attention.

The affirmative for ownership structures voices coming from the interviewed that possess their own brands are additionally based on their belief that such type of companies is contributing to CSR due to their basic, different market character, which was generally encompassed as *slow fashion*. In the designers' perception such kind of companies designing and producing less garments, with the help of local production, support CSR naturally through minimisation of overproduction and overconsumption, by stimulating resident economy and reducing environmental costs, due to smaller transport distances at least. In such case the designers presented themselves as those who inject ethical schemes and principles in the market through the way they manufacture, through empowering native, unique slow design and production. There were also other aspects mentioned, which were the creativity and exceptionality, that implement different patterns working against overconsumption. Based on investment into quality of design and innovative, green technologies, instead of quantity of sold goods, the designers marked their contribution to remodelling the market, to changing the bad purchase habits into better, more ecological and more fair ones.

Although the CSR values were claimed to be implemented through selection of the right technologies and accessories and through *slow fashion* promotion, equal significance was assigned by the respondents to proper choice of the right clients and marketing the CSR operations in the correct way to this specific group of consumers. As the consumers appear in the discourse, the designers that possess their own brands, although not judging the users as being ancillary towards CSR, were pretty confident, that in general, regular consumers are rather not interested in CSR and are not searching for information on ethical goods that much. The respondents in the interviews marked a great importance of targeting the right shoppers, who are interested in ethical fashion, thus they are responsive to CSR actions. CSR well targeted communication, proper advertising and spreading the information among those ethically oriented was highlighted in the interviews of small brands' owners. It was reasoned with the explanations, that CSR strategy, if not focusing on the interested in ethical matters group is ineffective, or could be even bad for the company regardless of

the type of the firm. What the designers added in context of ownership structures is also an easier way of collecting the consumers' minds and wishes, through personal contact during purchase process and direct communication with the clients in emails while gathering feedback after selling the garments in case of ownership structure of the firm.

5.4 Collective Meaning for Fashion Designers

As it could be summed up, there is already a common understanding between the designers what they need to know and what to do in the area of CSR implementation. Through comparison of the study results it could be comprehended, their contribution to the phenomenon is meaningful, multi-layered and based on interaction with other actors.

As the study points, the designers possess artistic compassion, creativity, professional skills and knowledge that makes a proper background to design and produce goods in the ethical spirit. As both the quantitative and qualitative research suggest, through technological solutions they have the power to code the product at the design stage and to determine the production more into sustainable character. This way the designers admitted they might remodel the corporate culture and reshape the market through providing already responsibly designed goods. The creators have explained that through influencing this way the consumers' minds, through getting them used to supply of such type of clothes they might implement more noble standards in the business.

Moreover, the designers hold CSR professional skills, possessed data and ethical sensitivity make also a value that could be shared with other employees. As it has been specified, that puts the designers from the interviewed creators' perspective in the role of company eventual effective CSR educators. It would be also important to notice the fact, that the creators, due to their occupation position within the organization stay in touch with many team members, what enhances their role of CSR principles trainers, but likewise CSR communicators. Through their place in the work environment, they may transfer CSR issues among other employees and this way enhance the CSR policy.

What even more draws the attention on the creators' prominent role in communicating CSR in the fashion industry is the global character of the business. The clothes production is mainly of a world-wide character. Such organization of design, production and sale of garments might significantly contribute to common understanding of the subject on a universal scale. This way the designers might enforce the international action towards more responsible solutions for fashion industry. However, as the designers have admitted their collective meaning and CSR involvement is detained and system locked, what shall be explained and concluded in details further on.

6. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Future Research

6.1 Designers' Commitment

6.1.1 Designers as Corporate Social Responsibility Communicators

This work has drawn attention to a communication gap that is one of the reasons for malfunctioning of CSR in fashion industry. As was validated by the research, communication is a keyword in the attempts to improve CSR, which seems to be one of the most important results of this research. However, as was indicated, communicating CSR should not be understood as green advertising in the hands of marketing managers. The research clarified that marketing could potentially support CSR policies, but CSR cannot be based on marketing, neither should it be treated as a method to exploit the compassionate clients' pockets. Marketing perception of green consumers is rather risky; in general it is treated as deceptive, aimed at finances, and leveraging corporate economy. This mixed-methods study demonstrates that clients approach this handling of CSR with much distrust and reluctance, which then results in negative outcomes, ones that are not in line with previous assumptions.

With all this in mind, the investigation suggests that designers can be potentially better communicators. Therefore, when using qualitative methods to analyse who could communicate CSR in place of marketing departments, designers turned out to be great CSR correspondents, mainly due to internal communication of CSR principles and, in consequence, the promotion of such ideology in their closest work environment. As it happens, designers want to share with their management their opinions with regard to the best implementation tools of CSR, which mostly revolve around a proper selection of sustainable technologies and responsible co-operators. What is more, the creators also claim that they should be the ones to pass valuable market information from the clients to the middle managers, and similarly share their knowledge on CSR related technologies, suppliers and customers' preferences with the executives. However, the reality shows that

the designers' understanding about CSR and the consumers' perception in this context is left unacknowledged.

The negligence of a company's attention to, and communication with, green consumers is another aspect explored through this work. Although companies have specialised departments committed to identifying the character of the market, as well as qualified agencies map customers' perceptions, the study has indicated that they rarely devote their attention to green consumers specifically. As the research suggested, a typical data collection process with regard to fashion clients' preferences usually checks emblematic product characteristics, e.g. the aesthetics and pricing, avoiding other values that could be desired by alternative or minor groups, such as ethically-oriented consumers.

