

Article

The Perception of CSR Activities in a Selected Segment of McDonald's Customers in the Czech Republic and Its Effect on Their Purchasing Behavior—A Case Study

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Received: 8 September 2020; Accepted: 15 October 2020; Published: 18 October 2020



Abstract: This case study presents the results of research which focused on the perception of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities by customers in a target segment of a selected fast-food chain in Czechia and its impact on their purchasing behavior. A total of 264 duly completed questionnaires were analyzed. Furthermore, the article presents the specifics of the development and fulfillment of the CSR concept in Czechia and at the same time points out differences in the implementation of the McDonald's CSR concept at the global level compared to its implementation at the national level in the Czech environment. Statistical dependence between age as well as education and understanding the essence of CSR was proven, while no correlation was identified when it comes to gender. Among factors affecting the purchasing decision-making process in the target segment of a selected company, CSR activities (i.e., the environmental mindset of the company) rank fourth after price, quality, and recommendations from friends. The results of this research can be applied to other restaurant establishments in Czechia, taking into consideration their target segments, and used for further research into the awareness and effect of CSR on consumer purchasing behavior and its comparison at the international level.

Keywords: CSR; customer; Czechia; McDonald's; purchasing behavior; restaurant

1. Introduction

Although corporate social responsibility is far from new, it is still not automatically understood and perceived by the lay public in the Czech Republic. This case study aims to show the extent to which the corporate social responsibility (hereinafter referred to as “CSR”) concept is perceived in the segment of young people and families with children in general on the one hand, and its perception by the target customer segment of the McDonald's fast-food chain on the other hand. We will also deal with the differences in promoting CSR activities by this company at the global level compared to the Czech environment. We will give reasons for the differences and put them into context, besides other things, by the different historical and political developments in the Czech Republic in comparison to western countries. The results of the study should also prove to what extent the purchasing decision-making by the target segment is affected by the selected company's activities in the field of CSR. The conclusion contains a summary of the results and recommendations for the selected company and other restaurant establishments in the Czech Republic, as well as a contribution toward further, follow-up research into the effect of CSR on consumer purchasing behavior.

The public interest in corporate social responsibility remains very strong. The perception of companies as being socially responsible affects people when making purchasing decisions or when deciding whether to use the services of a company as well as when looking for a new employer. Social responsibility has the potential to affect consumer behavior and brand recommendation and is currently a hot topic for both companies and individuals in our country as well as abroad.

There are not many research studies dealing with this specific topic. Harun [1] conducted research among a sample of young people, so-called Millennials, as to how their purchasing behavior is affected by their perception of fast-food restaurants' CSR activities. His research utilized a multigroup analysis and an importance-performance map analysis. Using a similarly sized sample of 320 respondents, Xu [2] studied the effect of CSR activities on the consumer behavior of McDonald's customers in a medium-sized city in China. In his article "Corporate social responsibility authenticity from the perspective of restaurant consumers", Kim Minseong [3] states that to date, the significance of CSR for restaurants has been insufficiently studied, and the output of his study conducted in the United States is the finding that consumers' perception of CSR activities increases their favorable perceptions, attitudes, and behavior toward a restaurant brand through the significant mediating role of CSR authenticity.

In his scientific paper, Sheeby [4] pursues the problems and solutions related to the defining of the term CSR in detail. In the final part of the paper, he defines CSR as "a form of international private self-regulation focused on the reduction and mitigation of industrial harms and provision of public good". According to Crowther and Aras [5], the three fundamental principles of CSR are sustainability, responsibility, and transparency. The sustainability principle relates to the impact of currently adopted measures on the options that will be available in the future. The responsibility principle is connected with the company's realization that its conduct affects the external environment, and that is why the company takes responsibility for the consequences of its conduct as well as responsibility for providing information to stakeholders (including customers) about the impact of the company's activities. The transparency principle means that the external impact of the company's activities can be ascertained based on true and clear information contained in the organization's reports. The UN Global Compact establishes ten general principles for companies' CSR activities that are a good starting point for companies' CSR and sustainability activities. The principles are founded on internationally recognized conventions relating to human rights, labor rights, the environment, and anti-corruption. Companies that subscribe to the UN Global Compact incorporate the ten principles into their business activities and report their performance to the Global Compact. The reporting requirements depend on the company's size.

Czech authors specializing in this area of CSR follow the CSR definition and principles provided by the UN Global Compact, and, with regard to CSR principles, they talk about similar areas and elaborate them in more detail specifically for the conditions of the Czech economy while taking into account the past and present development of the application of the CSR concept in the Czech Republic (for more information, see [6–8]).

In 2018, the McDonald's company announced a series of commitments globally with the aim of reducing the impact of its business on the environment. McDonald's is aware of the fact that a change in such an extensive global supply chain could have a significant impact on the planet and wants to put its size and influence to good use. It would also like to set an example and motivate other big players to similar actions. Global commitments focused on the environment involve the production of packaging and subsequent separation and re-use. By 2025, McDonald's intends to have 100% of its packaging, which is used for selling products to its customers, from renewable, recycled, or certified materials. By 2025, McDonald's also wants to make sure that, in 100% of its restaurants, waste from packaging left behind by customers will be separated and sent away for further use. It is hopeful about the rapid development of the infrastructure of recycling lines and waste incinerators that are crucial to meeting this goal. At this point, 80% of food packaging used by this American company in the Czech Republic is made of paper. McDonald's is also taking a number of measures to further reduce the quantity of plastic packaging it produces and to replace it with paper packaging. The current measures

which the company is taking to reduce plastic packaging and the impact of the packaging production on the environment are not a result of any spasmodic wave of environmental measures. On the contrary, it is the company's long-term strategy which started in 1993 when McDonald's established a partnership with the Environmental Defense Fund, an environmental advocacy group. The goal of the research carried out was to investigate whether it was important to communicate the activities of the selected fast-food chain to the target segment of customers with the aim of influencing their shopping behavior [9].

