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# Corporate social responsibility and project management: towards a better understanding of their relationship

## Abstract

The main purpose of this article is to identify the fields of convergence, if any, between two management concepts and business practices, namely Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Project Management (PM). To achieve the formulated goal, systematic literature review (SLR), including bibliometric analysis, LOESS regression analysis, and text mining, was performed. This analysis allowed us to distinguish five categories corresponding to the distinctive, related research areas combining CSR and PM constructs. Within these categories we were able to identify the most important characteristics of the linkages between both concepts.

**Keywords:** project management, corporate social responsibility, CSR, PM, systematic review

## Introduction

Initial literature screening and a meticulous observation of the economic reality suggest that researchers and practitioners have a growing interest in corporate social responsibility (CSR) and project management (PM) topics (Fatima & Elbanna, 2022; Wielicka-Gańczarczyk, 2020). These topics are most often discussed in parallel, individually, without attempting to integrate the research areas in order to understand existing potential links.

Projects are understood as temporary collaborative undertakings or organisations, involving temporary teams as a form of a social system (Bakker, 2010; Sydow et al., 2004). They are designed to implement a relatively unique, short- or medium-term strategic business process of a medium or large scope. Consequently, PM requires the application of knowledge, skills, techniques, tools and procedures to project activities, and the planning, organising, coordinating, leading, and controlling of project resources to achieve objectives and meet requirements – generally in terms of scope, cost, and time (Uribe Macías, 2020). For sure PM today is about rules, processes, standards and tools, but it is also about people. Nowadays projects are often large and complex, reaching beyond corporate boundaries, and therefore require the services of ambassadors to external stakeholders to assess and influence intentions and actions (Walker, 2015; Xia et al., 2018).

The CSR approach, in turn, from the fully voluntary corporate engagement of business to the overall guiding societal model, has evolved towards a moral, ethical, or philanthropic obligation of any business (Martinuzzi & Krumay, 2013) or even into a method of strategic business management (Bocquet et al., 2019). Corporations create social and environmental impacts, both positive and negative, through the daily operations of their value chain. Since the demand of society and politics is increasingly moving toward sustainability, products and services must be adapted, innovations discovered and implemented, and processes renewed (Marcelino-Sádaba et al., 2015).

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In view of this, CSR mainly aims for excellence in the organisation, with particular attention paid to diverse stakeholders, including employees and their working conditions, customers and suppliers, and also the quality of production processes or service provision, using the framework of three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental (Briones Peñalver et al., 2018; Brundtland, 1987; Yang & Shen, 2015). Nowadays, CSR is considered an important element of strategy or even a basis for strategic business performance improvement (Javed et al., 2020).

Thus, the main purpose of this article is to present the current state of knowledge and outline the framework of common ground describing the links between CSR and PM. This goal seems extremely important considering the progress of project management techniques and the growing concern for sustainable development. According to ILX Group<sup>1</sup> (2021), embedding CSR into projects must work both in practice and theory. This means that managers have to become leaders of change, striving to place CSR at the heart of all projects, influencing and inspiring change by example, empowering employees to contribute to CSR solutions. Meanwhile, in reality, organisations and project management teams seem to have little knowledge and poor awareness of the importance of CSR, in particular its links with project management (Trocki et al., 2020). Simultaneously, this more or less strategic approach can be considered as a project itself, where PM techniques and tools are deployed to smooth the implementation process.

Analysis of the current state of knowledge allows for tracing the evolution of the scientific community's behaviors, identifying similarities, and defining trends in science. The conducted research let us outline a cognitive gap, consisting of the identified shortage of publications presenting an integrative approach to CSR and PM. Meanwhile, it should be emphasised that the integration of CSR and PM concepts may be attractive to a wide range of stakeholders, including modern organisations (KPMG, n.d.), especially in light of the aforementioned unawareness of practitioners about the importance of these connections for building a more sustainable future of the organisation. Identification of common ground will enable taking effective actions, beneficial for the social and possibly environmental dimensions of business. Finally, the idea of combining both approaches also results from similarities in the way they are implemented. The dynamic growth of interest in the areas discussed in the article influences the expansion of knowledge bases with new content.

This is why we decided to examine the relationships existing between PM and CSR in management literature. To sum up, we would like to achieve three main goals within this research:

1. Identify fields of convergence, if any, between two separate approaches and business practices, namely Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Project Management (PM).
2. Detect research trends in the combined fields of CSR and PM.
3. Describe the existing relationships between CSR and PM.

This study includes articles published between 1981–2020. Our research methods, analysis, and results are presented in the following sections.

