

Article

# Training the CSR Sensitive Mind-Set: The Integration of CSR into the Training of Business Administration Professionals

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**Abstract:** Current corporations are subject to stringent requirements in terms of sustainable development; however, a relevant problem is highlighted on the basis of the studies conducted. On the one hand, corporations experience greater or lesser pressure, while on the other hand, it must be admitted that the problem of demand for professionals, which is presupposed by the insufficient quality of training in higher education institutions, is important. This is somewhat strange given that the issues of business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability have attracted increased attention in management education in recent years, and a five-fold increase in the number of stand-alone ethics courses has been noted since 1988. This interaction could contribute to the development of CSR, however a certain dissonance of cooperation between higher education and business exists, as there is a lack of leadership in this area in the study programs of business administration approved by the states, as well as in higher education institutions. Given these facts, the goal of the paper is to analyze the Master of Business Administration programs in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia to offer direction to the challenge of integrating corporate social responsibility (CSR) into management and training. The method of analysis of professional business and administration training program content in terms of the integration of CSR was used during the survey. Using panel data of 28 full-time MBA programs, our findings show that the core parts of MBAs under analysis merely—and mostly indirectly—cover CSR issues through one core course on business ethics. However, the leading MBA programs are currently missing an opportunity by ignoring their responsibility to support the training of CSR-minded future business administration professionals. The results of our research may act as a guide to which areas should be modified and/or changed.

**Keywords:** corporate social responsibility; training and development; qualitative research

## 1. Introduction

Recently there have been numerous changes in the sphere of modern business operations. Globalization, accompanied by rapid technological changes, has given rise to a completely new business environment. Under these new circumstances, the development of a modern company is determined not only by the effective use of resources and the application of appropriate strategies, but also by taking into account the concept of corporate social responsibility [1]. In other words, if a company wishes to be perceived as a reliable partner in business, it should implement elements of this

concept. Some criticism of the CSR concept [2] cannot change this opinion. However, the impression exists that CSR is yesterday's problem, while in some regions, e.g., post-Soviet Central and Eastern European countries, insufficient attention is paid to it. While researchers from Western countries sometimes show the ongoing withdrawal of enterprises from the very idea of CSR and present themselves to stakeholders by imitating CSR as one of the marketing tools [3–6], or even lobbying [7] (pp. 51–67), it is becoming a clear trend in post-Soviet countries. Therefore, attention is paid to the fact that the implementation of CSR should be oriented not towards charity, marketing, and public relations, but should first and foremost be understood as social responsibility towards stakeholders [8]. However, even the perceived benefits of communication do not increase the scale of CSR activity. As with a litmus paper, this indicates that CSR ideas in the latter societies are still not sufficiently relevant to cause business enterprises to respond more actively to them. The slow realization of ideas of social sustainability are also partly reflected in the dynamics of membership in the UN Global Compact. For example, there are 2.5 enterprises per 100,000 citizens in Sweden, 0.2 in Poland, 0.1 in Ukraine, and 0.9 in Lithuania. In terms of the number of active members, the trend is towards a decrease.

The research problem is raised by the question of whether CSR is an integral part of the mindset of business and administration professionals, who make decisions and express the values of their enterprises through them. Logically, the question arises as to where these values are and where they can be developed and trained. The focus should be on the training of business and administration professionals, i.e., on the people expected to be future entrepreneurs and administrators of enterprises. Research shows that the level of knowledge and management culture of managerial staff of enterprises is closely related to the sustainable development of CSR [9]. For example, Berber et al. [10] analyzed the relationship of CSR and human resources management in Central and Eastern European countries through an analysis of written statements of social responsibility. Although this practice is recognized as effective, it turned out that almost half of the companies surveyed did not have such written statements. A lower level of human resources operational programs for specific groups of employees was also found in such companies. Thus, the examples show that the development and understanding of CSR ideas should change significantly. In this case, an important role must be played by the education system in terms of the preparation and training of business and administration professionals. However, significant changes are necessary in this area as well. During reorganization from a narrow and planned economy into the global market economy, the task of preparing business and administration professionals who would increase the competitiveness and profitability of enterprises in as short a period of time as possible continues to fall to the system of higher education. Therefore, ethical aspects of business development remained somewhat in the shade. Of course, a comparison of data from studies carried out in different countries highlights certain differences. For example, what differences exist in the preparation of professionals, familiarizing them with business ethics in academic institutions of different levels? It is worth mentioning that Lithuanian colleges (institutions of non-university higher education) have less chance of setting up CSR teaching disciplines than universities since there is a lack of suitably-qualified college teachers working in this field. Currently, there are fewer colleges which are oriented to disciplines of CSR than universities. CSR is not offered on the level of vocational schools in Poland either [11]. In contrast to this, many European and American business schools run business ethics and CSR programs [12], and the growing interest in ethical issues has opened a market for the services of consultants and trainers [13]. However, those that are oriented to CSR often review this concept more widely and pay more attention to it, not only in business management, but also in industrial production study areas. In addition to the fact that programs for improving the qualifications of professionals lack the inclusion of integrated elements of CSR, several other types of problems are faced. Low levels of community activity and limited understanding of CSR do not lead to the development of a medium that would encourage businesses to reorganize themselves in accordance with the standards of social responsibility. In addition, there is the problem of the qualifications of teachers tasked with training management professionals; to this end, complex and coordinated changes in the policy of educational institutions and the state, focused

