The responsibility and ethics of the University in the social environment

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ABSTRACT

This article refers to the role that the responsibility and the ethics of the university in the social environment, -considering the permanent changes of the globalized world and the uncertainties due to the permanent changes in the educational field- plays nowadays with submission to greater demands on the quality of education both locally, nationally and internationally as a result of the changes and challenges for quality education and with corporate responsibility and ethics. The university should interact in dialogues with the different actors of students, teachers, companies and representatives of society in order to obtain greater criteria of understanding about their performance and their social responsibility with business ethics, identifying the essential contributions to sustainable human development but considering responsibility and business ethics as synonyms of high quality in university education. The university must focus on the sum of the efforts of all social actors, which involve the community with the management of the socially responsible organization, with academic training, with the production of knowledge and with the participation of sustainable human development, seeking the involvement of clients, suppliers, partners, the environment, communities, government and society in general and the consideration of social, economic, ethical and social factors.

Corporate social responsibility is: **"Do business based on ethical principles and in accordance with the law."** *The company (not the employer) has a role before society, in the environment in which it operates (Bank Group, 2016).*

INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not a culture of philanthropy, it is not intended that companies become charitable works, since companies are made to be profitable. This implies that companies adopt an active and responsible position regarding the impact of their operations. This culture is a way of doing business that guarantees greater sustainability over time to the company and economic growth.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the role that companies must play in favor of sustainable development, that is, in favor of the balance between economic growth, social welfare and the use of natural resources and the environment. This balance is vital for the operation of business. Companies must become an active part of solving the challenges we have as a society, for their own interest in having a more stable and prosperous environment.

Companies have the responsibility to know the environment in which they operate. They must have a clear knowledge of everything that surrounds their company, not only in geographical terms, but in terms of the set of rules, laws that govern their operation and all activities directly and indirectly related to the company.

The concept of Company Social Responsibility or Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arises in the United States in the late 50s and early 60s. Contrary to what is commonly thought, corporate social responsibility goes beyond certain practices, occasional initiatives or motivated by marketing, public relations or other business benefits. CSR is a corporate philosophy adopted by the top management of a company to act for the benefit of its own workers, their families and the social environment in their areas of influence. It is considered as an integral set of policies, practices and programs that are implemented in the full range of corporate operations and decision-making processes, and which means putting in place a management system with procedures, controls and documents (Virtual Center of News, 2006).

It is important to recognize that there are people or actors with whom every company is interrelated. These are called "interested publics". The interested publics are all those people to whom the business affects and are impacted by the company in a negative or positive way (Bank Group, 2016).

Corporate Social Responsibility is defined as business behavior based on ethical values and transparency principles that include a strategy of continuous improvement in the relationship between the company and its parties, a relationship that includes customers, suppliers, partners,

consumers, the environment, communities, government and society in general. "Corresponds to a business strategy focused on increasing profitability, competitiveness and sustainability, serving as part of a new model of sustainable development. The concept of CSR can incorporate human rights, anti-corruption measures, the environment, working conditions and activities within communities through partnerships with civil society organizations".

Many companies around the world today recognize the benefits of incorporating socially responsible practices and policies. Likewise, there are empirical studies that demonstrate the positive impacts of CSR in aspects such as financial performance, operating costs, brand image and the reputation of companies. However, the incorporation of CSR policies and practices in Latin America is still incipient and most of the interest is presented in large companies. However, there is growing pressure on companies in the region to incorporate the concepts of CSR, not only in order to compete efficiently, but even to guarantee access to international markets, where governments and consumers increasingly demand this type of practices (Virtual Center of News, 2006).

There is a subtle difference in the meaning of Corporate Social Responsibility and Company Social Responsibility, insofar as it distinguishes between the company and the corporation, understanding that the latter incorporates all organizations, business or not, regardless of their size, although for many, both expressions mean the same thing.

Yes, the difference between CSR or CSR and Social Responsibility (CSR) is unanimously recognized. Social Responsibility is understood as the commitment of all citizens, institutions -public or private- and social organizations, in general, to contribute to the welfare of the local or global society. It is necessary to say that the three are often abbreviated indistinctly to refer to Corporate Social Responsibility. In any case, social responsibility (RS) applies not only to private companies. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been extended to incorporate government agencies and other organizations that have a clear interest in showing how they perform their work (Wikipedia, 2017).

Companies exist to generate money, but more than that, they live to generate opportunities for relationships, new market niches, money is an important and essential element but it is not the only one; it is necessary to analyze the impact that the company produces in the air, in the land, in the water, besides the fact that this is an exercise of social responsibility now it is a competitiveness tool. We cannot forget that society is unstoppable and demands a good product, with better quality, customer service and that the way not to stay out of the market is understanding that the social responsibility argument is a reputation and strategy for the consolidation of our company, with better reputation we will sell more, we will have better

collaboration of employees and therefore, better results according to our strategy (Duarte, 2012).

On the other hand, Ferrer (2001) points out that, the voluntary nature in the adoption of corporate social responsibility is driven by "applied ethics" understood as: "Business ethics is a part of applied ethics, as all ethics of organizations and professions is, whose purpose is to reflect on how to apply principles to business activity" (page 46). This translates not only into the application of these principles, but also in the identification of the benefits that each of these applications must provide to society (social impact), what objectives or purpose should be pursued, and what values and habits are essential to incorporate in order to achieve and sustain them over time (Castañeda, Ruiz, Viloria, Castañeda, & Quevedo, 2007)

The ethics of the University in the social environment

Ethics can be defined as that branch of knowledge that is responsible for studying the moral actions of society and its components, as well as the norms and rules that mark its behavior.

