

PERCEPTION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: PERSPECTIVE OF YOUNG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Summary

Nowadays, a new company is claimed because in its actions includes the principles of sustainability of the results, generating satisfaction for all the stakeholders. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) seeks to create a balance between economic benefits and social welfare directly impacting in various operational levels. Due to it has been argued that CSR can be considered a competitive advantage, in this cross-sectional descriptive study, 207 young university students were consulted about their perception of CSR. It is concluded that young people conceive that companies have a responsibility toward society and their environment, so they perceive in a positive way to the committed companies, considering them as more desirable to consume their goods and services and as a workplace.

KEYWORDS: *Competitive Advantages, Corporate Social Responsibility, Perception, University*

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INTRODUCTION

A company is a social entity that has like a reason of being the obtaining of economic gain for the investors, for that reason, it is common to ask yourself if you have any obligation to society and the environment in which it operates. It has increased the importance of recognizing that society considers that companies have some kind of responsibility for them, and of defining what are the obligations that the company has and the reaction of society as a direct product of socially responsible actions that companies develop. Due to this, knowing the perception of the stakeholders can have a great impact on future decisions and actions that companies can take related with them. So the interest in the relationships kept by companies and society increase. These relationships are the economic and those concerning the impact that the company's activities may have on the social and environmental (Banerjee, 2008). Therefore, several studies have been given the task of exposing the benefits of companies to embrace corporate social responsibility (CSR) as part of their business strategy, to be identified as a competitive advantage (Piñeiro & Romero, 2011), (Marin, Ruiz, & Rubio, 2009), (Restrepo, 2008).

On the other hand, among the groups of interest, which include owners, investors, customers, employees, community, competitors, suppliers, social activists, the general public and government (Carroll, 1991), it has been investigated that the specific actions CSR are direct consequences of the personal values of the administrators of the

organizations (Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004). While CSR initiatives are currently considered value propositions to employees that allow the attraction and retention of quality human talent (Bhattacharya, Sen, &Korschun, 2008). In respect to this, Berry and Parasuraman since 1992 stated that "a paycheck can keep a person at work physically, but that by itself won't keep a person at work emotionally."

About the attitude of potential clients, even though it has been affirmed that young people have more interest in CSR (Wagner, 2009), most of the studies emphasize that it is the particular interest of each client for each CSR initiative for the companies more than sociodemographic variables such as age, education, and income, which influence the attitude of consumers towards companies (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000), (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) (Christmann& Taylor, 2006).

For the aforementioned, it is considered necessary to know the perception of young university students of Administrative Sciences on corporate social responsibility and the companies that practice it, for their foresight as administrators. For this purpose, a descriptive cross-sectional study is carried out using a Likert scaling of own elaboration.

Theoretical framework

Regarding the concept of CSR, there are many points of view and disciplines to address it, however, most of the proposed concepts indicate that CSR incorporates the expectations that society has on an organization with respect to its economic, ethical, environmental and philanthropic responsibilities (Carroll &Shabana, 2010), (Dahlsrud, 2008). These responsibilities make up a classification of the dimensions contained in the definition of CSR. The economic and legal responsibilities are obvious because it is recognized as natural that companies generate wealth for society and respect the legislation implemented in the place where they operate. Therefore, CSR is not a substitute for government regulation or social policy, but a complement, where different internal and external agents act (Restrepo, 2008). However, CSR has been formulated as a requirement to be met by organizations, which is usually requested by government agencies, where companies, the state, and citizens play different roles, so none can replace another in their functions (Chirino, Fernández& Sánchez, 2012).

While ethical and philanthropic responsibilities are an extension of the social contract between company and society that are considered a set of discretionary actions that the organization carries out with its own resources to procure the common good (Carroll &Shabana, 2010). The most common areas of action are the protection of the environment, education, sports, and culture, where the first beneficiaries must be the workers of the company, for their proximity to the company they stand out for their relevance in the business strategy (Chirino, Fernández&Sánchez, 2012).

In addition to the aforementioned CSR dimensions, internal dimensions to the company have also been considered, including socially responsible practices that affect employees and the environment in reference to aspects such as human resources management, health, and work safety, negotiation of change and the negotiation of natural resources used in production. In line with this, the external dimensions that reflect the company's relationships with communities, business partners, NGOs, suppliers, customers, and investors, as well as consideration of respect for human rights and environmental concerns (Piñeiro& Romero, 2011).