on the integration of CSR in the training of management professionals and in parallel with it in the development of public opinion, are deemed necessary.

Given the deliberations presented, the goal of our paper is to analyze the Master of Business Administration programs in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia to offer direction to the challenge of integrating corporate social responsibility (CSR) into management and training. The method of analysis of professional business and administration training program content in terms of the integration of CSR was used during the survey. The objectives of the study were achieved on the basis of data gathered through content analysis, i.e., data gathered and analyzed using a content summative approach and binomial analysis. The target subjects included a group of 28 full-time MBA programs offered by the universities in question. The paper is structured as follows: Firstly, we describe the concept of CSR which has been presented in the literature, concentrating on the relationship between CSR, education, and training programs at the MBA level. Secondly, we present the methodological part, i.e., the materials and methods of the research which has been conducted. The next part of our paper analyzes the results of the aforementioned research in detail, which, in turn, is followed by the Discussion section. Finally, we present the conclusions and limitations of our study.

## 2. Literature Review

At present, the idea of corporate social responsibility is not an innovation or a message that the directors of enterprises would not have faced unexpectedly or that the shareholders of enterprises would not have heard about. However, the problem of understanding the significance of CSR is often encountered, as the main purpose for which managers set up and developed the CSR concept is an axiomatic maximization of profit, while at the same time reducing the expenditure and the risk of decreasing profitability [14–16]. These are solid arguments, as most corporations are not charities or social enterprises seeking specific social goals. On the one hand, according to Weinzimmer and Esken [17] (p. 336), numerous studies have contended that taking a stand on a social issue may lead to long-term competitive advantages. Therefore, when firms decide to support or oppose specific social issues, they should be aware that their positions may have an impact on business outcomes. On the other hand, del Rosario González-Rodríguez et al. [18] point out that the way the consumers perceive corporate social responsibility may be directly affected by the individual benefit structures, the range of which is very extensive. Studies in this area show that CSR provides more flexibility to organizations themselves, when operating in various situations [16,19], such as in dealing with emerging crises [20], contributing to the active development of goodwill [21–23], while addressing relevant social and ethical problems not only by means of specific support—as is often perceived—but also by changing the moral and ethical climate in the socio-cultural media in which they operate through their values [24–27]. This can be compared with the metaphor of a growing snowball, especially if the organizations focus not only on the present, but also on the long-term rebound effect.

Thus, one can observe that a plethora of research which justifies the direct and indirect benefits to enterprises which apply CSR in practice, and to different societies where both the enterprises [28–33] and other institutions [34,35] work, have been undertaken in recent years. However, in spite of the papers published so far, CSR literature remains highly fragmented. For example, it seems that this does not make an impression on large enterprises, as corporate social responsibility is not the maxima which many of them would be guided by. The sincerity and learning of enterprises in the context of CSR values is an undoubted and significant factor [36], but the question is, how much does the tax-funded system of state higher education contribute to the preparation of professionals? Does the development of CSR have to fall only on the shoulders of enterprises themselves?

