

Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics in the Formation of Students in the Administration Area

Responsabilidade Social Corporativa e Ética na Formação de Estudantes da Área de Administração

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Submission: March 16, 2020

Approval: May 08, 2020

Abstract

Corporate social responsibility and ethics are themes that circulate in organizations, through initiatives that can obtain recognition from interested parties. Higher education institutions, in turn, have an active role in this context, as they directly influence the training of future managers who will take over the companies, as heirs or contractors. Therefore, this study sought to examine the perception of business students about Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics. To achieve the objective, the research technique was applied to the Perceived Role of Ethics and Social Responsibility (PRESOR) scale, by Singhapakdi, Vitell, Rallapalli e Kraft (1996). Through factor analysis, it was found that the students' perception of Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics assumes different dimensions. Although most respondents have favorable perceptions about the two concepts, there is a part that does not understand them as fundamental when facing decisions related to the company's profit.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility. Ethic. Higher education institution. Marketing strategy.

Resumo

Responsabilidade Social Corporativa e Ética são temas que transitam em organizações por meio de iniciativas que podem obter reconhecimento junto aos *stakeholders*. As Instituições de Ensino Superior, por sua vez, possuem papel ativo neste contexto, posto que têm influência direta na formação dos futuros gestores que assumirão as empresas, como herdeiros ou contratados. Sendo assim, este estudo buscou examinar a compreensão de estudantes de escola de negócios sobre Responsabilidade Social Corporativa e Ética. Para atender ao objetivo, foi aplicada a técnica *survey* com uso da escala *Perceived Role of Ethics and Social Responsibility (PRESOR)*, de Singhapakdi, Vitell, Rallapalli e Kraft (1996). Por meio de análise fatorial, foi possível constatar que a compreensão de estudantes sobre Responsabilidade Social Corporativa e Ética assumem diferentes dimensões. Enquanto a maior parte dos respondentes possui entendimentos favoráveis sobre ambos os conceitos, há uma parcela que não os entende como fundamental quando fazem frente a decisões relacionadas ao lucro da empresa.

Palavras-chave: Responsabilidade Social Corporativa. Ética. Instituição de Ensino Superior. Estratégia de Marketing.

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1 Introduction

In the face of growing discussions about sustainable consumption, the literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), emphasizes the importance of understanding how stakeholders perceive the sustainable practices of firms (Fitzpatrick, 2013). In the quest to maintain economic, social, and environmental interests, CSR initiatives can contribute to the strengthening of the brand, according to Scharf and Fernandes (2013). The environmental, social, and ethical aspects of business it is important for the organization's survival in the global environment (Gassler, Meyer-Höfer, & Spiller, 2016; Pätäri, Arminen, Albareda, Puumalainen, & Toppinen, 2017). In this way, the study brings a strategic perspective to organizations regarding their legitimacy in the markets and society.

Students, as part of this society, are future managers, leaders, and employees forming, according to authors such as Alonso-Almeida, Fernández de Navarrete, and Rodríguez-Pomeda (2015) and Pätäri et al. (2017), a society of tomorrow. Therefore, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have an important role in the dissemination of knowledge about CSR, according to Teixeira, Ferreira, Correia, and Lima (2018). To investigate students' comprehension is to understand the formation of a new society, according to Fitzpatrick (2013).

Therefore, this study aims to examine the comprehension of business school students about Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics.

Divergent understandings between students are also found in different cultures, according to authors such as Peterson, Albaum, Merunka, Munuera, and Smith, (2010) and Pätäri et al. (2017), mainly in central countries. Few kinds of research, however, direct their efforts to peripheral countries, according to Bahae, Perez-Batres, Pisani, Miller, and Saremi (2014), providing only literature for contexts in central countries, as understood by Tomo - Wymer - Teixeira (Tormo-Carbó, Oltra, Seguí-Mas, & Klimkiewicz, 2016; Wymer, & Rundle-Thiele, 2017; Teixeira et al., 2018).

