

# THESES OF THE DOCTORAL (PHD) DISSERTATION

## ICT COMPANIES' CSR ACTIVITY IN THE CONTEXT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENT'S JOB PREFERENCES

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# **1. BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

„Mankind has chosen machines” states GYARMATY (2020:3). It does not only come with the fact that we want to and can reach and solve everything by pressing a button, but also that this demand can and must be satisfied. We live in the accelerating increase of technological development (KURZWEIL, 2005). It can easily be acknowledged that even for these very simple reasons, the size and importance of economic segment offering informatic and infocommunicational products and services are continuously increasing.

In a world, dominated by information technology, knowledge and education are being valued higher because, although humanity is currently experiencing the accelerated pace of technological development, the evolution is unable to follow it, human nature stays fundamentally unchanged, so people must learn in order to be able to thrive (DYSON, 1997). Not to mention that the responsibilities of parents, corporate actors and other decision-makers are continuously increasing by the fact that nowadays, the information is available to anyone (including vulnerable age groups) unlimitedly and in real time.

According to SELIGMAN (2004), technological development is considered as one of the areas that can be used to increase human well-being on Earth in general. Therefore, with the help of technology, life can be made more pleasant, full of positive feelings, more meaningful and simply better. However, this development can be at least as harmful if it is not used responsibly.

I attempt to bring closer to each other these two fields, education and the world of ICT companies through one of the increasingly significant domain of economic life, CSR, by examining the job choice preferences of university students and through the CSR practice related to education and talent management of ICT companies.

The roots of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) go back even to ancient Roman patronage (CSAPÓNÉ RISKÓ, 2016). The way we think about CSR today was founded by Howard BOWEN (1953) in his book *The Social Responsibility of the Businessman*. DRUCKER (1954) considered CSR, and within it, public responsibility, to be one of the eight key activities needed to achieve corporate goals. The conservative thinkers of the following decades were mostly impressed by the admonition of FRIEDMAN (1970), according to that, profit generation was thought as the social responsibility of a business enterprise. DAVIS (1973), who emphasized

the ethical dimension and volunteering by saying that responsibility begins where law ends, first toned that the responsibility of business people should be commensurate with their social power.

Hierarchical models have contributed greatly to the detailed analysis of corporate social responsibility. The best known of these models is CARROLL's (1991) CSR pyramid, which is being used nowadays as well. The economic and legal responsibility, at the lower levels of the CARROLL pyramid, is a requirement of the society. Nevertheless, the ethical responsibility can be seen as a social expectation. The philanthropic responsibility, at the top of the pyramid, embodies the social desires. ELKINGTON's (1997) three-pillar CSR model captures CSR areas horizontally. According to him, corporate operation can be described by the three basic pillars of economic, environmental and social responsibility. The third large group of CSR models rests on the fundamentals of stakeholder theories. The typical stakeholder groups of a company in the approach of ÁSVÁNYI (2013) are the employees; the managers; the owners; the local community; the consumers; the suppliers; the creditors; the competitors; the state; the environment; the media; the NGOs and the future generations. By grouping these stakeholders according to their relation to the company, we can arrive to the external and internal division of CSR, taking into account the target group of CSR activities (TURKER, 2009).

According to the European Commission's statement, corporate social responsibility is a responsibility for the society, for the effects of corporate operations on society. It focuses on companies, furthermore, the civil sector and the government play a supporting and regulatory role. (EC, 2015). While in the past the voluntary nature of companies' attendance in CSR initiatives was emphasized from the regulatory point of view, nowadays, **the role of companies in shared common value creation** has become a clear expectation (SPELKENS, 2017). In the global economy, however, it is now almost impossible to enforce any rule without the voluntary responsible behavior of actors (PONCE DEL CASTILLO, 2020).

**I interpret the corporate social responsibility in accordance with the new CSR principles of the European Union as shared value creation that – emphasizing the aspects of positive psychology, increases welfare and strives to decrease social inequalities.**

Responsibility and CSR communication can build an employer brand if they are consistent with the company's actual practices, based on the cornerstones of transparency and responsible operation (KNOX - MAKLAN, 2004).

Defining the ICT sector is not an easy task. More and more companies will be increasingly imbued with technology. Nevertheless, a sharp line cannot be drawn on the basis that a given

company is interested in hardware production as a manufacturing company, or as a service provider in software development, because nowadays there are mixed profile companies and the work of developers can take the form of off-the-shelf (or webshop) products - just to mention the most obvious example. New economic trends such as the social economy, competition and startup culture build on collaboration. Cooperation is not far from ICT actors. Engineers and developers from the initial startups like Microsoft, Apple, and later Google or Yahoo were also happy to meet. Relatively early in their competition, the initiative of compatibility came out victorious. Cooperation and transparency are important core values in today's startup ecosystem around the world. The sharing economy and cooperative collaborations take advantage of the benefits of networking to create common values and operate sustainably. Both concepts are closely linked to social responsibility.