2. Literature Review

2.1. *The Development of the CSR Concept in the Czech Republic*

Since its conception back in 1953, when the book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* by Howard R. Bowen [10] was published, the concept of CSR has developed a great deal. Due to a number of factors, CSR developed differently in different countries, which has resulted in varying understanding of this concept, even within the European Union.

When it comes to the development of corporate social responsibility in the Czech Republic, the first mention of CSR dates back to the period between the two world wars—i.e., in the first half of the 20th century. The earliest application of CSR in the Czech Republic is most frequently connected with the entrepreneur Tomáš Baťa—many experts consider social responsibility to be a typical feature of Baťa's enterprise, as Baťa himself was actively involved in the promotion and advocacy of corporate social responsibility not only in his company, but he also tried to raise awareness of this concept among the general public [6].

The essential milestones concerning the spread of the CSR concept in the Czech Republic were the country's accession to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and its accession to the European Union, for which corporate social responsibility is one of the fundamental agendas which it has promoted over the long term [7].

Having Sheehy's definition [4] then allows for an organized, more focused debate on the issues appropriate to regulation, namely what is to be regulated; for what purposes or objectives; who is to administer the regulation; using what resources; and how the costs and benefits are to be distributed. In the Czech Republic, the government has no substantial control over CSR, and corporate social responsibility is managed on a voluntary basis. Corporate social responsibility is no longer common only in foreign companies. Since the beginning of the new millennium, awareness of the CSR concept has risen in the Czech Republic and gained support among many Czech companies that started to incorporate CSR into their corporate cultures. In their publication, authors Kašparová and Kunz [7] state that "knowledge of the CSR concept and its main principles is usually proportionate to the size of the company". According to a survey by the Business Leaders Forum in 2008, it was obvious that the rate of awareness of the CSR concept in the Czech Republic was only 37% among small enterprises, 61% for medium-sized enterprises, and 97% of the surveyed large enterprises [7].

2.2. *The Perception of CSR Application by Consumers*

Despite all the arguments in favor of or against applying the CSR concept, the consumers' view of CSR is essential, as well as whether they expect companies to behave responsibly and prefer companies that do so.

Applying the CSR concept has also proven to be a very effective positioning strategy, which gives the brand a symbolic value and becomes an attribute of desired competitive differentiation [11].

It is not easy to ascertain the level of influence of CSR activities on consumers' purchasing decision-making, as CSR can affect a customer's decision on a particular purchase directly or indirectly. The effect is indirect if a corporate context (positioning strategy) is created for purchasing decision-making, while there is a direct effect if the consumer shows interest in CSR activities. However, only a small segment of consumers uses CSR as a criterion of purchase [12].

2.2.1. Development of the Perception of CSR Application Abroad

According to a 2009 survey by GlobeScan conducted in 25 countries, which studied respondents' expectations in terms of companies' behavior and the assumption of responsibility for the various areas of CSR, the survey had the following findings [13]:

- 69% of respondents expect companies to behave responsibly with respect to the environment (not harming it);
- 68% of respondents expect responsible behavior towards employees;
- 65% of respondents expect accountability to be ensured in the supply chain;
- 59% of respondents expect the provision of high-quality and harmless products and services;
- 52% of respondents expect a decrease in the company's impact on climate change.

The data indicate that customers favor companies that are considerate to the environment, their employees, the choice of suppliers, provide high-quality products, and strive to minimize their company's negative impact on the climate. Harun [1] also states that particularly environmental considerations are most perceived within CSR activities by fast-food chains. In his research study "The effect of CSR on corporate image, customer citizenship behaviors, and customers' long-term relationship orientation", Kim Minjung [14] aimed to understand the perception of companies' CSR activities by customers (corporate image, customer-citizenship behavior, and building up long-term relationships). The results provide empirical implications for companies by verifying the effect of CSR activities as a focal factor in building long-term relationships as an organizational goal in the foodservice industry.

Given the focus of our case study, the following text will deal in more detail with the perception of the significance of social responsibility by Czech consumers.

2.2.2. Development of the Perception of CSR Application in the Czech Republic

The Ipsos research agency has over the long term focused on the comprehensive study of consumers' view of CSR in the Czech Republic (specifically, since 2010), both from the point of view of the general public as well as industry experts. The latest research conducted by Ipsos in April 2019 indicated that 69% of Czechs are interested in the provenance of the goods they buy and 52% of Czech respondents take into consideration the social behavior of a company when making their purchasing decision [15]. In her research, Slabá [16] acquired very different data in terms of the effect of companies' CSR activities on purchasing decision-making by Czech consumers. Her research indicates that only 12% of respondents consider companies' CSR activities important when deciding on a purchase, while 46% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion and 31% of respondents do not take companies' CSR activities into account when purchasing products. In total, 65% of respondents also stated that they did not have a sufficient amount of information about the CSR activities of companies [16]. The different findings of the two studies can be explained—while the Ipsos agency obtains a representative sample of the Czech population between the ages of 18 and 65, there is no mention of how the respondents were selected for the research study by Slabá. The authors thus consider the data acquired by Ipsos to be relevant, and these data are further worked with. The Ipsos research also suggests that what Czechs expect the most from companies is environmental protection and fair treatment of staff. Czechs also express interest in education, truthful communication with customers, and the development of modern technologies [15]. Compared to its research results from previous years, the Ipsos research data show a high degree of consistency [17]. The results mentioned above indicate that environmental protection and the fair treatment of staff are the most important areas in terms of CSR both for Czechs as well as respondents of the research conducted worldwide. Based on these research results, we can also conclude that companies should focus on these two areas the most, as they are expected the most by consumers both in the Czech Republic and around the world.