Acknowledgement of the topic brings another conclusion that green consumers' preferences are presented in this investigation as not explored sufficiently by the conventional fashion market. Ethically-oriented shoppers' minds seem ignored by companies' top management, where the lack of focus and knowledge of this group creates gaps in communication and, as a result, the supply of responsible fashion. With this in mind, another significant discovery is that the designers included in the study seem to be the best ones to collect such needed data and pass it to the company's management. Although, surprisingly, the inventors do not have specialised measurement equipment that could be used on a large scale, the research shows that the creators themselves are the ones who can effectively gather the needed information about the state of the green market.

The designers may be good at perceiving, reading and then communicating the consumers' minds. This thesis' novelty lies also in the discovery that the creators do additional and unacknowledged work in their companies in this area. This type of their CSR involvement and supplementary character of their occupation is hidden, nor is this fact used on the mainstream market. It can be assumed that corporations or even smaller brands might be spending money on market research, while their creative employees might collect and communicate such data for free, doing their own research that they often need to design in a more responsible way. The designers express their regret that their input in this regard is

not taken into account; they think they could be a great source of market information about green shoppers, influencing their top management's strategies and improving the CSR practice this way.

Furthermore, better communication inside and outside the organisation is an integral element of CSR injection. The company must inform the employees about its CSR strategy and in this way convey the pro-CSR instructions, trainings, and relevant finances. Here the marketing role might be decisive, for instead of advertising the commodities, it shall strengthen the company's sustainable concept presentation. Internal and external communication with regard to the organisation's ethical operations, expectations, and targets— included in self- regulation policies and performed in a balanced way in order to avoid *greenwashing* accusations shall be followed. Here, apart from the marketing departments, the designers through their work position among many stakeholders present themselves as good, internal CSR communicators. It could be assumed, if joining forces together, both the marketing department and designers would help the other employees to be identified with the ethical corporate strategy, might integrate the workers around such concept and make them cooperate better on the CSR area. However, in general such function of the designers comes out from the research as locked and not used in the market.

6.1.2 Designers as Corporate CSR Trainers

Another issue that stands out in the study and supports the view on the designers' dominant and real activity on CSR is the designers' potential in educating their professional surroundings. Most of the designers interviewed in this research sense their power in coaching other stakeholders about the CSR area. Although the creators admit that the academic education they received at schools was insufficient to design under the CSR umbrella effectively, they admit to complete their knowledge themselves and to possess the highest understanding related to ethical matters in design and production. They declare to have a huge interest in information about issues related to this subject what they reason with their sensitivity and interest in sustainable technological solutions. Relating to their professional skills the designers turn out to be the transmitters of social values, CSR

exponents, and, possibly, effective educators for the company's management, other employees, and even the consumers. The creators declare that they possess the right knowledge to pass it to the other CSR-practice supporters if there is such a possibility. The top management is suggested by them to be the most important in this context, followed by other co-workers—most vitally to Fashion Buyers and Product Managers—and, finally, the clients themselves.

Additional positive aspect that emerges from this research is that the designers are truly willing to discuss and train sustainability to other employees, too, not only to executives. Regarding the middle management, in order for Fashion Buyers and Product Managers to be willing to get involved into ethical matters, they must be challenged and coached about the drawbacks of the contemporary *fast fashion*. Here, the above-mentioned desire to train and education skills, meaning the right knowledge and sensitivity of the designers are significant due to the designers' close contact with these managers. This, however, applies only when the CSR policy is officially set up and the designers are allowed to decide on sustainable solutions during the manufacture process.

Moreover, the designers emerge as to be able to impact the consumers' thinking patterns through providing them with responsibly-produced goods; they convey abundant information about green processes of fabrication. Through the delivery of ethically made items on the one hand and spreading information on how these eco clothes were made on the other, the designers indirectly educate the market. Additionally, the research has shown that the creators understand their coaching role towards the shoppers due to their direct contact with the clients at sale places, where individual talks on ethical matters can take place.

6.1.3 The Designers' Role in CSR through Technological Solutions as a Proper CSR Tool. Designers as Underestimated CSR Players.

One of very strong outcomes of this study is the finding that an ultimate contribution to CSR in garment industry is about the practical part that takes place through the choice of

the right, sustainable technologies and contractors that meet ethical requirements. This work mentions several positive tools used to advance ethical issues in the fashion industry, however sustainable technological solutions are indicated as being the most proper direction for CSR implementation in the garment business. Apart from acknowledging the literature review, surveys, and the interviews, all of which point to this situation, it is also significant to notice how strongly the designers emphasise that by the means selected at the beginning of the design phase they contribute most successfully to advance ethical standards in the company.

Recognition of the subject brings clear conclusion that the creators have the opportunity to improve the market and follow responsible design through a simple selection of proper, sustainable technologies. Not only is this a promising finding, but it is also a great perspective for CSR practice in fashion; the study has shown that this is the most effective element of the CSR puzzle. As both quantitative and qualitative research methods have revealed, the designers are very conscious of their pro-CSR role in clothes production through choosing the right, sustainable materials and suggesting ethical suppliers. They find themselves potentially powerful and responsible for the CSR through their duties, believing that they have the right competences to fulfil this fragment of CSR application.

However, a certain failure in CSR application has also been found through this research. Namely, the collected data has confirmed some earlier assumptions, i.e. that clothes' designers are undervalued in CSR implementation and their role in ethical practice through selecting more sustainable technologies is underrated or even ignored. Even when the company runs CSR through a marketing department or has a separate CSR section, the designers unanimously admit that they are not invited to take part in talks with the executives on these issues, nor are they usually included in decision processes with regard to fashion production technologies. Regrettably, the pattern is that they are not even consulted on their perception of these problems or on the companies' suppliers. As the designers complain, their role in CSR through technological qualifications and daily duties in ethical conduct is unrecognised, unappreciated, and included occasionally, mostly in smaller companies and ownership structures.