It must be admitted that, on the one hand, there are differences in the perception and implementation of CSR practices related to different cultures [37–43] or corporate culture (e.g., [44]). One of the important conditions for understanding the role in the context of social responsibility is related to the perception of shareholders and the competencies of hired professionals to develop the strategies and use ethical potential. Therefore, attention is shifting to education institutions and

education itself, which influences human values, as well [16,18]. On the one hand, enterprises cannot wait for governments to understand the significance of CSR and start improving the preparation of professionals. On the other hand, however, one cannot rely on the mere belief that the maturity of enterprises will reach a certain level of maturity of corporate philosophy by itself, interacting with separate stakeholder groups. Studies which focus on some of the stakeholders (e.g., communities, consumers) reveal that corporate social responsibility is inadequate as a certain image-forming tool when the published position does not necessarily correspond to reality [4].

One should also point out that the issues of business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability have come to attract increasing attention in management education in recent years [45] and the increasing prominence of CSR education in American and European business schools is observed [46]. This is confirmed *inter alia* by a five-fold increase in the number of stand-alone ethics courses since 1988 [47]. Some authors go even further, claiming that the public sector plays an important role in the development of social responsibility, of which universities are an essential part as they represent an irreplaceable role in society, where they take part in the creation and increase of human capital. One perceives the social responsibility of universities as part of the so-called “third role” of universities, perceived as the meaning of the impact of universities’ activities on society in the broadest sense [48]. On the other hand, however, if aiming at closer cooperation between higher education and business, it is necessary to identify what leads to miscommunication and gaps between theory and practice. According to Hayter and Cahoy [49], within an increasingly global context, society expects colleges and universities to undertake new and increasingly complex social responsibilities that expand traditional higher education missions while emphasizing new obligations such as economic development and sustainability. In this case, it would be useful to go deeper into the integration of the concept of corporate social responsibility in university study programs. However, these are also struggling with the same broader education problem [50], as they remain rather unchanged and are not able to cope with a broader view of the world. Instead, they remain oriented towards a narrow specialization, focusing on profit maximization instead of social and economic prosperity, i.e., preferring shareholders over stakeholders. The short-term mindset of business corporations makes the integration of long-term issues, such as CSR, difficult to integrate into educational programs [51]. The dissemination of sustainable development ideas is complicated, not only in corporations and/or the policies of the states [52], but also in higher education institutions, which, themselves, need certain changes related to the realization of CSR philosophy in practice and in studies in the preparation of future professionals [34,53]. It should transform their programs to transformative ones that would integrate a holistic approach [54] and would even change the metaphor (i.e., the way they perceive the world) of a war which is still based on business administration education [55].

The role of higher education institutions in the perception of CSR by their students seems to be important. One may observe that there is a higher percentage of student interest in the topics of ethics, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability in the MBA programs offered by top 10 business schools [46]. In turn, Sobczak et al. [56] found that the students’ perception of CSR is dependent not only on the content of the program, but also on the integration of CSR into the culture of these higher education institutions. This is supported by Barrera-Martinez et al. [57] who concluded that social integration factors have a greater impact on the perception of CSR than explanatory factors. The CSR-sensitive mindset of students can be trained in cases in which the curriculum integrates care theory with CSR teaching [58].

The ambiguity of the perception of CSR integration into professional business and administration training leads to the formulation of two research hypotheses. On one hand, the number of CSR courses are perceived to be increasing and integrated into the education of professional business and administration training. The hypothesis can be formulated as:

H1: CSR is integrated into professional business and administration training.

On the other hand, there are many doubts about the practical and effective integration of CSR into professional business and administration training. Therefore, the second hypothesis is formulated as:

H2: CSR is not integrated into professional business and administration training.

The results of studies show that business administration study programs, especially Masters of Business Administration (MBA) programs that have a significant positive correlation between CEOs with an MBA and corporate environmental performance [59], could, and should, play an important role in the preparation of students for understanding the essence, meaning, and benefits of corporate social responsibility, because business students are our future managers [60].

