

ARE THERE THE DIFFERENCES IN THE APPROACH TO CSR ACCORDING TO THE MOST IMPORTANT BUSINESS SECTORS IN THE SMES SEGMENT? EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN THE V4 COUNTRIES

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Cite as: Belas, J. (2023). *Are there differences in the approach to CSR according to the most important business sectors in the SME segment? Empirical research in the V4 countries*, *Ekonomicko-manazerske spektrum*, 17(2), 86-95.

Available at: dx.doi.org/10.26552/ems.2023.2.86-95

Received: 12 October 2023; Received in revised form: 3 November 2023; Accepted: 15 November 2023; Available online: 30 December 2023

Abstract:

Research background: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an important concept that is gradually finding application in the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) segment.

Purpose of the article: The aim of this paper was to define the significant drivers of CSR in the SME segment and to compare these attitudes across the three most important business sectors in the Visegrad Four countries (V4 countries).

Methods: Empirical research, which aimed at identifying the attitudes of SMEs, was conducted in June 2022 in the V4 countries using the "Computer Assisted Web Interviewing" (CAWI Research Method). The total number of respondents in the V4 countries was 1.398. The sample, which only included respondents within the top three sectors in each V4 country, consisted of 995 respondents. The established statistical hypotheses were tested through descriptive statistics and Z-scores at a significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$.

Findings & Value added: Based on the results of the empirical research, some basic conclusions of this study can be formulated. The knowledge of the CSR concept is not at an adequate level within the sample set, which consisted of the three most important business sectors in the V4 countries. This trend is particularly evident in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The research confirmed that there are no statistically significant differences within the sample in the assessment of knowledge of the CSR concept. A relatively small number of SMEs consider the concept of CSR in the management of the company. This trend is particularly evident in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Better results were found in Poland and Hungary. The research has shown that there are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of SMEs within the sample across the V4 countries. SMEs within the sample agree with low intensity with the statement that CSR implementation enables them to gain competitive advantages in the market. The attitudes of SMEs are very similar across the V4 countries. The most statistically significant differences in the attitudes of SMEs within the sample were found when assessing the importance of CSR in the process of recruiting new employees. Some sectors valued significantly more the importance of CSR in this process.

Keywords: small and medium-sized enterprise, Corporate Social Responsibility, business sectors

JEL Classification: M14, L26, D64

1. Introduction

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are an important part of the economy in all countries of the world. Due to certain constraints on their business activities, they carry out some activities on a limited scale or in a different, self-contained way.

The situation is similar with regard to the application of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). While some authors argue that SMEs' activity in this area is insufficient (Berniak-Wozny et al., 2023) and they have to overcome various obstacles (Wentzel et al., 2023), other authors argue that SMEs have been carrying out some partial CSR activities long before the emergence of this concept, because they are more strongly linked to the region in which they operate, such as charity activities and regional outreach activities.

CSR is one of the basic directions that companies should focus on, because the focus on profit maximization is not sufficient for the current trends in business. SMEs also need to feel the weight of social responsibility. SMEs should pay attention to "improving environmental conditions, healthy competition and equality in the market, treating human resources with dignity and advancing them as the greatest asset of the enterprise, and caring for the whole community, with the local community as the main focus" (Rashiti and Skenderi, 2023; Chi et al., 2023).

This article focuses on the research on the application of CSR in the three most important SME business sectors in the Visegrad Four countries (V4 countries: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary). SMEs in the V4 countries are mainly engaged in services, trade, manufacturing and tourism. On the one hand, the individual economic sectors in which SMEs operate differ in their specific characteristics, which are conditioned by the area in which they operate. On the other hand, some sectors also share a number of common features.

The originality of this paper lies in the fact that we investigate the attitudes of SME owners/managers towards CSR on the basis of our own empirical research conducted in the V4 countries. The focus of this research is the question to what extent there are different attitudes and approaches of SMEs towards CSR in different business sectors.

The structure of the article is as follows. The first chapter presents the scientific views on the issue. The content of the second chapter is the aim, description of the methodology used and description of the data. The next chapter presents the results of the research and a discussion of them. In the conclusion, the main results of the research are formulated in an integrated form.