6.2. Industry Adaptation of CSR

6.2.1 CSR Not Common

As this work has determined, it is not that common for fashion companies in general to practice ethical policy. The qualitative research has revealed that clothing enterprises mostly do not include CSR in their official activity. Apparel companies see CSR as a luxurious fad that generates costs and brings unrecognized, limited benefits. What is more, the fashion brands in this study are clearly exposed as being superficial about ethical policy, more boosting their sales and improving the image through CSR-related actions or treating them as an escape from problematic topics. As we may read Phillida Jay in Black (2012) “ For many large brands, sustainable luxury is still a nascent field, demanding clear goals, and consistent organizational learning and transformation” (p.237).

CSR in clothing business turns out to be included more due to some market tendencies, but without any deeper understanding or commitment. Another thing that the research brings up is that in general the employees are not informed about CSR policies, nor are they instructed how to implement them. Unfortunately, more conscious inclusion of CSR into corporate strategy turns out to be rare in the fashion industry. When it happens, it is adapted by organisations which believe they can afford it, or companies, whose management or owners have confidence in this idea through some personal involvement. The idea of practising CSR just for the sake of common wealth as the corporate, philosophical approach to business seems to be secondary.

With all the above considerations in mind, this work has also determined that the apparel market is segmented into three major groups of companies' tactics towards CSR, with some subtler distinctions. The first group includes MNE that happen to run CSR policies, although they seem to be doing it with many difficulties, failures, and inconsistencies. The second set includes medium and small organisations that, as the research has shown, mostly do not possess recognised ethical principles, although in some cases they follow moral standards in less formal, but still organic way. The study has also found that the SME group also includes minor designers' brands; these ones practise CSR strategies more

often or, in cases where such ethical policies are not 'established, the owners or the designers seem to be willing to follow ethical standards in an honest and effective way.

6.2.2 Managers' Role in Conditioning CSR and Setting Up the Designers' Position in CSR.

Sadly, the reality does not look optimistic, since the research with regard to CSR application points to the exclusion of the designers in the apparel system model, with their input being underestimated or sometimes even ignored. The novelty of this work is rooted in a deeper exploration of this negative phenomenon, which has led to the conclusion that the designers' role in CSR malfunctions due to a specific set of factors that could be analysed in organizational context.

This study has revealed that the clothes' creators' position in the ethical policy application is often downplayed by other professionals in the company, mostly the managers, but in particular by the Fashion Buyers and Product Managers. These are jobs that have not been acknowledged in the related literature review, although they did emerge as important actors in the qualitative research, ones that have the potential to block the creators' CSR effectiveness in the organisational context, ceasing the designers' activity and involvement in the CSR practice. In general, the Fashion Buyers and Product Managers seem to be following the executives' profit- and administration-oriented orders rigidly, contributing to the maintenance of the companies' typical and official economic strategies.

As has been previously explained, the executives' choices are mostly based on the maximisation of income and the minimisation of costs. Most big retailers' managements are mainly revenue-concentrated, naturally guarding the companies' main goal, namely the money, instead of being interested in constructive activities, such as social service and citizen-like performance. Corporate rationalism and the very phrase 'profit sacrifice' are not perceived well by economists or executives. When the company's management is hostile towards CSR, or perhaps just ignorant towards official ethical policy, the above-mentioned Fashion Buyers and Product Managers seem to remain on the position of

corporate profit guards. In such a situation, they stay unsupportive to ecological technological solutions and fair-trade suppliers, since these are usually more expensive than more conventional means.

The study reveals that the Fashion Buyers and Product Managers—due to the said lack of well-established ethical policy, communication problems, and responsible fashion manufacture being more expensive—are consistent in not conveying, supporting, and practising CSR implementation. Therefore, in such cases they create barriers on the organisational and decision levels for the more ethically-concerned designers, who contradict their priorities and directives. If CSR policy is not officially set up, the Fashion Buyers and Product Managers do not facilitate CSR-related principles, nor do they let the creators flourish with the solutions they come up with regard to designing and producing more responsible garments.

What is more, according to the study, the role of the middle management is underestimated, too, and could also be embraced more positively and crucially. Now unwilling to engage in CSR, they could—if trained and organisationally prepared for the CSR implementation—be more supportive to the designers, which the creators themselves have admitted in the interviews. However, such a shift of attitudes and dynamics in CSR application is strongly conditioned by, first, the corporate size, self-regulations, and, second, the offer of sustainable technologies.

To continue the subject of possible improvements with regard to CSR practice in fashion, what is perhaps one of the most prominent suggestions underlined by the research participants is the need to strengthen the CSR scheme through the other employees' personal experience of ethical problematics. Exposition to CSR-related problems and issues is highly advisable, especially with regard to the executives and the middle management. In terms of the suggested changes, the decision-making process with regard to moral issues can be approached not only through definitional and practical lenses, but it should also be understood as the organic, individual process. As some of the study participants have stated, CSR is more about empathetic feeling. The earlier recommended

personal experience of CSR is suggested to constitute a natural, living filter of corporate decisions. Creating individual involvement and generating personal interest in this topic should make the CSR practice much better. A personal bond of managers, corporate workers, subcontractors, and suppliers with people who actually make commonly accessible T-shirts; witnessing environmental damages; or becoming aware of the impact of animal-derived products on the welfare of other existing creatures—will all result in changes in attitudes towards CSR as well as a better understanding of, and a greater contribution into this phenomenon.