## Research methods

The identification of the state of knowledge on the permeability of process management and corporate social responsibility, using a systematic literature review, necessitated the design of a research procedure to identify publications within three knowledge bases: Web of Science, Scopus and Publish or Perish. In the theoretical study implemented, the raw data generated in the three knowledge bases was used for systematic literature review and subjected to selection, extraction, analysis, and synthesis (Tranfield et al., 2003). It should be emphasised that the authors were familiar with the research method limitations, including the difficulty of analysing a large amount of material and synthesising the data generated in interdisciplinary publications, as well as the insufficient number of indexed monographs (Pittaway et al., 2004). Our study used a publication selection approach, via a database search extended in the methodology adopted to include the content of abstracts and publication titles, using keywords (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). Given the diverse identities of design solution implementations, the search was expanded to include the keyword 'design'. This, on the one hand, presented a risk in terms of increasing the number of publications, but most importantly it served to avoid a state in which publications relevant to the perspective of the issue under study would be overlooked. The search selected constituted a criterion for the publication selection, taking all the categories in the selected knowledge bases into account. The limitation arising from the inclusion of the Publish or Perish database ought to be outlined as well. It mainly pertained to the lack of a search option allowing the inclusion of the content of abstracts, which means that for this database only the title and keyword search criteria were applied. It is worth noting, however, that the Publish or Perish database mirrors Google Scholar resources, while the relevance of this database has been indicated by (Bauer & Bakkelbasi, 2005). Due to the diversity of papers, i.e., theoretical, theoretical-empirical, and empirical, this review is conceptual, which determines the structure of the theoretical study, and focused on descriptive methods (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010).

<sup>1</sup> The educator in PRINCE2 PM methodology, read more on: <https://www.prince2.com/pl/blog/building-csr-into-project-management>

To sum up, the research procedure implementation involved a proposed, original nine-stage method, described in Table 1. It should be emphasised here that each of the stages mentioned is crucial to maintaining scientific rigor.

The following research methods were used in the implementation of the objectives formulated in the theoretical study: bibliometric analysis, systematic literature review, and critical evaluation of the literature. In addition, based on similar theoretical research, in particular at the bibliometric analysis stage, were used: text mining (White et al., 2016), data mining (Huang et al., 2009), and LOESS regression (Cordeiro et al., 2021). The applied research

method includes a few important stages presented in Figure 1 – it specifies the consecutive steps of the implementation of the research process (stages 3–5, from Table 1).

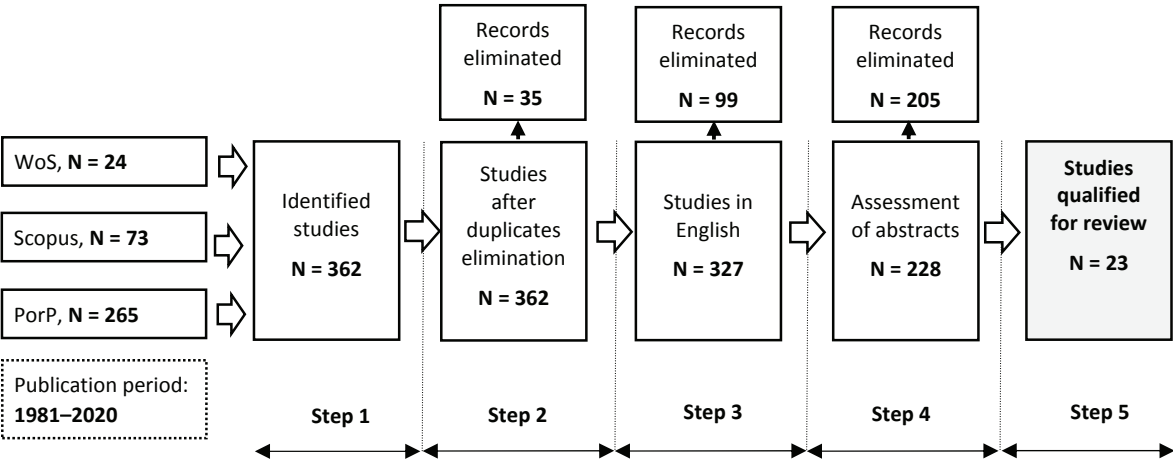
The following query was used in the quantitative study: (“corporate social responsibility” OR “CSR”) AND (“project management” OR “project”). As a result of the bibliometric analysis, a total of 362 publications were identified using the following criteria: publications indexed in one of three databases (Web of Science, Scopus and Publish or Perish); publications with a DOI number; publications in English; all types of documents, except reviews and publications concerning both project manage-

**Table 1**  
*Characteristics of the theoretical research stages*

Stages	Stage description
Stage 1.	Identification of research gaps and formulation of research objectives
Stage 2.	Selection of knowledge bases and keywords
Stage 3.	Identification and quantitative analysis of publications in Web of Science, Scopus and Publish or Perish
Stage 4.	Identification of the period (1981–2020)
Stage 5.	Identification of duplicates and papers in English
Stage 6.	Assessment of abstracts and selection of papers for systematic literature review
Stage 7.	A systematic review of articles dealing with the issues of project management and CSR. Division of publications into three groups: theoretical, empirical and theoretical-empirical
Stage 8.	Creating categories and grouping articles
Stage 9.	Presentation of the results and outlining the directions for further research and cognitive gaps