There are several stakeholders that CSR provides real benefits to the companies that practice it. First, investors and the company's management are interested in determining if CSR represents a true competitive advantage, cost reduction and risk of certain activities, developing reputation and legitimacy, for customers and human talent, and the

search of value creation looking to win-win results (O'Sullivan, 2006). Also the activists due to the support that companies can offer to their initiatives (Carroll &Shabana, 2010). Another interested party is the government because it expects companies to generate environmental and social benefits (Zadek, 2000). Finally, the society that consumes products from companies that care about the environment and social causes (Carroll &Shabana, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

After defining CSR, its dimensions and its importance, the question arises, what perception and attitudes do young university students have about Corporate Social Responsibility in their region? To know the general appreciation, about the products, as a place of work and as organizations immersed in the region, that socially responsible companies generate in these young people, as well as the role that public policies are expected to have in the promotion of CSR; an instrument consisting of a Likert scaling was designed with six questions subject to five categories, ranging from completely agreeing to completely disagreeing, the items are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Items of the Instrument Applied in the Study

No.	Ítem
1	State companies are concerned about the environmental, social and economic impact of their activities
2	A Socially Responsible company is better perceived by consumers
3	When deciding to make a consumption, consumers prefer a Socially Responsible Company even if prices are higher
4	When choosing a job, a Socially Responsible Company is preferred than one that is not.
5	There is a change in the mentality of government institutions towards the promotion of Socially Responsible Companies
6	Companies must be concerned about supporting youth with scholarships, work exchanges and availability for professional practices

Items used on a Likert scale of five categories that range from completely agreeing to completely disagreeing.

The instrument was applied in class to a sample of 207 students of Administrative Sciences of public universities located in the city of Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico during the month of October 2017. 44% of the sample corresponded to the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) and 54% to the Polytechnic University of Baja California (UPBC). 76% of the students surveyed were over 20 years old, with 59% female students. All the surveys were answered correctly and anonymously. In this way, the type of research carried out in this project is descriptive and transversal.

CSR has an environmental, social and economic dimension, that is, corporations must be concerned about the way in which they impact their businesses and their interactions with their employees, their families, the community and society (Dahlsrud, 2008). Due to the majority of the companies are exposed to political, economic and social changes, they must be constantly developing strategies that allow them to continue operating and stay in the market, in such a way that it manifests corporate social responsibility through presentation of new complementary tools to build a new type of company oriented to the creation of sustainable value, in relation to its capacity to endure over time and to create at the same time economic, social and environmental value as defined by Piñeiro and Romero (2001)). In this way, companies located in the state must be concerned about the environmental, economic and social impact of their activities, ensuring this the protection of the interests of the company, as mentioned by Aguilera and Puerto (2012). Therefore, it is important to know if young people perceive that commitment of companies located in the State.

Likewise, corporate social responsibility is a strategy to favor the positioning of the brand, either by renewing the corporate image, capturing the preference and loyalty of customers, being better perceived by customers as mentioned by

Aguilera and Puerto (2012), instead Chirino, Fernández and Sánchez (2012), point out that social responsibility is not a fashion, but a strategic necessity that allows developing evident competitive advantages, by action and communication, generating tangible and useful benefits for the company, even when its product is of a higher price. Not only that, for Piñeiro and Romero (2011), being a Socially Responsible Company, has its internal and external advantages, one of them is that they are better perceived at the moment that a citizen chooses to be employed, in addition to increasing fidelity and motivation of this person to be part of one of them, in addition to this, it is mentioned that there is a continuous search for the diversity of human resources, possibly this option, used to seek to employ more young people either through professional practices or job banks. The determination of the influence of the CSR on the preference of the clients and the prospects to employees is transcendent according to Sen and Bhattacharya (2001). This is investigated in items 2, 3 and 4 (Figures 2, 3 and 4).

