

Patrycja Hąbek

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-7545-1637

Silesian University of Technology, **Poland**

Juan Jose Lavios Villahoz

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1418-1151

University of Burgos, **Spain**

INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility concept, which entails beside the economic also environmental and social dimension of functioning a company, has become an important topic for both practitioners and researchers (Hąbek and Wolniak, 2015; Hąbek and Brodny, 2017; Janik and Ryszko, 2017; Jonek-Kowalska and Zieliński, 2017; Ryszko, 2017; Hąbek, Biały and Livenskaya, 2019; Cierna and Sujová, 2020). One key challenge for a company which aims to be socially and environmentally responsible is to assure sustainability in its supply chain, i.e. sustainability of its suppliers. Therefore the focus on cost and quality issues in supply chain management must be expanded and also include environmental and social aspects (Porter and Kramer, 2006). To spread sustainability idea in their supply chains producers need to collaborate directly with suppliers. They can make use of the supplier development (SD) practices which have been described in the literature as a set of practices aimed at improving suppliers' performance and/or capabilities (Krause, Scannell and Calantone, 2000). Examples of (SD) practices contain evaluation of the suppliers' environmental and social performance, supplier training, sharing the knowledge, collaboration on product improvement to end in a better supplier's corporate social responsibility (CSR) performance.

The capabilities and skills of suppliers to deal with CSR challenges play critical roles in producers' CSR performance. Irresponsible supplier behaviour is able to damage public image and reputation and can be severely expensive for a company. We have witnessed many scandals of producers who suffer problems because of irresponsible behaviour of their suppliers, for example Mattel (its supplier produce defective toys), Nike or Sainsbury (labour abuses in their suppliers' plants).

The issue of responsible supply chain management is of utmost importance in the automotive industry as car manufacturing is characterised by long and numerous supply chains. It is not enough for car producer to be socially responsible and not to take into account the practices of its numerous suppliers.

Thus the aim of the paper is to identify and classify the socially responsible activities practised by the car producers in their supplier development process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Supplier development practices and strategies

Supplier development has been viewed as an essential supply chain management method for a company to identify and select an adequate pool of suppliers to provide products and services needed by the company, and to improve their capabilities to meet the company's short- and/or long-term requirements (Krause and Ellram, 1997; Krause, Handfield and Scannell, 1998). A number of studies have offered empirical evidence of the benefits of supplier development on improving suppliers' performance including buyer's productivity, new product development, cost, quality, and delivery problems (Sánchez-Rodríguez and Hemsworth, 2005; Krause, Handfield and Tyler, 2007; Modi and Mabert, 2007; Humphreys *et al.*, 2011). Supplier development practices can be applied at different levels of involvement and investments (Sánchez-Rodríguez and Hemsworth, 2005; Wagner, 2011). We can distinguish direct and indirect supplier development practices. In direct supplier development, buying companies engage specific resources such as financial capital, human resources, know-how, technologies, and managerial capabilities (Krause, 1999; Wagner, 2010). It involves direct investments such as on-site consultation, training programs, temporary personnel transfer, and supplier development consortiums (Krause and Ellram, 1997; Krause, Handfield and Scannell, 1998). In indirect supplier development, the buying company commit limited resources to suppliers. It generally uses information technology tools and market forces to monitor supplier performance (Krause, 1999; Wagner, 2010). Some common techniques used in indirect supplier development include supplier assessment, supplier recognition, communicating feedback, plant visits, performance measurement, and supplier auditing (Krause and Ellram, 1997; Krause, Handfield and Scannell, 1998). Indirect supplier development is widely applied to monitor suppliers' operational performance, whereas direct supplier development is considered better for enhancing suppliers' capabilities (Wagner, 2010).

Buying firms can use various supplier development strategies to improve supplier performance. The framework of these strategies includes (1) supplier assessment, (2) providing suppliers with incentives for improved performance, (3) instigating competition among suppliers, and (4) direct involvement of the buying firm's personnel with suppliers through activities such as training of suppliers' personnel (Krause, Handfield and Scannell, 1998; Krause, Scannell and Calantone, 2000). The suppliers' development strategies most frequently described in the literature are as follow:

- *Competitive pressure*: Buying firm uses more than one supplier to develop competitive pressure which helps and motivate other suppliers to enhance

quality, delivery, cost, technical capabilities or other supplier performance characteristic (Tezuka, 1997).

