Vocational And Citizenship Training: An Element Of Human And Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT
The research carried out focuses its objective on evaluating the perception of students and teachers regarding professional and citizenship training under the guidelines set forth by Vallaeys (2009). The research is a descriptive study under a quantitative approach anchored in a positivist paradigm developed in three moments, starting with a theoretical review, followed by the quantitative analysis of the variables resulting from the results obtained from the questionnaire applied to a finite sample of teachers and students, the instrument was designed under the Likert scale. The results show the articulation of subjects with social projects in the external sector of the institution, and in a very positive way, the ethical and citizenship training of students and teachers to form socially responsible people is highlighted. However, the participation of teachers and students in the organization of social development activities should be strengthened in order to train professionals who are sensitive to the needs of the environment.

Keywords: Citizenship Training; Sustainable Development, Vocational; University Social Responsibility.

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

University Social Responsibility (USR) is part of a social responsibility management policy, since nowadays, this topic, i.e., social responsibility, has gained strength in the management of organizations, due to global advances and competitiveness (Vallaeyys, et al., 2009). Now, depending on the type of organization, different categories of social responsibility are defined and the purpose of each of them must be different, however, there must be a clear objective for all of them, and that is, the continuous improvement of society (Torres Castaño & Sánchez Vásquez, 2014).

Social responsibility is carried out when it is performed ethically before the profession, companies, the environment, the law, future generations and human rights (Martínez-Usarralde, et al., 2017); for this reason, social responsibility is considered a management policy, from which it is manifested through its various directions, among which the following can be
highlighted: Social Responsibility of religious, state, civil society and university institutions. But during the following lines, emphasis will be placed on social responsibility in the context of universities, which has the nature of being a managing entity of improvement and social welfare (Torres Castaño & Sánchez Vásquez, 2014).

In agreement with several authors who have studied USR, it is agreed that addressing this topic has become a difficult task, given that its definition is still under construction, depending on the discipline that proposes it and the theoretical-political current of its authors (Carrillo Barahona, 2016; Carmona Muñoz & Castillo Reyes, 2016; Rodriguez Bonilla, et al., 2018). In addition to the above, the paradigm is even more complex when one has to consider the context, circumstances and conditions in which such social responsibility is assumed (Ibarra Uribe, et al., 2020). Now, in agreement with Méndez Chang (2020) who explains that, in order to interpret the concept of USR, it is necessary to eradicate or stop believing that Social Responsibility is synonymous with "social aid", since, in no case an organization that carries out the practice and/or social welfare, can obtain the title of being "socially responsible" purely by that fact.

In the context of the university, social responsibility seeks to organize management, training, research and extension with the objective of contributing to local and universal development in a fair and sustainable manner (Méndez Chang, 2020). From this idea, the concept of RSU can be structured as a policy of continuous improvement in search of the effective fulfillment of its social mission through the four processes mentioned above, which should be understood as a university extension strategy that encourages students to remain active in the social and political processes of change, in search of causes such as democracy, equality and justice (Acosta Maldonado, 2020). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco, for its acronym in English), has taken an important role in the dissemination and positioning of USR as an important factor within higher education institutions, making a mitigating call to universities to be more socially responsible with the needs of the contexts where they are located (Aristimuño, et al., 2011).

Now, authors such as Torres Castaño and Sánchez Vásquez (2014) agree with Vallaey, et al. (2009), regarding the impact that Higher Education Institutions generate in their environment; these impacts can be agglomerated in four (4) sections, as illustrated in Figure 1.
When reference is made to the organizational impact, it is based on the premise that the staff that makes it possible for institutions to be sustainable, must experience and maintain a pleasant organizational climate and a synchronous relationship between managers, administrative, teaching and operational staff, i.e., build a responsible campus, where justice, democracy and sustainability prevail, ensuring a healthy coexistence in the work team (Medina Peña, et al., 2017). Regarding the educational impact, this section focuses on students, who should be trained and educated as responsible and upright citizens in all their professional facet, however, to achieve and/or maximize this impact, it requires the continuous commitment of all the processes of the university, starting from the central administration, curriculum and knowledge management policies, all with the intention of fulfilling and being part of social responsibility (Vallaeys, 2012).

Continuing with the above, the cognitive impact section refers to the production and dissemination of a social management of knowledge, where mutual learning should be prioritized in professionals, where everyone teaches and learns at the same time, simultaneously isolating themselves from academic paternalism, where only one person applies the form of authority and knowledge, therefore, teachers should adopt a supportive attitude and encourage the process of self-learning, thus awakening creativity and research spirit in students (Vallaeys, 2014). Subsequently, the social impact is applied to all the actors of the environment such as: the community, civil society, companies and the public sector, which should motivate universities to create an intelligent system for the management of social capital for development, especially for the coordination of the actions of the actors that focus on producing and generating social impact and contributing positively to the lifestyle of the population that are in the areas of their incidence (Olarte-Mejía & Ríos-Osorio, 2015).