### **1.1. Main aims of the research**

The aim of the research was to explore, through the decision makers' opinion, the value preferences and CSR tools of Hungarian ICT companies, including the activities related to education, educational institutions and talent management. To present the role and potential of CSR activity in building and communicating an employer brand. To examine how ICT companies respond to the growing shortage of professionals, what steps they are taking on CSR from here and beyond to ensure a skilled workforce now and in the future, to retain their employees. The issue of job choice preferences can be examined along a number of factors. Some suggest (regional differences, educational attainment) that in certain circumstances, a single preference exists that is nothing more than the possibility of taking up a job itself.

We can see changes in both employers' and employees' expectations. Changes cover challenges that can be successfully overcome by exploring the current situation and trying to obtain relevant information. Researches examining the job choice preferences of university students confirm that the current generation of university students is much more conscious and - compared to salary/payment - more motivated by other factors of employment (KUDARI, 2020). Pleasant work atmosphere, work-life balance issues, family-friendly attitudes, training programs, individual development plans, and professional recognition play an increasingly important role in motivating Generation Z in the workplace (POÓR et al., 2018). Exploring the opinion of university students on the assessment of the areas of corporate social responsibility can also be important for the companies and the society because they will shape our future, as

opinion leaders, decision makers, expectants of high positions (DEUTSCH - BERÉNYI, 2016), whether governmental or civil, even in the private sector. From another point of view, in BOCSI's (2015) value-based approach, universities appear as a factor influencing and shaping work values, which in a broader perspective can also be seen as one of the phases of workplace socialization.

POÓR and co-authors (2018) highlight that the way to reach Generation Z appearing in the labor market is through new target-group-specific tools and channels.

Identifying university students' knowledge of CSR and the value judgements of certain CSR activities is the other ambitious objective of the research.

Furthermore, the aim of the research is to define and evaluate the relationship between the university students' job choice preferences and the actual CSR activities carried out by companies. Then to make proposals to bring the two areas closer to each other.

## **1.2. Research hypotheses**

**H1:** The company leaders of the ICT sector have common value preferences according to which they guide the operation and CSR of their companies.

**H2:** The CSR activities of ICT companies are firmly determined by labour market competition and thus their CSR activities are primarily focused on the regions where they are located.

**H3:** In the CSR activities of ICT companies, education-focused programmes are considered to be industry-specific.

**H4:** Good practices in ICT companies can be described; which are responsible activities and can have an impact on the job choice preferences of university students.

**H5:** The job choice preferences of the examined student sample do not differ from those which have been found in similar researches in recent years (5 years).

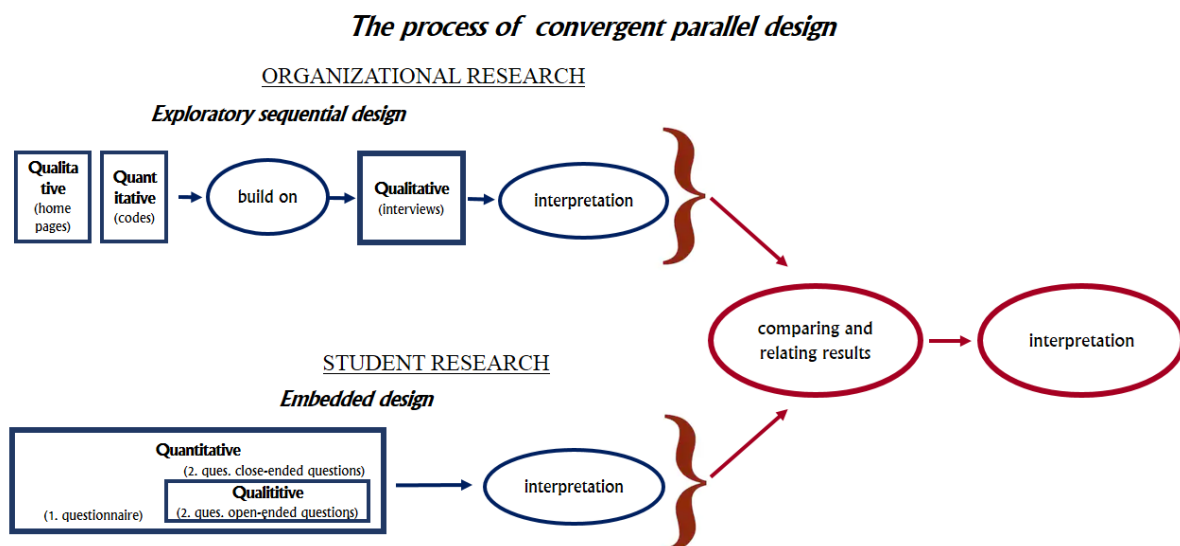
**H6:** University students take into account the CSR activities of their prospective employer when they develop their job preferences.