In such a way that there is a change of mentality of government institutions as mentioned by Restrepo (2008), where Corporate Social Responsibility is not a substitute for government regulation, but a complement or as mentioned by Chirino, Fernández and Sánchez (2012), referring that it already appears as a requirement to be fulfilled for all organizations and that it is usually requested by the governmental instances. Therefore, the appreciation of the role of public policies in CSR by university youth is explored in item 5 (Figure 5).

RESULTS

The results show how each one of the answers to the affirmations made towards the students of two regional universities of the State of Baja California is broken down. For item 1 presented in the survey, 43% of students agree that state companies are concerned in some way about the environmental, social and economic impact of their activities, in contrast, there are a 28% students who are not, as shown in Figure 1. Taking into account that, there is a very high percentage of students agree that a socially responsible company is better perceived by consumers, with 90% of respondents, reflected in Figure 2.

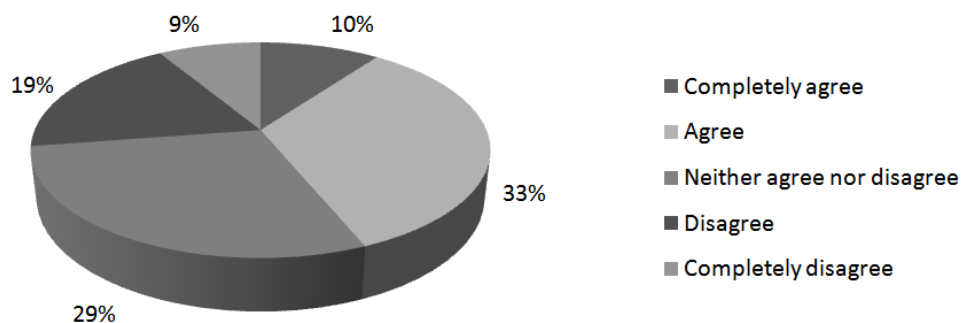


Figure 1: Registered Answer to the Question. Do State Companies Worry about the Environmental, Social and Economic Impact of their Activities?

This figure indicates in blue that 10% completely agree with the question, in red that 33% agree, in green that 29% disagree or disagree, in purple with 19% disagree and finally in sky blue with 9% who completely disagree.

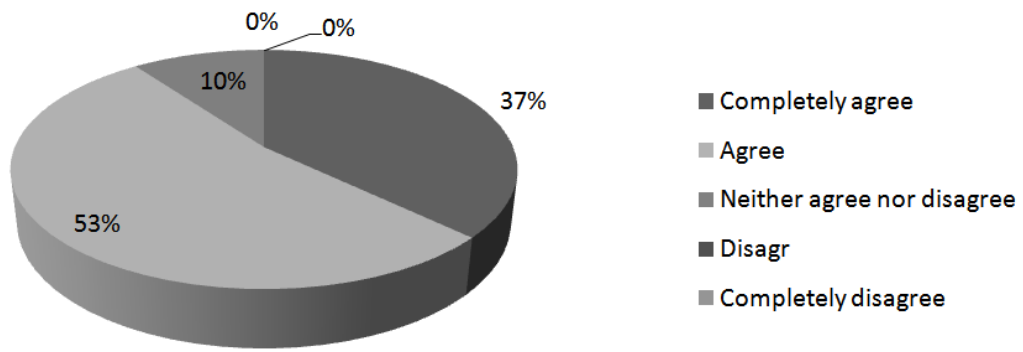


Figure 2: Registered Answer to the Question. Is a Socially Responsible Company Better Perceived by Consumers?

This figure indicates in blue that 37% completely agree with the question, in red that 53% agree, in green that 10% do not agree or disagree, while in purple and blue sky, this is in disagreement and completely in disagreement they do not have percentage. 53% of the total number of students indicate that they prefer to consume products from a Socially Responsible company versus 20% who said otherwise, as shown in Figure 3.

