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**The Social Responsibility Shown by
Retail Companies Operating in Russia
(Primary Research)**

Přemysl Průša

**Faculty of International Relations
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Retail Companies Operating in Russia
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The Social Responsibility Shown by Retail Companies Operating in Russia (Primary Research Conducted in the Ekaterinburg/Sverdlovsk Area)

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Summary:

This paper presents the results of the primary research conducted among students and academic workers of the Ural State Technical University in Ekaterinburg, Russia (May, 2009). The aim was to discover the attitude of the Russian respondents towards the issue of “Corporate Social Responsibility” in Russia, as well as their opinion about the current situation as concerns social responsibility of both the companies in general, as well as retail companies operating in Russia. The results obtained are compared to the results obtained from a similar survey performed at the University of Economics in Prague in May, 2008. According to the results, the term “CSR” is not unknown in Russia. Moreover, the attitude of Russian respondents is similar to that of the Czech respondents.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, retail chains, retail companies

Společenská odpovědnost retailingových firem v Rusku (primární výzkum provedený v Jekatěrinburgu/Sverdlovské oblasti)

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Abstrakt:

Text přináší výsledky primárního výzkumu provedeného mezi studenty a akademickými pracovníky Uralské státní technické university v Jekatěrinburgu (Rusko) v květnu 2009. Cílem bylo zjistit postoje ruských respondentů k problematice společenské odpovědnosti firem, stejně jako jejich názor na současnou situaci, co se týká společenské odpovědnosti jak firem obecně, tak retailových firem působících v Rusku. Výsledky výzkumu jsou porovnány s výsledky podobného průzkumu provedeného na Vysoké škole ekonomické v Praze v květnu 2008. Z výsledků průzkumu vyplývá, že pojem „CSR” není v Rusku neznámý, navíc postoje ruských respondentů jsou podobné postojům českých respondentů.

Klíčová slova: společenská odpovědnost podniků, retailingové řetězce, retailingové firmy

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Introduction

In my previous working papers I devoted attention to the issue of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) from various perspectives. In my first paper the term CSR was explained together with a description of the different evaluation methods used for companies' assessment as regards their social responsibility. Furthermore, in May 2008, I conducted a smaller research among the students of the University of Economics in Prague (236 respondents) concerning their approach to the topic of CSR, and concerning their opinion on socially responsible behaviour of companies/retail companies operating in the Czech Republic. The outcome is as follows:

- 1) Most students have already heard about the topic of CSR.
- 2) The activities, that it is most frequently believed should be a part of CSR, are social and environmental activities.
- 3) Most companies in the Czech Republic are not regarded as socially responsible.
- 4) Students would prefer products produced by socially responsible companies.
- 5) Students have problems to obtain information about the socially responsible activities of companies; main sources of information are companies' communications, which is not very trustworthy.
- 6) Only some retail companies in the Czech Republic are regarded as socially responsible.
- 7) Students would not choose a retail chain to do their shopping in, just because of its social responsibility; the most important factors in their choice are location and prices.
- 8) Students have problems to obtain information about the socially responsible activities of retail companies, the main source of information are companies' communications, which is not very trustworthy.

In this working paper I shall present the results of a similar survey, which was conducted at the Ural State Technical University in Ekaterinburg, located in the Sverdlovsk area of Russia. The survey is based on the results obtained from a questionnaire, which was designed in order to find the opinion of respondents concerning corporate social responsibility in Russia, as well as the situation in the area of socially responsible behaviour of companies/retail companies operating in Russia in the Sverdlovsk area.

The survey was carried out in April/May, 2009 and the group of respondents consisted mainly of students and academic workers of the Faculty of Economics and Management of the Ural State Technical University in Ekaterinburg.

The research has been performed on the basis of a structured questionnaire, which was created with the assistance of Ing. Milan Postler, Ph. D., from the Department of Retailing and Commercial Communications of the University of Economics in Prague. The questionnaire was distributed personally in cooperation with the staff of the International Business Department of the Ural State Technical University to students and other academic workers of the Faculty of Economics and Management of the Ural State Technical University. They then completed the questionnaires at their seminars. Therefore, the rate of return was 100%.

In total, 250 questionnaires were distributed and filled in; of these 217 were forwarded for further analysis due to several of them being incorrectly completed, or their containing equivocal answers. The questionnaire contained sixteen questions, all of them closed. The evaluation was carried out using the standard mathematic – statistical methods.