**H7:** University students form their opinion about ICT companies in conjunction with large companies of the region.

## 2. DATABASE AND APPLIED METHODS

The advantage of the mixed methodological approach used in the Dissertation is that mixing quantitative and qualitative methods is closer to more practical issues requiring more complex investigations and their solutions (SÁNTHA 2013; BALÁZS – HÓGYE-NAGY, 2015). Figure 1 illustrates the methodological structure of the research. Student research and organisational research were carried out and interpreted in a convergent and parallel structure.

The novelty of the methodology of the present research is not the application of the mixed methodology itself, but the consistency of the elements of the mixed methodological research design, as well as the planned unit of the certain sub-researches which ultimately led to the targeted solution of a complex research problem.



**Figure 1: Methodological approach to own research**

*Source: Own editing based on CRESWELL-PLANO CLARK 2011: 69-70*

The theoretical framework of the research is provided by corporate economics, including a practical approach to corporate social responsibility (DÖRY et al., 2019). The theoretical approach is further nuanced by marketing, sustainability, positive psychological and cooperative aspects (SHAMAUN et al., 2019; GÉRING, 2018; PETERSON et al., 2007). Exploring the opinions of university students in a company research can be important not only because they are the potential employees of organisations as members of emerging generations, but also

because as graduates, they are the leaders of the future generations, they will form the strategy of companies and manage operations (DEUTSCH - BERÉNYI, 2018).

Two major units of the research are combined in a convergent parallel model.

As the focus of the research is on the activities of IT and telecommunication companies, the most emphatic element of the methods is the qualitative part of the organisational research (interviews). This was preceded by another element of organisational research related to website analysis. The latter also served as an input for the investigations by interviewing decision makers and experts of industry and other organisations (non-profit organisations, academics). The first questionnaire survey on student research (1st Student Questionnaire, CSR, 2016) raised a number of questions that justified the implementation of a subsequent, closely related research. The second element of the student research, the survey carried out in 2019 (2nd Student Questionnaire, IT CSR 2019), is finally given greater emphasis in data analysis and interpretation because, on the one hand, it is specifically aimed at revealing the opinions of IT companies in connection with CSR activities and, on the other hand, thanks to the personally-assisted replies to the opened questions of the questionnaire, it has been managed to obtain detailed and informative answers to the open questions of the questionnaire, which allowed for a more wide-ranging analysis.

The aim of the student research is to reveal the opinions of students of the University of Debrecen on the areas of corporate social responsibility with which they can directly or indirectly get in contact with. In the first more general survey (1st Student Questionnaire CSR 2016), I would also have liked to get an answer to the question whether it is worthwhile for companies to go to universities (to participate in training, to attend events and to be present on university platforms in other ways) and not to wait for students to find them.

In the second part of the student research (2nd Student Questionnaire IT CSR 2019), I wished to explore students' opinions in connection with IT companies. How do the surveyed university students define this group, how do their potential employees see the IT companies? What do they think of the social responsibility of these companies?

Overall, the aim of the research is to explore the opinions of the surveyed university students as potential decision makers of the future on CSR including stakeholders of the IT sector in relation to their expected CSR activities.

During the expert interviews, I would have liked to learn about the motivations, personal opinions and experiences of industry opinion-leaders on CSR in the industry regarding their companies and their identity.

I also wanted to find out how they and their companies think about young graduates, how they see them and what expectations they have towards them.

## 2.1. Characteristics of test samples

In addition to the companies participating in the 2016 survey, in 2020 I included in the website analysis those ICT companies that are linked to the interviewees. The companies included in the website analysis are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2 Companies included in the website analysis (2016; 2020)**

Companies 2016	Sanofi	Bosch	ITSH	MKB Bank	Tesco
IT companies, organisations 2020	NI	KÜRT	Prezi	Graphisoft	DBSC round-table

Source: Own editing

At the planning stage of the expert interviews the first thing I had to clarify was the principles for selecting the interviewees.

- Nationally relevant experts in the ICT industry, who have international experience in the industry and company management as well (*company*: Dr. Sándor Kürti, Gábor Bojár, Péter Halácsy);
- Experts in the ICT industry at a regional level, preferably a responsible decision-maker of one of the companies that appears frequently in the student sample (*Company*: Dr. László Ábrahám, László Bodrogközi);
- An expert (non profit organisational) at national level, with international experience (non profit *organisation*: Veronika Pistyur)
- An expert (non profit organisational) at regional level (*non profit organisation*: Imre Töviskes)
- Regional professional (*coopetitive organisation/company*: Márta Bede; Éva Kissné Nyéki)
- Decision makers at the University of Debrecen who have an insight into the cooperation with companies in the ICT sector and has experience in this field (University: Dr. Piroska Ailer, Dr. Péter Csátár)



Table 3 lists the main characteristics of the interviews and interviewees.