- *Evaluation and certification*: Supplier assessment and certification system ensures the suppliers' performance. A crucial element of the assessment process should be evaluation feedback to suppliers. The feedback helps to understand the expectations of the buying firm and shows the supplier direction for improvement. The evaluation and certification system motivates suppliers to improve performance consecutively (Krause, Scannell and Calantone, 2000; Carr and Pearson, 2002).
- *Incentives*: Buying firm can offer incentives to motivate suppliers to develop their performance and capabilities, which include achieved cost savings sharing, increased volumes, priority consideration for future business. These activities aim to induce suppliers to improve their performance as to increase business with the buying firm (Krause, Handfield and Scannell, 1998; Monczka *et al.*, 1998).
- *Direct involvement*: buying firms develop suppliers' performance through their direct involvement, e.g. activities such as training and education of a supplier's personnel (Galt and Dale, 1991; Monczka *et al.*, 1998) and allocating buying firm personnel temporarily to the supplier (Newman and Rhee, 1990).

Supplier quality development

When the firms' supplier base is not competitive or capable of meeting expectations or requirement, firms have different alternatives, including supplier switching, if there are capable suppliers and switching costs are not excessive; vertical integration, which may be in contradiction with the firm's intention to focus on their core competences; and supplier development (Wagner, 2006).

Supply quality development (SQD) is an initial step in the supplier programmes (Noshad and Awasthi, 2015). Also historically it has been the case: after the first article, by (Leenders, 1966), a "first wave" of supplier development research was initiated in the late 80's by researchers on the quality management field (Wagner, 2006).

Basically, supply quality development involves two main processes: quality measurement, assessing the current situation and spotting opportunities of improvement; and quality development, implementing the activities leading to a better quality performance (Noshad and Awasthi, 2015).

Due to its lack of immediate return and the risk that the relationship with the supplier be unsuccessful, many companies are reluctant to invest in supplier development (Talluri, Narasimhan and Chung, 2010).

On the practical side, (Noshad and Awasthi, 2015), studied the best practices in SQD obtained from industries, highlighting as the most often used the following activities: information sharing, on-site assistance, supplier awards, clear communication of expectation, training on quality techniques, awards and

recognition, supplier product development, and supplier involvement in planning.

Socially responsible supplier development

In the past buyers' purchasing interests were primarily related to the quality and the price of purchased goods, as well as purchasing risks and delivery conditions, today supplier social responsibility performance is also a factor which is taken into account. Nowadays, buyers' stakeholders more and more often exert pressure on buyers to manage their global supply chains in a socially and environmentally responsible way (Meixell and Luoma, 2015). Stakeholders can punish buyers severely when they become aware of unsustainable practices among suppliers (Hofmann *et al.*, 2014), arguing that buyers are able to prevent such practices by means of supplier selection and development (Adams *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, purchasing decisions and supply chain management of buyers are of high importance in ensuring supply chain sustainability (Krause, Vachon and Klassen, 2009). Through sustainable supplier development, buyers can shape their supply base to mitigate potential supply chain sustainability risks (Foerstl *et al.*, 2010; Busse *et al.*, 2016).

There may be indicated some trends that have influenced the inclusion of social and environmental requirements in supply management:

- the increasing strategic importance of supply management (Harland, Lamming and Cousins, 1999);
- the increasing importance of buyer and supplier partnership both for "normal" business, but also facing environmental and social problems (Goldbach, Seuring and Back, 2003);
- the awareness of the connection between supply decisions and a firm's environmental and social or sustainable performance (Bowen *et al.*, 2009).

Socially responsible supplier development (SRSD) can be defined as specific supplier development efforts made by a buying firm to improve its foremost suppliers' capabilities to implement the concept of social responsibility. Thanks to the implementation of SRSD, CSR performance of both suppliers and the buying firms may be improved (Lu, Lee and Cheng, 2012). Socially responsible supplier development practices are getting more and more attention from academia, business as well as different international organisations, for example ISO or Global Reporting Initiative. Their activities in this particular topic brought about the development of standards and guidelines which aim is to support the organisation in the implementation of socially responsible practices in supply chain management. Some of most important are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Standards and guidelines related to socially responsible supplier development practices