2.3. The CSR Concept at McDonald's in the Czech Republic and Around the World

Prior to conducting the research itself, which is the central element of this case study, a preliminary situation analysis was carried out to acquire available information for investigating the topic at hand, and so-called desk research was also conducted, which focused on the study of secondary resources, such as the McDonald's website, articles about the company's activities, as well as its official documents and annual reports. Together with information obtained from an internal source within the selected company, these data provided information about the company in question and its currently implemented CSR strategy.

As one of the largest restaurant chains, McDonald's prides itself on the fact that tasty food can also be sustainable and views social responsibility as the foundation of the values the company holds [18]. McDonald's Corporation, which represents the selected subject of the entire research, was investigated first in terms of its business activities worldwide, which was followed by a focus on the fast-food chain's activities in the Czech Republic, where this multinational foodservice retailer is represented by McDonald's ČR spol. s r.o. [19]. As part of its CSR endeavors, McDonald's conducts a number of activities, some of which overlap and are interconnected, which is why achieving one goal may lead to another goal being achieved, and vice versa.

On a global scale, McDonald's devotes a substantial amount of attention to the issue of corporate social responsibility and shares its values across its outlets around the world. It even creates its own strategies and sets goals that the company wants to achieve in the area of CSR. As one of the largest restaurant chains, it also tries to maintain its influence, act as a responsible leader and set an example for others [20].

In 2018, McDonald's published its CSR strategy entitled "Scale for Good", which outlines a number of goals concerning how to incorporate social and environmental issues into the company's core business and how to engage both internal and external stakeholders in a meaningful dialogue about the priorities and performance of the company for the 2022–2030 period. Through this strategy, the McDonald's Corporation pursues the implementation of all three pillars of corporate social responsibility. For each activity in the economic, social, and environmental areas, it sets goals so that these are in line with those of the UN [21].

McDonald's is committed to the values that it honors and respects. Since the beginning of its operations, McDonald's has committed to doing "the right thing"—managing people, processes, and practices around the world every day to produce quality food, responsibly select resources, build stronger communities, and improve life on the planet in general. The core areas on which McDonald's builds its concept are: sustainability, good food, a good planet, people, and communities. Thus, McDonald's performs all its activities with regard to these areas, seeking to meet its core business goal of customer satisfaction [22].

The conducted analyses have shown that in the Czech Republic McDonald's does not devote itself as much to the area of corporate social responsibility compared to its parent company. Although McDonald's in the Czech Republic does share its basic values and priorities concerning corporate social responsibility such as the procurement of raw materials from renewable sources, consideration of the environment, and support for local communities, the question is to what extent this is the case, as neither the company's Czech website nor annual report or similar documentation bear any mention of some of the CSR activities carried out worldwide. The Czech website contains very little information about the company's activities in the Czech Republic, and the information about the company's CSR activities focuses more on the commercial sphere and any relevant information is published in the "For the Media" section; therefore, not even customers interested in this area can easily learn about McDonald's CSR efforts in the Czech Republic [7].

3. Materials and Methods

The design of the research, including all of its stages is based on the work of Yin "Case Study Research: Design and Methods" [23]. Yin's publications are highly regarded worldwide in the field of

creating case studies and the use of appropriate research methods. A combined approach will be used. This is a holistic approach which aims to discover the case constituents, capture the case in the context of real life, and get to know it in detail and in context. One can assume that by understanding one case, we will be able to understand similar cases as well. The goal was to reach the target group of the McDonald's fast-food chain—i.e., young people and families with children. The case study is presented as an integrated system and a single country study because the study results can be applied to all fast-food chains in the Czech Republic and can also be used for other places to eat while respecting their target segments. The character of this article is that of a descriptive synoptic and methodological study, which is based on the latest domestic and foreign literature, and following a case synthesis, the article can be used as a basis for future systematic research into the influence of the perception of CSR activities of selected companies on the shopping behavior of customers.

The research aimed to evaluate the view of the target segment of the selected company, McDonald's, on the concept of corporate social responsibility as such and also the impact of McDonald's CSR activities conducted in the Czech Republic on the purchasing behavior within the target segment.

The target segment of the McDonald's fast-food chain is mostly made up of young people and families with children [24].

The research questions, defined based on the research goals, are formulated using the inductive-deductive hierarchy:

- Q1: What is the awareness of corporate social responsibility?
- Q2: Is there a correlation between age/gender/education and knowledge of the CSR concept?
- Q3: How is the CSR concept perceived?
- Q4: Is the application of CSR considered a competitive advantage?
- Q5: Do CSR activities affect consumers in their purchasing decision-making?
- Q6: How are the CSR activities of McDonald's perceived?
- Q7: How is the communication of McDonald's CSR activities perceived?

