

MONITORING AND ASSESSING THE RESEARCH ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PUBLISHED IN ROMANIAN ECONOMIC JOURNALS

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Abstract:

The present paper aims to evaluate the interest of Romanian economic journals towards issues related to corporate social responsibility. The research began with drafting a list of Romanian economic journals, according to official classifications. We used content analysis to determine the characteristics of articles that address the issue of corporate social responsibility, based on the following criteria: number of articles whose titles include the term „corporate social responsibility”, ratio of pages devoted to CSR issues in the total number of pages, type of research, geographical area of research, authors' affiliation, CSR issues being addressed. The research results helped create an indicator that measures the interest of Romanian economic journals towards issues related to CSR. According to the values of this indicator, we ranked the analysed publications.

Keywords: scientific research in Economics, economic journals, corporate social responsibility.

1. Introduction

Science is an on-going process of learning, using methods and techniques of observation and experimentation, and plays an extremely important role in the development of human society. "Economic science requires a set of rules that regulate household activity, an administrative activity relating primarily to livelihood" (Dinga, 2009, p.27).

Scientific research is an act of knowledge and an inseparable part of the scientific and economy knowledge base. It targets an object related to which the researcher sets a specific objective of research (Enăchescu, 2005, p 230). The concept of research is used "to refer to the organized, cognitive activity of society resulting in discoveries of more adequate representations of reality that are disseminated in society, in other words

published" (Ad Astra Association, 2005). "Fundamentally, research is undertaken in order to enhance our knowledge of what we already know; to extend our knowledge about aspects of the world we live in" (Adams, Khan et al, 2007, p.20).

In this context, nations aware of the benefits generated while using scientific research results identify the most appropriate ways to stimulate researchers and improve scientific results.

One such example is Horizon 2020: it is an EU level on-going project, and "a financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness". Running from 2014 to 2020 with an € 80 billion budget per year, the EU's new program for research and innovation is part of the

drive to create new growth and jobs in Europe "(European Commission, 2013).

This study aims to monitor and evaluate research papers focusing on CSR issues published in Romanian economic journals in 2012. On the one hand, the study includes a content analysis of Romanian economic journals, ranked by CNCSIS in A or B + category and, on the other hand, creates a ranking of these publications, depending on their focus on CSR research.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 expresses some considerations on the content and purpose of economic scientific research, Section 3 contains opinions on how to disseminate research results in economic journals, section 4 contains the research methodology and results of monitoring the presence of CSR research in Romanian economic journals that are of interest to both Romanian and foreign researchers and that are well established both nationally and internationally. Finally, we present our conclusions on the interest of researchers and analysed economic journals on CSR research.

2. Considerations regarding the meaning and purpose of scientific research in Economics

Scientific research in Economics currently holds particular importance for the academic world, but especially in the economic life, as it represents "a source for future directions of development, or, conversely, to get disapproving opinions that will also determine favourable scientific developments" (Teiușan and Călean, 2012, p.141).

Scientific research in Economics is to seek explanations for real or imaginary phenomena and processes, in a systematic manner, focused on specific purposes, to identify solutions to existing or specially created problems that are of interest and importance to Economics or life daily (Zaiț and Spalanzani, 2006).

Conceptually, economic scientific research develops from a hypothesis, through apodeixis (demonstration) and gradually becomes a *theoria* or *theoretike* (theory) (Săvoiu, 2013).

Economic scientific research, as well as scientific research in general, can be applied or theoretical, reflecting its duality. As Hans Georg Gadamer stated, scientific research includes exact sciences and natural sciences, based on forecasting as opposed to sciences of spirit that focus on knowledge without foresight (Săvoiu, 2013).

„We can define a number of types of research study that are aimed at achieving different knowledge outcomes: descriptive research (is aimed simply at describing phenomena and is not particularly concerned with understanding why behaviour is the way it is), explanatory research (is deeper in the sense that it describes phenomena and attempts to explain why behaviour is the way it is) and predictive research (is an attempt not only to explain behaviour but to predict future behaviour given a change in any of the explanatory variables relevant to a particular phenomenon" (Adams, Khan et al, 2007, p.20). In another vision, the levels of economic scientific research are: „empirical level, theoretical level and application level" (Pătruț, 2009, p.92).