Source: authors' elaboration based on: “A multi-dimensional framework of organisational innovation: A systematic review of the literature”, M. M. Crossan & M. Apaydin, 2010, *Journal of Management Studies*, 47(6), 1156–1159 (<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2009.00880.x>); “Shared human capital in project management: A systematic review of the literature”, M. Suhonen & L. Paasivaara, 2011, *Project Management Journal*, 42(2), 6–9 (<https://doi.org/10.1002/pmj.20211>); “Earned Green Value management for project management: A systematic review”, B. Koke & R. C. Moehler, 2019, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 230, 182–189 (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.05.079>)

**Figure 1**  
*The process of identifying studies qualified for a systematic literature review*



Note. \*WoS – Web of Science; PorP – Publish or Perish.

Source: authors' elaboration based on Publish or Perish, Scopus, and Web of Science. Access: 23.10.2021

ment and CSR. In the next stage a database was built, and duplicate publications indexed simultaneously in several databases were removed from the collection. The duplicate elimination was performed using such variables as the publication title and DOI number. This led to 327 results, which were reviewed for the language of the publication in Step 3. The assumption was that only studies published in English would qualify for the literature review. In total 229 such scientific papers were identified in the study group. In stage 4 the authors performed publication qualification, based simultaneously on abstracts and the content of studies. Individual author assessments of publications were made at this stage. Based on the abstracts, the publications were assessed in terms of meeting the formulated criterion of project management and CSR issue interpretation. With regard to compatibility, i.e. when both marks were positive the given publication was qualified for the literature review, whereas when the marks differed a discussion about the inclusion or elimination of a given publication from the sample was undertaken, based on the publication content. This part of the study allowed the authors to identify 23 publications meeting the criteria established. It should be emphasised that 201 publications did not qualify for the literature review, due to the fact that the problematics adopted did not constitute the main axis of the publications, but involved side threads, or despite the inclusion of keywords they did not address the issue of CSR in the context of project management. A hindrance in the conducted research was the appearance of the term 'project', used in abstracts, in the context of, for example, an ongoing research project.

The period of the study includes the years 1981–2020. This period indicates the outline of the framework of the study, i.e., from the first identified publication in the Publish or Perish, Web of Science, and Scopus databases up to the year of this study.

The selected 23 studies are analysed and described in the following sections. The performed bibliometric analysis refers to the entire sample of identified studies for a better understanding of the initial sample.

Results

Table 2 shows the results of searches in the three knowledge bases Publish or Perish (PorP), Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus. At this point it should be emphasised that in the context of the diversified structure of the knowledge bases used, a similar approach to the search category was applied (PorP – title, WoS – title, Scopus – article title, author keywords). The study included peer-reviewed scientific articles, chapters in monographs, and post-conference materials published in English.

Figure 1 presents a summary of the unique 362 publications, published between 1981–2020, described in Table 1. The time series analysis was performed using non-parametric locally weighted regression identified in the literature, with the abbreviation LOESS (Cleveland & Devlin, 1988).

As can be seen in Figure 2, the interest in project management and CSR issues has been systematically growing till 2016. The greatest interest expressed in the number of publications was recorded in 2013–2016. In the last five years a decrease in the number of publications combining both terms could be noticed. This may be connected with the visible gradual replacement of CSR with a sustainable development construct, although this point would require further analysis.

To better understand the studied relationship between CSR and PM, we decided to apply the cloud tag technique. The tags in our tag cloud are represented according to their frequency, weight and meaning relative to other tags. This analysis was performed for the overall collection of 362 selected publications, in

Table 2  
Characteristics of selected bibliometric indicators for the Publish or Perish, Web of Science, and Scopus knowledge bases

Category	Database		
	Publish or Perish	Web of Science	Scopus
Publication years	1981–2020	2001–2020	2002–2020
Citations years	1981–2020	2003–2020	2002–2020
Documents	265	24	73
Citations	1542	447/446***	639
Cites per year	39.54	23.53	35.5
Cites per paper	5.82	18.63	8.75
h-index	18	7	3

Note. \* Query used: ("corporate social responsibility" OR "CSR") AND ("project management" OR "project").  
\*\* The difference in the timespan for the knowledge bases research results from the publication indexing periods.  
\*\*\* Without self-citations.