Thereby, this work can also contribute to the understanding of the problem in countries considered peripheral as opposed to that of central countries, although this is not the main objective, rather it was declared as a specific objective. Still, the contribution in managerial terms can be highlighted, evidenced by the presentation of the understanding of future managers, leaders, and employees of the companies.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR in business can be defined as a combination of the interests of the firm and the social interests of the community, emphasizing the latter, according to Klein, Michal, and David, (2018). It also represents the sustainable actions that the organization takes, aiming at its commitment to stakeholders. Sustainability is made up of an economic, social, and ecological dimension, as was initially defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987).

Besides the pursue to establish a good relationship with society, the practice of CSR has been an activity with economic gains (Klein, Michal, & David, 2018). Maintaining economic, social, and environmental interests, CSR can contribute to the strengthening of the brand (Scharf, Fernandes, & Kormann, 2012). Similarly, studies have shown the positive influence of CSR actions in creating competitive advantage (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2011; Kim, Kim, & Qian, 2018), and maintaining customer loyalty, when they identify and trusts the brand that adopts CSR practices, according to authors such as Martínez and Del Bosque (2013) and Scharf and Fernandes (2013).

The creation of value obtained by CSR makes it a strategic imperative for companies, an idea defended by Strategy and Marketing researchers, such as Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen (2011). CSR is often linked to favoring long-term gains, according to Elias (2004), to building a solid foundation for the organization through its brand, according to Scharf, Fernandes, and Kormann (2012), in addition to being present in global economic transactions, according to Gassler, Meyer-Höfer and Spiller (2016). Monetary fund transactions, especially commercial ones, must be imbued with Ethics, which is understood as a guide to present and future behavior, which is based on the values and responsibilities of individuals towards each other, according to Stohl, Stohl, and Popova (2009).

2.2 Business ethics

Life in society, as well as in organizations, is based on values and these values serve as support for the design of the rules of coexistence (Cragg, 1997). Business ethics is usually based on the standardization of behavior and little contribution is made about moral values (Barros, 2007). Paradoxically, according to Hoffman's (1984) understanding, a person can be moral and, at the same time, not be ethical. Ethical principles will hardly be learned by students who have a moral contrary to the teachings, according to Hoffman (1984) and Cragg (1997). For the authors, morality is in the customs of the society in which they live, in its rules and laws, while ethics concerns the behavior of the individual.

Codes of ethics, created by organizations, are formal declarations of corporate principles and rules of conduct that govern inter-organizational and intraorganizational practices and relationships (Stohl, Stohl, & Popova, 2009). The organization must assume responsibilities that go beyond efficiency and legality when seeking profit, adopting ethical obligations towards employees, consumers, and society, as, as defended by Hoffmann (1984), its obligations are directed to all those affected by corporate activities.

The need for the humanization of business behavior begins to be noticed through the work of Baumhart (1971) after research carried out among entrepreneurs in the United States of America. Business behavior was originally based on purely economic orientations, or "... a predominantly technocratic behavior", as highlighted by Baumhart (1971, p. 344). Globalization is the phenomenon that has driven the behavior of organizations and highlighted ethical concerns and issues of social responsibility, according to authors such as Stohl et al. (2009), Aggerholm, and Trapp (2014) and Renouard and Ezvan (2018).

In the 1960s, the teaching of ethics became part of the reality of business schools, especially in the United States of America, according to Arruda, Whitaker, and Ramos (2003). According to authors such as Aggerholm and Trapp (2014) and Teixeira et al. (2018), Corporate Social Responsibility integrates social, environmental, and ethical principles and, being a global trend, starts to compose business and HEI guidelines. Ethical behavior in business decisions has been widely studied, according to the conclusions of Lehnert, Park, and Singh (2015) and, as such, is included in the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (Liedekerke & Dubbink, 2008).

2.3 Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics in Education

One of the great challenges in the teaching of Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics in higher education institutions is the evolution of the understanding of these concepts from a purely moral role in the organization to a strategic bias (Calabretta, Durisin, & Ogliengo, 2011). With the expansion of concepts, academic practices are closer to the reality of organizations and play an important role in the academic education of students in the business area.

Techniques for teaching CSR and Ethics have spread as a result of an expansion of the theme in the business world (García-Rosell, 2019). Ethics lost its classic bias of individual morality and started to compose approaches linked to CSR (Liedekerke & Dubbink, 2008). New ways of teaching these concepts are needed to reinforce their importance to the students' context. This is due both to the theoretical evolution of the theme and to the organizations' commercial and reputational bias (Calabretta et al., 2011).