To answer the research questions themselves, methods of quantitative research were used, specifically an online questionnaire survey, as the selected company's target group (i.e., the statistical population) represented by young people and families with children have easy access to the Internet. In answering some of the questions, the Pearson chi-square test was used to compare category variables to determine dependence or independence between two variables, and also the ranking method, which is used to determine the order of selected factors according to their importance and only requires ordinal data, though it does not take into consideration absolute differences in factor values.

Before the actual implementation of the questionnaire survey, a pilot study was carried out on a sample of respondents consisting of five people. The questionnaires filled in during the pilot study are not included in the overall assessment. Based on the pilot study, some instructions for filling in the questionnaire were added, and certain questions were modified so as to make them more comprehensible to the respondents in order to make the filling in of the questionnaire as effective and easy as possible and to make sure that the answers obtained have sufficient validity.

The research, or the questionnaire survey to be precise, was conducted between 20 March 2020, and 3 April 2020. The questionnaire itself was created using Google Forms and subsequently distributed via Facebook, as it is the second most widely used social media network among the selected company's target group. The most widely used social media site in the Czech Republic is the video sharing platform YouTube [25]. Due to the possibility of sharing a text and a hyperlink to the questionnaire, Facebook was chosen for the distribution of the questionnaire rather than YouTube.

The evaluation contains a total of 264 duly completed questionnaires. The composition of the sample of respondents—i.e., their gender, age and education i— shown in the following table (Table 1).

Table 1. Composition of the sample of respondents according to age, gender, and education with respect to their knowledge of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) concept.

Type of Question	Knowledge of the CSR Concept			Total
	Yes, I Know	I am Not Quite Sure	No, I do Not Know	
Gender:				
Male	55	48	19	122
Female	71	53	18	142
Age				
<18 y	1	2	5	8
18–25 y	78	39	14	131
26–35 y	29	36	5	70
36–45 y	17	19	8	44
>45 y	1	5	5	11
Education				
Elementary school	1	6	6	13
Secondary school	42	42	18	102
University	83	53	13	149
Total	126	101	37	264

The question regarding gender also contained the option of choosing a non-binary alternative, but none of the respondents selected this option.

As the questionnaire survey examined the views of the target segment represented by young people and families with children, the representation of the various age groups can be considered adequate.

Based on the aforementioned research questions and the analyses conducted, nine hypotheses were proposed, which by way of conducting marketing research were either verified or disproved:

1. A minimum of 70% of respondents within the selected target segment know the term corporate social responsibility.
2. There is a correlation between age/gender/education and knowledge of the CSR concept.
3. More than 75% of respondents consider the CSR concept important (evaluation 4 and 5 on a 5-point scale, with 1 = least important; 5 = most important).
4. When deciding on a purchase, a minimum of 50% of respondents prefer products from companies engaged in CSR.
5. In the analysis of factors affecting purchasing behavior, there is at least one factor associated with CSR among the three most significant factors affecting purchasing decision-making.
6. At least 80% of respondents are aware of some of the CSR activities conducted by the company McDonald's ČR.
7. There is a correlation between McDonald's ČR's restaurant attendance and the number of CSR activities of McDonald's ČR known to the respondent.
8. Respondents expect McDonald's to carry out specific CSR activities on a larger scale than they do of other companies in general, which applies to a minimum of 30% of cases.
9. In total, more than 50% of respondents consider the current communication by McDonald's ČR concerning its CSR activities insufficient rather than sufficient.

4. Results

4.1. Awareness of the CSR Concept

The questionnaire survey has shown that almost half of the respondents (126 respondents; 47.7%) know the term CSR, while the remaining 138 respondents (52.3%) were either not sure about the term or they were not familiar with it—see Table 1.

The respondents' knowledge was subsequently tested by another question, in which they were asked to briefly state what in their opinion CSR means. Only one respondent provided an inaccurate

interpretation of CSR, stating that CSR represents accountability for damages and cash shortages—a result of the incorrect answer; this respondent was moved to the group of respondents unfamiliar with CSR. Other respondents interpreted the term at least partly correctly and associated CSR with one of the areas that CSR represents. The author analyzed all the respondents' answers and divided them into the appropriate areas which CSR covers. Respondents most frequently associate CSR with the environmental area of CSR (mentioned in 96 definitions), which is followed by the social area (87 definitions), with the economic area being least frequently associated with the term CSR (27 definitions). Apart from these three areas, the respondents' definitions contained expressions such as “voluntary commitment”, “beyond the scope of ethical and legally required obligations”, and “achieving societal goals even at the cost of lower profits”.

4.2. Correlation between Age/Gender/Education and Knowledge of the CSR Concept

The data above can be used to evaluate whether there is a correlation between the respondents' age/gender/education and their knowledge of the CSR concept. Each relationship was tested separately, and for each dependence a null hypothesis and an alternative hypothesis were formulated.

Hypothesis 1:

- Null hypothesis (H0): *There is no correlation between gender and knowledge of the CSR concept.*
- Alternative hypothesis (HA): *There is a correlation between gender and knowledge of the CSR concept.*

Based on the results shown in Table 2, the null hypothesis is rejected neither at a 5% nor 10% level of significance. Based on the results shown in Table 2, the null hypothesis is not rejected at neither a 5% nor 10% level of significance. The value of the test criterion at these levels did not reach the critical region, and the P-value is also higher than the levels of significance considered. Therefore, there is no correlation between gender and knowledge of the CSR concept.

Table 2. Results of the hypothesis testing the correlation between gender and knowledge of CSR.