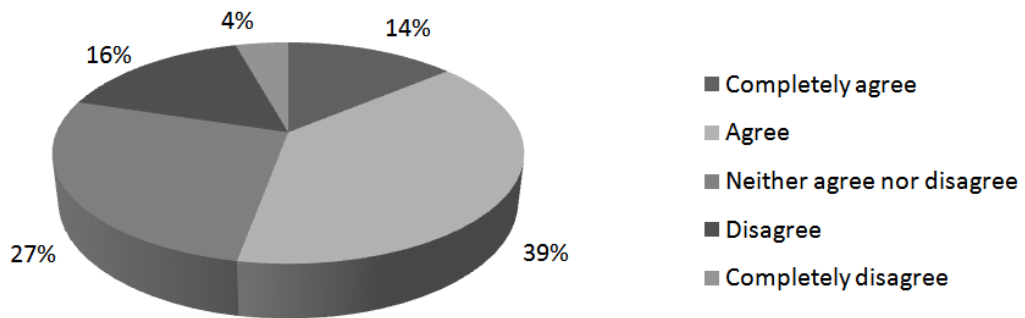


Figure 3: Registered Answer to the Question. When Deciding to Make a Consumption, Consumers Prefer a Socially Responsible Company Even if the Prices are Higher?

This figure indicates in blue that 14% completely agree with the question, in red that 39% agree, in green that 27% disagree or disagree, while in purple with 16% it is they disagree and in sky blue, that is, completely disagree has a percentage of 4%. 68% of the students consider that they agree to choose a socially responsible company when they intend to choose a job, against the 10% who do not agree, as shown in Figure 4.

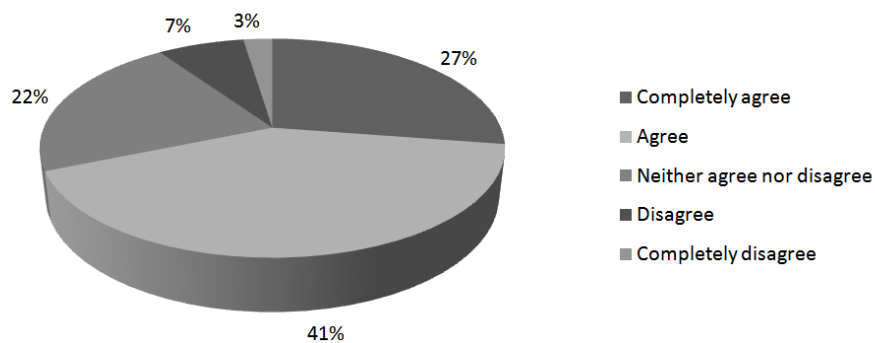


Figure 4: Registered Answer to the Question. When Choosing a Job, do you Prefer a Socially Responsible Company than one That is Not?

This figure indicates in blue that 27% completely agree with the question, in red that 41% agree, in green that 22% do not agree or disagree, while in purple with 7% it is They keep in disagreement and in sky blue, that is, completely disagree has a percentage of 3%.68% of the survey respondents completely agree or agree that there is a change of mentality of the governmental institutions towards the promotion of Socially Responsible Companies, whereas 16% consider that they completely disagree or disagree, as it does Note Figure 5. Regarding whether companies should concern themselves with supporting youth with scholarships, work exchanges and availability for professional internships, the majority of students responded that they completely agreed or agreed with 81%, and in return, only 9% is completely in disagreement or disagreement, seen in Figure 6.

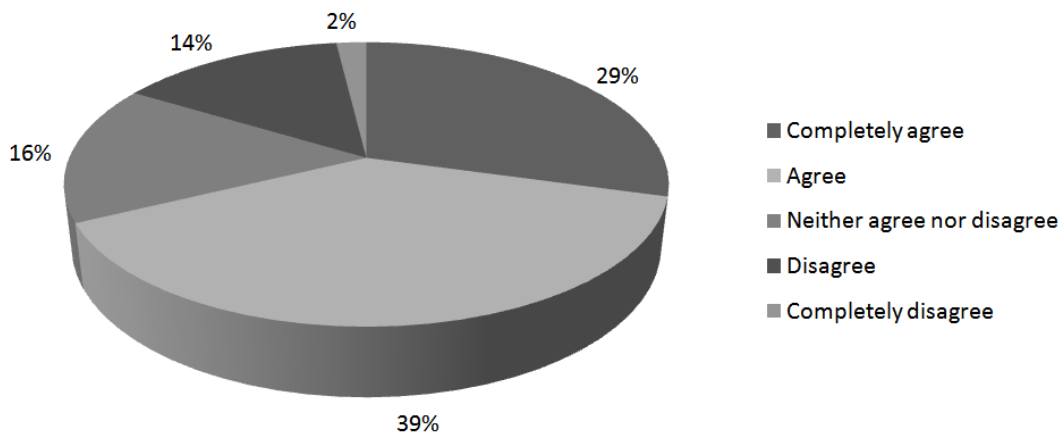


Figure 5: Registered Answer to the Question. Is There a Change in the Mentality of Government Institutions Towards the Promotion of Socially Responsible Companies?