I have set out several working hypotheses as follows (similar to those from the previous survey) so that the results can be compared to those obtained from the survey conducted in the Czech Republic:

- 1) Most respondents have already heard about CSR.
- 2) The most frequently mentioned activities, that should be part of CSR, are social and environmental activities.
- 3) Most companies in Russia are not regarded as socially responsible.
- 4) Respondents would prefer to buy products produced by socially responsible companies.
- 5) Only some retail companies in Russia are regarded as socially responsible.
- 6) Respondents would not give preference to any retail chain to do their shopping in, just because of its social responsibility; the most important factors in their decision making are location and prices.
- 7) Respondents have problems obtaining information about the socially responsible activities of retail companies; main sources of information are the companies' communications, which are not very trustworthy.

Respondents

The main sources of respondents were:

- Students from the Faculty of Economics and Management of the Ural State Technical University in Ekaterinburg;
- Academic workers from the International Business Department of the Faculty of Economics and Management of the Ural State Technical University in Ekaterinburg.

The structure of the respondents can be found in following tables.

In my text I will try to compare the results obtained with the results from my previous research conducted in the Czech Republic (mentioned above) (Pruša 2008). The comparability is possibly due to following facts:

- The questionnaires contained the same/similar questions;
- Both groups of respondents were very similar as regards their size and structure (according to age, gender and its origin).

Tab. 1: Structure of respondents according to their age

Age group	Abs.	Rel. (%)
18 – 25	142	65.44
26 – 45	54	24.88
46 +	21	9.68
In total	217	100.00

Tab. 2: Structure of respondents according to gender

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Male	77	35.48
Female	140	64.52
In total	217	100.00

As I assumed there might be rather high percentage of respondents who have not heard about “Corporate Social Responsibility”, and these may even have no idea about the definition of that term; my first two questions could be answered by all respondents, whether they knew about “CSR”, or not. The third question was designed as a screening question, and its aim was to identify the number of respondents who already knew of the existence of “CSR” and the further questions were put only to those respondents who answered the third question positively.

1. What Do the Russian Consumers Think a Company Should Be Responsible for?

My first question was aimed at identifying all possible areas of companies’ activities, which might be regarded by people in Russia as the most important areas/aspects, companies should be responsible for.

The results are depicted in the Tab. 3 and these are ranked according to their importance for respondents. It is quite interesting, that as the most important are mentioned those areas and activities, which are regarded as matters of course in the companies' practice in the Central Europe (as well as in the Czech Republic), such as safety of products, not breaking the laws, fulfilment of obligations towards employees, paying taxes, being honest with employees, suppliers, etc. These activities are in most European countries regulated and protected by legislation; therefore these are usually not embraced in the CSR concepts of European companies, as it is obvious that all companies must fulfil the standards given by law. Protection of environment seems to be also important for Russian people as well as for the Czech people, however, social activities are not so highly preferred – in the CSR concepts of the European companies these activities are rather dominant. It is also interesting that “giving and taking bribes” is not mentioned to a big extent; it seems that this activity is accepted in Russia as a normal business practice. Among “other” it was for example named, that companies should not employ immigrants.

Tab. 3: What do you think a company should be responsible for? (more options possible, the same preference)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Production activity (quality of its products, safety of its products)	189	87.10
Not braking the laws	141	64.98
Employment activity (its obligations towards employees)	138	63.59
Financial activity (paying taxes properly, return credits)	127	58.53
Being honest with customers, suppliers, employees and others	114	52.53
Protection of environment and energy saving	113	52.07
Social activities (helping poor people, charitable projects, etc.)	80	36.87
Commercial activities (building good relations with suppliers, eliminate child labour)	78	35.94
Not giving and taking bribes	72	33.18
Making profit for shareholders or owners	51	23.50
Other	2	0.92

2. Are the Russian Consumers Willing to Pay Higher Price for Environmentally Friendly Products?

This question should reveal the sensitivity of Russian consumers to the environmental issue, which is one of the most important pillars of CSR concepts of most European companies. And according to the results in Tab. 4, which show a clear preference of environmentally friendly products, the environmental issue in Russia is gaining in importance and this result slightly corresponds with 52% of respondents, who mention environment protection as an important activity, which companies should perform. If we compare these results with the results obtained from the very same question in a survey performed in the Czech Republic (May, 2008) (Průša 2008: 13), the figures show the same tendency both in the Czech Republic and in Russia, however, the percentage of respondents, who would prefer environmentally friendly products at higher price, is higher in the Czech Republic (75% versus 57%) as well as the percentage of respondents, who would not/or rather not prefer environmentally friendly products at higher price, is higher in Russia (24% versus 10%).