2. Literature Review

The view of the meaning and focus of CSR has evolved over a historical framework, and there are therefore a number of quite diverse perspectives on this sphere. Initially, CSR was perceived as a philanthropic idea and practiced mainly by large corporations. Over time, the view that CSR can become a more integral part of corporate strategy has gained ground and can be very important for SMEs, as CSR activities of SMEs can potentially contribute to increasing their competitiveness (Apospori, 2018).

Carroll (1979) defined CSR as the social responsibility of a company which includes the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that a company has from organizations at any given time.

CSR can be defined as a concept in which firms integrate social and environmental concerns into their business activities and interactions with stakeholders on a voluntary basis (Apospori, 2018). CSR is an ongoing commitment by businesses to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of employees and their families, as well as the local community and society as a whole (Rexhepi et al., 2013). CSR can be considered as a practice that sacrifices profits, through a tool for marketing and gaining reputation, to an international self-regulation of private business (Sheehy, 2015).

Castro-Gonzalez et al. (2021) prefer to define CSR in the form of specific organizational activities and corporate policies that take into account stakeholder expectations in the spheres of economic, social and environmental performance. They view CSR as a strategic factor to achieve sustainable development of firms. CSR enables companies to improve not only their profitability but also their social impact, or to influence the attitudes and behaviour of consumers or vendors. In this context Coppa and Sriramesh (2013) emphasize that CSR "seeks corporations to generate profit while creating minimal harm to society and go a step further by contributing to social improvement as well".

According to several authors, the application of the CSR concept can bring SMEs competitive advantages in the market. CSR has the potential to strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs. Aligning regional CSR initiatives with the CSR needs of SMEs is critical to achieving regional sustainable competitiveness (Apospori, 2018). According to the author, the concept of CSR suggests that "companies should seek to optimize their performance by maximizing synergies and minimizing conflicts between economic, social, and environmental objectives." Market-oriented CSR activities have a significant positive impact on increasing the competitiveness of SMEs (Rashiti and Skenderi, 2023). The most important benefits of engaging in CSR are building trust, building relationships with clients and improving image (Berniak-Wozny et al., 2023). According to some authors, CSR has a positive effect on firm performance because it positively influences competitive advantage, reputation, and customer satisfaction (Saeidi et al., 2015) and influences customer recommendation and repurchase behaviour (Perez and del Bosque, 2015). SMEs also perceive a positive relationship between the integration of CSR rules within their business and sustainable business performance (Wentzel et al. 2023).

The current business environment is increasingly being characterized by uncertainty, hypercompetition and rapid technological change, presenting challenging conditions for SME management (Al-Jinini et al., 2019). In this context, CSR plays an important role to motivate the management of SMEs to optimize practices while balancing economic, social and environmental aspects. Of course, SMEs present their CSR policy in relation to the external environment, but the most important area is the approach to their own employees.

According to Gorny (2019), incorporating CSR principles into an organisation's strategy will help to increase its social capital. In particular, it highlights the need to create favourable working conditions for employees that translate into work comfort, which is an integral part of efforts to perform work effectively. In this context, several authors emphasize the importance of human capital, as higher business performance is positively related to a higher level of both intellectual capital and innovation culture (Dabic et al., 2019; Gomezelj and Smolcic, 2016). SMEs with employees who develop their knowledge and skills are more likely to have higher growth and profitability (Gomezelj and Antonic, 2015) or represent an important resource that influences the identification and exploitation of international opportunities (Buzavaite and Korsakiene, 2019). Positive perceptions of CSR reduce employee turnover in a firm. According to the authors, employee turnover is a key issue that can threaten the survival of a company, either by reducing its revenues or increasing its costs (Castro-Gonzalez et al., 2021). Song et

al. (2023) emphasize the importance of sustainable human resource management because it plays a moderating role between corporate environmental ethics and environmental commitment and positively influences corporate environmental ethics and employee environmental commitment.

The most important business areas for SMEs in the V4 countries are services, trade, manufacturing and tourism. The services sector has gradually become the dominant sector in advanced economies (Ogujiuba et al., 2023) Services can take many forms, e.g. financial services, software services, tourism services and many other areas. The typical characteristics of services are that they are intangible, extremely labour intensive, cannot be warehoused, and are highly heterogeneous as their quantity and quality are directly dependent on the provider. Applying the concept of CSR to services means that the services provided are economically efficient as well as socially beneficial and environmentally acceptable.