HEIs, as trainers of professionals and, using these disciplines in their grades, contribute to the adoption and implementation of CSR and Ethics practices. Besides, the company is aware of the effects and results resulting from ethical and CSR initiatives. According to authors such as Barros (2007), Scharf and Fernandes (2013), and Kim, Kim, and Qian (2018), the use of a set of ethical behaviors directly influences the formation of organizational reputation and the increase in the degree of trust in this same company. In this sense, the relations (of power or cooperation) that exist between company and employee and between company and university, can favor and strengthen the application in business of the concepts in question, while requiring universities to adapt curricula or, at least, to a classroom discussion on such topics.

The social context matters in the classroom discussion, since this context can broaden or delimit students' understanding of the topic since ethics and CSR form a social structure (García-Rosell, 2019). The discussion of business ethics involves broader contexts (Liedekerke & Dubbink, 2008). The authors report that it is not just an agent's decision in an organization, but an organizational process and its impact on the business. From this point of view, the professor plays a decisive role in teaching students on the topic. Bringing students closer to this context, bringing real and practical examples, covers the complexity of the concepts of CSR and Ethics in a more satisfactory way. The discourse used in the classroom for the transfer of content related to CSR and Ethics is central to the formation of students' opinions (García-Rosell, 2019).

3 Method

This research is characterized as descriptive, with a quantitative approach. According to Hair, Babin, Money, and Samouel (2005), the quantitative approach is used when the research is based on theoretical models and validated research problems.

The procedure adopted for data collection was the survey method since it provides a quantitative description of trends and opinions of a certain population (Creswell, 2010). This method meets the objective of the research, which is to investigate the factors of student's comprehension in the Business area on Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics.

3.1 Research construct

The perceived role of ethics and corporate social responsibility in companies was inspired by the dimensions proposed by the studies by Singhapakdi et al. (1996), as shown in Table 1, having been later replicated by Fitzpatrick (2013) with Business students and, in the replication of the instrument, by Teixeira et al. (2018). Sixteen perceptions about Ethics and CSR were grouped. The comprehension analysis was performed using the Perceived Role of Ethics and Social Responsibility (PRESOR) scale by Singhapakdi et al. (1996).

The scale consists of general statements about the importance of Ethics and Social Responsibility for the overall effectiveness of an organization. Also included in the scale are statements that reflect the importance of Ethics and Social Responsibility concerning other "traditional" measures of organizational effectiveness, including the quality of the good or service, profitability, competitiveness, and survival. It assesses the importance of CSR on three main factors: profitability, long-term success, and short-term success.

Table 1
Ethics and Social Responsibility

Dimension	Description
Social Responsibility and Profitability	The individual who points out the scale's highest value in this dimension will tend to believe that Ethics and Social Responsibility will play a very important role in improving profitability and organizational competitiveness.
Long-term gains	The individual who responds to the highest scale value in this dimension will tend to believe that Ethics and Social Responsibility are important for the company's long-term success.
Short-term gains	The individual who responds to the highest scale value in this dimension will tend to believe that Ethics and Social Responsibility are important to achieve short-term gains.

Source: adapted from Singhapakdi et al. (1996).

Studies involving this theme mostly contain central countries, according to Fitzpatrick (2013) and Teixeira et al. (2018). Thus, the analysis of an emerging context makes it possible, in the understanding of Gassler et al. (2016), a new perspective to support the same problem. In this study, capturing the comprehension of students from business degrees using the same collection instrument enables identical narrative in different contexts, without, however, is one of the main objectives of the work. It is attached to the general objective, taking advantage of the application context and the sample.

3.2 Instrument and data collection

The questionnaire used for data collection was adapted from the study by Teixeira et al. (2018), comprising 16 different perceptions (Table 2). The statements involve perceptions about Social Responsibility and Ethics, such as “a company's most important concern is profit, even if it means circumventing or breaking rules” or “being ethical and socially responsible is the most important thing a company can do”. The measurement scale used has nine points and varies in intensity level from 1 (not important) to 9 (extremely important), according to the instrument validated by Singhapakdi et al. (1996). It was applied in the period between September and October 2018.