**Table 3: Summary table of interviews**

<b>name</b>	<b>organisation represented</b>	<b>educational context</b>	<b>position</b>	<b>venue</b>	<b>time</b>
<b>Pilot</b>	anonymous	projects	requested confidentiality	Debrecen, rented office	30.01.2018
<b>Veronika Pistyur (DLA)</b>	Bridge Budapest	projects	founder, leader	Budapest, Bridge Budapest office	31.10.2019
<b>László Bodrogek</b>	Neuron	DE IK, professional training	founder, leader	Debrecen, Neuron office	20.11.2019
<b>Péter Halácsy</b>	Prezi, Budapest school	Budapest School	founder, leader	skype	11.11.2019
<b>dr. Sándor Kürti</b>	Kürt Zrt.	H2O; KÜRT Foundation high school	founder, leader	skype	09.01.2020
<b>Gábor Bojár</b>	Graphisoft	BIT; projects	founder, leader	Budapest, Graphisoft Park, BIT office	06.01.2020
<b>dr. Péter Csátár</b>	DE BTK	DBSC contact person	Deputy Dean of Strategic and Economic Affairs	Debrecen, DE, office	15.01.2020
<b>Márta Bede</b>	DBSC Round-table; NI	DBSC Round-table	founder, leader (until the end of 2019)	Debrecen, rented office	21.01.2020
<b>Imre Töviskes</b>	CSR Debrecen	Service intermediate operator	founder, leader	Debrecen, rented office	25.02.2020
<b>dr. László Ábrahám</b>	NI	projects	founder, Executive until the end of 2019	Debrecen, NI office	04.02.2020
<b>Éva Kissné Nyéki</b>	DBSC Round-table; BT	DBSC Round-table	leader (from 2020)	Debrecen, BT	10.02.2020
<b>dr. Piroska Ailer</b>	DE	industrial/company relations	Deputy Rector for Technical Innovation and Training Development	Debrecen, DE office	19.02.2020

Source: Own editing

The data collection of both questionnaires took place during the winter examination period. The size of the sample was in a similar order of magnitude, while following the 2016 survey I analysed the data of 502 people and after completing the questionnaire of 2019 I analysed the data of 408 people. The average age of respondents and their standard deviation were very similar in the questionnaires. I have summarised the characteristics of the samples in Table 1.

**Table 1: Characteristics of student research samples**

	1. Student research 2016 (CSR - DE)	2. Student research 2019 (IT CSR - DE)
Time of data collection	January-February 2016	January-February 2019
Raw date	n=514	n=408
Excluded respondents	>5%	none
Analysed data	n=502	n=408
Mean age of respondents	21,1 years	21,4 years
Standard deviation of mean age	1,83	1,95

*Source: Own editing*

## 2.2. Description of applied methods

The student research was carried out at the University of Debrecen (DE). According to the 2020 data, the Institution is the university that offers the widest range of courses in Hungary. More than 30 000 students are educated in the 14 faculties (currently close to 6 300 foreign students).

The data collection was related to the examination activities of the non-professional subject group that was announced at the various faculties of the University of Debrecen.

In two periods (in 2016 and 2019) the survey was carried out with two self-edited questionnaires with similar themes but different content. The respondents' activity in filling out the questionnaire was not directly related to the assessment of the examination. The questionnaire was taken by a person other than the examiner before the beginning of the exam. While the questionnaire was being filled in, the examiner was not present at any time so he could not exercise any influence on the response.

The data collection in the case of both questionnaires was carried out on randomly selected exam days and it was personally assisted. In both cases, the respondents were from different faculties of the DE and the samples are not representative.

The data analysis was carried out by using R and SPSS statistical software and content analysis. In the organisational research part of the research, I examined the corporate social responsibility of ICT companies from the corporate side, in particular on the side of their implemented practices and personal opinions of managers and experts. I primarily chose the interview method to describe organisational behaviour. I intended to underpin this qualitative method (main method) with a methodology that provides a comprehensive picture of the social responsibility of the organisations in the sample in the field of education and talent management through the content analysis of their websites (qualitative method with a quantitative analysis of the data quantified by encoding in part).

The aim of the investigation was to explore the network of activities of corporate social responsibility of companies in the areas that are related to education, talent and talent management. The purpose of the investigation was not to entirely describe the CSR activities of the investigated companies.