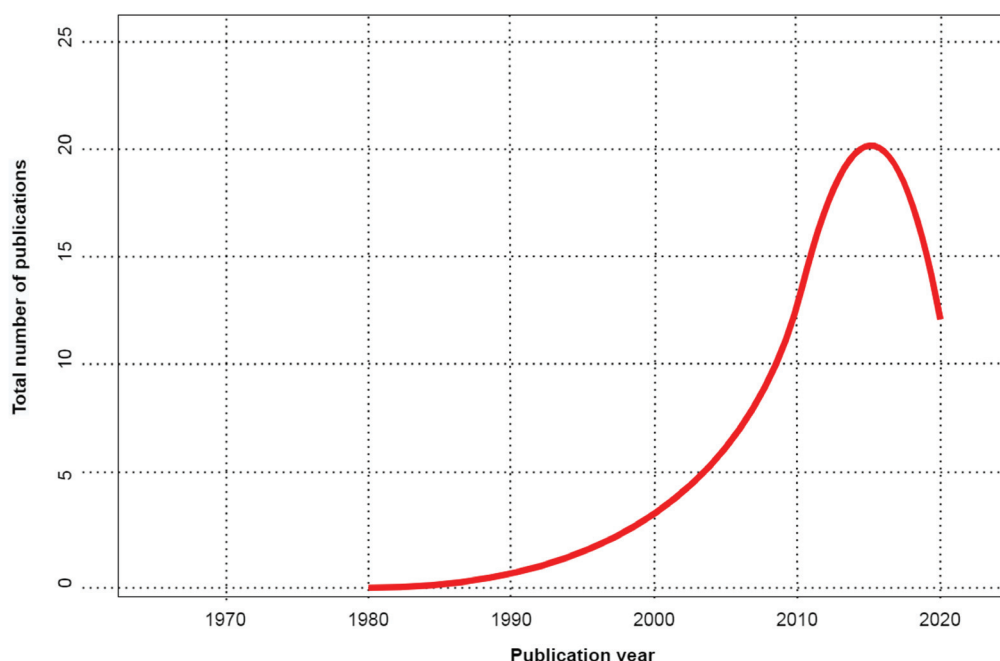
Source: authors' elaboration based on data from the databases. As of: 23.10.2021 r.



# Corporate social responsibility and project management...

**Figure 2**

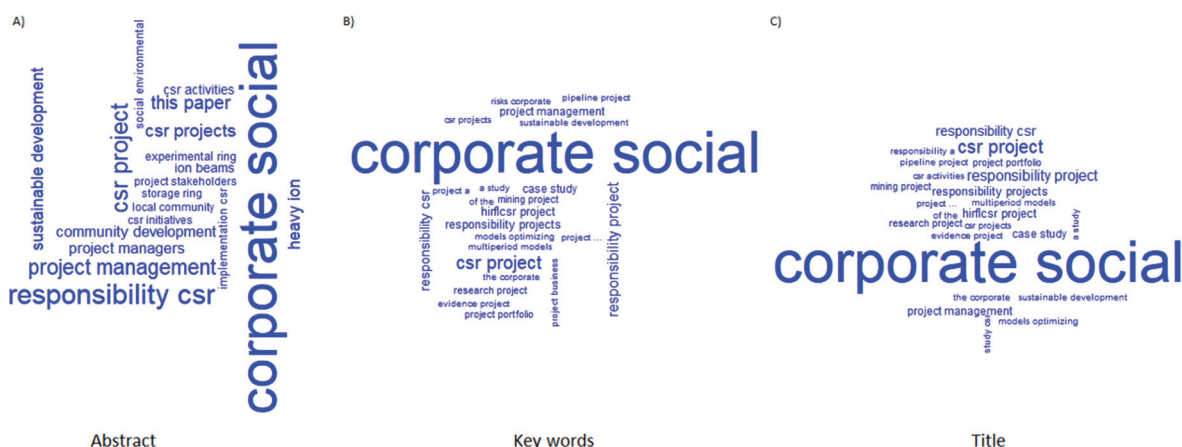
A summary of the number of publications dealing simultaneously with the issues of project management and CSR (1981–2020),  $N = 362$



Source: authors' elaboration based on the data from the selected knowledge bases (Publish or Perish, Scopus, and Web of Science). As of: 23.10.2021.