Karl Popper (1934) managed to separate scientific research of pseudoscientific research by setting the four distinct lines along which one can test and critically evaluate a theory that aims to become science: *internal consistency control of a theory as a hypothetic-deductive system, examining the logic form of a theory or future science to determine if it holds informative content, comparing empirical consequences derived from such a theory or future science, assessing the theory or future science in light of these tests*. According to Popper, the differentiation can be

restricted to an essential aspect, valid for exact and natural sciences: the amount of knowledge held by different scientific theories and future sciences that depend on the degree of falsifiability or testability. "The success of scientific research depends on the structural properties of the investigated phenomena, but also on understanding that nature and the outside world have a high degree of order, perceived as objective laws by human reason" (Săvoiu, 2013, p.5).

On the one hand, optimists believe that the only thing preventing

Economics to become a purely numerical science is "the immensity of equations"; on the other hand, pessimists believe that economic research makes it difficult to model specific qualitative factors (Săvoiu, 2013, p.6).

Any type of economic research is based on two styles of reasoning: inductive and deductive. The inductive method is strongly associated with philosopher John Stuart Mill, while Henri Poincare and later Karl Popper developed the deductive method (Adams, Khan et al, 2007).

Table 1

Styles of reasoning in economic scientific research - comparative presentation

<i>Inductive method</i>	<i>Deductive method</i>
1. To draw general conclusions from a finite number of observations. 2. John Stuart Mill (1843) The method relies on empirical verification. Very popular in the 19th century and still used by many as a scientific method.	1. Universal laws are hypotheses to be tested against the predictions implied by these laws. 2. Karl Popper (1934) The precise name is the hypothetic-deductive method and has largely replaced inductivism in the 20th century.

Source: taken from Adams et al., 2007, p.29 and adapted

The purpose of scientific research in general is to acquire scientific knowledge, with immeasurable benefits for culture and human civilization (Vintan). In this context, „the motive of scientific research is generally constituted by knowledge and the need to expand it” (Pătruț, 2009, p.90). The aim of economic research is to discover the best solutions to economic problems and to increase their contribution to wealth creation.

3. Disseminate research results in economic journals

In order for humanity to benefit from scientific research results, they should be disseminated by means capable of reaching a greater number of stakeholders. Scientific literature is how research results are stored for later

retrieval, use and efficient processing of knowledge over time (Vlada, 2009, p.49). According to some specialists, scientific research is part of the mission of universities, alongside learning (Thomas, 2010, p 402; Auranen and Nieminen, 2010), but is also successfully carried out in specialized institutions, either public or private.

Writing scientific papers is an important part of scientific research and is a form of exploiting results by integrating gained knowledge (Vlada, 2009, p.50). The practice of economic research intended to be completed by publishing articles, may be reduced to a few landmarks (Săvoiu, 2013, pp.7-8):

- selecting one or more publications with a smaller impact factor based on their hierarchy, followed by

others with a high impact factor and by journals with a relative influence score;

- careful study of selected publications and reading of articles on subjects that are accessible and similar to actual research already carried-out;

- the title of the article will be selected for its appropriateness to the topic, both in relation to the publication and the actual research, but also to highlight the relevance and originality of the work; the short title is the most difficult and challenging solution that increases citations, once it has been published;

- article writing is the most elaborate work;

- the abstract is written, despite all expectations, after the work is finished, although it is often required before; citations of an article depend heavily on the title, abstract and keywords;

- the content of the article is structured in relation to publication requirements that will be met in full; it starts with an introductory section, followed by a brief overview of theoretical and applied literature, and the latest articles on the selected topic;

- there isn't a fully standardized process of writing an article that transcribes economic research, but there are differences depending on the type of article based on research results: individual or team, applied or theoretical, deductive or inductive, focusing on modelling or the impossibility of modelling;

- citations and graphic representation demonstrate the qualitative level of research, acquired knowledge and accessed information; their accuracy and prompt content writing are relevant for the final assessment of a truly high-quality article;

- bibliography and references must prove both outstanding editorial rigor according to requirements and a serious documentation carried out by the author;

- publishing can be a long process of months or even years in the case of high-impact publications.

A scientific paper must meet the criteria of any academic paper: research, study, analysis, addressed topic or theme, an original, comparative investigation or an implementation of methods and techniques to get results or conclusions in the field of knowledge. Mastering scientific writing principles will lead to rigorous, clear and concise writing, to consistency between substance and form (Vlada, 2009, pp.49-50). Publishing the most valuable results that reflect the level reached by scientific research in journals and conference proceedings crowns the work of researchers.

4. Research on the presence of the concept of CSR in Romanian economic journals

In Romania there are a number of papers, some of great interest, which address the issue of economic research. Measuring the quality of scientific research in a country is a complex, even complicated, process that requires the use of quantitative and qualitative assessment criteria (Vintan).

To analyse and monitor Romanian economic journals „is to assess to what extent certain features in the language used in articles authored by Romanian researchers (non-natives) are similar to those of the language produced by native writers” (Ghivirigă, 2012).