In the content analysis, I involved the official websites of participating companies, in particular their CSR menu points and the news feed, their Sustainability reports and their relating thematic websites.

The software used for data analysis was Microsoft Excel 2013, while Microsoft Office 2013 SmartArt was used to make the graph.

The selection of interviewees for the expert interviews was made arbitrarily. I prepared the semi-structured interviews along predefined guiding thread (question line).

The steps in the analysis of the interviews were as follows:

1. I typed the audio recordings made during the interviews.
2. I first processed the interviews with continuous open coding.
3. In the next step I classified the codes in their own literature-based dimensions in line with results of the student research.
4. In parallel with its own dimension I asked an independent encoder (MBA qualified expert who also carries out scientific work) to develop dimensions.
5. Then I applied the method of matching the samples to the analysis, in other words I compared the data content (codes) of their own dimensions with those of the independent encoder (GOLNHOFER, 2001) and I created a matrix out of this.

The size of the sample (11 individuals) did not allow me to carry out a valid statistical analysis from the received information.

### **3. THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE DISSERTATION**

For young graduates job choice preferences are less nuanced in terms of CSR activities. It is clear that the compensation package is important for them, but it is even more important to have a positive atmosphere and a good team at their future workplaces. The information they have obtained on employers is often incomplete so they judge the specific CSR activities by comparison with the existence of university students. In terms of space and time, they consider CSR categories according to the relative distance to their own life situation. One of these categories is the employer's activity in connection with education and training. They consider it very positive if a company places emphasis on the education and development of workers, and if it cooperates with external educational institutions.

The active involvement of IT companies in universities can be justified for a number of reasons. Higher education (and secondary education) is the place to fight for talented workers. Today's university age group prefers „human factors” in the perception of a potential employer such as good team, working environment, opportunities for personal development. They obtain information on these on the basis of accessibility. If they do not have direct access to company information, they either do not have the information or they obtain it as quickly as possible through informal channels. The range of informal communication channels currently available is wide, faster and smoother than ever. If a company wants to present a true image of itself towards its future graduates employees, then it cannot stay away from university students.

In this process the university has a gatekeeper role, which cannot lack continuous monitoring and evaluation.

Both university and company decision makers stress that educational institution cannot be passive recipients of initiatives coming from companies. Ideally, they should cooperate at the planning stage so that the optimal use of initiatives can be achieved. For example, if a donation of equipment is not integrated into the training, then on the one hand, it may end up in closed cabinets and on the other hand if these devices get to be used, it is not certain that users will make good benefit of them if there is no concept, frameworks, goals and training.

## **Confirmation of hypotheses**

*H1: The company leaders of the ICT sector have common value preferences according to which they guide the operation and CSR of their companies.*

The interviewed ICT leaders believe that technological development in the right hands drives society to the right direction.

Transparency and commitment to open communication appear to be common values. All interviewed leaders take action against corruption emphasising its further damage in the areas of quality, competition, development and innovation. At the same time, they stress the importance of responsible taxation in the hope of ensuring the efficient operation of supply systems.

Other common values include cooperation in common value creation along the lines of compatibility and common interests, as well as sharing knowledge, in particular by extending the latter to a wide range of society. They emphasise their commitment to high quality in the interest of producing good products and service.

They appreciate independence where the freedom of choice also ensures a flexible response to challenges.

They believe in the importance of setting an example, Setting an example, of which both organisational and personal aspects are relevant. The positive activity of a highly influential and capital-intensive ICT company can have a multiplier effect.

According to them, corporate social responsibility has a message both out of and into the organisation and the latter supports the commitment of colleagues.

**I certify the first hypothesis with the described value preferences.**

*H2: The CSR activities of ICT companies are firmly determined by labour market competition and thus their CSR activities are primarily focused on the regions where they are located.*

In all the interviews, the interviewees gave an account of the perception that they see the education system as the emitters of their future employees. The arena formcompetition for talented workers is secondary and higher education institutions today. The presence in the educational institutions and its content may result in a competitive advantage for the employer. In both the short and long term, even if a company does not acquire talented employee directly

in an educational institution, its presence and activities influence the image of the company, which can later become a competitive advantage in the labour market.

**I certify the first part of the second hypothesis.**

In the age of informatics, the importance of geographical location is declining, ICT companies compete in the global market.

All the three groups of companies described above have international employees, and it is characteristic for the majority of them that their sites are not limited only to Hungary.

Their CSR activities are affected not only by the founders' intentions and organisational culture, but also by the culture and regulations (e.g. tax rules) of the host country. From this point of view, they cannot even focus only on the regions of their sites. I have also mentioned that the CSR of companies in connection with education and talent management is closely related to the issues of labour supply. In Hungary, the vast majority of university students take up a job in the region of their university after getting their degrees. Therefore, if the company wants to enforce the labour supply criteria, it has to focus primarily on the regions of the sites in the CSR areas related to education and talent management.