Figure 1. Impacts of the University Institution Note. Illustration adapted from Vallaeys, et al. (2009). Source: University Social Responsibility: First steps manual (p. 8).
Now, to apply USR, Vallaeys, et al. (2009) propose a process based on four fundamental steps (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Steps to apply University Social Responsibility. Source: Information adapted from Vallaeys, et al. (2009) p. 4.

In accordance with the conclusion issued by Gasca-Pliego and Olvera-García (2011), we share the idea that citizenship education must be aided in all its dimensions, where Higher Education Institutions are presented as key actors to promote democratization, which implies that universities should be partially open to society and for society. This implies that universities must partially open up to society and for society, specifying the ties that link them, starting with a conversation between all the actors that make up the university, such as students, teachers, researchers and administrators, through projects that articulate the student body with reality, closing the gap between what is learned in the classroom and what happens in everyday life.

Based on the above, it can be interpreted that the axis of alignment to be adopted by the RSU should focus on the comprehensive training of students, preparing them to understand the theory that describes and explains the phenomena of reality, as well as to strengthen and consolidate the ability to identify and solve the problems of their own lives, strengthen the character, as well as to reflect critically and empathetically from an objective viewpoint. Professional training must establish competencies of responsibility in future graduates with a clear sense of belonging to the difficulties and problems that arise outside the university campus, through concrete actions that allow the acquisition of interpersonal skills that facilitate the activation of sensitivity and immediate action to the needs of the environment.

### 2. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN
The methodology carried out to evaluate the perception of students and teachers regarding professional and citizenship training under the guidelines proposed by Vallaeys (2009), is that of a descriptive study under a quantitative approach anchored in a positivist paradigm.

The research has been developed in three phases: a first moment starting with a theoretical framework of the subject of study, a second moment is directed to the quantitative study of the variables through the application of a questionnaire to 50 teachers and 296 students, designed under the Likert scale with five response alternatives, where the items deal with the axis of professional and citizenship training.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organization of social projects in the development of the subjects.</td>
<td>1-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers' approach to current social and environmental problems.</td>
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<td>Micro-curricula updated and in line with the social needs of the environment.</td>
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<td>Participation in the organization of solidarity volunteering events.</td>
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Finally, the third phase focused on the analysis of the data through SPSS statistical software, identifying trends and frequencies regarding the professional and citizenship training of students and teachers of the public accounting program at UFPSO.

3. RESULTS

Higher Education Institutions play a very important role in society through their three basic components of work: academia, teaching, research and extension, assuming the challenge of their social function and responding to the transformation needs of their stakeholders, through the implementation of strategies in the fulfillment of university social responsibility.

Nowadays, the topic of responsibility has acquired relevance in the academic context, playing a transcendental role in university activities. According to Torres Castaño & Sánchez Vásquez (2014), universities have made an effort to align their mission policies with USR models, which allow them to efficiently promote activities that are essential to their institutional function, materializing the conceptualization of moral and ethical commitment.

In accordance with the above, this article describes the fulfillment of the USR from the axis: Professional and citizen training under the guidelines proposed by Vallaeys (2009), from the perception of the student and faculty body, presenting in this section the quantitative results, analyzed through the SPSS statistical package, subjecting the data to a descriptive analysis.
The integral formation of a student depends on the way in which, from the classroom, the teacher coordinates the pedagogical activities with the problems that affect the community in which they are immersed; this is the reason why critical and participative thinking is stimulated and they feel the need to approach the social reality and in this way propose possible solutions. In response to the previous statement, 63.2% of the students surveyed agreed that, from some subject, they have been participants in social projects in the external sector of the institution, compared to 6.80% who disagreed and 1.4%, who said they totally disagreed, so it is essential to develop mechanisms that include all students belonging to the UFPSO. When the teachers were questioned about the linking of social projects outside the university environment as an additional component to the courses and/or subjects provided by the same, 56% of the participants stated that they agreed with this statement, 18% were neutral towards the subject and a relatively high percentage of the sample corresponding to 16% disagreed. Therefore, during the application of institutional policies, teachers should be encouraged to include social outreach with greater emphasis in their teaching practice.
Figure 4. Approach to current social and environmental problems. Source: Own elaboration based on the USR surveys conducted among students of the Public Accounting program.

The knowledge of each one of the problems of a society for the student is based on the orientations received in the classroom, hence the teacher, as the person directly responsible for ensuring that his study groups are related to the different sectors and are put in context with the current reality. When the students in the sample were asked if the orientations they have received from the teachers are characterized by relating the different themes and/or subjects with social and environmental problems that are currently experienced, 73.7% agreed with the statement, 23% were not in favor or against it, and 3% disagreed that in reality this was the case in the classroom.