This study aims to monitor the presence of articles on CSR in Romanian economic journals that are of interest to both Romanian and foreign researchers, and that are well established, both nationally and internationally.

The main objectives of this research are:

O1. Prepare a list of Romanian economic journals, based on classifications created by CNCIS for 2012.

O2. Analyse all Romanian

economic journals of 2012 that have been selected and are available online.

O3. Create a summary, based on the following criteria: number of articles whose title or content contain the term "CSR", the ratio of pages dedicated to issues of CSR in the total number of pages, the type of research, the geographical area of research, authors' affiliation, CSR topic being addressed.

O4. Create a hierarchy of Romanian economic journals that include CSR related articles in their 2012 volumes, according to the Indicator of Interest to CSR - IICSR (ratio of cumulated pages of these articles in the total number of pages in the publication).

O5. Correlate the number of CSR related articles, the number of CSR-themed pages and total number of pages in each economic publication.

The first step of research was to identify Romanian economic journals that formed the basis for selection. In this respect, we analysed a list of all Romanian scientific publications, classified by CNCSIS into five categories: A, B +, B, C and D (CNCSIS, 2013). We selected A and B + economic journals because of their international visibility and recognition gained after being indexed in prestigious databases. Class A publications are included in the Science Citation Index Expanded, the Social Sciences Citation Index or the Arts and Humanities Citation Index. B + publications are indexed in various international databases. The basis for selection included 39 A and B + economic publications in categories for which full 2012 volumes were available.

The second step of research was to perform content analysis in order to create a summary of publications addressing CSR issues in their content. Content analysis criteria were: **number of articles whose title or content contain the term "CSR", the ratio of pages dedicated to issues of CSR in**

the total number of pages, the type of research, the geographical area of research, authors' affiliation, CSR topic being addressed.

Of the 39 selected publications, 16 (41%) class B + publications included in their 2012 volumes articles addressing the issue of CSR. Note that none of the A economic publications included articles dealing with CSR in their 2012 volumes.

According to the first criterion of analysis, **number of articles whose title or content contain the term "CSR"**, we identified 38 articles signed by 63 authors. These amount to 339 pages out of 26831 pages in the 2012 volumes of the 16 analysed publications.

According to the second criterion, **"the ratio of pages dedicated to issues of CSR in the total number of pages"**, research shows a reduced approach of CSR issues. Thus, relative to the total number of pages included in the 39 economic publications selected, CSR themed items amount to only 1,263%. Also, for the 16 publications that form the basis of analysis, we calculated an average of 2.825% CSR themed scientific work (Table 2).

In connection to these findings, the results of content analysis for the **"CSR topic being addressed"** criterion showed that none of the analysed publications included a permanent section on CSR or has a CSR oriented general theme. A single publication (Euroeconomica) held a temporary CSR section in the magazine.

Based on results obtained for IICSR (Indicator of Interest to CSR , **"the ratio of pages dedicated to issues of CSR in the total number of pages"** criterion), we ranked the 16 economic publications based on their focus on CSR as an object of economic research, CSR themed articles ranging from 7, 2% (maximum) to 0,9% (minimum) of the content (Table 2).

Table 2

Romanian economic publications – a classification for 2012 based on the existence of CSR topics in their content

Journal title	No. of CSR articles	No. of pages / journal	CSR no. of pages (abs.)	IICSR (CSR no of pages -%)	Type of research *	Geographic area**	Authors' affiliation
Management & Marketing (Craiova)	2	428	31	7,2	A	N	RO
Economic Studies and Research Journal	1	230	12	5,2	T	I	RO
Hyperion International Journal of Econophysics and New Economy	1	375	16	4,3	A	I	POL
Acta Universitatis Danubius. Oeconomica	4	1094	48	4	A	I, N	RO, NIG
Economy Transdisciplinarity Cognition	3	604	24	4	A, T	I, N	RO, MOLD
Ploiești Petrol and Gas University Bulletin, Economic Sciences Series	2	499	18	3,6	A	I	RO, NIG
The Annals of the "Ștefan cel Mare" University Suceava	2	577	19	3,3	A	E, N	RO
The Annals of the "Constantin Brâncuși" University Târgu-Jiu, Economic Series	4	1222	26	2,1	T, A	I, E, N	SLO, RO, MEX
"Vasile Goldiș" Studia Universitatis Arad, Economic Sciences Series	1	502	10	2	A	E	SLO
Economic Journal	1	737	13	1,8	A	I	RO
Theoretical and Applied Economics	2	1631	29	1,8	A	E, N	RO
Review of General Management	1	483	8	1,6	T	I	RO
The Annals of the "Ovidius" University, Economic Sciences Series	8	3535	45	1,3	A, T	I, E, N	RO
Euroeconomica	1	635	7	1,1	T	I	RO
Annals. Economic Sciences Series. Timișoara	2	1504	13	1	A	N	RO
The Annals of the Oradea University - Economic Sciences	3	2175	20	0,9	A	I, E	RO, IT