Adjustments were made on some questions depending on the meaning of the language in different countries, in this case, Portugal and Brazil. All adjustments were expressly authorized by the authors of the Portuguese study (Teixeira et al., 2018 study). Questions with statements contrary to CSR and Ethics (Q2, Q3, Q5, Q8, Q13, Q14, Q16) were inverted in their scales, avoiding generating inconsistency in the results.

The data collection method focuses on collecting primary data from the selected sample and through a survey questionnaire. The survey type survey is defined by Malhotra and Naresh (2012) as a formal set of questions to extract specific data from the interviewees.

Table 2
Assertions on CSR and Ethics

Comprehension	Description
1	Being ethical and socially responsible is the most important thing a firm can do.
2	While output quality is essential to corporate success, ethics and social responsibility are not.
3	Communication is more important to the overall effectiveness of an organization than whether it is concerned with ethics and social responsibility.
4	Corporate planning and goal setting sessions should include discussions of ethics and social responsibility.

5	The most important concern for a firm is making a profit, even if it means bending or breaking the rules.
6	The ethics and social responsibility of a firm is essential to its long-term profitability.
7	The overall effectiveness of a business can be determined to a great extent by the degree to which it is ethical and socially responsible.
8	To remain competitive in a global environment, business firms will have to disregard ethics and social responsibility.
9	Social responsibility and profitability can be compatible.
10	Business ethics and social responsibility are critical to the survival of a business enterprise.
11	A firm's priority should be employee morale.
12	Business has a social responsibility beyond making a profit.
13	If survival of a business enterprise is at stake, then you must forget about ethics and social responsibility.
14	Efficiency is much more important to a firm than whether or not the firm is seen as ethical or socially responsible.
15	Good ethics is often good business.
16	If the stockholders are unhappy, nothing else matters.

Source: adapted from Teixeira et al. (2018).

3.3 Sample

This research was carried out with students from a university in the south of Brazil, enrolled in the courses of bachelor's in administration, Technology in Marketing, and Technology in Foreign Trade, all included in the business area. The characterization of the population followed the closest degree of similarity with that approached by Teixeira et al. (2018).

The sample of this study was characterized as non-probabilistic for accessibility, involving elements that were more available to take part in the study and that could offer the necessary information, as predicted by Richardson, Peres, Wanderley, Correia, and Peres (2014). The sample consisted of 216 respondents, out of a total of 371 students. The answers obtained followed the criterion of statistical reliability proposed by Hair et al. (2005), considering the error percentage of 5%.

3.4 Data analysis

The data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 21 software. Descriptive analysis and exploratory factor analysis were performed, as a multivariate technique. Through descriptive analysis it was possible to analyze the profile of the sample and the general average of perceptions; with the factor analysis, the relations observed between a set of interrelated variables were synthesized, identifying common factors, according to Malhotra and Naresh (2012).

The application of factor analysis consists of analyzing n observable variables X_i with their respective means μ_i , each linearly determined by k random variables $F_1, F_2 \dots F_k$, called common factors, and an additional source of variations ε_i called errors or specific factors represented, according to Johnston and Dinardo (2001) by:

$$\begin{cases} X_1 - \mu_1 = \ell_{11}F_1 + \ell_{12}F_2 + \dots + \ell_{1k}F_k + \varepsilon_1 \\ X_2 - \mu_2 = \ell_{21}F_1 + \ell_{22}F_2 + \dots + \ell_{2k}F_k + \varepsilon_2 \\ \vdots \\ X_n - \mu_n = \ell_{n1}F_1 + \ell_{n2}F_2 + \dots + \ell_{nk}F_k + \varepsilon_n \end{cases}$$

Common factors and errors ε_i they are not observable; only its existence is admitted. In matrix notation, represented by $\mathbf{X} = [\mathbf{X}_i]$, $\boldsymbol{\mu} = [\boldsymbol{\mu}_i]$, $\mathbf{F} = [\mathbf{F}_j]$, $\boldsymbol{\varepsilon} = [\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}_i]$ e $\mathbf{L} = [\ell_{ij}]$ (the latter, called the load factor matrix), is represented by:

$$\mathbf{X} - \boldsymbol{\mu} = \mathbf{L}\mathbf{F} + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}.$$

