UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN LATIN AMERICA: SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

RESPONSABILIDAD SOCIAL UNIVERSITARIA EN LATINOAMÉRICA: REVISIÓN SISTEMÁTICA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: University social responsibility is present in the discourses of academics, but it fails to permeate the actions that lead to the transformation of the university, requiring a paradigm shift. At present there are conceptual confusions that make its promotion and transformative practice very difficult, in many universities it is confused with social projection, which reduces its transversal dimension. Objective: To analyze the scientific evidence related to university social responsibility in Latin America. Method: Systematic review of the literature, between the months of August to December 2021; the search for articles was carried out in the databases: Scopus, Scielo, Doaj, Lilacs and Redalyc; the use of Descriptors in Health Sciences (DeCS) and the combination of the Boolean operators OR and AND were applied. Full texts in Spanish between the years 2015 and 2021 were considered. Results: 508 articles were obtained, which were submitted to the PRISMA methodology, selecting 20 articles, grouped into four categories according to the Social Responsibility Manual of the Úrsula Model: management, training, cognitive, and social participation. Conclusion: USR is an inalienable moral commitment, it is important in university management to promote sustainable development, with ethics and respect for human rights, the participation of committed actors is necessary, considering that it currently has a welfare and reductionist approach, scarce support, socialization and implementation and there is a need to unify criteria.

Keywords: Social Responsibility; Universities; Faculty; Students. (Source: MESH-NLM)

RESUMEN

Introducción: La responsabilidad social universitaria está presente en los discursos de los académicos, mas no logra permear en las acciones, que conlleven a la transformación de la universidad, siendo necesario un cambio de paradigma. En la actualidad existen confusiones conceptuales que hacen muy difícil su promoción y práctica transformadora, en muchas universidades se la confunde con proyección social, lo cual reduce su dimensión transversal. Objetivo: Analizar la evidencia científica relacionada con la responsabilidad social universitaria en Latinoamérica. Métodos: Revisión sistemática de la literatura, entre los meses de agosto a diciembre del 2021; se realizó la búsqueda de artículos en las bases de datos: Scopus, Scielo, Doaj, Lilacs y Redalyc; se aplicó el uso de los Descriptores en Ciencias de la Salud (DeCS) y la combinación de los operadores booleanos OR y AND. Se consideraron textos completos en español entre los años 2015 al 2021. Resultados: Se obtuvo 508 artículos los cuales fueron sometidos a la metodología PRISMA seleccionándose 20 artículos, agrupados en cuatro categorías según el Manual de Responsabilidad Social del Modelo Úrsula: gestión, formación, cognitivo, y participación social. Conclusión: La RSU es un compromiso moral irrenunciable, es importante en la gestión universitaria para promover el desarrollo sostenible, con ética y respeto de los derechos humanos, la participación de actores comprometidos, considerando que actualmente tiene un enfoque asistencialista y reduccionista, escaso apoyo, socialización e implementación y falta unificar criterios en su conceptualización.

Palabras claves: Responsabilidad social; Universidades; Docentes; Estudiantes. (Fuente: DeCS- BIREME)
INTRODUCTION
In the 1950’s in the United States, the term Social Responsibility arose, and in the 1970’s, the concern for the conservation of the environment began, due to the increase of pollution on the planet, basically due to the growth of companies extracting raw and industrial materials, giving rise to the concept of sustainable development that the United Nations has defined "as that which seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations, therefore companies began to talk about social responsibility" (1).

Corporate Social Responsibility seeks to integrate, on a voluntary basis, social and environmental concerns into its commercial and production operations and its relations with human resources and society as a whole (2). In the Latin American university environment, in 2000, the concept of university social responsibility (USR) was incorporated into the Chilean Network, which encompasses labor, environment, training, and knowledge impacts and their relationship with the social environment (3).

However, within each university there are different approaches and approaches that are assumed by each teacher and faculty or training program, which would not contribute to generating a unitary response as an organization that makes it possible to comply with the USR in terms of ethical commitment to the social and environmental impacts of university activities in this globalized world (4). The ethical purpose of USR is linked to justice, equity, and sustainability (8).

In Peru, in recent years there has been a growing interest in USR, so that the university law No. 30220, in Chapter XIII, defines it as “the ethical and effective management of the impact generated by the university in society due to the exercise of its functions: academic, research, extension services and participation in national development at different levels and dimensions” (4). One of the promoters of its development is François Vallaeys, who published a manual of the first steps in USR, where he proposes a roadmap for its implementation (5).

To this day, conceptual confusions make the promotion and practice of a transformative USR very difficult. In many universities, USR is confused with social projection, which reduces its transversal dimension, which implies that it should be present in all institutional actions. We must remember that the ethical purpose of USR is linked to justice, equity, and sustainability (8).

METHODS
A systematic review of the literature was carried out from August to December 2021, in four stages: planning, design, analysis and elaboration, applying the hermeneutics that made possible the reflective transcendence (10,11). The following research questions were formulated: How is university management from the perspective of social responsibility? What is the perception of teachers on university social responsibility? What is the perception of students on university social responsibility? through the PICO methodology, where the population (P) are university authorities, teachers and students, the intervention (I) is to describe what meaning or approaches are taken on the RSU, comparison (there is no comparative), results (O) establishment of the categories of the RSU in the Latin American scope.

The articles were searched in the following databases: Scopus, Scielo, Doaj, Lilacs and Redalyc, using the specific search engines of each one of them. The search strategy applied was the use of the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) and the combination of the Boolean operators OR and AND, which allowed a more precise search (Table 1).
The inclusion criteria for the selection were: full text articles published in indexed journals from January 2015 to December 2021, with translation into Spanish, excluding: gray literature, articles with access only to the abstract, duplicate articles, and those that are not in accordance with the research objective.