The trade sector focuses on the exchange of goods or services between economic agents. Trade matches the supply of goods and services with the demand in this area. The trade sector helps to increase competition and provides a greater variety of goods and services to customers. Strong competition in the trade market generates optimal prices for customers. CSR in the trade sector should focus on taking care of employees and minimizing negative impacts on the environment (Huttmanova and Valentiny, 2019).

Manufacturing is oriented towards expanding the range of goods. As part of the transformation process, manufacturers convert inputs into desired outputs in the form of products that are demanded in the market. Compared to services, trade and tourism, the production process generally requires more technological support, consumes more raw materials and produces more negative externalities.

Tourism has a significant position in the economy of many countries and its importance is growing worldwide. The essence of tourism is the mobility of people, which is determined by various motives, primarily aimed at gaining new experiences (recreation, discovering new places, cultures and natural beauties, etc.). Service quality and tourist satisfaction are the basis for long-term tourism development (Amoah et al., 2023). In the tourism industry, increased attention has been paid to the implementation of CSR principles, yet many SME owners/managers experience various barriers in this area, such as lack of financial resources or lack of time and necessary knowledge. However, increased stakeholder pressure requires tourism businesses to respond to demands for more sustainable behavior in the sector (Santos, 2023). This study aims to investigate the significant drivers of CSR in the top three business sectors in each of the V4 countries.

3. Methodology

The aim of the paper was to define the significant CSR factors in the SME segment and to compare these attitudes within the three most important business sectors in the V4 countries.

The empirical research, which aimed at identifying the attitudes of SMEs, was conducted in June 2022 in the V4 countries. Data collection was carried out by the external agency MNFORCE using the "Computer Assisted Web Interviewing" (CAWI Research Method). The questionnaire could be completed by the owner or the top manager of the SME.

In the Czech Republic, the total number of respondents was 347. The structure of respondents in terms of company size was as follows: 45.2% micro enterprises, 30.8% small enterprises and 23.9% medium enterprises. The largest number of firms were engaged in services 138 (39.8%) and manufacturing 72 (20.7%), followed by the following areas: 60

(17.3%) trade, 32 (9.2%) construction, 11 (3.2%) transport, 7 (2.0%) agriculture, 3 (0.9%) tourism and 24 (6.9%) respondents indicated other business sector.

In the Slovak Republic, the total number of respondents was 322. The structure of respondents in terms of company size was as follows: 51.9% micro enterprises, 26.7% small enterprises and 21.4% medium enterprises. The largest number of firms were in services 129 (40.1%) and trade 79 (24.5%), followed by the following areas: 42 (13.0%) manufacturing, 37 (11.5%) construction, 7 (2.2%) transport, 3 (0.9%) agriculture, 3 (0.9%) tourism, and 22 (6.9%) respondents indicated other business sector.

In Poland, the total number of respondents was 381. The structure of respondents in terms of company size was as follows: 47.2% micro enterprises, 27.8% small enterprises and 25.0% medium enterprises. The largest number of firms were in tourism 110 (28.9%) and manufacturing 78 (20.5%), followed by the following: 56 (14.7%) trade, 49 (12.8%) services, 31 (8.1%) construction, 13 (3.4%) transport, 17 (4.5%) agriculture, and 27 (7.1%) respondents indicated other business sector.

In Hungary, the total number of respondents was 348. The structure of the respondents in terms of company size was as follows: 50.0% micro enterprises, 28.2% small enterprises and 21.8% medium enterprises. The largest number of firms were in tourism 110 (31.6%) and trade 69 (19.8%), followed by the following: 52 (14.9%) services, 34 (9.8%) manufacturing, 23 (6.6%) transport, 19 (5.5%) agriculture, 13 (3.5%) construction, and 29 (8.3%) respondents indicated other business sector.

In this article, we will assess the respondents' attitudes according to the three most important business sectors in each V4 country. In the Czech Republic these will be the following sectors of the economy: services, manufacturing and trade. In Slovakia, services, trade and manufacturing. In Poland, tourism, manufacturing and trade. In Hungary, tourism, trade and services. These sectors make up the sample of 995 respondents that will be the subject of research for this study.

Based on previous research and qualitative analysis of the literature reviewed, statements were established that appropriately characterize the importance of CSR in the SME sector:

ST1: I am familiar with the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

ST2: I take the concept of CSR into account when managing a company.