The following basic assumptions are made, starting from Johnson and Wichern (2007):

$$\begin{aligned} E(\mathbf{F}) &= \mathbf{0} & \text{Cov}(\mathbf{F}) &= E[\mathbf{F}\mathbf{F}'] = \mathbf{I} \\ E(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}) &= \mathbf{0} & \text{Cov}(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}) &= E(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}') = \boldsymbol{\Psi} = \begin{bmatrix} \psi_1 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & \psi_2 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & \psi_p \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{Cov}(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}, \mathbf{F}) &= E(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}\mathbf{F}') = \mathbf{0} \end{aligned}$$

These assumptions and the relationship between the matrices constitute the orthogonal model of factors, according to Johnson and Wichern (2007):

$$\begin{aligned} (\mathbf{X} - \boldsymbol{\mu})(\mathbf{X} - \boldsymbol{\mu})' &= (\mathbf{L}\mathbf{F} + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon})(\mathbf{L}\mathbf{F} + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon})' \\ &= \mathbf{L}\mathbf{F}(\mathbf{L}\mathbf{F})' + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}(\mathbf{L}\mathbf{F})' + (\mathbf{L}\mathbf{F})\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}' + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}' \\ &= \mathbf{L}(\mathbf{F}\mathbf{F}')\mathbf{L}' + (\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}\mathbf{F}')\mathbf{L}' + \mathbf{L}(\mathbf{F}\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}') + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}'. \end{aligned}$$

By having $\boldsymbol{\Sigma} = [\sigma_{ij}]$ as the covariance of \mathbf{X} , we find:

$$\begin{aligned} \boldsymbol{\Sigma} &= \text{Cov}(\mathbf{X}) = E[(\mathbf{X} - \boldsymbol{\mu})(\mathbf{X} - \boldsymbol{\mu})'] \\ \boldsymbol{\Sigma} &= \mathbf{L}E(\mathbf{F}\mathbf{F}')\mathbf{L}' + E(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}\mathbf{F}')\mathbf{L}' + \mathbf{L}E(\mathbf{F}\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}') + E(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}') \\ \boldsymbol{\Sigma} &= \mathbf{L} \text{Cov}(\mathbf{F})\mathbf{L}' + \mathbf{0} \cdot \mathbf{L}' + \mathbf{L} \cdot \mathbf{0} + \text{Cov}(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}) = \mathbf{L}\mathbf{L}' + \text{Cov}(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}) \\ \boldsymbol{\Sigma} &= \mathbf{L}\mathbf{L}' + \boldsymbol{\Psi}. \end{aligned}$$

And, according to the model proposed by Johnson and Wichern (2007), it was obtained:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cov}(\mathbf{X}, \mathbf{F}) &= E[(\mathbf{X} - \boldsymbol{\mu})\mathbf{F}'] = E[(\mathbf{L}\mathbf{F} + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon})\mathbf{F}'] = \mathbf{L}E(\mathbf{F}\mathbf{F}') + E(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}\mathbf{F}') \\ \text{Cov}(\mathbf{X}, \mathbf{F}) &= \mathbf{L} \text{Cov}(\mathbf{F}) + \mathbf{0} = \mathbf{L} \mathbf{I} + \mathbf{0} = \mathbf{L} \end{aligned}$$

In the end, 16 understandings were obtained for analysis. To be able to identify and analyze the understandings, the questions that had statements contrary to CSR and Ethics were inverted in their scales (Q2, Q3, Q5, Q8, Q13, Q14, Q16), to obtain consistency in the results.