**Figure 3**

Tag cloud for a selected group of articles for abstracts, keywords, and titles

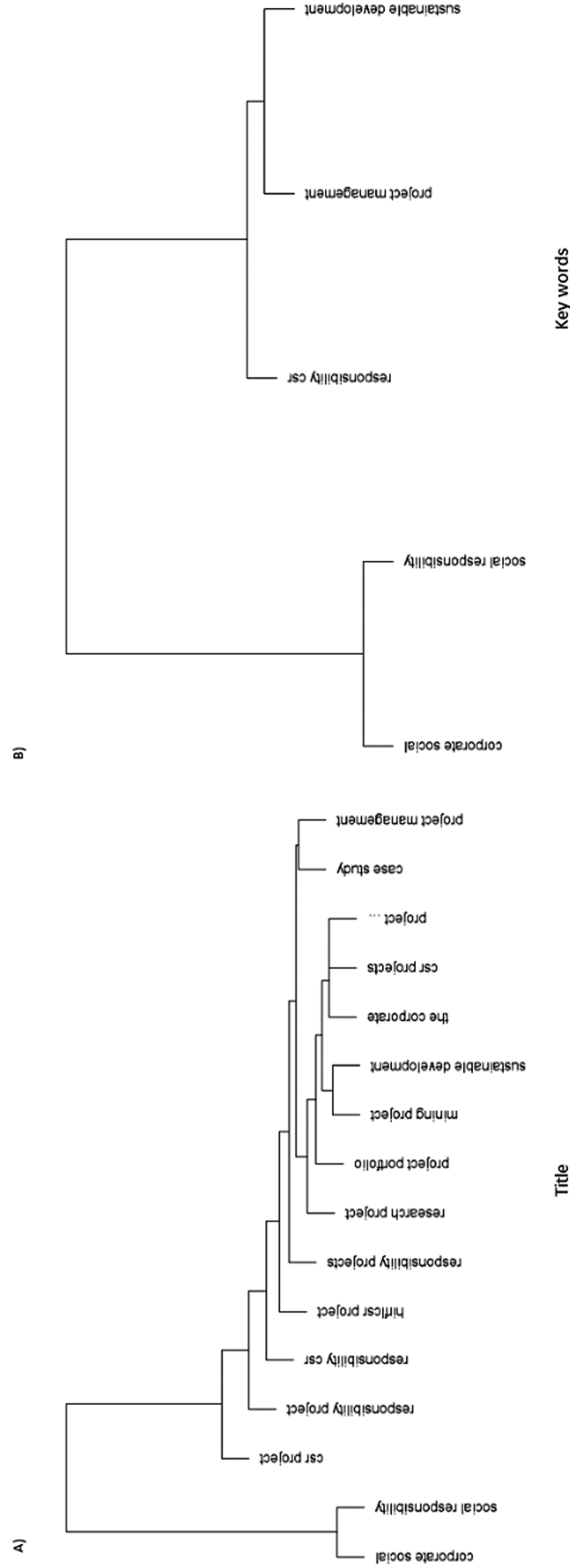


Source: authors' elaboration based on the data from the selected knowledge bases (Publish or Perish, Scopus, and Web of Science).

three conceptual subsets of the most common terms in abstracts (A), keywords (B) and titles (C) (Fig. 3). As we can see, in all three clouds the “CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY”, together with ‘RESPONSIBILITY’ and ‘CSR PROJECTS’, are the most frequent tags. In the abstracts, in turn, ‘PROJECT MANAGEMENT’ comes directly after CSR and ‘RESPONSIBILITY’.

Figure 4, with the use of a dendrogram, presents the most frequently occurring entries in the titles (4A) and keywords (4B) of the identified publications. It is also worth emphasizing that the most common keyword in the group of the publications studied, in all categories under examination (abstract, keywords, and title) is ‘corporate social’.

**Figure 4**  
*Dendrogram of the most common tags based on titles and keywords from identified publications, N = 362*



Source: authors' elaboration based on the data contained in Publish or Perish, Scopus, and Web of Science.

Systematic literature review

Based on a dendrogram of the most common tags based on the titles and keywords from the identified publications,  $N = 362$ . Out of 362 identified publications in which the issues of project management and CSR were simultaneously addressed, 23 scientific publications qualified for the next stage of the study – systematic literature review (Fig. 1). The selected papers were published between 2008 and 2020 (Tab. 3).

Table 3 presents the characteristics of these publications, divided into three groups of studies: theoretical, empirical, and theoretical-empirical, and provides basic information on the purposes and results of the papers included in this study.

In the following step, a set of 23 publications described in Table 3 was coded according to the discussed topics. As a result of the analysis of the texts, five categories were distinguished:

- **CSR projects** – the assigned publications present the social good taken into account by business organisations, as well as how the CSR projects dynamise entrepreneurship, society, and organisational culture. These papers reveal the extent to which business units engage in activities in the field of CSR. The category characterises the motives chosen by organisations, as well as who and how to manage the CSR policy (P06).
- **CSR in projects** – includes content referring to building new business networks, taking into account cross-sectoral cooperation within CSR projects. Articles describing projects influencing the development of society, and building the

image of an organisation, are the most represented in this category. We have included here also the content presenting the impact of CSR projects on acquiring new customers, as well as on improving the financial performance of the organisations (P07).

- **CSR in business** – covers content presenting transparent responsible proceedings by current law, taking into account factors resulting from the implementation of the CSR concept. It shows the strategy and evolution of activities as well as trends in the field of CSR used by business units in selected markets (P08).
- **CSR in Project Management** – encompasses articles aiming at familiarising the reader with the scope of CSR activities. It explicitly discusses sustainability and CSR initiatives in both project management and in particular innovations, and testing of new business models in the project management field (P09). CSR and PM activities of an organisation are integrated and practiced in business relations.
- **CSR and Project Management** – a category that assumes a balanced approach, excluding concentration on one area of activity. It includes papers presenting innovative solutions aiming at helping stakeholders change the world and support the local economy (P10). This content contributes to the optimal development of modern management of CSR projects. Emphasis is placed on sustainable development, welfare, and health of the society. Projects take into account the expectations and needs of local stakeholders.