Dependence of the Knowledge of CSR on Gender	
The critical region of the test criterion $\chi^2_{(1-0.05); 2}$	5.991465
The critical region of the test criterion $\chi^2_{(1-0.1); 2}$	4.605170
Value of the statistic χ^2	0.795713
<i>p</i> -value	0.671758

Similarly, the correlation between the respondents' age and their knowledge of CSR was tested, for which the following hypotheses were formulated.

Hypothesis 2:

- Null hypothesis (H0): *There is no correlation between age and knowledge of the CSR concept.*
- Alternative hypothesis (HA): *There is a correlation between age and knowledge of the CSR concept.*

The test results in Table 3 led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, as the value of the test criterion exceeded the critical region both at a 5% and 10% level of significance (therefore, it is not necessary to calculate the *p*-value). There is a certain correlation between age and knowledge of CSR.

Table 3. Results of the hypothesis testing the correlation between age and knowledge of CSR.

Dependence of the Knowledge of CSR on Age	
The critical region of the test criterion $\chi^2_{(1-0.05); 8}$	15.507313
The critical region of the test criterion $\chi^2_{(1-0.1); 8}$	13.361566
Value of the statistic χ^2	42.246886

In a similar way, the correlation between education and knowledge of CSR was tested, with the hypotheses formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 3:

- Null hypothesis (H0): *There is no correlation between education and knowledge of the CSR concept.*
- Alternative hypothesis (HA): *There is a correlation between education and knowledge of the CSR concept.*

Based on the test results (Table 4), the null hypothesis was rejected, as the value of the test criterion exceeds the critical region both at a 5% and 10% level of significance. Therefore, there is a certain correlation between the respondents' highest level of education achieved and their knowledge of the CSR concept.

Table 4. Results of the hypothesis testing the correlation between education and knowledge of CSR.

Dependence of the Knowledge of CSR on Education	
The critical region of the test criterion $\chi^2_{(1-0.05); 4}$	9.487729
The critical region of the test criterion $\chi^2_{(1-0.1); 4}$	7.779440
Value of the statistic χ^2	21.506082

4.3. Perception of the CSR Concept

The research also investigated the respondents' position on the CSR concept. Before a respondent was asked a question requiring the evaluation of how important/unimportant it is for them that a company applies the CSR concept, that respondent was given a definition of corporate social responsibility, which allowed the respondent to answer the question more reliably. Information acquired through this question represents a certain degree of identification with the CSR concept. Respondents answered on a scale from 1 to 5, with the value 1 representing "completely unimportant" and the value 5 "very important". All the answers are quantified in Table 5. Despite the fact that 52% of the respondents were not familiar with the CSR concept, a total of 80.3% of the respondents consider the concept of CSR, once they were given its definition, as at least important (i.e., values 4 and 5). Therefore, there is a clear interest among respondents in areas covered by CSR, and it is possible to convince them by conducting CSR activities and informing about them.

Table 5. Perception of the CSR concept.

Evaluation	Number of Respondents		
1	10	3.79 %	
2	11	4.17 %	19.70 %
3	31	11.74 %	
4	106	40.15 %	
5	106	40.15 %	80.30 %
Total	264	100.00 %	100.00 %

In order to evaluate the importance of individual CSR activities and ascertain the respondents' expectations in terms of conducting various CSR activities, the questionnaire included another question

which, apart from the factors mentioned above, also aimed to determine what type of companies should devote themselves to CSR (see Table 6). The results of the questionnaire survey indicate that the area which the respondents find most important is accountability and the fair treatment of staff—a positive reaction (agree and strongly agree) was marked by a total of 90.15% of respondents. A similar level of agreement was found with the provision of truthful information by a company and its transparency, with 87.5% of the respondents agreeing with this statement. This was followed by a statement rejecting corruption and respecting the rules of fair competition, which was agreed with by 85.61% of the respondents. Over 75%—i.e., more than three-quarters—of positive responses concerned the implementation of CSR in the supply chain (81.06%) and a focus on environmental protection (76.89%). The results show that respondents believe that the CSR concept should be implemented by all companies regardless of the industry they operate in (agreeing responses—74.62%) and regardless of their size (agreeing responses—70.08%).

Table 6. An overview of answers to the individual statements during the survey.

Level of Agreement with the Individual Statements	Completely Disagree	Rather Disagree	Do Not Know, Not Sure	Rather Agree	Completely Agree
Companies should reject corruption and respect the rules of fair competition.	14	20	4	38	188
Companies should provide truthful information about their activities and be transparent.	17	10	6	64	168
Companies should treat their employees fairly and create good working conditions for them.	14	8	4	18	220
Companies should ensure compliance with social responsibility requirements in their supply chain.	12	17	21	96	118
Companies should be involved in dealing with social problems (equal job opportunities, poverty ...).	22	36	33	87	86
Companies should support education (wide availability ...).	14	31	45	93	81
Companies should support projects focused on children, the elderly, and the disadvantaged.	20	41	63	84	56
Companies should support local communities (financially or materially).	29	56	69	78	32
Companies should be engaged in environmental protection.	15	18	28	66	137
Companies should accept certain standards or strive for certifications which will commit them to compliance with certain procedures.	14	16	42	98	94
Every company, regardless of its sphere of activity, should be devoted to social responsibility.	16	22	29	84	113
Every company, regardless of its size, should be devoted to social responsibility.	14	33	32	70	115

4.4. Does CSR Represent a Competitive Advantage in the Czech Environment?

A total of 170 respondents (64.39%) to a certain extent agree (i.e., evaluation 4 or 5) with the statement that “socially responsible behavior can represent a substantial competitive advantage”, as seen in Table 7. It can thus be inferred that respondents consider the application of the CSR concept as important and, if communicated correctly, being socially responsible can constitute a significant competitive advantage for companies. It can also be inferred that in the eyes of the respondents, socially responsible companies are more “valuable”.