4 Analysis of Results and Discussion

Following the instrument of Teixeira et al. (2018), the questions analyzed in the survey are presented in Table 3. It is possible to observe the values of the mean scores obtained for each question. This table identifies that the highest means are those in favor of CSR and Ethics and that they consider these aspects to be relevant in obtaining competitive advantage and profit for an organization. As an example, perceptions 1, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 15. On the other hand, perceptions 2, 3, 5, 14 obtained the lowest means. These understandings are directed towards CSR and Ethics as non-important issues for organizations.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics

Comprehension	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
C 1	1,46	1	9	7,83
C 2	2,46	1	9	5,96
C 3	2,17	1	9	5,36
C 4	1,48	1	9	7,81
C 5	2,41	1	9	6,45
C 6	1,69	1	9	7,56
C 7	1,97	1	9	6,56
C 8	2,13	1	9	7,19
C 9	1,86	1	9	7,25
C 10	1,72	1	9	7,57
C 11	1,75	1	9	6,97
C 12	1,70	1	9	7,46
C 13	2,36	1	9	6,87
C 14	2,34	1	9	5,66
C 15	1,46	1	9	8,03
C 16	2,30	1	9	6,67

Source: research data.

Based on this set of understandings, exploratory factor analysis was performed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure is 0.793, indicating that the sample is adequate to perform factor analysis. Also, the Bartlett Test significance level is approximately 0 (~ 0.000). Therefore, with a significance level of 5%, the sample is suitable for this technique. The extraction method used was that of main components, using varimax rotation, with the determination of three factors.

In Table 4, it is possible to identify three dimensions, considering the factorial loads and following the previous interpretations of PRESOR (Singhapakdi et al., 1996; Fitzpatrick, 2013). The components are: component 1, which includes favorable understandings of CSR and Ethics; component 2, which includes understandings that challenge the importance of CSR and Ethics and component 3, which includes items related to the company's prioritization, placing CSR and Ethics in the background. Through reliability analysis, with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the results presented by the exploratory factor analysis are confirmed, as the values are greater than 0.60, and, according to Hair et al. (2005), it is considered the lower limit of acceptability.

Table 4
Factor Analysis Results

Variable	F1	F2	F3
C 6	0,727		
C 10	0,693		
C 7	0,669		
C 15	0,636		
C 4	0,565		
C 12	0,554		
C 11	0,461		
C 1	0,452		
C 9	0,442		
C 2		0,760	
C 3		0,740	
C 8		0,729	
C 5		0,550	
C 16			0,679
C 14			0,664
C 13			0,658
Variation Explained	25,747	13,424	7,545
Alfa de Cronbach	0,764	0,735	0,652

Source: research data.

4. 1 Discussion

Through factor analysis, it is observed that students' understanding of CSR and Ethics assume opposite dimensions. On the one hand, respondents have favorable understandings about CSR and Ethics; on the other, some of them do not refer to CSR and Ethics as being a concern that should be understood as fundamental by organizations.

The participation of companies in society makes the perspectives of Corporate Social Responsibility an integral part of the organizational strategy, especially when looking for competitive advantages, say Scharf et al. (2012). In this way, they influence the Higher Education Institutions regarding disciplines that deal with related themes. After all, according to Laditka and Houck (2006), an HEI reflects, to a great extent, the needs of the contracting market. The authors argue that there are limitations in the teaching of ethics in some HEIs, while in others, there is a search for the definition of the most appropriate way to deal with the topic with business students.

However, according to Laditka and Houck (2006), in both situations, the theme is considered basic to meet the business demand of professionals with extensive training. The statement is in line with the understanding of the respondent students, who believe that Ethics and Social Responsibility are important triggers of profitability and organizational competitiveness. Companies invest in CSR and Ethics to serve the broader interests of a specific public or society, but also to obtain a profit. As the maintainer of the organization's survival, profit is an integral part of what is called CSR. For Klein et al. (2018), it is fair to say that organizations should pay attention to the market and economic responsibilities with the same effort with which they perform ethical and social activities.

Competitive companies adopt best practices for survival in their industry, which implies immediate reflections on their employees who have obtained training in HEIs. For Kim et al. (2018), companies called ethics benefit in business by solidifying the feelings of trust and mutual respect with the various stakeholders, by strengthening the relationship and adopting appropriate behaviors with employees, customers, and stakeholders. The more involved and the more knowledge they have about Ethics and social practices, the closer they are to their application in business.

On the other hand, the feeling of respondents who refer to CSR and Ethics as a minor concern for organizations may be linked to the importance given to other disciplines, such as finance (Kraft, 1991), violation of rules to achieve the profit (Singhapakdi et al., 1996) or even profitability (Elias, 2004). The quality and breadth of knowledge transmitted in the classroom seem to be strictly focused on consumer support and the act of financially pleasing stakeholders, being treated as something far from the student's interests (Branco & Delgado, 2016).

