

A Survey of CSR Education: Trends, Comparisons, Processes (Executive Summary)

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The European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS), in association with the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) and the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (ICCSR) of Nottingham University Business School, conducted a global online survey of universities and business schools about corporate social responsibility (CSR) education. The respondents (77 European business schools and 142 universities worldwide) included members of EABIS as well as non-members that were on the mailing list of EABIS.

CSR is a field of study that examines the complex relationships and responsibilities of business in society. The study shows that in Europe there was a **general increase in CSR coursework**, which was **most pronounced for dedicated CSR programs and optional CSR modules at the Masters level**. Yet, in some cases, CSR coursework in European institutions of higher education also declined, such as dedicated CSR programs in the MBA and Executive Education. Interestingly, there was little difference in the level of CSR education between different European regions, or country clusters (British Isles vs. France/Benelux vs. Central Europe vs. Southern Europe). In general, the changes presented in the full research report illustrate the Europe-wide maturing of CSR as a field of study.

The **trans-Atlantic comparisons** do not show any general superiority of either Europe or North America over the other in terms of CSR education. Instead, the differences were program-specific and, most likely, explained by the two continents' differing orientations to higher education. We surmised that the differences seem to have largely been driven by the greater market orientation of North American universities, which have been found to be more likely than their European counterparts to offer optional CSR modules and dedicated CSR programs at the UG and MBA levels. Conversely, European universities seem to be more likely to regard CSR as a serious academic endeavor, as suggested by their far greater commitment to CSR Masters-level coursework. The impression of greater market orientation by North American universities was reinforced by the respondents' answers to questions about the key success factors behind, and barriers to, mainstreaming of CSR education. Globally, faculty interest, CSR research or teaching centers, and student demand were considered the **three most important key success factors** in the effective integration of CSR topics in university curricula.

The two continents were remarkably homogeneous in their primary reliance on **case studies**, **guest speakers**, and **textbooks** in their teaching approaches to CSR. Research papers and seminars were used slightly less frequently, and audiovisual media and field trips far less often to

convey CSR course content. In terms of the framing CSR issues, what stood out is the great diversity of topics studied by experienced and newly minted researchers.

The European respondents considered faculty- and university-level forces the **main drivers** of the introduction, development, and successful mainstreaming of CSR education. In contrast, but consistent with a 2004 *Journal of Business Ethics* article by Matten and Moon, they by and large rejected national-level policies as important determinants. This raises the important issue of implementing appropriate faculty-level incentives for stimulating further growth in CSR education.

The results of multiple regression analyses demonstrated that, whereas university religious affiliation, public/private status, and program size had only negligible impacts on schools' commitment to CSR education, school **prestige** exerted great influence (in an analysis of main or direct effects). We demonstrated that the greater the school's *Financial Times* ranking, the greater its commitment to CSR education. In addition, school **geographic location** was a significant moderator of the influences of prestige and public/private status as illustrated in the two figures. Figure 1 illustrates that prestige is positively correlated with CSR commitment on both continents, but its effect is stronger in North America than in Europe. This is consistent with our expectations. As illustrated in Figure 2, in North America private business schools engage in more CSR teaching, while in Europe public schools offer more dedicated CSR programs.

Finally, a statistical discriminant analysis showed that the factors that most effectively differentiate high-commitment schools from schools with low commitment to CSR were the **schools' own CSR strategies and operational implementation, stakeholder collaborations of various sorts**, and, most importantly, **extra-curricular initiatives such as support for student clubs**.

Figure 1
Prestige X Continent

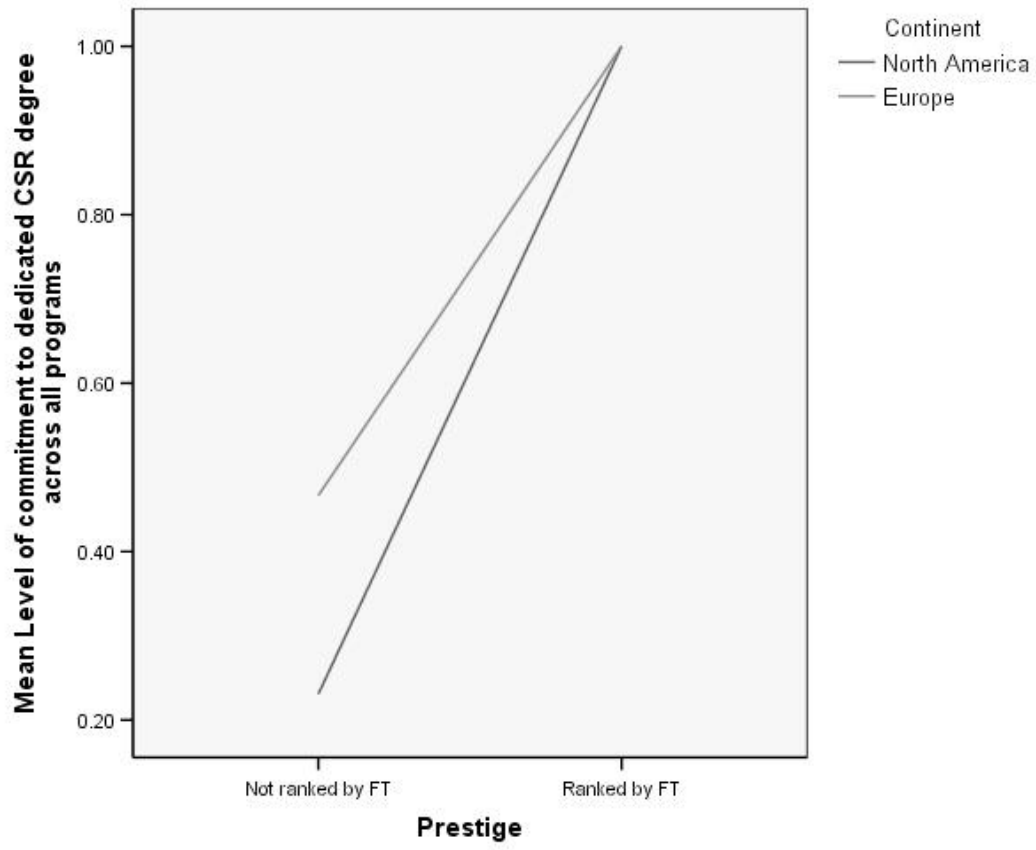


Figure 2
Public/Private X Continent