ST3: Implementing the CSR concept enables our company to gain competitive advantages in the market.

ST4: CSR enables our company to attract new employees.

Based on the method of expert estimation, we set the following statistical hypotheses:

H1: There are no statistically significant differences in respondents' positive attitudes by the three most important sectors across the V4 countries when evaluating ST1.

H2: There are no statistically significant differences in respondents' positive attitudes by the three most important sectors across the V4 countries when evaluating ST2.

H3: There are no statistically significant differences in respondents' positive attitudes by the three most important sectors across the V4 countries when assessing ST3.

H4: There are no statistically significant differences in respondents' positive attitudes by the three most important sectors across the V4 countries when assessing ST4.

The statistical hypothesis was tested through descriptive statistics, Z-score at $\alpha = 5\%$ significance level. If the p-value is greater than or equal to 0.05 the null hypothesis is confirmed. If the p-value is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected. Calculations were made using freely available software on the internet (Z Score Calculator, n.d.).

4. Results and Discussion

The following tables (Table 1-8) present the results of the research, including the verification of each scientific hypothesis.

Table 1: ST1 research results the three the most important sectors in the V4 countries

ST1: I am familiar with the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR).	CR	SR	PL	HU
	S/M/Tr 138/72/60	S/Tr/M 129/42/79	CR/V/O 110/78/56	T/Tr/S 110/69/52
1. I completely agree	20/23/12	24/8/14	42/43/26	39/33/27
2. I agree	59/27/17	46/14/32	48/27/20	56/29/23
Total 1+2	79/50/29	70/22/51	90/70/46	95/62/50
Percentage of positive responses	57/69/ 48	54/52/65	82/90/82	86/90/ 96
Arithmetic mean	58	57	85	91

Note: Czech Republic – CR; Slovak Republic – SR; Poland – PL; Hungary – HU; services – S; trade – Tr; manufacturing – M; tourism – T.

Source: own research

Table 2: Statistical calculations of ST1 by the three most important sectors in the V4 countries

Z score: p-value:			
CR: S/M; S/Tr; M/Tr	0.0854	0.2460	0.0139
SR: S/M; S/Tr; M/Tr	0.8337	0.1443	0.1936
PL: T/M; T/Tr; M/Tr	0.1336	0.9601	0.2041
HU: T/Tr; T/S; Tr/S	0.4902	0.0574	0.1902

Source: own research

The lowest proportion of positive responses was recorded in the trade sector in the Czech Republic (48%) and the highest proportion of positive responses was recorded in the services sector in Hungary (96%). The average value of positive responses to ST1 ranges from 57% in Slovakia to 91% in Hungary. Interestingly, many respondents in the Czech Republic and Slovakia did not take a position on this statement. In the Czech Republic this was up to 27% of respondents and in Slovakia even more respondents (30%). Does this mean that these SMEs do not know the concept of CSR?

H1 was confirmed. The empirical research confirmed that there are no statistically significant differences in the positive attitudes of respondents according to the three most important sectors in the V4 countries when evaluating ST1. The only exception was the comparison of the manufacturing and trade sectors in the Czech Republic (p-value = 0.0139).

SMEs operating in manufacturing were significantly more likely to agree with ST1 compared to trading firms.

Table 3: ST2 research results the three the most important sectors in the V4 countries

ST2: I take the concept of CSR into account when managing a company.	CR	SR	PL	HU
	S/V/O 138/72/60	S/V/O 129/42/79	CR/V/O 110/78/56	C/O/S 110/69/52
1. I completely agree	15/19/9	19/7/8	31/38/18	35/32/25
2. I agree	59/25/20	48/18/32	52/28/25	55/29/22
Total 1+2	74/44/29	67/25/50	83/66/43	90/61/47
Percentage of positive responses	54/61/ 48	52/59/63	75/85/77	82/88/ 90
Arithmetic mean	54	58	80	87

Source: own research

The lowest proportion of positive responses was recorded in the trade sector in the Czech Republic (54%) and the highest proportion of positive responses was recorded in the services sector in Hungary (90%). The average value of positive responses to ST1 ranges from 54% in the Czech Republic to 87% in Hungary. Many respondents in the Czech Republic (93 respondents) and Slovakia (86 respondents) did not take a position on this statement.