### 3. Materials and Methods

The world's leading fulltime Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs were chosen for the comparative analysis with the goal of finding the scope of the integration of CSR into full-time MBAs, i.e., into the education of the future leaders of the business world and decision-making professionals. According to the 2016 MBA and Business School Rankings [61], there were 28 full time MBAs chosen for comparative analysis: 10 of them being the best full time MBAs provided by higher education institutions in North America, 10 in Europe, and eight in Asia/Australia (there were nine full time MBAs in Asia/Australia; however, one program was excluded from further analysis as the program's structure and courses were not comparable with other programs and the summative content analysis for that program was impossible to apply). All MBA programs were coded using the code reflecting their regional dependency, i.e., AAU—for MBAs in Asia/Australia, EUR—in Europe, and NAM—in North America, and numbered starting from the MBAs with the largest number of elective CSR courses to those with zero elective CSR courses, i.e., number 1 is the MBA with the largest number of elective CSR courses and number 28 is the MBA with the smallest number (in this case zero) of elective CSR courses. The MBA structure and program content were retrieved from the official websites of institutions in January 2017.

The developed sample of full-time MBA programs represents the potential immersion into CSR by those studying in these programs, while the total population is the total number of MBA students in the relevant regions. As it was impossible to find a reliable (not fragmented) single source for the number of MBA students in relevant regions, the approximation of data was made using the data on MBA enrolment in business schools from the members of Association of Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). There were 294,651 general management/MBA students enrolled in AACSB member business schools in Asia/Oceania, Europe, and North America in 2015–2016 [62], and this number represented 96% of all MBA students enrolled by AACSB member business schools. According the AACSB, on average, 414 students (in 2014–2015) are enrolled in MBA programs at each business school [63]. Thus, our 28 programs under analysis can be considered as 4% of the total MBA student population, if it is assumed that there is one MBA program per institution.

The collected data on MBAs was analyzed using a summative content analysis, where core and elective courses were assigned to course groups covering specific business administration areas, such as: general management (including courses on the globalization of business enterprises, management communication, managing the work place, information management, and similar); decision analysis (including courses on decision analysis, quantitative methods for management, and similar); economics/finance (including courses on global economics, macroeconomics, microeconomics, and similar); marketing (including courses on marketing management, marketing planning and implementation. and similar); operations (courses on operational management and supply chain management. and similar); human resource management/organizational behavior (courses on organizational behavior, human resource management, and similar); leadership (courses on leadership, leading organizations, and similar); entrepreneurship (courses on entrepreneurial management, entrepreneurial mindset and venturing, and similar); strategy (courses on corporate strategy, competitive strategy); learning-by-doing activities (including projects, business games, internships, exchange programs); then core CSR courses, and CSR elective courses (courses on business ethics, business and climate change, sustainability reporting, sustainable business, social enterprise, and similar). Only two MBA programs which were the subject of analysis include some

learning-by-doing activity options covering CSR issues (one option among three to be chosen by the student); thus, the totality of these options are excluded from the analysis, and research is focused on core and elective courses of MBAs. Several MBA providers indicate that MBA students can choose their electives from the complete list of courses being taught at the higher education institution. In the framework of this analysis, electives provided by other divisions of the higher education institution than that which provides the MBA program being analyzed are not taken into account. The total number of all elective courses is identified and used to define the probability of a student choosing CSR courses among all the electives, which may potentially be chosen. The Bernoulli binomial probability distribution ( $P(X = k) = P_n(k)$ ), which calculates the probability of obtaining the exact number of chosen events ( $k$ ) in a chosen number of trials ( $n$ ), is applied to define the probability of each individual student choosing CSR courses among their electives. The formula is:

$$P(X = k) = P_n(k) = C_n^k p^k q^{n-k}$$

where  $C_n^k$  is the Binomial coefficient;  $p$  is the probability that the event will occur; and  $q$  is the probability that the event will not occur.

The initial comparative analysis revealed that, among all MBAs in this research sample, students can choose a different number of electives with the majority choosing from four to six elective courses on average; however, the probability of choosing CSR courses from among these electives is rather low. Thus, despite varying real numbers of trials in each MBA, for this specific analysis it is assumed that there are four trials in each case and the probability is calculated for zero, one, two, and three positive events, i.e., that among four chosen electives there will be zero, one, two, or three elective CSR courses.

The chosen method of analysis is limited, as the study credit value in terms of hours allocated to each credit in the MBAs is different. The course value in credits can be different, even if the course has the title and covers the same subject across different MBAs. Furthermore, we acknowledge that certain CSR issues and aspects can be integrated horizontally into the content of non-CSR courses; however, their identification and extraction from these courses appeared to be impossible after reading the course descriptions. These differences are not taken into account in this research and are known, but ignored, under this analysis.