6.3 CSR Implementation and the Company's Dimension

6.3.1 Complexity as an Obstacle for CSR

One of the failures of the CSR practice in the apparel industry lies in the wrong organisational process as exemplified by a systematic shutdown of the designers' access to CSR implementation. Their potential is hindered through a lack of a decisional position. This lack of opportunity as well as a certain deficiency in communication of CSR between the designers and other workers, including the executives, is one of the more serious gaps that this study has revealed. The designers, although they seem to be open for assistance and dialogue on CSR—especially since they possess the right knowledge and good will to unite companies on ethical matters—are largely deprived of their own voice and isolated from decision-making processes and from the executives.

The study shows that this state of affairs has two reasons. First, the separation of the creators from the top management is strongly related to the size and thus general character of the company. As has been mentioned at the beginning of this section, MNE happen to have a CSR strategy more often than their medium and small competitors. Nevertheless, although this issue does not seem to be included in the literature review, this research has also suggested that despite higher financial and supposedly better structural possibilities, those large retailers can face more challenges in CSR application than their smaller rivals, which is, ironically, due to their size and complexity.

Future research is needed on how to understand complexity as a variable that modulates organisational adaptation. The investigation reveals that the larger the company, the bigger challenges it might face due to its overall density. Complexity involves numerous other participants of the ethical policy implementation, because it translates into many actors being managed and, consequently, involved in the ethical conduct. However, it also means that there are extra actors that are put among the designers and the executives. This is why in MNE the designers are said to be disconnected from the top management and, thus, prevented from expressing their convictions. In very complex structures, the designers are claimed not to be able to stimulate sustainable solutions as they have no possibility of impacting the company's executives with regard to ethical matters, because they have too many people to pass in order to reach the executives. Their function in the prospective persuasion of the management towards ethical standards is organisationally hindered and cannot be envisioned that easily. The dialogue between the designers and the executives turns out to be the most serious malfunction, provided that it exists at all.

This study also helps to understand that the smaller the organisation is, the more direct and better the communication between the head of the company and the creative department is, which the designers have strongly emphasised during the interviews. In smaller structures, the creators tend to admit that their work is organised around more indirect contact with the company's top management, and they do have the possibility to speak to the executives on ethical matters. However, their opinions are rarely taken into account as they depend on the executives' individual choices and their level of knowledge on ethical problems in the industry.

One positive prospect that comes from this work is an assumption that when the SME become a designers' brand with ownership structure, the application of CSR shall be even more fruitful. CSR turns out to be an open door for further development and growth, but it is the case only when this ideology is consistent with private beliefs of the owners and designers, and when the technological and financial status of the company provides a supportive background for conducting ethical reforms.

6.3.2 Outsourcing Commitments

With regard to the above, a highly important recommendation especially for global, mainstream retailers concerns the question of outsourcing, which is actually the origin of problems in the CSR context. It would be utopian to assume that large organisations could change their size or type of production overnight. Their idea for survival is based on low and fast production, called *fast fashion*, that is rooted in shifting the manufacture to cheaper, mostly *Global South* locations. Thus, it would be highly desirable for the MNE to strengthen the audits of suppliers and co-operators, and begin thoughtful evaluations of their co-operators' ethical standards, what had been mentioned in the interviews with the designers. It can also be considered reasonable for the bigger players to cross-check the subcontractors and take brave decisions to eliminate the unethical ones. In case of MNE and global retailers, focusing on new, outside contractors that meet ethical requirements is expected. Such a modification could be made smoothly, with the number of more responsible business partners increasing each year. Time and money are both needed, of course, since CSR is not a costless investment, as has been clarified earlier. The larger companies should be aware of such imperfections, and prepare for increases in costs, workload, and the number of specialists needed to make the necessary audits. Therefore, extra finances should be allocated when selecting sustainable, but usually more expensive technologies. However, what the company might gain in return is more consistent CSR policy, a better reputation, and perhaps new clients.

Yet another suggested development relating to the above is the question of following the CSR rules on production places and in local economies. These should not be ignored. Production locations cannot be expected to be merely examined. They need a strong support on sustainable production standards from the main organisation. The understanding of the CSR topic by suppliers and co-workers is thought to be as important as educating the company's own employees. Feedback on ethical corporate strategy given by large structures to the so-called developing countries, where manufacturing processes are outsourced, is absolutely required. Proper theoretical coaching and good patterns of behaviour should be brought by the corporations to their external parties, since the latter ones can be deprived of such tools and financial possibilities.

6.3.3 Education Commitment

It should be emphasised once again that systematic changes in education of the fashion industry are required, including main brands' workers. According to the collected scientific material, academic institutions do not meet the expectations of the designers with regard to the preparation for CSR implementation. Thus one of the recommended directions could include companies' effort with regard to training their employees, although the burden of education cannot be put on the corporate arms alone. A fashion company's main purpose is not to educate, but to earn money, which, of course, should be done in the most ethical manner possible. If a company considers developing their corporate ethical strategy, the designers, as shown through this study, could offer great support, providing trainings in the CSR implementation to their colleagues and third parties alike. This is why they should be given special attention, due to their sensitivity to this topic, their job qualifications and knowledge they possess.

Regarding the preparation to follow such decent mission, it could be concluded from the research that the change in the designers' position should be reinforced by proper education at the very beginning, where their responsible and compassionate consciousness could be born in the first place. The creators should already enter the corporation as experts in responsible design and production so that they do not have to search for the specialised knowledge themselves, which is what they themselves have admitted is the case. In order to be absolutely set for immediate proper work in this area, the designers should devote their precious time and talent to essential, professional matters instead of completing their education during work time or privately.