Tab. 4: Are you willing to pay higher price for environmentally friendly products?

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Certainly yes	36	16.59
Rather yes	88	40.55
Don't know	40	18.43
Rather not	44	20.28
Certainly not	9	4.15
In total	217	100.00

3. Have the Russian Consumers Ever Heard about the Notion “Corporate Social Responsibility”?

Where have they heard the notion “CSR” for the first time?

This question was used as a screening question and its aim was the elimination of those respondents, who do not know about the term “CSR”. The eliminated respondents were not enquired further. The Russian respondents proved to be educated fairly well about the problems of CSR, a vast majority of them appeared to have heard about CSR (69%), which as a result is comparable to the result obtained in the same kind of research conducted in the Czech Republic in May, 2008 (73%) (Průša 2008: 11).

In my further evaluation of the questionnaires I only worked with the group of respondents with positive answers of this question. The structure of this group of respondents as regards the age and gender composition is the very same as the structure of the whole group of respondents, thus the structure of the respondents remains unchanged (see Tab. 6 and 7).

Respondents have heard about CSR for the first time mostly at the University (31%) and in newspaper articles (30%), followed by “advertising and PR” (21%) – respondents could choose only one option. These figures show quite a big importance of school/university education in diffusion of the CSR notion and knowledge, which slightly correlates with the results obtained in the Czech Republic, “where newspaper articles” and “school” were the most frequently named options (46%, 43% respectively). However, “advertising and PR” appears to be more important in Russia than in the Czech Republic (31% versus 8%) (Průša 2008: 11). In the “other” option especially “internet and family” as the information were named.

Tab. 5: Have you ever heard about the notion “Corporate social responsibility”?

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Yes	149	68.66
No	68	31.34
In total	217	100.00

Tab. 6: Structure of respondents according to their age (positive answers)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
18 – 25	92	61.74
26 – 45	41	27.52
46 +	16	10.74
In total	149	100.00

Tab. 7: Structure of respondents according to gender (positive answers)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Male	48	32.21
Female	101	67.79
In total	149	100.00

Tab. 8: Where have you heard the notion “CSR” for the first time? (one option possible)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
School	46	30.87
Newspaper articles	45	30.20
Advertising and PR	31	20.81
Product labels	11	7.38
Annual reports of companies	8	5.37
Other	8	5.37
In total	149	100.00

4. Is “CSR” a Source of Competitive Advantage of Companies in Russia?

More than 75% of respondents answered that CSR is a source of competitive advantage, which shows, that CSR might have a big potential as a marketing tool even in Russia. However, we have to bear in mind that in fact only highly educated respondents were enquired, therefore this group is not a typical sample of the Russian society, but it is quite evident, that for a certain target group (educated people, and perhaps also people with higher incomes) CSR represents an important differentiating factor, which might be a reason for product/company preference. It is very interesting that in the Czech Republic only 54% of respondents expressed their conviction about CSR as a competitive advantage and 24% had opposite opinion (in Russia only 5% of respondents) (Průša 2008: 15).

Tab. 9: Is “CSR” a source of competitive advantage of companies in your opinion?

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Certainly yes	47	31.54
Rather yes	68	45.64
Don't know	26	17.45
Rather not	6	4.03
Certainly not	2	1.34
In total	149	100.00

5. Where Do the Russian Consumers Obtain Information about Companies' Behaviour in Terms of their Social Responsibility?

The Russian respondents mostly obtain information about companies' behaviour from “newspaper articles”, “commercial communication”, followed by “corporate web sites”. These information sources are generally not regarded as impartial and independent, thus not very trustful. Probably the most objective information source about socially responsible behaviour of companies should be provided by the assessment of independent organizations, but this source is not easily accessible in Russia, therefore only 19% of respondents have chosen this answer. The results obtained in the Czech Republic are very similar (newspaper articles – 43%, commercial communication – 29%, corporate web sites – 25%) (Průša 2008: 16).