Table 3  
Summary of identified publications addressing the issues of CSR and project management at the same time

Reference	Purpose	Results
<i>Theoretical</i>		
Kampf, 2007	In the presented article, the author analyses project management as a place where CSR can be operationalised. The article focuses on the conceptual processes of projects and the co-creation of CSR knowledge.	In this article the results suggest that corporations need to incorporate CSR in the way they deal with third-rate emerging stakeholders when developing a project concept. The author argues that a project concept that is open to transformation through dialogue with emerging tertiary stakeholders could be beneficial.
Schieg, 2009	A presentation of corporate social responsibility as a management concept that is becoming more and more important for design companies.	The thesis of the presented article is the thought that for the successful implementation of CSR activities it is necessary to adjust the involvement of the project's organisation to its business activities and own goals.
Kampf, 2013	The purpose of this article is to refer to the issues raised in terms of the content of business education. It presents a shift from a business-centred approach to an understanding of management, opening up space for reflection and offering tools to support this paradigm shift.	The author shows that practicing the project concept by management can be understood as a place where CSR and sustainable development practices can be operationalised in the basic unit of work of many corporations as a project.



Table 3 – continue

Reference	Purpose	Results
Carboni & Hodgkinson, 2013	In the scientific article, the authors suggest the PRISM GPM Methodology or „Applied Green Project Management®“. The Green Project Management® (GPM) presented is the incorporation of sustainable methods into the process by which projects are defined, planned, monitored, controlled, and delivered.	As a result of the research conducted in the article, it was assumed that the GPM® standards for project management take into account these needs, and our processes, training programmes, and certificates fill the gap resulting from the mismatch between existing project management methodologies and changes in social needs and business requirements.
Uribe Macías, 2020	The main aim of the article is to present a theoretical approach to proposing a model of social responsibility management in project management.	The conclusions presented by the author relate to the different theoretical approaches found for the concept of CSR, design, and PM. At the same time they provide a framework for the development of research.
Gobet, 2013	The goal was to draw attention to the growing role of corporate social responsibility in project management.	The author ends the article with advice on examples that are to support the application of CSR at the level of project management.
Phiri, 2014	The author's priority in this <i>Empirical</i> study was to determine the extent to which CSR is included in project management within the Information Technology Sector (IT).	The analysis conducted by the researcher showed that the real motive for undertaking IT projects is cost reduction. The fact is that the efficiency of IT projects improves processes and eliminates unnecessary waste.
Silvius & Schipper, 2014	The purpose of the study is to identify the sustainability gap of project managers, and provide guidance on how to close the gap.	The article presents suggestions for the development of project management competences. To prepare project managers for their key role in enabling sustainable development of the organisations.
Tallio, 2015	The author of the text shows the specificity of the participation of oil companies in the public health sector. He analyses the changes that their intervention causes in the development model. The considerations analyse the consequences of these changes on the shape of the Angolan state.	Oil companies finance and implement social projects through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy. In doing so, they replace development NGOs that never seized the reconstruction market in Angola.
Sarmila et al., 2015	The authors describe the experiences of a local farming community that was involved in a CSR project run by an international company in cooperation with a local farmers' association. The overall goal is to understand the extent of the project's contribution to the community.	In this study, the researcher distinguished 15 basic themes from the presented thematic analysis: employment opportunities, sources of income, and generation of assets. These three themes reflect the contribution of the CSR project to the economic well-being of the community from the perspective of the community involved in the project.
Chovanová Supeková et al., 2019	The publication provides an overview of project management research from the perspective of applying corporate social responsibility to employees in the context of project management standards in small, medium and large enterprises in Slovakia, from the point of view of the project manager.	The research results provide empirical evidence of how project managers in chosen companies applied social aspects to the concept of managing their projects.
Tang-Lee, 2016	The publication is an analysis of the Letpadaung copper mining project, invested by Myanmar Wanbao, the subsidiary of a Chinese state-owned enterprise.	The author points out that Myanmar Wanbao is actively and visibly trying to save its corporate image by establishing several channels of public engagement and investing in community development projects.