Furthermore, we adopted a simplifying assumption and neither analyzed what is regarded as the definition of CSR by the creators of the syllabi and/or programs, nor what the boundaries of this concept are. Though it may mean that the MBA programs offered by different universities may not be homogeneous, we believe that this allowed us to obtain a true picture of the situation in the sector analyzed.

#### 4. Results

The analysis of leading MBA programs revealed that, among the core courses, those covering economic and financial issues in business administration are dominant (average frequency of 4.2 among all programs analyzed—Table 1). Courses covering decision analysis, functional organizational areas (marketing, operations, human resource management/organizational behavior), general management issues, strategic management, and those dealing with leadership competencies are of the same importance (frequency of approximately 1). Specific courses dedicated to the development of entrepreneurial competencies appear to be of lower importance (frequency—0.4); however, in many cases it is developed through learning-by-doing activities. The majority of MBAs contain one core course which directly (specifically) or indirectly (generally) covers CSR issues in business administration (frequency—1.0); however, only a quarter of these courses directly cover CSR issues, while the rest deal with it indirectly through the perspective of business ethics. In almost all MBAs, part of the program is subject to the decision and choice of the student, i.e., a student can choose from among electives proposed by the institution. There are 78 electives on average among all MBAs, where just 4.6 courses are elective CSR courses.

**Table 1.** Frequency of specific business administration areas covering core and elective courses.

Code of MBA	Core Courses, Learning by Doing Activities										Electives		
	General Management	Decision Analysis	Fin/Econ	Marketing	Operations	Human Resources/Organizational Behavior	Leadership	Entrepreneurship	Strategy	Learning by Doing: Project/Games/Internships *	Core CSR	Electives	CSR Electives
AAU06	5	2	6	1	3	2			1	+	2	136	10
AAU12		2	3	1		1		1	1	+		40	3
AAU13	1	1	3	1	2		1		1	+	1	50	3
AAU16	2	1	3		1				1	+	2	30	2
AAU17	3	1	5	1	2		2		1	+	2	70	2
AAU18	1	1	5	1	1		1		1	+	1	70	1
AAU22	1		2	1	4	3			2	+	1	0	0
AAU23		1	6	1	2	1	2		1	+	1	18	0
Average for AAU	1.6	1.1	4.1	0.9	1.9	0.9	0.8	0.3	1.1	+	1.3	51.8	2.6
EUR07			5	1	2	1	2		1	+	1	80	9
EUR11	1	1	6	1	1	1			1	+	1	76	5
EUR14	1	1	3	1	1	1	1		1	+	1	70	3
EUR15	2	2	5	2	3		2	1	1	+	1	100	3
EUR19	1	1	3	1	2	1		1	1	+	1	19	1
EUR20	2		1	1	1	1	1		1	+	1	6	1
EUR24		2	4	1	2	1		2	1	+	1	150	0
EUR25	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	+		18	0
EUR26	3	1	2	1	3	1	3	1	2	+	1	19	0
EUR27	1	1	7	1	4	2		1	2	+	1	20	0
Average for EUR	1.2	0.9	3.7	1.1	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.7	1.2	+	0.9	55.8	2.2
NAM01	1	1	2	1	1		1		1	+	1	100	17
NAM02	1	1	6	2					1	+		100	14
NAM03	1	2	5	1	2	1	1		1	+	1	93	12
NAM04		1	4	1	4	1	1			+	1	130	12
NAM05	1	1	6	1	2	2	1		1	+	2	73	11
NAM08	1		6	1			1		1	+	1	214	6
NAM09	1	1	4	1	1		1	1	1	+		135	6
NAM10	1	1	3		2	1	1			+		100	6
NAM21	4	2	7	2	2		1		2	+	1	68	1
NAM28	3		5	2	2		1			+	1	200	0
Average for NAM	1.4	1.0	4.8	1.2	1.6	0.5	0.9	0.1	0.8	+	0.8	121.3	8.5
Average total	1.4	1.0	4.2	1.1	1.8	0.8	0.9	0.4	1.0	+	1.0	78.0	4.6

\* "+" means learning by doing, project, game, internship type activities are integrated in a specific MBA program.