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES RELATED TO SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT	
ISO 26000:2010 Guidance on social responsibility	The international standard ISO 26000 encourage socially responsible supplier development in one of the seven core subjects – fair operating practices, issue 4: promoting social responsibility in the value chain.
ISO 20400:2017 Sustainable procurement – Guidance	The international standard ISO 20400 provides guidelines for integrating sustainability into an organisation's procurement processes. Aimed at top managers and directors of the purchasing function, it covers the political and strategic aspects of the purchasing process, how to align procurement with an organisation's goals and objectives and create a culture of sustainability. The standard defines the principles of sustainable procurement, including accountability, transparency, respect for human rights and ethical behaviour, and highlights key considerations such as risk management and priority setting. It also covers various stages of the procurement process, outlining the steps required to integrate social responsibility into the purchasing function.
GRI 414: SUPPLIER SOCIAL ASSESSMENT GRI 308: Supplier Environmental Assessment GRI 204: Procurement Practices	<p>The disclosures in GRI 414 standard can provide information about an organisation's approach to prevent and mitigate negative social impacts in its supply chain. Suppliers can be assessed for a range of social criteria, including human rights (such as child labor and forced or compulsory labor); employment practices; health and safety practices; industrial relations; incidents (such as of abuse, coercion or harassment); wages and compensation; and working hours.</p> <p>Additional disclosures that relate to the topic of sustainable supplier development can also be found in: GRI 308: Supplier Environmental Assessment. If the reporting organisation has identified both topics as material, it can combine its disclosures for <i>GRI 308</i> and <i>GRI 414</i>.</p> <p>The procurement practices standard GRI 204 sets out reporting requirements on the topic of procurement practices. This covers an organisation's support for local suppliers, or those owned by women or members of vulnerable groups. It also covers how the organisation's procurement practices (such as the lead times it gives to suppliers, or the purchasing prices it negotiates) cause or contribute to negative impacts in the supply chain.</p>
UN Global Compact & Business for Social Responsibility (Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement)	The guide illustrates how companies can implement the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact throughout their supply chains and integrate sustainability into procurement strategies. In 2015, the guide was revised to ensure the inclusion of and alignment with relevant standards and initiatives, and also to reflect current and emerging trends within this area.
OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises	The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises are recommendations addressed by governments to multinational enterprises operating in or from adhering countries. They provide non-binding principles and standards for responsible business conduct in a global context consistent with applicable laws and internationally recognised standards. The Guidelines are the only multilaterally agreed and comprehensive code of responsible business conduct that governments have committed to promoting. The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) offer guidance related to responsible supply chain management in the section on the General Policies and associated Commentary, the Commentary on Disclosure, the

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES RELATED TO SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT	
	Commentary on Environment, and the Guidance on Competition.
EcoVadis Business Sustainability Ratings	EcoVadis is an international platform supporting enterprises in the assessment of suppliers in terms of ethical practices and their impacts on the natural environment and society. For suppliers, it can serve as a self-assessment and communication tool with business partners. The EcoVadis expert team carries out an analysis of the data provided by the supplier. The results are available in the form of an evaluation sheet for four areas: the natural environment, employment practices, supply chain and ethical business. Suppliers receive access to results of the analysis on an online platform, including a benchmark of CSR activities for a specific industry or country, an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation, support in the preparation of the improvement plan. The methodology used by EcoVadis has been developed on the basis of the most recognised international standards (Global Reporting Initiative reporting standards, UN Global Compact Initiative guidelines and the international standard on social responsibility ISO 26000).
Automotive Industry Guiding Principles to Enhance Sustainability Performance in the Supply Chain	The collaboration among Automotive Industry Action Group (AIAG), Drive Sustainability and BMW Group, Daimler, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles Group, Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Honda, Jaguar Land Rover, Nissan, Scania, Toyota, Volkswagen Group, Volvo Cars, and Volvo Group created guidance to supplier partners. The guideline describes minimum expectations towards business ethics, working conditions, human rights, and environmental leadership, for suppliers as well as their subcontractors and their own suppliers.

Source: developed based on information retrieved from websites of: ISO, Global Reporting Initiative, UN Global Compact, OECD, Ecovadis, AIAG (<https://www.iso.org/publication/PUB100410.html>; <https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/gri-standards-download-center/gri-204-procurement-practices-2016/>; <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/205> ; <http://www.oecd.org/investment/mne/45534720.pdf>; <https://www.ecovadis.com/>; <https://www.oecd.org/daf/inv/mne/roundtableoncorporateresponsibilitysupplychainsandtheocdguidelinesformultinationalenterprises.htm>; <https://www.aiag.org/about/news/2017/12/12/automotive-industry-updates-its-guiding-principles-to-enhance-sustainability-in-the-supply-chain>)

According to Krause et al. (2007), supplier development includes seven dimensions: buyer commitment, shared values, information sharing, supplier evaluation, supplier development activities, supplier dependence, and buyer dependence. The research of R.X.A. Lu et al. (2012), (Lu, Lee and Cheng, 2012) suggest that information sharing, supplier evaluation, and supplier development activities are the most relevant dimensions for socially responsible supplier development. In a socially responsible supplier development program, SD-information sharing is about the transfer of CSR knowledge to suppliers. Through SR-information sharing, suppliers can learn CSR knowledge such as the fundamental concepts, related practices, implementation guidelines, and outcome measurement, etc. SR-supplier evaluation is about the use of an audit and feedback system to monitor suppliers' CSR implementation and outcomes,

and SR-supplier development is about making direct improvement efforts in suppliers' CSR implementation (Lu, Lee and Cheng, 2012).