As to CSR trainings, what could be recommended to the companies in the first place is that they should not rely only on spreading information and distributing emails with CSR-related articles. As this research participants admitted, "Nobody has time for anything today", which implies that such messages might be largely left unread. The attention of the companies and the designers could be directed towards additional, internal and external trainings in an insolent, interactive form devoted to responsible fashion. Such drills should

be less about theory, which might be well-absorbed by the executives and designers both at schools and through specialised reading, but they cannot be compared with practical exercises that would instruct the participants about technological solutions in design on the one hand and sustainable production on the other. Detailed tasks on how to implement CSR, on which stages the implementation chain breaks, how to supervise it, and with whom tighten the cooperation to organise internal and external practice of CSR—these are examples of issues that should be the subject of such meetings. Separate lectures run by external tutors would also be advisable as they would support objectivity and a diversity of views on the topic. An additional advantage of such an approach is the fact that this way the company could create its own net of CSR specialists and CSR consultants, making their CSR potential even higher.

What is more, an exam on CSR should be a regular practice. Controlling the level of knowledge of the employees is highly advisable, since it would give the company the awareness of whether the employees are well-prepared for CSR application. Another thing is that such tests or interviews would discipline and encourage the team members to actually advance their knowledge on the topic. A similar solution could be offered to the executives.

Therefore, regarding the primary aspect around changes in the academic system, which was poorly evaluated by the designers, both economic and artistic schools should update their programmes on CSR, as the designers and the managers are advised to cooperate tightly on this area. Such positive shifts have already been noticed among leading fashion schools in the world. For example, Parsons, LCF, Central St. Martins, Aalto already have departments devoted to sustainability and ethics in design. Sadly, no such phenomenon can be seen in other, less famous but still numerous institutions. This is why these changes should be more vibrant and more schools should be involved in transforming their programmes so that they can educate the designers on ecology and ethics in fashion, and on CSR specifically.

Significantly, these schools also need support from governmental institutions in order to be able to make such alterations. Academic institutions are usually separated from businesses, so they do not feel pressured into changing school programmes. Therefore, governmental interventions through systematic administrative changes in artistic education will be really supportive and crucial.

With all this in mind, likewise academic employees should be somewhat refreshed so that they can successfully follow such fluctuations. The academia needs new staff, i.e. new teachers who will derive their wisdom from the contemporary ideals and most recent publications on the topic of ethical production. CSR lecturers in fashion design are a new phenomenon, since the concept of CSR has been created only within last fifty years. The boom on CSR could be noticed almost fifteen years ago and the number of CSR specialists devoted to responsible clothes' design and production is, from my perspective, very limited, which can be easily observed both in the course of artistic studies and during specialised conferences. Thus, new teaching staff are required in order for the schools to provide valid, updated knowledge to the future designers, who could then contribute significantly to advancing moral standards in their prospective jobs.

Also, the consumers need to be prepared for the reception of CSR. The designers, even if being tutored in the best possible way, will need conscious interlocutors. Therefore, the customers remain the important element of the chain. As this work has concluded, it is utopian to think that we could educate several billions consumers worldwide in a simultaneous and equal manner. Due to different economical levels and cultural differences alike, it is risky to assume that the market could make the customers revolutionally understand and support CSR through their choices of responsible, but usually more expensive fashion items. Nevertheless, those important CSR stakeholders should be prepared to understand CSR issues in order to welcome pro-ethical efforts. Additionally, good recognition from customers is required; proper labelling of the garments could be suggested here as well as sharing information on how the clothes were produced on websites and social media, providing efficient and uncomplicated data on sustainability of the sold goods, - these could be the keys to educating the shoppers.

Media should be important partners to CSR, too. The designers seem to suggest that a huge role of the media and their involvement in publicising CSR and promoting CSR-related values is noticeable. It is an imperative for CSR practice that the corporate pro-ethical work should be approved by the final users of the produced goods. Supporting the education of the consumers, the media could shape new shopping habits on their pages, completed by pushing forward new, sustainable modes and lifestyles through providing valid information, promoting green fashion, and publishing related articles. All the above should be applied in a well-adjusted manner, i.e. not in too professional and specialised language, but, rather, through texts and visual communication that would be accessible to anyone.

This said, many risks and challenges are still to be encountered. The media live on money that is derived from advertising. The fashion titles do not care about who pays the invoice; what matters is that it is paid. It is often fast-fashion producers, including brands that sell and promote unethically produced garments, that have the opportunity to publish their advertisements in fashion media. It is hard to expect that the very same media company that edits articles devoted to responsible fashion would not meet criticism and objections from their unethical fashion co-operators. A conflict of interests is bound to occur. It is highly probable that there are many more unethically acting brands than those that are ethical, so the fashion media would have to make a choice with regard to an economic dilemma. Regrettably, it is presumed that the educational mission on sustainability and compassion in clothes production would be sacrificed on the altar of diplomacy, and the mainstream fashion brands that actually cover the media bills would prevail.

Significantly, other stakeholders should be constantly educated, too. Once again the significance of educating and informing many of the CSR chain participants shall be emphasised. Stakeholders are advised to be constantly advancing in their recognition of the CSR topic. As has been clarified, each group needs a different kind of approach. The executives need to change their minds and look at CSR from a philosophical perspective and as an additional, holistic concept for the company. The designers and other team members must be kept updated on latest science with regard to how to design and organise the production of responsible garments. It should be achieved through comprehending

answers of practical sense as well as absorbing modern technological knowledge. They also need to be intensely informed on the corporate CSR strategy in order for the concept to be fully grasped and applied. All the workers and customers alike must be communicated, influenced, engaged, and convinced about the policy in order to understand that ethical goals are treated by the company as the economical ones. Finally, according to the findings of this work, it is recommended on all levels, including education, that CSR should be presented as a possibility, not a restriction. Therefore, examples of other successful green brands should be given as a key to implementing an alternative way of thinking in the fashion industry.