After a regional analysis of MBA programs, it is clear that the core part of the programs is broadly similar, i.e., of the same importance (in terms of frequency) of courses covering economics/finance, the main business functions, and other areas, including core CSR courses, except entrepreneurship courses. The attention paid to the development of entrepreneurial competencies through specific core courses is comparatively high (frequency—0.7) in MBAs delivered by higher education institutions in Europe compared to those delivered in Asia/Australia and North America (frequency of 0.3 and 0.1, respectively). The largest number of elective courses, i.e., the most diverse choice, is provided by higher education institutions in North America (121.3 elective courses on average), while their counterparts in Asia/Australia and Europe limit their package of electives to around 50. The results of the analysis revealed that MBAs with the largest number of elective CSR courses are provided by higher education institutions in North America, where an average of 8.5 courses among all electives are CSR courses, with the highest such number of elective CSR courses 17 and the lowest zero. MBAs provided by higher education institutions in Asia/Australia and Europe are relatively modest in terms of elective CSR courses, accounting for 2.6 and 2.2 elective CSR courses per program, respectively, on average. It is worth noting that approximately a third of all elective CSR courses provided by higher education institutions in all regions cover social business issues, i.e., not-for-profit activity. Even if the existence of a greater number of elective CSR courses does not mean that students will choose them, it could be interpreted as higher education institutions, as a provider of MBA courses, placing greater emphasis on these issues. In that case, the probability of CSR being integrated into the culture of the higher institution could be expected to be higher, and the probability of the students developing a more CSR-sensitive mindset could be expected to be higher, too (the relationship stated by Sobczak et al. [56]).

Bearing in mind the elective course option provided by the higher education institutions presented above, a binomial analysis is undertaken in order to reveal the probability that a student of a particular MBA program will choose specific program electives covering CSR issues. The results of the binomial analysis are presented in Table 1, where  $P(x)$  represents the probability of obtaining the exact number of chosen elective CSR courses (0, 1, 2, or 3) in a chosen number of trials, and is applied to define the probability of each individual students choosing a specific number of CSR courses from among the electives.

In the framework of this research, it is assumed that a particular student of any of these MBA programs may choose four electives. Thus, the question of what is the probability that there will be zero, one, two, or three elective CSR courses among these four chosen elective courses should be answered. Based on an average-type MBA program with 78 elective courses and four full elective CSR courses, the highest probability is that a student would not choose any elective CSR course ( $P(0) = 0.77$ —Table 2). The probability of choosing one course in that case is  $P(1) = 0.21$  and, together with the probability of choosing zero elective CSR courses, indicates that the probability of choosing more than one course is very low ( $P(2) = 0.02$ , and  $P(3) = 0.00$ ). There are seven MBAs in which there are no elective CSR courses and the probability of choosing one is nonexistent (equal to zero). The probability of choosing zero elective CSR courses among four electives ranges from  $P(0) = 0.47$ , in the case of MBA programs with a lower number of elective CSR courses, to  $P(0) = 0.94$ , where the MBA programs propose a higher number of elective CSR courses. The probability of choosing one elective CSR course ranges from  $P(1) = 0.39$  to  $P(1) = 0.05$ , where the higher the probability, the higher the number of elective CSR courses in a respective MBA. The probabilities of choosing two and three elective CSR courses range from  $P(2) = 0.12$  to  $P(2) = 0.00$  and from  $P(3) = 0.02$  to  $P(3) = 0.00$  among all MBAs, respectively. There is no obvious regional dependency in these results; however, in the case of MBAs provided by higher institutions in North America, there is a higher probability that a student will choose a single elective CSR course.



**Table 2.** Probability of choosing elective CSR courses.

Code of MBA	P(X)			
	0	1	2	3
AAU18	0.94	0.05	0.00	0.00
NAM21	0.94	0.06	0.00	0.00
NAM08	0.89	0.10	0.00	0.00
AAU17	0.89	0.10	0.00	0.00
EUR15	0.89	0.11	0.01	0.00
EUR14	0.84	0.15	0.01	0.00
NAM09	0.83	0.16	0.01	0.00
EUR19	0.81	0.18	0.01	0.00
AAU13	0.78	0.20	0.02	0.00
NAM10	0.78	0.20	0.02	0.00
EUR11	0.76	0.21	0.02	0.00
AAU16	0.76	0.22	0.02	0.00
AAU6	0.74	0.23	0.03	0.00
AAU12	0.73	0.24	0.03	0.00
NAM04	0.68	0.28	0.04	0.00
EUR07	0.62	0.31	0.06	0.01
NAM03	0.58	0.34	0.08	0.01
NAM02	0.55	0.36	0.09	0.01
NAM05	0.52	0.37	0.10	0.01
EUR20	0.48	0.39	0.12	0.02
NAM01	0.47	0.39	0.12	0.02
AAU22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
AAU23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EUR27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EUR24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EUR26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EUR25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
NAM28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Average type	0.77	0.21	0.02	0.00