**Taking these factors into consideration, I consider the statement of the second hypothesis that the CSR activities of ICT companies primarily focus on the regions of the sites, to be partly justified.**

*H3: In the CSR activities of ICT companies education-focused programmes are considered to be industry-specific.*

The definition of ICT companies is very pliable. To the effect of digitalisation, the 3rd Information Technology Revolution and Industry 4.0, informatics and information technology have such an important role in the operation of more and more companies that the boundaries of industries have been blurring. At least three groups of ICT companies operate in Hungary whose CSR activities are slightly different. Multinational ICT companies apply their CSR activities following the CSR principles of the parent company to „Hungarians”. The socially responsible activities of domestically owned large ICT companies, which can be considered to be industry specific, can be linked to education. Multinational and domestic startups are less industry-specific, they pursue more startup culture-specific CSR. However, given that the vast majority of startups can be considered ICT companies (including the giant multi Microsoft, Google), their activities may even entirely cover the ICT industry-specific CSR. The leaders of startups that have grown into large multinational companies perform a significant part of their

CSR activities through their private and company foundations. The volume of their traditional corporate social responsibility-related activities is also affected by the available tax advantages. Hungarian startups also primarily support education through jointly established non-profit organisations. Thus, supporting education can be considered ICT sector-specific area.

**I consider the third hypothesis to be certified.**

*H4: Good practices in ICT companies can be described; which are responsible activities and can have an impact on the job choice preferences of university students.*

The perception of CSR activities among the students interviewed is guided by accessibility. The areas related to their current life situation are "visible" for them, that is to say, exactly the activities of corporate social responsibility that are related to education and training. It can also be seen from the results that these activities are interlinked and are organised thematically in their preferences.

During the research I identified good practices that specifically targeted the university age groups. These include the cooperative operation of the DBSC Roundtable, the AIT scholarship programme.

In addition, there are initiatives that support younger age groups, the Kürt Foundation High School, Girls' Day, NI's educational programmes, KIR for primary school students, Budapest School.

In particular, it is worth highlighting initiatives that support or recognise the work of teachers, because without their motivation the sustainable support of education is inconceivable. Such good practice is the Life Culmination of the Foundation for the Hungarian Natural Science Education of Teacher Mr. Rátz, and the segments that support teachers in NI's educational programmes.

**I certify the fourth hypothesis.**

The compiled list of activities, by organising CSR activities related to education, talent management and educational institutions, can be suitable for auditing these initiatives and identifying new activities.

*H5: The job choice preferences of the examined student sample do not differ from the those found in similar research in recent years (5 years).*

In recent years, Hungarian researches into students' job choice preferences emphasise greater awareness of today's Generation Z university students compared to previous generations. They expect personal care from their prospective employers along with good work atmosphere and modern working conditions.

They have strong work-life balance expectations and look for challenging work tasks.

Sustainability and the environmental aspects are increasingly important for them. In the analysed sample of students, I experienced an increased interest in CSR areas. The students surveyed consider the responsible behaviour of companies important. Students are guided by accessibility in forming an opinion of the different areas. They value the areas closer to their current life situation to a higher level. They consider good working conditions and a good team equally important as the fact that the company provides opportunities for education, training, development and progress for workers. The results obtained are in line with the results of research with a similar focus in recent years.

**I certify the fifth hypothesis.**

*H6: University students take into account the CSR activities of their prospective employer when they develop their job preferences.*

**I certify the sixth hypothesis** because in both samples of the student research, the results of research prove that for the respondents, in addition to salaries, other aspects related to the subject of corporate social responsibility are of great importance if they have to express their expectations for their prospective workplaces. Transparency of company operations, company communication, including CSR communication, are equally important for them when assessing an employer. Good working conditions, an ergonomic working environment and a good team at work are equally attractive to them. They expect their employer to provide them with education and training, to support their development and to ensure their promotion. They appreciate the external CSR activities of companies in this area in the context of education and talent management as they bring the world of work close to them. By ensuring accessibility CSR and CSR communication can connect the labour market with education.

*H7: University students form their opinion about ICT companies in conjunction with large companies of the region.*



The respondents, who gave any description of ICT companies, were able to name one of them. Two groups of the named and described companies can be identified.

The first group was made up of companies that were positively described by the students, highlighting the employer characteristics such as positive environment, well-being; opportunities for development and learning, good salary, career; flexibility and teamwork. Large companies in the region, such as ITSH, NI and BT belong to this group. In their case, therefore, I accept that the students' opinions were formed by their characterisation of these companies.