6.3.4 CSR Adaptation through Creativity and Uniqueness

As this investigation has revealed, the designers evaluate themselves positively, considering their position in CSR application as a high one, although the reality is that their potential in the apparel business is hindered externally. The designers emerge not only as actors that have professional qualifications perfectly suiting CSR support, but, interestingly, they appear to have another merit. As corporate employees, they rely on financial revenues to a much smaller extent than other players involved in the CSR promotion. They are not the companies' executives, who have to fight for the highest financial revenues, nor are they consumers, who expect the garments to be a constant bargain. They are also not the middle-level managers, such as Fashion Buyers or Product Managers, that need to guard low costs and higher sales, too. Rather, the designers are the compassionate, innovative contributors; they are uniquely creative with regard to new, sustainable solutions.

As this work shows, the question of moral values encounters certain obstacles, including targeting corporate numbers and customers' love for *fast fashion*. It can be said that the brands and the shoppers share common interests, i.e. keeping the prices low, producing cheaply, selling more, consuming more, changing the wardrobe often and inexpensively, and staying fashionable. The literature review suggests that neither the companies nor the clients are willing to act against these main economy boosters in the garment industry. On

the contrary; both the quantitative and qualitative research shows that the designers are objective and closer to achieving different business standards.

The designers consider themselves to be a vital part of the corporate machine. They think, through their compassion, creativity, and uniqueness in design, they encourage responsible fashion and they can direct the consumers' interest towards a different kind of style, including *slow fashion*. *Slow fashion* has two meaningful advantages over *fast fashion*. It generally means better quality and, frequently, more technologically and aesthetically advanced design. *Slow fashion*, which is based on unique patterns coming from smaller, common designers' brands, has been shown in this work as providing strong support for CSR. *Slow fashion's* keywords—uniqueness of design and creativity in the invention of new looks—result in this thesis contributing to CSR. Uniqueness is about providing more advanced designs, designing in a more original and innovative way, and predicting new usage of modern, sustainable technologies. Also, creativity in *slow fashion* is in accord with the whole CSR phenomenon as it strengthens more advanced design. In place of low price shapes that are manufactured fast, average, and repetitive, *slow fashion* might give the customer an original item that is locally designed and probably more sustainably produced.

It can be assumed that creativity and uniqueness, both being part of *slow fashion*, contribute to the lower ratings of overconsumption as they deliver things that are generally thought to maintain their attractive looks longer and, additionally, last longer due to their advanced quality. Such garments are considered to be of better value, so they cost more. It should be evaluated positively, since higher prices of clothes result in users buying less and, perhaps, respecting these garments more. If clothes are purchased less often, but treated with more care, it should translate into lesser consumption, supporting sustainable principles, which is something that the designers have emphasised.

6.3.5 CSR through Local Micro-Economy and *Slow Fashion*

All this said, this research also shows that creativity and uniqueness flourish in a *slow fashion* environment. In order to develop, these traits require the atmosphere of smaller enterprises. Here the findings coincide with other conclusions of this work. Small, native clothing companies seem to be more open to CSR and more effective in ethical conduct than the other ones. It has been suggested that CSR, when cross-checked by this type of an organisation, is implemented more effectively. Minor structures and with lesser complexity, should make better fundamentals of a good CSR application. *Slow fashion* and slow production—and uniqueness and creativity of design that aid them—are seen by the designers as making good environment for the development of ethical values, especially in designers' brands.

What is more, through local brands, local production, and *slow fashion*, the typical overconsumption of global retailers' clothes' mass production could be reduced. It could be achieved through shifting purchase choices towards more sustainable, resident brands, although it does not have to be a rule, since it is conditioned by several factors. However, the investigated material has indicated that *slow fashion* works on the micro-economy basis and contributes to the growth of better, more sustainable standards in the apparel industry. Local micro-economy usually means shorter distances of the transportation of the produced garments, thus smaller CO₂ emission and lower energy usage. It also translates into better possibilities of controlling the fabrication conditions. Local brands can also use circular economy issues, i.e. reducing, recycling, and reusing fabrics or garments, which would be more complicated in big, international corporations, due to geographical stretch of sale locations. The designers and smaller, resident brands could support local micro-economy through *slow fashion*, i.e. rich, creative design and originality. *Slow fashion* designers tend to have better opportunities and potential to transform the market towards a more sustainable place of commodities-money exchange. Potentially, they can also minimise overconsumption and ingrain more responsible shopping habits, although this issue should be treated more as soft data that needs further research and development.

Slow Fashion stands for sustainable, aware and ethical fashion. It is not just simply the opposite of Fast Fashion, it is much more than that. Slow Fashion is a change in people's way of thinking, the appropriate contemporary reaction to goods produced for the mass market, the uncontrolled consumption in today's throwaway society and the catastrophic conditions under which many textile workers must work. Deliberately thinking about the characteristics of materials, about guaranteeing that the origins of products can be transparently traced back and respectful and responsible treatment of humans, animals and the environment are more vital than ever. (Wolf, 2015, p.18)

With its creativity and uniqueness, *slow fashion* is definitely one of the solutions recommended for the future for the apparel industry and CSR implementation alike. However, whoever desires to go into slow, more ethical clothing business, should understand what one of the survey participants has accurately summarised, namely, "Low costs and CSR—these topics simply do not connect". Although *slow fashion* brands have better possibilities of generating design of the finest quality—which is a must considering the competition of big global retailers—higher costs of the project need to be accepted first by anybody who would like to follow responsible fashion, no matter which group of interest and stakeholders they represent.