## 5. Discussion

A discussion on the integration of CSR into the education of the future leaders of the business world and decision-making professionals starts from the question: are CSR issues covered and integrated into leading MBAs? If the answer is yes, what is the scope of that integration? If the answer is no, what could be the consequences of ignoring CSR issues in MBAs? The research question is followed by the formulation of two opposite hypotheses at the beginning of the research: one (H1) which states that CSR is integrated into professional business and administration training, and another (H2) that CSR is not integrated into professional business and administration training.

The research results revealed that the core parts of MBAs being analyzed merely cover mostly indirect CSR issues through one core course on business ethics. Such a type of course is the, more or less, classical MBA program and could not be linked to today's changed business environment with the increased importance of CSR. The results achieved in our study support the findings of Seto-Parnies et al. [64] who analyzed the extent to which corporate social responsibility (CSR) is taught in management schools and stated that although many universities have embedded CSR subjects, the CSR content is by no means fully developed. These statements support our second (H2) hypothesis that there is a substantial lack of CSR integration into professional business and administration training and somehow support our first hypothesis (H1) that CSR is integrated into the training of business and management professionals.

On the other hand, the results achieved fail to confirm the findings of research conducted by Christensen et al. [47] who investigated how deans and directors at the top 50 global MBA programs (as rated by the Financial Times in their 2006 Global MBA rankings) respond to questions about the

inclusion and coverage of the topics of ethics, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability at their respective institutions. Their research revealed *inter alia* that (1) a majority of the schools require that one or more of these topics be covered in their MBA curriculum and one-third of the schools require coverage of all three topics as part of the MBA curriculum; and (2) there is a trend toward the inclusion of sustainability-related courses. However, our results reveal that even with the enforcement of the inclusion of CSR-related courses by the directors of MBA programs, CSR courses remain marginalized.

Just two MBA programs offer learning by doing activities covering CSR issues; however, one of them focuses only on social business, *i.e.*, not-for-profit business. Elective CSR courses are nonexistent in seven MBAs, and in the case of the rest of the MBA programs, the highest probability is that each individual student will choose zero elective CSR courses. Generally, a mere one quarter of the best MBA graduates are developing their competencies and mind-set in CSR, *i.e.*, those with one core course directly covering CSR issues, while the rest of their CSR education remains their responsibility in terms of elective courses to be chosen. These results would support the statement that CSR integration into MBAs (*i.e.*, into the education of future business administration professionals), is marginal and almost entirely nonexistent (statistically it exists but, practically speaking, it is negligible at best), *i.e.*, it supports our second hypothesis (H2) that expresses the lack of integration of CSR into professional business and management training. The results support the statement of Rasche *et al.* [65], who argue that the introduction of CSR into management programs was merely an *ad hoc* reaction to meeting the needs of society after the global financial crisis of 2008 without any substantial changes to management programs themselves. Even in the case of MBAs delivered by higher education institutions in North America, which has the largest number of elective CSR courses, the highest probability is that zero elective CSR courses will be chosen by an individual student. The content of MBA programs remains more or less sluggish and continues to reflect its classical core structure and content. The issues of CSR are treated as emerging, not core, issues, and have little potential to become one of the cornerstones of MBA programs. It seems that CSR issues are being converted into non-profit business administration issues and are marginalized or kept apart from for-profit business administration issues. This could even be interpreted as meaning that not-for-profit activity administrators should take care of CSR, rather than for-profit business administrators. One may at least hope, if Gillespie's [51] statement about the general lack of transformative leaders and the inadequacy of their management training holds true, that such business administrators will not be excessively successful in developing these CSR-free organizations.

The discussion on the results of the research reveal that the results confirm our second hypothesis (H2) that CSR is not integrated into professional business and administration training and does not support the first hypothesis (H1) that CSR is integrated into professional business and administration training (integration being marginal at best). However, our interpretation of results and their support for the hypotheses should be treated with caution. There are some CSR elements integrated into professional business and management training, but this does not adequately reflect the change in importance of CSR and it seems to be the inertia driven past training programs adopted to emerging issues in management, but not the re-conceptualized training programs reflecting the long-term challenge of sustainability and CSR.