Table 7. Evaluation of viewing CSR as a competitive advantage.

Level of Agreement	Number of Respondents	
1	5	1.89%
2	30	11.36%
3	59	22.35%
4	120	45.45%
5	50	18.94%
Total	264	100.00%

4.5. Factors Affecting Consumers' Purchasing Decision-Making

When evaluating individual factors that affect the respondents' purchasing decision-making, the research included a question that contained factors directly unrelated to CSR, but also more specific factors concerning CSR. The results identified factors that have the biggest effect on consumers, and this information can be utilized when making decisions about the design and communication of CSR activities. The various levels of influence of the various factors can be seen in Table 8, with most factors achieving high values in the columns "moderate effect" and "major effect".

Table 8. Level of effect of various factors on purchasing decision-making.

The Level of Effect of Individual Factors	No Effect	Minor Effect	I don't Know/I am Not Sure	Moderate Effect	Major Effect
Price	2	34	2	132	94
Quality	0	3	4	103	154
Brand	21	70	46	113	14
Recommendation from friends	3	37	28	151	45
Independent consumer tests	16	81	45	109	13
A percentage of the price going to charitable causes	51	87	42	76	8
Information provided by the company	13	58	54	117	22
Adherence to standards and regulations, product certification (ISO, GRI, FairTrade . . .)	23	61	25	128	27
Rejection of corruption by the company and abiding by the rules of fair and honest competition	23	71	47	81	42
The company's fair approach to its employees	18	59	35	97	55
Resolving social problems by the company	38	67	50	85	24
The company's support for education	39	80	38	84	23
The company's environmental mindset	16	37	30	123	58

The ranking method was used to assign weight to the individual factors affecting the decision-making process—see Table 9. First, it was necessary to select a level at which the method would be applied. In the event that the respondent chose the answer "moderate effect" or "major effect", this factor was considered to be influential and both of these levels of agreement were assigned one value (the "Affirmative responses" column), from which the weight of the individual factors was evaluated. The results indicate that in their purchasing decision-making, consumers are most affected by the quality of the product—and this factor can also be viewed from the CSR standpoint. For example, a company can provide the consumer with a higher guarantee of the product being harmless to the consumer's health and compliant with public health and technical standards beyond the legally required limits. The price seems to be the second most influential factor for respondents, which is followed by recommendations from friends and the company's environmental mindset, the only CSR-related factor which received a weight of over 10% in the purchasing decision-making

process. The respondents are least affected by the company's support for education and the resolving of social problems.

Table 9. Ranking method applied to factors affecting purchasing decision-making.

Index	Criterion	Affirmative Responses	Ranking	Weight
1	Price	226	2	13.19%
2	Quality	257	1	14.29%
3	Brand	127	8	6.59%
4	Recommendation from friends	196	3	12.09%
5	Independent consumer tests	122	10	4.40%
6	A percentage of the price going to charitable causes	84	13	1.10%
7	Information provided by the company	139	7	7.69%
8	Adherence to standards and regulations, product certification (ISO, GRI, FairTrade . . .)	155	5	9.89%
9	Rejection of corruption by the company and abiding by the rules of fair and honest competition	123	9	5.49%
10	The company's fair approach to its employees	152	6	8.79%
11	Resolving social problems by the company	109	11	3.30%
12	The company's support for education	107	12	2.20%
13	The company's environmental mindset	181	4	10.99%
-	Total	-	-	100.00%

4.6. Perception of McDonald's CSR Activities

The research further investigated the respondents' awareness of the CSR activities conducted by McDonald's in the Czech Republic and partly also whether McDonald's sufficiently informs the public about its CSR activities. The data acquired from this question are shown in Table 10. This information will further be used in the design of plans to strengthen the perception of the significance of CSR in the Czech Republic and spread the awareness and focus on less familiar CSR activities by McDonald's. Respondents are most familiar with the company's activity supporting sports at schools—i.e., the McDonald's Cup competition, which more than half of the respondents know about. This was followed by recycling, sorting used packaging, which 46.21% of respondents were familiar with, and the use of recyclable packaging, which is known to 44.32% of the respondents.

4.7. Perception of the Communication of McDonald's CSR Activities

As a follow-up to the previous segment, the next question aimed to identify the source of knowledge of CSR activities conducted by McDonald's. This question was answered by only 198 respondents who knew at least some of McDonald's CSR activities. The remaining 66 respondents who answered that they were not aware of any CSR activities by McDonald's were not asked this question. The respondents could select multiple answers as well as state another source. The company's CSR activities are most widely known to respondents from advertisements (61.62%) and from points of sale (42.42%). For more than 25% of the respondents, other sources of information about McDonald's CSR activities included events and the company's social media profiles. Fifteen respondents chose the option of naming their own source of knowledge. Five respondents stated they learned about McDonald's CSR activities from friends, 2 respondents listed the McDonald's mobile app, and twice the respondents mentioned product labels or packaging and also their school. One respondent learned about McDonald's CSR activities when he worked at a McDonald's restaurant. All the answers and their frequency are shown in Table 11.