Are there differences in the approach to CSR according to the most important business sectors in the SME segment?

Empirical research in the V4 countries

Authors: Jaroslav Belas

Table 4: Statistical calculations of ST2 by the three most important sectors in the V4 countries

<i>Z score: p-value:</i>			
CR: S/M; S/Tr; M/Tr	0.2983	0.4965	0.1416
SR: S/M; S/Tr; M/Tr	0.3898	0.1096	0.6818
PL: T/M; T/Tr; M/Tr	0.1260	0.8493	0.2501
HU: T/Tr; T/S; Tr/S	0.2380	0.1585	0.7263

Source: own research

H2 was confirmed. The empirical research confirmed that there are no statistically significant differences in the positive attitudes of respondents according to the three most important sectors across the V4 countries when evaluating ST2. The only exception was the comparison of the manufacturing and trade sectors in the Czech Republic (p-value = 0.0139). SMEs operating in manufacturing were significantly more likely to agree with ST2 compared to trading firms.

Table 5: ST3 research results the three the most important sectors in the V4 countries

ST3: Implementing the CSR concept enables our company to gain competitive advantages in the market.	CR	SR	PL	HU
	S/V/O 138/72/60	S/V/O 129/42/79	CR/V/O 110/78/56	CR/O/S 110/69/52
1. I completely agree	21/15/7	27/6/19	33/34/20	41/28/21
2. I agree	44/30/23	41/18/31	43/30/21	46/30/22
Total 1+2	65/45/30	68/24/50	76/64/41	87/58/43
Percentage of positive responses	47 /62/50	53/57/63	69/82/73	79/ 84 /83
Arithmetic mean	53	58	75	82

Source: own research

Table 6: Statistical calculations of ST3 by the three most important sectors in the V4 countries

<i>Z score: p-value:</i>			
CR: S/M; S/Tr; M/Tr	0.0340	0.7039	0.1499
SR: S/M; S/Tr; M/Tr	0.6171	0.1362	0.5093
PL: T/M; T/Tr; M/Tr	0.0444	0.5823	0.2187
HU: T/Tr; T/S; Tr/S	0.4122	0.5892	0.8415

Source: own research

The lowest proportion of positive responses was recorded in the services sector in the Czech Republic (47%) and the highest proportion of positive responses was recorded in the trade sector in Hungary (84%). The average value of positive responses to ST1 ranges from 53% in the Czech Republic to 82% in Hungary. Interestingly, many respondents in the Czech Republic and Slovakia did not take a position on this statement. In the Czech Republic up to 36% of respondents could not take a position on this statement. In Slovakia, 34% of SMEs could not take a position on this statement.

H3 was confirmed. The empirical research confirmed that there are no statistically significant differences in the positive attitudes of respondents according to the three most important sectors in the V4 countries when assessing ST3. In two cases, the p-value was lower than the set criterion of 0.05. In the Czech Republic, we found statistically significant differences when comparing the services and manufacturing sectors (the manufacturing sector significantly more agreed with ST3) and in Poland also the manufacturing sector significantly more agreed with ST3 compared to the tourism sector.

The lowest proportion of positive responses was recorded in the trade sector in the Czech Republic (47%) and the highest proportion of positive responses was recorded in the services sector in Hungary (90%). The average value of positive responses to ST4 ranges from 53% in the Czech Republic to 84% in Hungary. Interestingly, many respondents in the Czech Republic and Slovakia did not take a position on this statement. In the Czech Republic as many as 102 respondents could not take a position on this statement. In Slovakia it was 90 respondents.

Table 7: ST4 research results the three the most important sectors in the V4 countries

ST4: CSR enables our company to attract new employees.	CR	SR	PL	HU
	S/V/O	S/V/O	CR/V/O	CR/O/S
	138/72/60	129/42/79	110/78/56	110/69/52
1. I completely agree	13/15/13	21/6/18	35/31/22	31/30/22
2. I agree	54/30/15	42/19/37	47/38/24	54/28/25
Total 1+2	67/45/28	63/25/55	82/69/46	85/58/47
Percentage of positive responses	49/62/47	49/59/70	74/88/82	77/84/90
Arithmetic mean	53	59	81	84

Source: own research

Table 8: Statistical calculations of ST4 by the three most important sectors in the V4 countries