## 6. Conclusions

Interest in CSR is growing rapidly. Since organizations are increasingly involved in CSR, scholars have the opportunity to engage in CSR research. No decrease in the importance of CSR issues is predicted in the near future. The correct response of business to the new business environment should come with the new era of business administrators, operating not just according to general business ethics and CSR principles, but designing, planning, and implementing CSR solutions in all business administration areas. However, as our results reveal, the current leading MBA programs are missing an opportunity and ignoring the responsibility of supporting the training of CSR-minded future business administration professionals. Just given these facts, the goal of the paper was to analyze

Master of Business Administration programs in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia to offer direction to the challenge of integrating corporate social responsibility (CSR) into management and training. Using panel data of 28 full-time MBA programs, our findings show that the core parts of MBAs under analysis merely—and mostly indirectly—cover CSR issues through one core course on business ethics.

Our study contributes to the prior literature in several ways. First, this research adopts an international approach, analyzing universities located in several continents, i.e., North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. This offers a wider perspective than a single-country or two-region approach, allowing us to obtain potentially more generalizable results. The relatively better integration of CSR into professional business and management training in North America compared to Europe, Asia, and Australia could act as a benchmark for the improvement of CSR training in other regions. Second, given the growing role of CSR in any aspect of business, as well as non-business activities, one should expect that the content of MBA programs related to CSR will have to take this growing trend into account. The results achieved may be a reliable indicator of which areas should be modified and/or changed. The marginalization of CSR courses, where the greatest possibility is that a single student will study just one CSR course, which is expected to be focused on general business ethics, could become a motivator for an in-depth analysis of training programs and the impetus for at least a vertical—if not horizontal—integration of CSR into professional business and management training. Leaving CSR training to be chosen by a single student, as our findings reveal, as an elective CSR course should be considered too opportunistic an approach to professional business and management training.

Our study has its limitations, however, the first of which is that empirical evidence is conditioned on the availability of information for a specific set of countries (continents): our sample is restricted to 28 MBA programs. In other words, this limitation needs to be addressed in future research, increasing the number of MBA programs, as well as countries. Secondly, the current results and discussion are based on a content analysis of MBA course titles and short descriptions. We adopted a simplifying assumption and neither analyzed what is regarded as the definition of CSR by the creators of the syllabi and/or programs (in fact, it would not even be possible) nor what the boundaries of this concept are. It is possible that the cases used during the study of specific subjects or other tasks provided for the students integrate CSR issues and the training of business administration professionals, but are not explicitly presented in the short course descriptions. Despite the limitations presented, we believe that the results achieved allowed us to obtain a true picture of the situation in the sector which was analyzed.

Finally, there is a need for further research on the presented topic. One should point out that the decision to choose a specific course can be dependent on the suggestions of program managers, the opinions of professors, student preferences, his/her coursemates' decisions, and other factors. Thus, these decisions are not fully independent and accidental. Given these facts, further focus on the issue of immersion into business administrators' competencies is needed. We were unable to find any studies linking CSR training and CSR implementation in enterprises, as well as studies on training program immersion into the field of CSR. For this reason, limited implications can be derived, and the research should be considered as one of the first seeds for further research into the sources of CSR in enterprises.

Furthermore, it seems that some form of cyclical research, for example, if conducted every five to 10 years, would allow researchers to obtain more valid data and provide some indications as to the direction in which the MBA programs offered by universities will evolve. In addition, the interviews among MBA graduates, linking it to the content of their MBA and their current corporate CSR sensitivity, would help to generate in-depth analysis of the relationship between MBA education and the sensitivity of the CRS mindset of business managers.

Finally, it seems that an analysis of the documents presented by the particular institutions is not sufficient, and may be regarded as the first step only. The best result would be to utilize a hybrid approach, i.e., a combination of content analysis and in-depth interviews to be done with business

educators and/or academic staff members. This would be helpful for three reasons: (1) it would allow researchers to find out what they think in terms of the core and parameters of CSR concept; (2) it would present visible differences between different regions; and (3) it would allow research hypotheses to be tested further.

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