Some of the most popular practices of socially responsible supply chains include supplier codes of conduct, integration of sustainability in sourcing strategies, monitoring and auditing of suppliers, sustainability data collection and participation in collaborative initiatives related to supply chains (BSR/GlobeScan, 2015). Many international companies signing contracts with suppliers require them to sign a declaration in which obligates the introduction of the concept of corporate social responsibility through application of the principles of good practice contained in statements differently named, e.g. Statements on Business Practices and in Supplier Social & Environmental Responsibility Agreements (Urbaniak, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

In order to identify and classify the socially responsible activities practised by the car producers, the technique of content analysis was applied. The data in the study was collected from the sustainability reports of car producers. The documents were obtained from the sustainability reports' database of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

Content analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004). According to White and Marsh (White and Marsh, 2006), the key elements to use during content analysis are: sampling units (identify the population and establish the basis for sampling), data collection units (units for measuring variables), and units of analysis (basis for analysis). In this research, the sampling unit is a sustainability report of certain automaker published in 2019, the data collection units are phrases, graphics, or tables containing certain information (information related with the social responsible supplier development), and the units of analysis are the evaluative criteria which are organised in the assessment categories based on dimensions of social responsible supplier development proposed by Lu et al. (2012). The assessment categories and evaluative criteria applied in this study are presented in Table 2. In the study, sustainability reports of seven automakers were analysed (Volkswagen, GM, Toyota, Ford, PSA, Nissan and Honda). To avoid bias during analysing the sustainability reports each author analyse the content of the documents, and they jointly agreed on the assessment of the socially responsible supplier development practices. As the scope of the socially responsible activities is very wide beside the distinction of three possible dimensions the authors decided to classify the practices into four categories: environmental, social, governance and global CSR - being those practices that relate to the development of CSR management of their suppliers.

Table 2 The category system for the content analysis of sustainability reports

Dimensions of socially responsible supplier development		Short name	Definition and examples
First dimension	Socially responsible information sharing	SRIS	Refers to the sharing and discussion of knowledge of CSR concepts and implementation between the buying firm and the supplier. Through SR-information sharing, suppliers can learn CSR knowledge such as the fundamental concepts, related practices, implementation guidelines, and outcome measurement, etc.
Second dimension	Socially responsible supplier evaluation	SRSE	Refers to buyer's efforts in regularly assessing suppliers' CSR implementation processes, and relevant ethical behaviors, and outcomes. This dimension also involves providing feedback and rewards to suppliers on a regular basis.
Third dimension	Socially responsible supplier development	SRSD	Refers to buyer's efforts in identifying improvement areas in suppliers' CSR implementation and intaking necessary actions to rectify problems. Example actions of this dimension include ethical performance record study, site visit, problem identification analysis, training, etc.

Source: based on: Lu et al./Int. J. Production Economics 140 (2012) pp. 160-167

RESULTS

It has been analysed the socially responsible supplier development practices and strategies of seven automakers declared in their sustainability reports. As a result, it has been found instances showing various degrees of supplier development for each automaker. Table 3 shows the highest level of the practices found in the automaker's sustainability reports which was classified as third dimension – socially responsible supplier development (SRSD). It is noticeable that all of the practices disclosed in sustainability reports present a significant concern in the environmental issues, but for some of them, there are not explicit practices focused on social or governance issues in supplier development. That does not mean that they do not care about these areas of CSR, but instead, they limit these practices to first or second dimension and for example, check if their suppliers comply with human rights and labour legislation.

Table 3 Dimensions and categories of socially responsible practices dedicated to their suppliers

Automaker name	Environmental	Social	Governance	Global CSR
Ford	SRSD	SRSD	SRIS	SRSD
General Motors	SRSD	SRIS	SRSE	SRIS
Honda	SRSD		SRSE	SRSD
Nissan	SRSD	SRSD		SRSD
PSA	SRIS			SRSD
Toyota	SRSE			SRSD
Volkswagen	SRSD		SRSD	SRSD

It has also been found differences in how the supplier development process is managed. While in some cases (e.g. Volkswagen, Honda, Nissan) this process is performed internally, in other cases the burden of the assessment and training is left to a third party (e.g. General Motors base their supplier development strategy in externalising it to different associations through a partnership). Some combine both approaches (e.g. in PSA, audits are managed by an independent external service provider, but training is developed internally). Coincidentally, the automakers that audit and train their suppliers internally, base their strategy on creating a culture related to environmental issues and CSR and work hand in hand with their suppliers. At the opposite end of the spectrum, General Motors seem to be less involved with their suppliers, and base their sustainable supplier development strategy on sharing experiences and good practices in various forums. All of them collaborate with industry groups and associations to promote CSR practices.