In the other group of companies, development, expansion, great potential, great reputation and strong competitiveness were linked to naming large multinational companies such as Apple, Microsoft and Google. In other words, the more general characteristics of the sector are defined by the image of multinational companies in the students' opinions.

Thus, it can be said that the perceptions of employment preferences related to specific work are influenced not only by the perceptions of the company, but also on the level of industry perceptions.

The more general perceptions regarding the ICT sector, like the opinions related to development potential and competitiveness, are expressed at a more general level, through the image and perception of the world-wide known market leading companies of the sector.

**For these reasons, I consider the sixth hypothesis partly justified.**

#### **4. NEW AND NOVEL RESULTS OF THE DISSERTATION**

- 1. ICT companies consider transparency and ethical business conduct as the fundamental of their social responsibility. They fight against corruption because its spill-over destructive effects on the economy and society are damaging.**

The interviewed decision makers take very firm steps against corruption, which obscures quality, hinders competition and blocks innovation. If it is possible to succeed with corruption, then all other efforts are in vain, so talents can be lost, or in the better case, they migrate. Real work and results become relative.

Transparency and ethical business conduct, however generate and maintain positive processes.

They build trust outside the organisation and loyalty within the organisation.

In line with this, transparency is also important expectation in the job-choices of future decision-makers who will soon enter the labour market as recent graduates.

- 2. The role of the corporate leader in forming CSR and its personal dimensions can be understood in a positive psychological framework.**

By bringing about positive change in the area of social relations and social issues, in addition to money and other economic factors, the manager's responsible activity (including CSR) can increase the psychological well-being of not only others but also their own psychological well-being. People who experience happiness and subjective well-being are more willing to help others, thus creating a positive feedback circle. If the leader's intellectual heritage has an impact on the company and society, in addition to increasing his own happiness and well-being, it also ensures its symbolic immortality.

Another way to exercise a positive effect is personal example, mentoring and promoting others to develop.

The successful intergenerational collaboration can bring personal and organisational benefits, in particular in the areas of knowledge transfer and forming views as well as ensuring succession.

- 3. Based on the interviews, three ways of corporate social responsibility of Hungarian ICT companies can be identified:**

### ***Domestic multinational companies with an international corporate background***

They cultivate CSR with a ready-made recipe from the parent company. For them, the slogan “think globally and act locally” stands out. The primary driving force of their responsible activities related to education and talent management is the acquisition of skilled human resource, the care of the next generation as a stakeholder of the company, brand building. Their internal CSR is mature, bringing in the parent company’s best practices, while being the first to incorporate new elements in line with the latest international trends.

### ***Domestic companies with decades of background and charismatic, today still active founders***

They are patriotic-minded and local patriots. Already as active leaders, they used to support long-term educational collaborations with their companies, and they still do so even after their retirement, at all levels of education, in collaboration with experts and nonprofit organizations. They have set up their own educational institutions, in which they support domestic talents on the basis of responsible aspects, the development of students who are different from the average in any way.

### ***Domestic startups***

Domestic startups think globally in CSR, as in all other areas of operation. They also cooperate with each other, other market players, professional organizations, educational institutions and non-profit organizations. They themselves are setting up new initiatives with them. They use original solutions in which a “you can do it – do it yourself”-kind of problem-solving, engineering thinking can be achieved in action. Their greatest value is the joint realization of independence and cooperation.

## **4. The CSR activities of the actors of the IT and telecommunication sector are most influenced by the type of company and the identity of the company manager, whereas the location of the sites is less competent.**

Startups with a foreign and domestic ownership background employing tens of thousands of employees at international level and domestic startups that are just starting with few employees compete for potential employees from the same educational institutions in the same labour market.

This competition can often be decided in the educational institutions, so it is in the interest of all ICT operators to be present. Multinational ICT actors use a wider range of CSR tools and the leader’s influence is only secondary to the CSR strategy of the parent company.

The role of the charismatic founder and leader of domestic ICT companies is very decisive in the CSR of their company, even if they have left the company.

Their intellectual heritage lives on. This is particularly true if a long-term education and talent management project are linked to their name. Domestic "new wave" startups implement their CSR with one another and with external experts – who are generally relevant to the field – in cooperation with non-profit operators.

**5. The responsibility of ICT companies can be interpreted in several dimensions in the context of education and talent management.**

These companies own technology and influence public opinion in a new symbiosis of technology and communication. ICT companies are taking an increasing role in education and research, due to the accelerated technological development, the challenges of digitalisation, the urgency of a growing and unmet labour demand, and the demand from educational institutions. The areas in which and to what extent an ICT company takes a role is closely linked to corporate social responsibility. In the socially important activity of companies in this regard, cooperation among actors is emphasised, even at the planning stage of projects.