Tab. 10: Where do you obtain information about companies' behaviour in terms of their social responsibility? (more options possible, the same preference)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Newspaper articles	72	48.32
Commercial communication – (advertising + PR)	70	46.98
Corporate web sites	38	25.50
Assessment of independent organizations	28	18.79
I don't search for such information	22	14.77
Product labels	21	14.09
Annual reports	15	10.07

6. Do Companies in Russia Behave Socially Responsibly?

According to the respondents' opinion only "some companies" or "few companies" in Russia behave socially responsibly (30% of respondents, 65% of respondents respectively – in total 95% of respondents). This means that Russians are not convinced that companies in Russia are socially responsible. There might be several reasons for this situation – the first is the fact, that companies in Russia really are not socially responsible. The other fact is insufficiency of companies' communication – 66% of respondents have the opinion that companies do not inform about their socially responsible activities sufficiently. That is very important and shows the necessity and importance of corporate communication.

The very similar situation also appears to be in the Czech Republic (43% of respondents think that "some companies", and 56% of respondents think that "only few companies" behave socially responsibly), 67% of respondents are rather convinced about the insufficiency of companies' communication about their socially responsible activities (Průša 2008: 18–19).

Tab. 11: Which statement do you agree at most with?

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Most companies in Russia behave socially responsibly	5	3.36
Some companies in Russia behave socially responsibly	44	29.53
Only few companies in Russia behave socially responsibly	97	65.10
No company in Russia behaves socially responsibly	3	2.01
In total	149	100.00

Tab. 12: Do you think that companies in Russia communicate their socially responsible activities sufficiently?

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Certainly yes	3	2.01
Rather yes	25	16.78
Don't know	22	14.77
Rather not	88	59.06
Certainly not	11	7.38
In total	149	100.00

7. Why do Companies in Russia Behave Socially Responsibly?

Respondents in Russia, mostly, suppose that socially responsible behaviour increases the attractiveness of companies' products for consumers (52% of respondents), which confirms the belief that CSR is a source of competitive advantage. In addition, this information presents certain evidence, that also in Russia there are customer segments, which appreciate the socially responsible behaviour of companies, which they express by favouring their products. Quite an important body of opinion is also the "social necessity", which might illustrate an increasing level of social accountability among Russian consumers (or at least in some customer segments).

The results in the Czech Republic are quite similar again – 61% of respondents mention "social necessity" and 41% of respondents mention "greater attractiveness of products for consumers" (Průša 2008: 20).

Tab. 13: What is the reason, in your opinion, that companies behave socially responsibly? (more options possible, the same preference)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Greater attractiveness of their products for consumers	78	52.35
Social necessity	64	42.95
Greater attractiveness for investors	34	22.82
Greater attractiveness for employees	19	12.75
Other (only "reputation" was named)	1	0.67

8. Do Retail Companies in Russia Behave Socially Responsibly?

The aim of this question was to discover the respondents' opinion as to whether retail companies in Russia behave socially responsibly, and to compare the answers to question No. 6, which was related to companies in Russia in general. However, the answers to both questions are nearly identical, and do not reveal any difference between the opinion on the situation among retail companies and companies in general.

The results obtained from a survey performed in the Czech Republic in May, 2008 do not show any difference between the situation in the retail sector, nor in the economy as a whole, either.

Tab. 14: Which statement do you most agree with?

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Most retail companies in Russia behave socially responsibly	6	4.03
Some retail companies in Russia behave socially responsibly	47	31.54
Only a few retail companies in Russia behave socially responsibly	90	60.40
No retail company in Russia behaves socially responsibly	6	4.03
In total	149	100.00

9. Which Retail Chains Do Russian Consumers Prefer for Shopping?

What is the reason for their preference?

In Tab. 15 we can see the list of retail chains the Russian respondents marked as the most favoured for shopping in the Sverdlovsk area. The results cannot be generalized for the whole Russian market, as the retail chains operating in each area of the Russian Federation are different. Thus, a different list of retail chains might be obtained, for example, in the Moscow area. In the list below we can find both international retail chains; namely: Auchan, Ikea, Metro, OBI; and the Russian domestic retail chains, such as: Kupec, Monetka, Kirovskij, Megamart and Zvezdnij. Most of the Russian retail chains operate in many different areas of the country, and thus, are widespread. This situation is different from that in the Czech Republic, and it demonstrates the ability of the Russian retail market/companies to defend and preserve the position of Russian domestic companies in the face of competition from the international players. The reasons for this situation, in my view, are the following:

- The international/multinational retail companies entered the Russian market later than they entered the Central European market;
- this enabled the domestic companies to develop, grow and expand in their home market and become competitive in terms of assortment, prices, shopping atmosphere, logistics, and several other aspects;
- the huge geographical size of the Russian market, which makes the entrance and proper/fast expansion of international retail companies very difficult, time consuming and costly.
- The Russian respondents mostly prefer particular retail chains because of assortment, prices and location. This is very logical, as these factors are the most important ones all over the world, and the very same results very also obtained from the survey performed in the Czech Republic in May, 2008. However, my reason for asking this question was

also to discover the importance of the factor “social responsibility”, which proved to be the least important one for the Russian respondents. Nevertheless, this option was marked by more than 10% of respondents, which is not a negligible amount, and it again shows the increasing importance of CSR even in the less developed markets. On the contrary, in the Czech Republic the “social responsibility” option was chosen by only 3.5% of respondents, which is considerably less than the result obtained from the survey in Russia.

Tab. 15: Which retail chains do you prefer to do your shopping in?
(more options possible, the same preference)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Auchan	82	55.03
Kupec	66	44.30
Ikea	58	38.93
Monetka	50	33.56
Kirovskij	49	32.89
Metro	47	31.54
Megamart	42	28.19
OBI	20	13.42
Zvezdnij	16	10.74
Other (they named small local stores)	7	4.70

Tab. 16: What is the reason for your preferring the chosen retail chains?
(more options possible, the same preference)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
assortment	101	67.79
prices	95	63.76
location	89	59.73
shopping atmosphere	30	20.13
personnel	20	13.42
advertising	17	11.41
social responsibility	16	10.74

10. Which Retail Chains in Sverdlovsk Area Do Behave Socially Responsibly?

Where do the Russian respondents obtain information about the socially responsible behaviour of retail companies?

It is evident from Tab. 17, that all three of the most frequently mentioned companies are the international retail chains, which do not come from Russia originally (Ikea, Auchan and Metro). Of the Russian retail companies, Kupec was quite frequently marked as socially responsible. This retail company is a modern retailer running super- and hypermarkets, and it is oriented on the higher income customer segments. Therefore, its assortment contains high quality products in a great variety. However, the price level of this retailer is rather high.

Nevertheless, it is very difficult to generalize these results **for** the whole country, as there are different companies in different areas of Russia.

In the Czech Republic there are different retail chains operating, than these in Russia (except Ikea, Makro and OBI), therefore it is not reasonable to compare the answers from this question.

Tab. 17: Which retail chains in the Ekaterinburg/Sverdlovsk area, in your opinion, behave socially responsibly? (more options possible, the same preference)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Ikea	57	38.26
Auchan	44	29.53
Metro	43	28.86
Kupec	34	22.82
OBI	20	13.42
Kirovskij	20	13.42
Megamart	19	12.75
Monetka	8	5.37
Zvezdnij	5	3.36
Don't know...	46	30.87

The respondents mostly expressed, that they can see from their own experience, whether or not a retail company behaves socially responsibly. Furthermore, they

orient themselves according to the corporate communications and newspaper articles. However, these two information sources are not very objective, and companies can simply lie about their activities. Some respondents also obtain the information from the “assessment of independent organizations”, but here, the problem is that usually only a few companies are assessed by independent organizations, and mostly this is done on the international companies, and not the “true Russian” companies.

The results obtained from a similar survey performed in the Czech Republic show several similarities: “newspaper articles”, “corporate communication”, “own experience”, “corporate web sites” together with “product labels” account for the majority of answers. “Assessment by independent organizations” was mentioned; as it was in Russia; by 12% of respondents.

Tab. 18: Where do you obtain information about the socially responsible behaviour of retail companies in Ekaterinburg/Sverdlovsk area?
(more options possible, the same preference)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Own experience	65	43.62
Commercial communication (advertising + PR)	54	36.24
Newspaper articles	39	26.17
Corporate web sites	20	13.42
Assessment by independent organizations	18	12.08
Product labels	13	8.72
Annual reports	7	4.70
Don't know	44	29.53

11. Which Socially Responsible Activities do the Retail Chains in the Sverdlovsk Area Perform most frequently?

Are these activities sufficient?

According to the opinion of the Russian respondents, the retailers show their social responsibility by sponsorship, social programmes for employees and by donations and charity. Also, support for the healthy lifestyle was mentioned quite frequently (21%). It is quite interesting, that the environmental activities/protection are probably not performed by the Russian retailers to any great extent, even if these activities are demanded by Russian consumers – they would also favour environmentally friendly products, even at a higher price.