**Table 3 – continue**

Reference	Purpose	Results
Sarfraz et al., 2018	The authors are interested in the observation of the moderating role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in decisions on financing projects.	For the outcome of the publication, the author states that corporate social responsibility plays a moderating role in decisions on project financing and environmental risk management, stakeholder assessment and credit risk.
Williams et al., 2019	The authors provide information on how companies design and develop CSR projects. Additionally they present the related activities, their sequence, and the roles of various stakeholders.	The article concludes with observations based on a qualitative scope study. The study consists of in-depth interviews with CSR practitioners from five major Australian companies.
Jovanović et al., 2019	The study covers corporate social responsibility (CSR), the ecological aspect, volunteering, and the social aspect. The authors emphasise the intangible benefits of projects in Serbian project-based companies.	The conclusions and results of the study may form the basis for comparisons with other studies conducted in transition and developed economies.
Al-Reyaysa et al., 2019	The publication promotes the idea that corporate social responsibility is an influential concept, considered more implemented in the West than in the Gulf Cooperation Community (GCC) and in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.	Research exploration is about building CSR capacity in organisations, and analyses the research question as to whether managing CSR projects can contribute to increasing awareness, commitment and implementation.
<b>Theoretical-empirical</b>		
Mrvová & Púčiková, 2013	The publication presents an initiative to assess the economic efficiency of environmental investments in environmental management. The entire text is included in the context of corporate social responsibility and its interconnection, based on the CBA method.	The conclusion is that the CBA Programme is a quick assessment of an upcoming social project. Thanks to this we can obtain information on whether the project is acceptable or not.
Pamukçu & Öğüz, 2018	The author intends to interpret the significant positions of accountants and how they should act in corporate social responsibility projects.	The proposal states that accountants must adopt the concept of corporate social responsibility, and also adopt it in their practices. The author emphasises that accounting is one of the basic functions of a business.
Saenz, 2018	The study presents how the context in mining projects influences the CSR strategy. The author focuses on defining the main purpose of obtaining a social license to run a business.	The result of the study is to note that mining projects with a complex-unstable context require considerable effort and a longer process to achieve SLO.
Sohn et al., 2018	The publication is about important CSR packages. The main goal is to demonstrate that junior managers pay more attention to them in decision-making processes for future projects.	The result of the study is to present the view that behaviour depends on gender. Women perceive projects that generate clear value for CSR compared to male participants who prefer projects that primarily support individual and corporate financial benefits.
Sun et al., 2019	The analysis is based on the Sino-Pakistani context – Economic Corridor (CPEC). The main finding is that the CSR activities in the CPEC project are initiated by a long-term CSR initiative.	The authors suggest using a mechanism based on building a framework to lead to the sustainable development of the local community.
Chen et al., 2021	The main purpose of the publication is to examine how the adoption of any CSR framework by a business organisation influences the decision-making process of managers.	The result of the study is the conclusion that investments in CSR projects are much higher when companies report in an independent CSR reporting framework.

Source: authors' elaboration based on the literature review.

Table 4 presents a summary description of the created categories and indicates the references of publications in which the specific issues are discussed.

- Project-oriented CSR is just a first step toward sustainable management, and hence further steps are required to transform responsibility into success for companies (Martinuzzi & Krumay, 2013).

**Table 4**  
*Categories of publications dealing with the issues of project management and CSR*

No	Category	Category description	References
1.	CSR projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Projects for CSR</li><li>• CSR projects</li></ul>	Schieg, 2009; Gobet, 2013; Sarmila et al., 2015; Tallio, 2015; Pamukçu & Ögüz, 2018; Saenz, 2018; Sarfraz et al., 2018; Sohn et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2019; Al-Reyaysa et al., 2019; Jovanović et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2021
2.	CSR in projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CSR refers to projects</li><li>• Projects including CSR</li></ul>	Schieg, 2009; Carboni & Hodgkinson, 2013; Kampf, 2013; Phiri, 2014; Sarmila et al., 2015; Tang-Lee, 2016; Pamukçu & Ögüz, 2018; Sarfraz et al., 2018; Saenz, 2018; Sohn et al., 2018; Al-Reyaysa et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2019; Chovanová Supeková et al., 2019; Uribe Macías, 2020
3.	CSR in business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The role and importance of CSR in contemporary organisations</li></ul>	Schieg, 2009; Carboni & Hodgkinson, 2013; Kampf, 2013; Mrvová & Púčiková, 2013; Phiri, 2014; Sarmila et al., 2015; Tallio, 2015; Tang-Lee, 2016; Sarfraz et al., 2018; Sohn et al., 2018; Pamukçu & Ögüz, 2018; Saenz, 2018; Chovanová Supeková et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2019; Jovanović et al., 2019; Al-Reyaysa et al., 2019; Uribe Macías, 2020; Chen et al., 2021
4.	CSR in Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation of CSR management in PM</li><li>• CSR management functions in PM</li><li>• The impact of CSR management on PM</li></ul>	Schieg, 2009; Carboni & Hodgkinson, 2013; Gobet, 2013; Kampf, 2013; Phiri, 2014; Silvius & Schipper, 2014; Tallio, 2015; Sarfraz et al., 2018; Sohn et al., 2018; Pamukçu & Ögüz, 2018; Chovanová Supeková et al., 2019; Uribe Macías, 2020
5.	CSR and Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sustainable development, including CSR and PM</li></ul>	Schieg, 2009; Carboni & Hodgkinson, 2013; Silvius & Schipper, 2014; Phiri, 2014; Sohn et al., 2018; Sarfraz et al., 2018; Pamukçu & Ögüz, 2018; Chovanová Supeková et al., 2019; Uribe Macías, 2020

Source: authors' elaboration based on the literature review.