It is advisable that *slow fashion* should be approached with full awareness with regard to its price. Neither the designers nor the consumers—or the companies, for that matter—would invest into better quality while expecting it to be less expensive. Although morality is not an issue that could be validated with money, here sustainable fashion should be filtered through potential incomes and losses, and juxtaposed with bigger financial investments. The conditions of apparel production that are better for the environment, people, and other living creatures, do need to come with more labour, more workload and work time, higher payments, more advanced technologies, special certifications, and, probably, the relocation of production to places that are of higher fabrication standards. A good business plan and great financial assets are required when preparing to launch a responsible, slow-fashion brand, since this is not a typical, mainstream supply that could be produced and sold fast and economically. Future, responsible entrepreneurs must be aware of the fact that also in this case the adjective 'better' cannot be linked with the adjective 'cheap'. When one does not recognise it, they should end up feeling disappointed and, eventually, having a broken company.

6.3.6 CSR through Choosing the Right Consumers

Coming back to the consumers, who are one of the most studied CSR players in this work, the literature review and the designers' opinions on the shoppers need to be referred to. As has been mentioned earlier—through their pursuit of professional data and their personal curiosity, as well as through the possibility to contact the customers directly—the designers seem to understand the consumers' preferences and needs well. In this research, the green consumers' profile was easily described and properly observed by the creators, which additionally proves that they evaluate themselves well with regard to this part of CSR application, too. According to the literature review and the designers' perceptions, green fashion receivers happen to be mostly middle-aged women, well-educated and with high income, and coming from the so-called developed countries.

However, this is not the demographics of the eco users that is important so much, but choosing the proper concept of design, clothes technology and corporate philosophy that would attract the eco enthusiasts. Here, the demographics used in marketing in a common way through age, sex or economy filters that check other consumers groups is not the key to the green consumers' hearts. A core thing with regard to successful CSR policy in the garment industry is the fact that instead of chasing and nagging the ethical shoppers with marketing slogans, a company should extend a proper invitation by the means of truly good, responsible design. When the corporate moral policy is visible, consistent with produced goods, and not advertised, but reasonably communicated, it is green customers that are supposed to take a step forward.

When reaching the green consumers' attention the organization shall take under consideration what has been already suggested in this study, CSR had better not be based on the cunning marketing and sales, even if it relates to responsibly-manufactured fashion. Performing superficial pro-CSR actions that are built on monetary exchanges will turn against the company and, as a result, against its ethical strategy. Consumers do not have to be well-educated on the CSR field, but they are not stupid either, and they will not be deceived with advertising dressed up as green marketing. As the designers have revealed,

if the corporate efforts towards moral goals are to be rewarded, the company needs to be perceived in clear, ethical terms both by the market and by the consumers. It would then attract those consumers that are empathetic and responsible fashion- oriented.

The organisation needs to design and make collections that would draw various consumers, however with the one common denominator- being sustainability. Targeting a proper group of clients, i.e. those who choose the brand intentionally due to its holistic and ethical approach to fashion turns out to be the fundamental issue for the link between the CSR and the consumers. A character of the company is significant, since smaller structures might make it more easily than global retailers; mainstream fashion usually offers only a small part of collections related to green design, and in such case the idea of ethics fades against the background of common, *fast fashion* supply. In contrast to such a situation, when approaching CSR through a separate, smaller green brand, *slow fashion* turns out to be a remedy that helps to develop and maintain CSR. Through *slow fashion* companies and their loyal clients, who appreciate the brand due to its sustainable character, CSR-consumers marriage is presented to be easier and much more effective. It is recommended that a company should not throw their usual consumers into the green brackets, but, instead, it should approach the green policy appropriately, after which the compassionate and conscious customers would come on their own.

Making pilot pro-ethical products has been additionally indicated in this research as a satisfying way of reaching the green consumers without great financial losses when entering the CSR path. Nevertheless, it is important to select the clients-evaluators carefully, involving those who represent a true sample of this specific brand's shoppers. This way, the company and its designers shall have a preview of how the market would react to CSR-related clothes produced by them.

6.3.7 The Role of Self- Regulations

As this research indicates, companies should approach CSR through setting up internal self-regulations, obligatorily fabricated by the designers and executives. These self-

regulations would enable the workers to be informed not only about the economic prognoses and profit goals of the organization, but also about ethical standards production as integral to, and inseparable from, the financial aspect. New, innovative, moral objectives, including aims settled and communicated inside the company, would positively influence not only the designers' pro CSR work but also the other stakeholders.

The self-regulations shall be advanced in tight collaboration of the top management and the creators and shall touch issues going beyond legal obligations, thus putting human and monetary resources into more developed internal and external responsible performance that would be clear and visible to all the employees and co-operators. However, what is significant is the maintenance of CSR inside the company through self-regulations translated into a good cooperation among the company's workers. Such an integration is needed so that all the participants of the ethical conduct chain can be well-informed and better involved in CSR, thus applying the general CSR in a more effective manner.

One contribution could come down with the creation of ethical guidelines included in self-regulations that would be developed through tightened cooperation between the designers and the executives. This way, the designers' decisional and communicational position with regard to CSR would get unlocked. What is more, the self-regulations would construct a platform for stakeholders' further discussions on the expansion of the concept.

In an external and international viewpoint, a more clear designers' representation is still missing. A possible initiative like the establishment of the, for example, Fashion Designers Alliance for CSR would be able to have some influence and make contributions close to international initiatives already in place, either more companies oriented as it is the global 'Sustainable Apparel Coalition'²² initiative, or more institutional such as United Nations Global Compact²³ or CSR Europe – The European Business Network for CSR²⁴.