Regarding the CSR framework, most of the automakers have defined their own scheme. The exception to the rule is PSA, that uses an external framework (EcoVadis Rating Framework) as a reference. Table 4 shows a summary of the programmes and frameworks of the selected automakers which are used in socially responsible supplier development process. To incentivise the suppliers to adopt these frameworks, most of the automakers relate their adoption to the perspective of continuing future cooperation with the supplier.

Table 4 CSR Supplier program or framework of the selected automakers

Automaker name	CSR Supplier program or framework
Ford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PACE, Ford's own supply chain sustainability initiative - Aligned Business Framework (ABF) - MentorMe/ MentorWE
General Motors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAIC-GM's Green Supply Chain project - Supplier Safety Council - membership in the Responsible Minerals Initiative (RMI) - Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)
Honda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Honda Supplier Sustainability Guidelines - Honda Green Purchasing Guidelines - Procurement risk management system
Nissan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renault-Nissan Purchasing Way - Renault-Nissan CSR Guidelines for Suppliers - THANKS (Trusty and Harmonious Alliance Network Kaizen activity with Suppliers) - Procurement risk management system
PSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EcoVadis Rating Framework (external) - Responsible Purchasing Policy
Toyota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Toyota Supplier CSR Guidelines - Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)
Volkswagen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business Partner Due Diligence (BPDD) - S-Rating

Source: own elaboration

It is difficult to rank the studied cases considering the degree of development of their program. According to Table 3, the three top companies in this ranking are Ford, Nissan, and Volkswagen, the three presenting in their reports evidence of

the third dimension – socially responsible supplier development, in at least three out of the four categories defined, and especially in the Global CSR category. Volkswagen's approach is worth to be highlighted, and it differs from the others regarding the sustainability supplier development. They have defined an integrated system capable of preventing, detecting and reacting to the risk they face regarding sustainability, and explicitly declare that "The key objective is to rectify and prevent breaches and to actively and effectively improve suppliers' sustainability performance". They also define a systematic training of both employees and supplier as a central component in their strategy for the improvement of sustainability in the supply chain and is through training that they can influence their suppliers' culture towards the improvement of sustainability systematically.

CONCLUSIONS

In the paper the authors try to identify and classify the socially responsible activities practiced by the car producers in their supplier development process. The implementation of socially responsible supplier development practices may improve CSR performance on both sides – suppliers as well as buying firms. To improve the supplier CSR performance the buying firms can use various strategies and practices for example trainings designed to suppliers needs, on-site support and solving problems, joint projects focused on sustainability improvement, sharing with information or supplier evaluation. Due to the importance of the CSR issue in the supply chain, different international guides and standards have been developed to help enterprises implementing these strategies and practices. It should be mention here at least the ISO 20400:2017 Sustainable Procurement Guidelines or Procurement Practices of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI 204).

All of the seven automakers which reports were analysed disclose socially responsible practices focused on their suppliers. The practice varies in their dimensions (information sharing, supplier evaluation, supplier development) as well as in their categories (environmental, social, governance and global CSR). The automakers use their own programmes (Honda Supplier Sustainability Guidelines) or external frameworks (e.g. EcoVadis Rating Framework) in socially responsible practices dedicated to their suppliers. The most developed practices comprehensively cover CSR issues and apply various dimensions. However, it seems that the best solutions are those tailored and developed according to the needs and expectations of individual cooperation between the producer and supplier.

It should be noted here that, using the content analysis technique, the authors assessed only information disclosed in sustainability reports and not the automakers' performance in sustainable supplier development process.

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Abstract: A socially responsible company should take responsibility for its impact but also take care of the impact throughout its supply chain. Its perspective must be wider than only its own practices. Supplier development process can be used to spread socially and environmentally responsible practices across the supply chain. The aim of the paper is to identify and classify the socially responsible activities practised by the car producers and dedicated to their suppliers. In the paper sustainability reports of seven automakers were analysed. The authors used the technique of content analysis. The socially responsible practices dedicated to suppliers was classified into three dimensions and four categories. All of the automakers disclose information in their sustainability reports on socially responsible practices focused on their suppliers. However, the practices differ in terms of dimension and the area of CSR applied.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, automotive, reporting, supplier development, sustainability