With respect to this topic, 94% of the teachers in the sample stated that they partially or totally agreed that the classrooms seek to associate academic contents with social and environmental problems of the current world context, while 4% did not express a position in favor or against this statement. Furthermore, the fact that 2% do not agree in the same way, shows that it is necessary to raise awareness among teachers so that they understand the importance of including this in academic environments, so that students complement their integral formation and become critical actors of what is happening in their environment.
The design of the curricula should be directed to students, within their formative process, to be able to make decisions during the development of their career, as well as after finishing it, but it is also essential to be constantly updated as a result of the social, economic and environmental needs of the environment. For this reason, the perception of the students as direct beneficiaries of the education provided and based on the RSU policies, allows them to evaluate whether the education received is adequate. In this regard, 80.1% of those surveyed agreed that the micro-curricula designed for their professional career are up to date and aligned with the current needs of the environment; however, the opinions were different for 17.2% who were neutral on the subject and 2.4% who disagreed with it, even so it is an indicator that should be continuously improved in the definition of the curriculum.

The teachers state that the courses they guide are updated and respond to the social needs of the environment, since 98% agreed that the program is aware of the requirements of the current context regarding the development of the communities and provides contents that allow students and teachers to become agents of change. On the other hand, it is important that the remaining percentage makes their contributions and allows recognizing the factors that lead them not to take any position on this issue, so that the program can formulate strategies and actions to be fully complied with.

Figure 5. Micro-curricula updated and in line with the social needs of the environment. Source: Prepared by the authors based on the USR surveys conducted among students of the Public Accounting program.
The application of policies associated with the guidelines of university social responsibility is transmitted to the community of the program's sphere of influence, through the creation of spaces that allow the approach to each of the stakeholders and the community in general. Therefore, it is essential to frequently develop events in which students and teachers participate together and link with people outside the program in order to know their realities and transmit to them a little of what they can contribute to their development from their professional training. In this sense, when asked about the participation in solidarity volunteering events to the participating students, it was appreciated that much work should be done in this aspect and promote mechanisms that encourage young people and teachers to get more involved with this type of activities and to enrich their knowledge from socially responsible practice, since only 53.8% of the total said they had done it before.

The statements made by teachers when asked about their participation or that of students in solidarity volunteering events made it clear that work should be done to improve the strategies for disseminating these actions, as well as the way in which the importance of their solidarity contributions to society is instilled in the educational community, since 58% were in complete agreement. However, although this is a relatively high percentage, the program should emphasize those who did not agree, 14%, and those who did not show favorability, which was 28% of the sample.
Regarding the formation based on principles and values, HEIs must foster within each of the academic spaces a culture that allows the formation of socially responsible professionals, who understand that in addition to their individual concerns, they understand the dimension of the problems of their environment and their role as citizens. For this reason, the present study emphasizes the relevance of knowing the students' perception regarding the ethical and citizenship training they receive in the program, to which 83.2% agreed with the statement, while 10% showed no inclination to either side and only 1.7% disagreed. Regarding the actions that the program implements so that the pedagogical process is governed by ethics and citizenship, favorable results were obtained, since 66% agreed totally with another 34% agreeing that the program offers training based on these two criteria, and that in addition, its exemplary performance is reflected within the campus and externally by the members of the academic community.

In the following figure, the statistical results are presented under the SPSS program and analyzed with descriptive statistics such as the mean.

**Figure 7.** Training in ethics and citizenship. Source: Prepared by the authors based on the USR surveys conducted among students of the Public Accounting program.
Figure 8. Statistical analysis of the professional and citizenship training dimensión.

The professional and citizenship training axis, according to the results of the students and teachers, shows the lowest mean of 3.7 and 3.9 respectively, in relation to "organize activities to participate in social projects outside the university". On the other hand, it is important to highlight that students and teaching staff evaluated the premise "if students are offered ethical and citizenship training to form socially responsible people" with the highest mean, results of 4.2 and 4.7. Likewise, in the case of students in relation to the variable "have participated in the organization of solidarity volunteering events with fellow students and teachers", the lowest score was observed with an average of 3.5, which shows that the Public Accounting Program should strengthen this aspect through strategies to train professionals sensitive to the needs of the environment.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The Public Accounting program should be characterized by training professionals with integrity in every sense, being an educational symbol and a source of knowledge in the region, a reference in social and economic development. However, to emphasize this aspect by implementing that the pedagogical process is governed by ethics and citizenship, so that graduates and teachers are socially responsible people. In this sense, the program offers training based on these two criteria, and its exemplary performance is reflected within the campus and externally by the members of the academic community.

The integral formation of a student depends to a great extent on the way in which, from the classroom, the teacher coordinates the pedagogical activities with the problems that affect the community in which they are immersed, hence the bets that the public accounting program makes in articulating its subjects with the social reality, stimulating critical and participatory thinking of students and teachers.
REFERENCES