²² <https://apparelcoalition.org>

²³ www.unglobalcompact.org

²⁴ www.csreurope.org

6.3.8 Governments' Involvement and Support for CSR

It would be impossible to draw the final remarks without mentioning the role of legal structures in advancing ethical standards in the apparel industry first. Administrative institutions should turn out helpful in supporting the establishment of ethical canons in clothes manufacture, both on the micro- and macro-economy levels.

It could be assumed from the collected data that governments do not tend to intervene in *fast fashion* to a sufficient extent. As the literature review shows, local authorities in the so-called developing countries happen to encourage potential investors through the conditioning of the market into *fast fashion*, which means offering very cheap labour and minimal manufacture requirements in the context of CSR. Characteristics such as: corruption; blindness towards ecological matters, human rights, and animal welfare; as well as general abuse—these seem to be a meaningful part of the fashion business worldwide. This is why ethical regulations and sustainable development goals that could be implemented all over the world are required, which would then facilitate universal CSR standards. Although it may appear as a naive perspective, the study suggests that public administrations would be good partners in the cooperation aiming at introducing CSR practice, provided that they are willing to support it. As has been indicated by the designers, the governments should be included in CSR actions on a massive scale and not only through basic legal requirements. Reconstructing the clothing business environment through making better law that would protect all stakeholders from the capitalistic dimensions of corporate abuse is only one aspect. Another thing is that, as the qualitative research has found, sustainable fashion must be financially supported by public agencies so that it can have equal chances to compete with global *fast fashion* retailers. Since it is not outsourced, local production is slower and more expensive in case of developed countries, bringing smaller revenues and negatively influencing the final price of the garment. In order to make modest and sustainably manufactured and competitive products, responsible brands need additional funds that would let them sell the items for a reasonable price. Subsidies for manufacturers, tax reliefs, and donations to local production sites that protect micro-economy are all on list of expectations towards governments so that they could become partners for Corporate Social Responsibility.

Along similar lines, the role of independent organisations and green certifications should not be ignored when working out solutions for CSR. When governments are not supportive to CSR policies that much, NGOs can overtake; NGOs that specialise in sustainability in fashion would contribute significantly towards better social and ecological solutions. My opinion is that their experts and volunteers are still an underestimated power with regard to CSR application. Also, the cooperation with NGOs could be additionally beneficial as they have another ace in the hole, namely green certifications and labelling. These were not a specific object of research for the purposes of this work, but they might constitute a significant eco-purchase motivation that also plays an informative role from the point of view of ethical consumers. This should not be ignored, although it still requires more detailed research.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research

A word of caution for the interpretation and generalisation of results would be needed here. There was an obvious generalisation, that was needed to make the conclusions. It was possible thanks to the methods that were used. The study has been done consciously of its limitations that mostly come from the convenience sample in the qualitative part. That is why in the future it would be advised to develop more detailed studies, that go deeper into some questions, using for example segmented and more numerous samples in order to reach more precise results. Regardless of the conclusions drawn to this investigation, further research is required in order to develop some of the main threads of the CSR problematics.

It is important to look into the possibilities of re-positioning the designers in corporate structures. Studies devoted to relocating designers' place among other employees and unlocking their decisional potential within the organisation are crucial. Also needed is a deeper analysis of how to reinforce the creators' position as company's educators, communicators, and technological innovators. Self-regulation is one of the most important areas here and as such it needs more profound research. Some of the questions will be

about how to design self-regulating acts that would be effective, how to implement them into the corporate structure, and how to successfully communicate them. This should be the subject of future investigations.

Circular Economy, regarding the ecological issues and new business trends should also be taken under consideration in future research. With regard to technological topics that this study shows as one of the best tools of CSR implementation in the fashion business, Circular Economy needs to be included in future CSR practices. Good studies are required on the usage of recycled garments and fibres as well as on their implementation into design and production cycles. Because it faces the global shortage of natural resources, the contemporary apparel industry needs to include this subject as a necessary element of future research on CSR.

Finally, although already being discussed in scientific papers, more investigation into differences between big and small apparel companies' CSR practices is expected. However, none of the above-mentioned dimensions were part of the research methodology or even a part of literature review, there comes a conclusion, more focus is needed on specific CSR policies that include the fashion designers' role in CSR, especially with regard to different types of companies, i.e. MNE, SME or organization with ownership structure in fashion business.

6.5 Final Remarks

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, we live in such dangerous times—more and more frequently threatened with ecological disasters and the resultant economical collapses—that staying passive towards the necessity of huge transformations is not only pointless, but totally unhealthy for people, other living beings and for the whole planet. Humans, entire ecosystems, and other creatures need instant emergency actions and they require them now. Leaving ethical and ecological dilemmas merely on a dialogue platform exposes us to serious existential problems. Cooperation must be taken up immediately. I can see such a possibility in the practical application of social and green guidelines that are coded in CSR policies.

The fashion business is in a great need for CSR operation as clothing business impacts all of the three aforementioned CSR fields: the environment protection, human rights, and animal welfare.

The key to effective CSR performance in garment industry could be mostly in the designers' hands through their proper, impressive involvement in such a policy. This research has shown that the designers offer a real hope for more responsible practices in the apparel industry, provided that they are allowed to engage with CSR on a bigger scale inside the organization. However, first their position must be promptly unlocked.

The answers suggested in this thesis are not cheap. Nevertheless, to those who are sceptical I would say that morality is never a comfort zone, nor is it an option of low expense. If a regeneration of the fashion market towards more sustainable solutions is to happen, it is through proper corporate ethical conduct. I believe in CSR. It is not a trick.

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