Table 10. Respondents' knowledge of McDonald's CSR activities.

McDonald's CSR Activities	Number of Respondents	
Assuming moral and legal responsibility (anti-corruption policy, ethical conduct)	31	11.74%
Requiring socially responsible behavior from its suppliers	35	13.26%
Employing disadvantaged workers (e.g., persons with disabilities)	90	34.09%
Participation in the ČEZ Group's Electromobility project	19	7.20%
Recycling, sorting of used packaging	122	46.21%
Using recyclable packaging	117	44.32%
Efficient use of resources (electricity, water) and their conservation	19	7.20%
A more calorie-balanced HappyMeal (including fruits and vegetables)	45	17.05%
The option of choosing a book when purchasing a HappyMeal (instead of a toy)	30	11.36%
Organization of the McDonald's Cup competition (supporting sports at schools)	144	54.55%
Support for the Ronald McDonald House Foundation	74	28.03%
The purchase of ethical coffee (fairtrade)	70	26.52%
I do not know of any of the above	66	25.00%

Table 11. Source of knowledge of McDonald's CSR activities.

Source of Knowledge of McDonald's CSR Activities	Number of Respondents	
McDonald's website	48	
McDonald's social media profiles	53	
McDonald's annual report	1	
McDonald's corporate social responsibility report	11	
Advertising	122	
Event	58	
At the point of sale	84	
Other	15	

Subsequently, the research investigated the respondents' satisfaction with the currently provided information about McDonald's CSR activities. The largest number of respondents (117; 44.32%) selected the option that they found the current level of awareness of McDonald's CSR activities to be "somewhat insufficient". However, 125 respondents found the current communication somewhat sufficient or better. This is due to the respondents' varying degree of knowledge of the individual CSR activities. The questionnaire provided respondents with information about a number of McDonald's CSR activities currently underway, which allowed respondents to compare their knowledge with the number of ongoing CSR activities and based on this to answer the question. All the responses to this question are shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Level of sufficiency of current awareness.

Level of Sufficiency of Current Awareness	Number of Respondents		
Completely sufficient	34	12.88%	47.35%
Somewhat sufficient	91	34.47%	
Somewhat insufficient	117	44.32%	
Completely insufficient	22	8.33%	52.65%
Total	264	100.00%	100.00%

Based on the data obtained, it is also possible to evaluate hypothesis no. 9 which claims that more than 50% of respondents in total find the current communication about socially responsible activities from McDonald's CR rather insufficient or completely insufficient. Since 52.65% of respondents in total find the current communication rather insufficient or worse, hypothesis no. 9 is, therefore, rejected.

An important source of information about the perception of the communication of McDonald's CSR activities and its potential future course was a question about areas of corporate social responsibility which McDonald's should improve in the Czech Republic. Respondents could select multiple answers. Given the results indicated in Table 13, it is no surprise that a total of 161 (60.98%) respondents picked the answer that McDonald's should provide more information about its CSR activities (see Table 13). Almost the same number of respondents, around 24% of them, selected the option of creating more CSR activities for customers and engaging in more CSR activities. Seventeen respondents also chose to write their own answer, with 13 respondents claiming that there is no need to improve anything; 2 respondents do not know what the company should improve, 1 respondent recommended promoting CSR activities in restaurants, and 1 respondent expects McDonald's to "really do what it claims it does".

Table 13. Expected activities.

Activity	Number of Respondents
Provide more information about its activities	161
Create more socially responsible activities for customers	64
Engage in more socially responsible activities	63
Others	17

4.8. Research Limitations

Despite the fact that the target group of the subject of the research is made up of young people and families with children, we may consider there to be a certain limitation in terms of the method of data collection, which took place through Facebook, although this social media platform is typically used by the given target group. To achieve more comprehensive research results, it would have been more suitable to consider acquiring a larger amount of data also from other segments of respondents and also using, for example, face-to-face interviewing. The research was conducted during the worldwide coronavirus pandemic, which may have led to a distortion of the respondents' statements, as it was an extraordinary period which, in various aspects, temporarily affected our behavior and experiences.

5. Discussion

Corporate social responsibility can also be looked at from a different point of view. In her article "Fast-food addiction and anti-consumption behavior: The moderating role of consumer social responsibility", Farah [26] deals with the relationship between CSR and fast-food addiction in connection with anti-consumption. The results of this research conducted among Generation Y (i.e., so-called Millennials) led to recommendations to raise awareness of healthy consumption among public policy makers and managers. To date, there have been very few research studies that focused on the significance of CSR in connection with the direct communication of anti-consumption. Apart from Farah [26], another example is a case study from the fashion marketing industry [27]. The more the fast-food chain McDonald's applies its CSR principles, the less it will be mentioned in connection with anti-consumption.

More than half of the respondents consider the current communication of McDonald's CSR activities to be insufficient. Given the questionnaire survey results, McDonald's should focus on communicating activities concerning "accountability and the fair treatment of employees", "rejection of corruption and abiding by the rules of fair and honest competition", and "provision of truthful information and ensuring transparency". It is particularly important to present a "story": the fact that McDonald's is interested in others, that it is changing the world, cares about sustainable development, and not only about its own short-term profit. The research has also shown that more than half (61.74%) of the respondents would prefer to buy a product from a socially responsible company. Raising awareness of the socially responsible behavior of McDonald's could strengthen the perception of the significance of CSR in the Czech Republic but also result in an increase in the company's profits and consequently ensure long-term sustainability of this company and improve the brand's positioning. In 2016, the Global Compact Network Czech Republic introduced the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDG) Compass manual in the Czech Republic which helps companies define their priorities and goals, measure their results, and report them in relation to SDG implementation. It clearly puts the SDG vision into practice with the aim of having the key problems faced by our planet resolved by 2030 in cooperation between the private and public sector. The manual helps Czech companies set goals that correspond with SDGs and stimulate innovations, investments, involvement, and, last but not least, their productivity and competitiveness. The use of the manual, even on a voluntary basis, and implementation of the concept of meeting SDG goals can definitely be recommended [28].