Their responsibilities in connection with educational institutions are twofold: on the one hand, the responsibility for ethical and positive cooperation, on the other hand, respect for boundaries and interests. The student's interest is not only to gain professional experience but also to obtain a qualification at higher education. The interest of the institution is not only that the student consolidates the entire training course, but also the professional cooperation, competence development and increasing values.

**6. I have compiled a list of activities.**

By systematising CSR activities of companies in the field of education, talent management and educational institutions, a distinction can be made between the scope of activities targeting its own employees within the organisation and the scope of activities outside the organisation. The system can be applied by companies to audit or plan their CSR activities and by researchers to analyse the CSR activities carried out in the fields of education, educational institutions and talent management.

**7. The attitude of university students towards CSR activities is driven by accessibility. Their current life situation and their short-term plans are the limits to access.**

By ensuring accessibility, CSR and CSR communication can link the labour market with education. Transparency of corporate operations, corporate communication, including CSR communication, are equally important for students when judging an employer. Good working conditions, an ergonomic working environment, a good team are all attractive to them. They expect employers to provide them with education and training, to support their development and to ensure promotion. In the context of education and talent management, they appreciate the external CSR activities of companies in this area, as they they bring the world of work close to them. Among the specific CSR activities named in the questionnaire (21 + 1 activities), the respondents considered the provision of an ergonomic environment (consciously taking the specificities of body and mind into consideration) the most important. The active involvement of the company in education such as writing degree theses, assisting with research; traineeship programme; traing their employees and also environmental awareness is a high priority for them.

Considering the results of this research, accessibility has been found to be the most important prioritising factor.

**8. University students consider ICT companies as potential employers. All students would work here with pleasure, their opinions are led by large regional ICT employers who are present at the higher education institutions with their education and talent management activities.**

The students' view form an opinion of companies in the ICT sector in which strong development potential, flexibility and quality-oriented thinking get great emphasis. They are aware that this sector is constantly expanding and offering more and more jobs. These jobs are thought to be secure ones, with financial appreciation, opportunities for learning and development, a positive atmosphere and an appropriate working environment, which they find attractive. Their responses also show that their opinions are primarily formed by large regional ICT employers, who are accessible to them and are present in higher education with their initiatives.

## **5. PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY OF THE RESULTS**

The research has produced concrete results that companies can use and integrate into their CSR activities and more generally, into corporate communication. I compiled a list of activities that can be useful for companies in auditing or planning their CSR activities and for researchers in analysing the CSR activities carried out in the fields of education, educational institutions and talent management.

By systematically presenting the challenges and possible solutions, I would like to encourage the various actors in the labour market (including education) to cooperate, as they can be actually socially responsible and by cooperating they can be so effective to bring value to the economy and society.

Supporting the systematic introduction of good practice in education (with company support) is a strategic task of the state. In this, companies envisage cooperating as partners, because their primary tasks are creating value and making profits.

By presenting good practices, I intend to encourage their spread.

It is the responsibility of the companies in the industry to exercise restraint in meeting their labour needs if they are potential employees who are still in active education. In doing so, on the one hand they serve to create common shared value by respecting the limits of competence and functioning of the operators, and on the other hand, they respect the aspects of the personal careers of students through their ethical behaviour.

By taking an active role in educational institutions, they can bring the economic sector closer to education, and through teacher training, courses and internships, they can advance to bring the skills and expectations of school leavers closer to the needs and opportunities of the labour market. Projects aimed at informing university and secondary school students are in the interests of the growing generations.

In such cooperations, educational institutions have a gatekeeper role, which means that with their professional background and experience, they have to integrate any activity coming from companies into their own systems. This involves not only an opportunity but also a responsibility, because if there is no proper cooperation between the actors, even the best intentions will lead to failure. The educational institution must be able to identify the needs and adapt them to the possibilities of the cooperation.

The University of Debrecen has recognized the strategic importance of such cooperation, but it would be practical to provide an appropriate organizational framework at faculty level for flexible cooperation, taking the principle of subsidiarity into consideration.

The research also revealed that students have little knowledge of CSR, but they are very interested in it. There are examples that they can learn about CSR, but only to a very limited extend. It would be useful to launch courses on a wide scale (at all faculties) that provide information on CSR, in areas related to employment, beyond CV writing and career planning, including the involmment external corporate experts. According to a positive scenario, all university students will be employees somewhere and the earlier the world of work affects them, the more responsible decision they can make when they choose a job.

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## 6. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION



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### List of publications related to the dissertation

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1. **Bene, Á.**: Fiatalos IT vállalatok? Milyenek látják a fiatalok az IT szektor szervezeteit: Hallgatói vélemények feltárása a Debreceni Egyetemen.  
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