*A: applied; T: theoretical

** I: international; E: European; N: national.

Following content analysis, the 38 CSR-themed articles were grouped into two categories according to the **type of**

research (Săvoiu, 2013): applied (29 articles, or 76%) and theoretical (9 items, or 24%). Using the criterion of

geographical area of research, the 29 articles in the field of applied research were grouped in three other categories: articles focused on Romanian CSR practices (13 articles, or 45%), articles that show the development of scientific research on CSR in Europe (8 items, or 27,5%) and articles dealing with CSR issues from an international perspective

(8 items, or 27,5%).

Content analysis based on the **authors' affiliation** showed that the majority of CSR themed articles published in 2012 in CNCSIS B + quoted economic publications are signed by Romanian researchers (Figure 1).

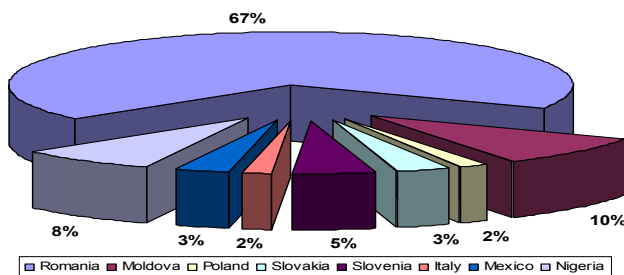


Figure 1. Classification of CSR themed articles published in 2012 based on authors' affiliation

To meet the fifth objective of the research, we calculated the correlation between the number of CSR themed articles, namely the number of CSR-themed pages and total number of

pages in each economic publication, using the Pearson correlation coefficient (Adams, Khan et al, 2007). Using descriptive statistics, this correlation was plotted in Figure 2.

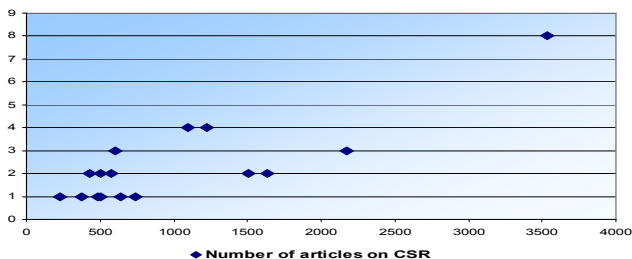


Figure 2. Correlation result

There is a *moderate positive correlation* (0,56) between the number of CSR-themed pages and the total number of pages in each economic publication and a *strong positive correlation* (0,83) between the number of CSR themed articles and the total number of pages in each economic publication. Therefore, one can draw the conclusion that economic publications with a larger number of

pages are also those that are interested in publishing articles addressing CSR related issues.

5. Conclusions

The role of scientific research, regardless of its subject, is to generate additional knowledge or to discover new concepts, processes, methods, techniques or solutions or to formulate ideas that improve the already existing

knowledge. From this perspective, the role of economic scientific research is to find the best solutions and ideas that enable increased performance/results of economic activities and to consequently generate extra wealth in people's lives.

At this point, Romanian economic scientific research deals with concerns and outcomes that are also in the top of international economic research concerns and results: sustainable development, eco-technology, globalization and regionalization, responsible capitalism, modelling and forecasting of economic phenomena, corporate governance, risk management, capital flow analysis and, of course, corporate social responsibility.

Corporate social responsibility is a new business philosophy that began to change the world in which we live. Contemporary theorists and practitioners show great interest in this concept, as demonstrated by the large

number of scientific papers on the subject published in the last decade. To assess the extent to which CSR themes can be found in Romanian literature, we used content analysis on a sample of 39 economic publications listed by CNCISIS.

The results showed Romanian researchers' and economic journals' reduced interest in carrying out scientific research in the field of corporate social responsibility, as only 2,825% of the content of the 16 publications that have formed the basis of economic analysis address this issue. Moreover, about 59% of the analysed publications didn't include CSR themed articles in their 2012 volumes.

It will be interesting to analyse the evolution of CSR issues published in Romanian economic journals in the years ahead, as future research could highlight and change the vision over the concept of CSR among Romanian researchers.

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