Although the research showed that less than half of the respondents were familiar with the concept of CSR, more than 80 % of them, once they were told the definition of CSR, found this concept important. Xu [2] also confirmed that the awareness of McDonald's CSR activities in China is not sufficient. It is thus important to expand the general awareness of the CSR concept. The recommendation for the McDonald's fast-food chain in the Czech Republic would be to put emphasis on expanding the awareness of this concept and at the same time point out the company's own CSR activities.

What also needs to be taken into account is the fact that according to the research results, the most important factors for consumers in their purchasing decision-making are price, quality, and recommendations from friends, which are then followed by CSR activities, which in this case means the company's environmental mindset. It is recommended that the company also communicate the quality of the various raw materials and possibly their provenance, which at McDonald's is often related to CSR. As far as positioning is concerned, the McDonald's brand is deeply rooted in the minds of the public; however, it would be advisable for this brand and its positioning to be associated with the concept of corporate social responsibility. A strong dependence between the application of the CSR concept and the brand's positioning is corroborated by the research by Akbari et al. [29]. Akbari [29] also confirms an indirect correlation with respect to customer loyalty.

6. Conclusions

This research has shown that less than half of the respondents are familiar with the concept of corporate social responsibility and that unlike age and education, the respondents' gender has no effect on this statistic. Respondents most frequently learn about the CSR concept by study or on the Internet, TV, the radio, or in the press.

The research further revealed that 80.3% of all respondents show a certain interest in areas covered by CSR and find the CSR concept important—i.e., they identify with it to a certain extent.

The survey also provided information about the CSR activities of companies most preferred by respondents, which include the "provision of truthful information and transparency", "rejection of corruption and abiding by the rules of fair and honest competition", "implementing CSR in the supply chain", and "environmental protection".

The research has also shown that respondents to a certain extent prefer companies that act responsibly in their communities; more than half (61.74%) of the respondents would rather buy a product from a socially responsible company, and as many as 35.98% of the respondents are willing to pay an acceptable amount of money extra for a product from a socially responsible company.

At the same time, 64.39% of the respondents believe that applying the CSR concept can present a competitive advantage for a company, so it can be assumed that more than half of the respondents take the provenance of products into consideration in their purchasing decision-making—meaning what type of companies the products come from and whether these companies are active in the area of CSR.

However, the research found that the most important factors in respondents' purchasing decision-making are price, quality, and recommendations from friends, and only then do they take into account CSR activities, which in this case means the company's environmental mindset. Concerning questions dealing with the selected fast-food retailer, the research revealed that despite the fact that only 12.12% of the respondents do not eat at McDonald's restaurants and that 78.41% of the respondents go to McDonald's restaurants at least once every six months, only 75% of the respondents know of at least some of the activities conducted by McDonald's in the Czech Republic. The most

well-known to respondents is the McDonald's Cup competition, which is followed by recycling, sorting used packaging, and using recyclable meal packaging. Respondents learned of these activities (as well as others) primarily from advertising or at points of sale. What respondents expect of McDonald's the most is "accountability and the fair treatment of staff", "rejection of corruption and abiding by the rules of fair and honest competition", and "provision of truthful information and ensuring transparency" (in this particular order). Almost 53% of the respondents agree that the McDonald's company does not provide a sufficient amount of information about its activities in the area of CSR. Furthermore, they mainly expect the fast-food retailer to provide more information, and to a lesser extent also to create more socially responsible activities and greater engagement in more socially responsible activities. Respondents would like to learn about McDonald's CSR activities mostly from meal packaging and product labels, or through advertising and social media profiles, or possibly on the company's website or at points of sale. The questionnaire survey revealed several substantial areas which deserve further attention. If the findings from the conducted marketing research were to be reflected in the current CSR strategy and some shortcomings were prevented or remedied, the company could improve its position in the market and at the same time strengthen the perception of the entire CSR concept by Czech citizens.

With regard to positioning, the McDonald's brand is deeply rooted in the minds of the Czech public; however, it would be advisable for the brand, for the sake of its positioning, to be associated with the concept of corporate social responsibility.

In the future, further research will be needed to follow up on such research studies (also Kim Minseong [3] and Harun [1]) to deal in more detail with the effect of applying CSR activities by restaurant establishments and their impact on customers' purchasing decision-making. Given the various factors that affected and continue to affect the penetration of the CSR concept into the everyday lives of consumers and companies in individual states, it is advisable to also compare the levels of penetration and implementation of this concept between them.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, D.H. and K.Š.; methodology, D.H.; software, R.S.; validation, L.V.; formal analysis, D.H.; investigation, L.V.; resources, L.V.; data curation, K.Š.; writing—original draft preparation, D.H. and L.V.; writing—review and editing, K.Š. and R.S.; visualization, L.V.; supervision, D.H.; project administration, D.H.; funding acquisition, K.Š. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by the Faculty of Economics and Management, Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, grant number 20161003.

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

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