Z score: p-value:				
CR: S/M; S/Tr; M/Tr	0.0549	0.8103		0.0688
SR: S/M; S/Tr; M/Tr	0.2301	0.0033		0.2627
PL: T/M; T/Tr; M/Tr	0.0183	0.2713		0.3030
HU: T/Tr; T/S; Tr/S	0.2713	0.0444		0.3077

Source: own research

H4 was partially confirmed. The empirical research confirmed that there are largely no statistically significant differences in the positive attitudes of respondents according to the three most important sectors in the V4 countries when assessing ST4. However, in three cases the p-value was below the set criterion of 0.05. In Slovakia, we found statistically significant differences when comparing the services and trade sectors (the trade sector significantly more agreed with ST4), in Poland the manufacturing sector significantly more agreed with ST4 compared to the tourism sector, and in Hungary the services sector significantly more agreed with ST4 compared to the tourism sector.

The results of the empirical research can be summarized as follows.

Knowledge of the CSR concept is relatively low in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. It can be concluded that there are no statistically significant differences between the three most important SME business sectors in the individual V4 countries. A relatively small number of SMEs take the CSR concept into account when managing a company. This trend is particularly evident in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Better results were found in Poland and Hungary. Empirical research has shown that there are no statistically significant results when comparing the three most important sectors across the V4 countries. Thus, it can be argued that the attitudes of SMEs doing business in the top three sectors in the V4 countries have similar attitudes towards the acceptance of CSR in management. Firms in the V4 countries agree with relatively low intensity with the statement that the implementation of CSR enables them to gain competitive advantages in the market. This trend is particularly evident in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Empirical research has shown that there are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of SMEs towards ST3 across the V4 countries.

SMEs in the V4 countries (sample) agreed with relatively low intensity that CSR enables them to attract new employees. This trend prevails in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

When assessing the ST4 attitude, we found the most significant differences when comparing the top three sectors in the V4 countries. These differences were observed in Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. Some indication of a trend can be seen if we compare the tourism sector with the other sectors in Poland and Hungary. The tourism sector was significantly less likely to agree with the statement that CSR enables a company to attract new employees.

The research results show that some SMEs are not yet fully aware that the implementation of CSR in their business activities can bring them various competitive advantages in the market, which are presented by several authors in their studies (Apospori, 2018; Rashiti and Skenderi, 2023; Berniak-Wozny et al. 2023; Saeidi et al. 2015; Perez and del Bosque, 2015; Wentzel et

al. 2023). It would be advisable to communicate these options to SME representatives in each country. The research findings follow the findings of Wentzel et al. (2023) who state that SMEs face challenges in implementing CSR in all areas of management levels related to the organization and business environment and Berniak-Wozny et al. (2023) who state that SMEs engage in CSR activities to a limited extent. In this context, there is clearly a need to pay more attention to this issue in the communication of professional and governmental spheres with SME representatives.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to define the significant factors of CSR in the SME segment and to compare these attitudes across the three most important business sectors in the V4 countries. Based on the results of the empirical research, some basic conclusions of this study can be formulated. The knowledge of the CSR concept is not at an adequate level within the sample set, which consisted of the three most important business sectors in the V4 countries. This trend is particularly evident in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The research confirmed that there are no statistically significant differences within the sample in the assessment of knowledge of the CSR concept.

A relatively small number of SMEs consider the concept of CSR in the management of the company. This trend is particularly evident in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Better results were found in Poland and Hungary. The research has shown that there are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of SMEs within the sample across the V4 countries. SMEs within the sample agree with low intensity with the statement that CSR implementation enables them to gain competitive advantages in the market. The attitudes of SMEs are very similar across the V4 countries. The most statistically significant differences in the attitudes of SMEs within the sample were found when assessing the importance of CSR in the process of recruiting new employees. Some sectors valued significantly more the importance of CSR in this process.

The limitations of this research can be seen in the limited, albeit representative, sample of respondents, as the research was conducted only in the V4 countries. It can also be assumed that the current political situation in the world (the war in Ukraine and the deteriorating security situation in the world) and the worsening economic situation (high inflation, rising energy prices, etc.) may have influenced the attitudes of SMEs. However, it can be assumed that the results of this research will enrich the knowledge base in the field of CSR application in the SME segment.

Author contributions: All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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