**Discussion**

The conducted research showed that the existing relationship between PM and CSR is nowadays a rapidly developing field of management research. In the initial years of the studied period 1981–2007, the two topics seem to be analysed quite separately, as independent, unrelated approaches to running and developing businesses and organisations. Only after this initial period do both separate paths start to merge, with some interesting convergences also gradually emerging. Among the findings describing the convergence fields, we were able to identify some specific topics:

- Incorporating CSR in PM requires, first of all, recognising future changes in the company environment and key stakeholders that need to be included, and then forming and implementing a proactive CSR policy based on core values and ethical attitudes that the company demonstrates and stands for (Jovanović et al., 2019).

- Incorporating CSR brings a change of focus in the management of projects from managing time, budget, and quality, to managing social, environmental, and economic impact. Moreover, it means that the high predictability and controllability proper to the PM is supposed to shift into a flexibility, complexity, and opportunity approach, typical of CSR (Silvius & Schipper, 2014).
- Implementing the practical and operational approach that PM can provide when undertaking CSR activities, helping to align CSR with organisational goals. Moreover, the mechanism, techniques, and project phases can be applied to CSR initiatives, and in some cases help to effectively implement CSR in a more structured way, increasing profits, reducing risk and contributing to achieving sustainable goals (Al-Reyaysa et al., 2019). In particular, this means that there is imperative to study the organisation's stakeholders' needs in detail and then determine the purpose of the CSR project following the internal values.

- Incorporating CSR in PM is the responsibility of project managers, who should integrate the relevant aspects of responsible behaviour in the project's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (Phiri, 2014; Schieg, 2009).
- For organisations committed to operating socially, ISO 26000 guides those who recognise that respect for society and the environment is a critical success factor. Like other ISO norms, it is only a standard frame that requires specific planning, and where PM techniques increase the probability of the CSR programme's success.
- Results of the study indicate that corporate social responsibility plays a moderating role in project decision-making. Companies involved in CSR activities have more value compared to other companies.
- Project managers can play a special role in motivating their companies to implement more socially responsible behaviour at local level in areas such as human rights, employee rights, environmental protection and supplier relations, which is potentially a risk-mitigating approach (Tharp & Chaudhury, 2008).
- The results of a study by Sarfraz et al. (2018) conclude that maintaining a sound corporate and social reputation is of additional importance to a financial institution when assessing the risk of projects.

A closer look at the selected study articles allows us to conclude that only seven of them were co-financed, therefore it was impossible to determine a dominant group of organisations interested in funding this kind of research. However, our findings emphasise that China is very active in this field with its research institutions. Just to mention a few of the funding institutions from China: The Chinese Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities, the National Natural Science Foundation of China, Humanities and Social Sciences of the Ministry of Education of China, the Postdoctoral Research Foundation of China, the Research Project of the Education Department of the Jilin Province, the research projects of Jilin University and the MOE Project of the Key Research Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences. The list of funders also includes organisations from Colombia – Universidad del Tolima, Slovakia – VSEMs IGA VSEMs, i.e. the School of Economics and Management in Public Administration, Serbia – the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, and Germany – the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology.

## Conclusions

The authors of this research decided to examine the relationships between PM and CSR, and in particular identify the fields of convergence, describe them, and to detect the research trends in the combined thematic fields. The performed systematic literature

review highlights five main categories of the links between both constructs, confirming the current growing interest in applying PM in the implementation of CSR projects and in deploying CSR key rules in the PM methods. The identified categories include a detailed description of projects to which CSR is referred at all stages of project implementation, including an ex-post project evaluation verifying the achievement of the assumed project objectives.

Moreover, the performed analysis and the related practice underline the importance of CSR deployment in project management methodologies. In other words, it highlights the necessity to include CSR as an important dimension of project management, in particular in the area of methods used in measuring project maturity in descriptive and prescriptive dimensions.

Moreover, taking into account that CSR is one of the pillars of sustainability, looking at the growing number of evidence on this relationship we believe that CSR activities should be more frequently integrated into projects and supported by project management, sometimes becoming specific projects themselves. This would also require further research, since the concept of sustainable development was not the focus of our research.

Additionally, it is worth emphasising that despite the increasing number of publications, some of the convergence trends remain not fully explored, and therefore the five identified areas or categories would require more extensive exploration.

## Study limitations

Like most theoretical proceedings, the presented analysis has its limitations, resulting mainly from the decision about the nature of the included papers. We decided to consider only articles, chapters in monographs, and proceeding papers published in English. This means that doctoral dissertations and documents published in other languages were not included in this study. Research limitations also relate to the inability to identify possible mis-indexing of the authors' publications.

## Further research perspectives

The conducted research indicates that the penetration of CSR issues and project management is the object of interest of researchers, which is expressed in the increasing number of scientific publications. From the authors' point of view, the presented results highlight the previously explored research areas in the organisation's activity related to the implementation of projects (change-the-business). The aspiration of the authors is to undertake a similar theoretical study in which the mantle of CSR and BPM (Business Process Management) interpenetration will be outlined, and thus the identification of CSR activities in the organisation related to the core activity (run-the-business).



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