This figure indicates in blue that 29% completely agree with the question, in red that 39% agree, in green that 16% disagree or disagree, while in purple with 14% it is they disagree and in sky blue, that is, completely disagree has a percentage of 2%.

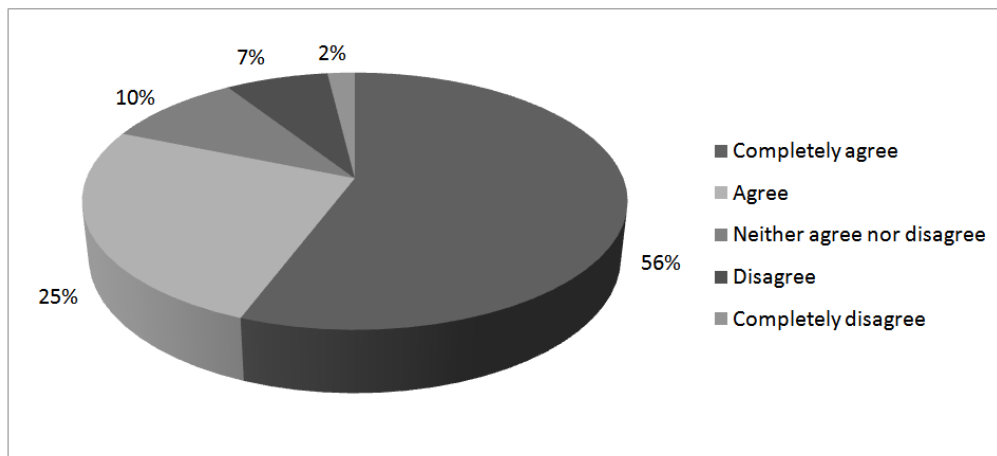


Figure 6: Registered Answer to the Question. Do Companies Have to Worry about Supporting Youth with Scholarships, Work Banks and Availability for Professional Practices?

This figure indicates in blue that 56% completely agree with the question, in red that 25% agree, in green that 10% do not agree or disagree, while in purple with 7% it is they disagree and in sky blue, that is, completely disagree has a percentage of 2%.

CONCLUSIONS

According to Piñeiro & Romero (2011), the integration of CSR in business negotiation can cause various impacts and consequences in the different areas and results of the company. They also point out that companies should change their way of operating and visualize CSR as an additional cost since they can innovate to be socially responsible, increase their productivity and expand their markets.

Taking into account what Cox and Dupret (2004) mention, "companies must be a social entity with the main mission of serving the community that surrounds it and that it must have a great sense of solidarity and concern for welfare collective". Not only that, they also define the socially responsible company as one that cares about the welfare of those who work in it and demonstrate solidarity with their environment. From the results get, 90% of the students consider that the companies that claim to practice CSR are better perceived by consumers, while 47% indicate that in spite of that this does not affect or lean in favor of purchasing habits. Prospective customers. Regarding the perspective as sources of employment for CSR companies, a third of the surveys indicate that it is not a discriminating factor for selection as a workplace. However, four-fifths of the sample indicate that companies have the responsibility to offer job boards and places for professional practice. Likewise, companies must take into account that the university community perceives in a better way a company that considers itself as Socially Responsible since this can determine if it is to the taste of the consumers or if it is not. In such a way, that a socially responsible company is more susceptible to being chosen as a source of work, as one that is not. On the other hand, two-thirds of respondents believe that government policies promote CSR, but only 43% of the sample considers that companies located in the state implement CSR actions.

Socially Responsible Companies have grown in recent years due to the change in the mentality of government institutions since they are concerned with supporting youth with scholarships, job exchanges and availability for professional practices. It is due to this that there must be a better company-university relationship, due to the support that the university community can provide and vice versa.

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