Ethics is an area of philosophy that shows how the foundations of morality are governed by always linking the making of good with happiness and the making of evil with unhappiness and suffering. Ethics is a theoretical discipline that deals with the practical: action, that is, facts. This theoretical orientation is a framework of ideal reflection for every human being to make decisions according to the criterion of what is right or what is just.

For a long time, the university was seen as a synthesis of known knowledge, in charge of transmitting knowledge, based on its own interests and somewhat isolated from society, participating indirectly in the training of professionals; in more recent times and given the existence of more competitive markets and the rise of information and communication technologies, in what has been called the Information Age and a little more towards the knowledge society (Toffler, 1981; Castells , 1997, Drucker, 1998),these have generated a change in the production mode of knowledge, which have been modifying the role of the university in society, generating a new mode of knowledge production that emerges from practical needs and market demands through research.

In modern times, research is incorporated as a fundamental activity of the university. The fact of inserting research as a function of the university allowed, in the mid-nineteenth century, a continuity between research institutes and industrial activity, by transferring the results of research.

The social, economic and political changes produced in the world in the mid-twentieth century, made it necessary to adapt and restructure the pillars that supported and gave meaning

to the university. Its function as a public service must meet the demands of society and, therefore, anticipate the future to prepare people capable of surviving in a type of society that changes at an abysmal speed and that separates the society in which learning was acquired with the society in which it is required to put them into practice.

The university work has been focused on learning to know and learning to do, neglecting the other two pillars that govern the education of this century and which form the basis of cooperativism, expressed in another way: learning to be and live together. Consequently, it is necessary to train and train in and for social responsibility, that is where Higher Education plays a leading role: "an education guided by love towards humanity and moved by wisdom" (UNESCO, 1998, page 23), and based on what Delors (1996), in the same order, has called the four pillars that should govern the education of this century: learning to know, to do, to be and to live together, the last two being the solid foundations of university social responsibility and cooperativism or solidarity.

It is considered important a paradigmatic change of the theories and practices of the Universities to help the development of justice and the formation of socially responsible citizens. It is necessary to move from a social action centered on charity and assistance to one based on justice, citizens' rights and duties, recognition of the need and deep interdependence among the people of a society (Castañeda, Ruiz, Viloria, Castañeda, & Quevedo, 2007).

The university institutions fulfill a public function, that of educating, which generates a social responsibility, in relation to the training of professionals; it plays a new social and moral role beyond ensuring professional, technical and scientific training, teaching ethical and solidarity behaviors, in favor of development; it constitutes one of the most important spaces for learning and creates social networks based on trust, tolerance, mutual understanding and shared values (social capital), which help the healthy and sustainable development of a society and of an economy.

The interest groups of a university include, among others, professors, students, administrative staff, managers, future employers, organizations / institutions, the community and the public sector, which are affected by the decisions made by the university to the way they prepare their students to be professionals and citizens, capable of ethically assuming the social context they face from the different disciplines.

On the other hand, for Cavero (2006), university social responsibility is an ethical approach to the mutual link between university and society. It is a relevant commitment for the solution of social problems, allows the direct application of scientific and technological knowledge, as well as a more humanitarian professional training. Mónica (2002) defines university social responsibility as: The ability of the university to spread and put into practice a

set of general and specific principles and values, through four basic processes considered key in the university, such as the management, teaching, research and university extension (Sánchez Arza, 2011).

The university social responsibility, has been associated with social projection / extension, because it goes beyond the already known third pillar: the university extension (next to the academic formation and the investigation), the social projection of the university. Therefore, it must overcome the narrow vision of the University social mission (projection/extension), limited to philanthropic works. The whole university goes through the four processes, not only training and research, but also social participation and, above all, institutional management; the university is expected to commit itself and be allowed to be horizontally transferred, in the words of Giacoman and Opazo (2002), for the concept of integral sustainability, in dynamic equilibrium with society, it has to play a new social and moral role in vocational training.

In this framework, the concept of university social responsibility is associated with the ability of the university to apply a set of principles and values, declared in its management philosophy, in the practice of its basic functions: management (transparency and quality), teaching (teaching and applied practice in the solution of social problems), research and production (of knowledge, goods and services with social relevance) and extension (social projection and interaction, human development projects and quality of life) with a view to responding to demands of their environment; to the idea of sustainable development, citizen and democratic sustainability, proposed by Guédez (2003).

University social responsibility implies a socially responsible management of the university, of the organization itself (institutional management), especially of human and environmental resources, of academic training, of the production of knowledge and promoted epistemological models, of participation, sustainable human development of the community (management, teaching, research and extension), translated into the sum of collective efforts: teaching plus capacity development, social projection plus economic development, research plus sustainable development and management plus human development and capacity development, given the possibilities of integration and the permanent return of the social actions undertaken to improve the functions in coherence with the mission statement, vision and academic and institutional practice (Sánchez Arza, 2011).

Personal reflection

In the changing world that human beings live, universities have to play and assume a belligerent and essential role, promoting the analysis of the discussion and the way of reflection with work, research, extensions in their environment, considering elementary issues such as quality in education, new curricula adapted to the demands of society and companies, new

methods and teaching-learning strategies, articulation among students, teachers, university, mobility plans to obtain higher levels of understanding, updated training and commitments or challenges to the future.

The university of the future has to play a role or social commitment with all local, national and international actors for the expansion of knowledge in the pursuit of academic excellence, relevance of its processes, improvements in human capital made available to the business and student society that every day makes them more competitive but only with empowerment of knowledge and quality in education with business ethics and a lot of social responsibility.

University social responsibility leads to a university aimed at solving complex problems thanks to a more multidisciplinary academic organization based on separate and fragmented specialties, but based on complex thinking.

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