There is quite a big percentage of respondents who do not know what socially responsible activities the Russian retailers perform (19%), perhaps, because of the fact that the Russian companies mostly do not perform any socially responsible activities at all. Or if they do, they do not inform consumers about them.

In the Czech Republic the results were quite similar – the respondents also mentioned “sponsorship”, “donations and charity” and “support of the healthy lifestyle”. However, “environmental activities” were highly dominant, unlike the situation in Russia.

Tab. 19: Which socially responsible activities do the retail chains in the Ekaterinburg/Sverdlovsk area perform most frequently, in your opinion? (more options possible, the same preference)

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Sponsorship	62	41.61
Social programmes for employees	49	32.89
Donations, charity	32	21.48
Support of the healthy lifestyle	31	20.81
Support of the local community	23	15.44
Support of suppliers	20	13.42
Ecological products	19	12.75
Ecological activities and energy saving	9	6.04
Other	1	0.67
Don't know...	28	18.79

The Russian respondents seem to be quite convinced that the socially responsible activities of Russian retailers are not sufficient so far – nearly 70% of the respondents expressed the opinion, that the socially responsible activities of retailers are either: “rather not” or “certainly not”, sufficient (50%, 19% respectively). 22% of respondents “do not know”, and only 9% of respondents are positive about this issue. Therefore, there appears to be a lot of room for improvement in Russia.

In the Czech Republic the situation, according to the survey performed in 2008, was almost identical – there was only a slightly bigger percentage of respondents, who “did not know” (25%), and a slightly smaller percentage of respondents, who answered “certainly not” (8%). It can be said, that the opinion of Czechs is not so polarized, but the general meaning is the very identical.

Tab. 20: Are these activities sufficient in your opinion?

	Abs.	Rel. (%)
Certainly yes	3	2.01
Rather yes	10	6.71
Don't know	33	22.15
Rather not	75	50.34
Certainly not	28	18.79
In total	149	100.00

Conclusion

“Corporate Social Responsibility” is not an unknown phenomenon in Russia anymore – more than 69% of respondents answered, that they had heard about “CSR”. But it appears that the understanding of this term might be slightly different in Russia from that in the Czech Republic. Whereas in the Czech Republic those activities that are regarded as socially responsible, which are based on some legislative framework; in Russia the respondents named activities such as “not breaking the law” or “the production of healthy and safe products”, as things which should be a part of the legislation, and are thus regarded as matters of fact by Czech consumers.

To sum up the results I shall return to my hypotheses:

- 1) Most respondents have already heard about CSR.
Confirmed.
- 2) The most frequently mentioned activities, that should be the part of CSR, are social and environmental activities.
Partly confirmed – Russian respondents prefer social activities to environmental activities.
- 3) Most companies in Russia are not regarded as socially responsible.
Confirmed.
- 4) Respondents would prefer products produced by socially responsible companies.
Partly confirmed – Respondents would prefer ecological products.

- 5) Only some retail companies in Russia are regarded as socially responsible.

Confirmed.

- 6) Respondents would not base their preference for any retail chain in which to do their shopping, just upon its social responsibility, the most important factors for their choice are location and prices.

Confirmed

- 7) Respondents have problems to obtain information about the socially responsible activities of retail companies; main sources of information are companies' communications, which is not very trustworthy.

Partly confirmed – Respondents also use their own experience (for example from shopping) and assessment by independent organizations, which is difficult to obtain in Russia, as the independent organizations usually only assess the international retail chains.

In conclusion, I would like to express my own surprise at seeing that the results obtained from the survey in Russia are very similar to the results obtained in my previous survey performed in the Czech Republic in May, 2008. There were only slight differences revealed – mainly in the understanding of the importance of several “CSR activities”. Otherwise, the Russian consumers' perception of the situation in the Russian retail market, as regards CSR, appears to be very similar to the Czech consumers' perception.

It is also important to mention, that the results obtained in this survey cannot be generalized on the whole Russian population, as the sample of respondents was too small, and it was not representative of the whole Russian population, as it only consisted of students and academic workers from the Ural State Technical University in Ekaterinburg. Therefore, especially the findings concerning the retail companies and their behaviour cannot be applied to the whole Russian retail market; rather, only to the Sverdlovsk area.

Nevertheless, this survey may serve as interesting material for comparison with the situation concerning students' awareness about CSR in the Czech Republic. It can also serve as inspiration for further research.

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