The findings of this study postulate that most respondents admit that companies adopt the concepts daily, while others understand that profit or even the culture of advantage can be more influential in business decision-making dynamics. There may be a partial understanding of the concepts on the part of the students, which leads to a superficial interpretation of its importance (Branco & Delgado, 2016). In the long-term, therefore, future managers may find it more difficult to implement CSR policies and ethical decisions in the companies they lead, especially when there is a need for a decision based on the profit-loss dichotomy.

This suggests that, even with the appreciation of CSR practices by organizations, the market is not influenced only by these, but also by their financial return, as advocated by Aggerholm and Trapp (2014). Therefore, both students and HEIs have a long-term challenge in terms of leveling expectations about CSR. This leveling would allow both to seek a more positive agenda for the business implementation of social and ethical techniques, without omissions or exaggerations, from either side. As Arli, Bucic, Harris, and Lasmono (2014) think, for whom no business program involving ethics, however well designed, is successful when participating individuals do not have ethical precepts. For the authors, it is necessary to prioritize the human being who has values and allow environments for dialogue and discussion as a basis for organizational development based on ethics.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This study aimed to examine the understanding of business school students about Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics. To meet this objective, research was carried out using exploratory factor analysis with data from 216 students from a Brazilian university, enrolled in the Bachelor of Business Administration, Marketing Technology, and Foreign Trade Technology courses, all-encompassing the Business area.

The findings demonstrated that there is no unanimity regarding the understanding of the relevance or application of ethical precepts and those related to CSR in organizations. This may be based on how HEIs deal with the issue. Although there may be interest in inserting specific disciplines in Business and Administration courses, in most cases the concepts are treated only as a topic within the menu of another discipline. Therefore, business school students may not be receiving the necessary quality and depth in the explanations given. This would lead them to partially understand the concepts of CSR and Ethics, or even to misunderstandings. This is the first contribution of the study.

According to several studies presented in this work (Du et al., 2011; Martínez and Del Bosque, 2013; Scharf and Fernandes, 2013; Kim et al., 2018; Klein et al., 2018; García-Rosell, 2019), teaching discussion of topics related to CSR and Ethics is important for the achievement of optimal business performance, particularly when dealing with foreign countries. In this

sense, this study contributed not only to this consideration (treatment of teaching by HEIs) but also to the managerial and teaching implications that can become an aspect of differentiation between a group of administrators and the others.

The second contribution partially addresses a gap in the academic literature in studies using the PRESOR scale. While the scale consists of statements about the importance of Ethics and CSR for the effectiveness of organizations in central countries, this study brings the understanding of students of Administration and Business courses at an HEI in a peripheral country. Students who will be the future managers of leading organizations in their segment. It is worth noting the fact that many students are heirs or contractors of companies located in a region with several centuries-old and large brands, such as Hering, Karsten, Malwee, Bunge, Weg, Senior and Hemmer. In this way, a direction can be drawn (with or without the adoption of Ethics and CSR initiatives) over which these students will manage their careers in the future.

As seen in the studies already cited in the theoretical foundation, a distinctive way to appropriate organizational performance and sustainable competitive advantages in a globalized world are to pay attention to ethical issues, as it greatly facilitates business negotiations. In other words, the teaching of the subjects mentioned in this work may, in the future, be of paramount importance for the success of organizations.

As a managerial implication, this study facilitates the argument in the sense of redesigning curricular matrices that may encompass disciplines of Ethics and CSR, not limited to be an integral part of the syllabus content of other disciplines. An academic contribution is in the methodological analysis of classroom teaching, seeking to deepen the studies of these concepts in all their complexity, not only addressing the interests of stakeholders or consumers but bringing this content to the reality of the student and future manager.

Despite all the methodological procedures adopted while conducting this research, some limitations have occurred. One of them is the disregard of sociodemographic (gender, age, professional experience) and situational factors, as well as the analysis being carried out in only one HEI, minimizing the possibility of extending the findings. New studies can explore the addition of new analysis variables and investigate Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics in HEIs located in other regions of the country. With this, different results can be obtained and can be compared at the regional level.

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