A total of 508 articles were obtained (Figure 1), which were submitted to the PRISMA methodology and 20 articles were selected using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flowchart, which is described below:

**Table 1. Search strategy by database.**

<table>
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<th>Database</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
<th>Search strategy</th>
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| Scopus   | Social responsibility            | Responsabilidad social AND universidades AND in:("mex" OR "col" OR "cub" OR "per" OR "arg" OR "chl" OR "scl" OR "cri" OR "bol" OR "pry" OR "ven" OR "ecu") AND year_cluster:("2018" OR "2019" OR "2016" OR "2017" OR "2021" OR "2015" OR "2020") AND subject_area:("Health Sciences") AND wok_subject_categories:("education & educational research" OR "education, scientific disciplines" OR "education, special" OR "social"

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**Figure 1. Flow chart of the selection process of the articles that were part of the study.**
RESULTS
Twenty articles were obtained from different Latin American countries that strictly met the inclusion and exclusion criteria, which were grouped into four categories according to the Ursula Model Social Responsibility Manual for their analysis\(^{(5)}\): These were grouped into four categories according to the Ursula Model Social Responsibility Manual: management\(^{(6)}\), training\(^{(7)}\), cognitive\(^{(7)}\) and social participation\(^{(7)}\).

DISCUSSION
Category Management:
University social responsibility (USR) is the ethical and transparent management of administrative, educational, cognitive and social processes carried out by an institution of higher education\(^{(8)}\). University management is a basic core process of co-responsibilities between the university and the community; it promotes sustainable development and respect for human rights\(^{(9)}\). Its nature and scope comprise an axiological dimension because it is based on ethical values and an operative dimension by carrying out novel and important actions to respond to scientific, professional, educational and social demands; it arises in the historical and social evolution where it acquired autonomy and legitimacy; at present it is associated with the multifunctionality and multidisciplinary of its activities, which makes possible the construction of thought and knowledge based on the problematization and reflection of social reality\(^{(10)}\).

A study conducted in Colombia concludes that there is a trend towards humanistic, pedagogical, ethical and socio-curricular approaches where USR is assumed as an ethical behavior of universities. Its implementation requires committed private and public actors to ensure sustainability in society. Its results identify five categories in the implementation of USR management; the first is the curriculum; the second corresponds to the political sphere; the third indicates the social function of the university; the fourth indicates that USR makes sustainable development possible, with education as the medium; and the last category is training, where new approaches to teaching and learning are grouped together\(^{(11)}\). In another study carried out in the same country, it was found that the perception of students, teachers and staff in relation to the practices of USR is partial due to the difference in approaches, little support for the use of new methodologies, the implementation of continuous improvement processes and lack of unification of criteria that allow a real transformation of their context, so they suggest strengthening the formation of mutual learning teams for development\(^{(12)}\).

Another research conducted in Chile identified two major categories: professional training sensitive to the environment and the regional relevance of university work. In relation to professional training, it is the process by which it connects students not only in the theoretical field but also with social problems, making them active participants. It comprises three subcategories: service learning, strengthening of citizenship, and the role of professors. Respect to the category of pertinence of university activities, it refers to the adequate relationship between what the university does and what society demands. This category is structured on the basis of three major elements: educational offerings, knowledge transfer process, and greater linkage with the university environment and the local area\(^{(13)}\).

The activities should be evaluated by a single unit in a systemic, comprehensive, and socially responsible manner, having as results committed students, knowledge generation, social improvement, entrepreneurship and innovation. To generate positive effects in society, the management model must be fully identified and socialized with everyone, the RSU must be valued according to its impacts on stakeholders, meeting the needs and expectations in terms of sustainability and value creation\(^{(14)}\).

Research in Puerto Rico indicates that professors and students perceive that there are strong areas such as work climate, environmental responsibility, responsible marketing, promotion of scientific transmission and dissemination of knowledge to external actors and also point out weak areas such as ecological habits, participation in community projects, relations between NGOs and local government agencies. Therefore, there is a need for universities to adopt a distinctive approach when it comes to conducting USR practices\(^{(15)}\).
Another study concludes that most students do not know the values of environmental culture, as well as the actions that are implemented to reduce the negative environmental impact. Therefore, they suggest rethinking the curriculum to strengthen these aspects and generate a culture of good environmental practices. Therefore, it is evident that in higher education institutions there is a lack of incentive and promotion of environmental culture with eco-efficiency in the members of the university community, mainly in the training, research and RSU processes\(^{(19)}\).

**Training category**

Universities need to develop new management models, having social responsibility as a strategic axis that incorporates the personal, professional and ethical values of the future professional in the training process. In this scenario, students are considered as the internal interest group that is closely affected by the RSU\(^{(20)}\).

The development of students' social responsibilities allows the implementation of institutional educational policies that lead to the reproduction of equitable values and behaviors, which favors equal opportunities, leads to the development of innate and potential wills of students as future professionals, who must show ethical practices in favor of the most vulnerable citizens\(^{(21)}\).

It is intended to raise awareness towards the empowerment of individual practices and socially responsible behavior of university students and also to promote related studies on social responsibility. In this regard, one study concludes that social responsibility does not depend on gender, nor on the student's place of residence, and another study carried out in a Mexican university shows that the teaching axis should be based on social responsibility\(^{(21)}\). Another study carried out in a Mexican university shows that the teaching axis should be linked to research and the environment as areas of opportunity to improve USR\(^{(22)}\).

University social responsibility seeks to homogenize teaching with quality standards, where a new graduate profile is consolidated, whose training involves leadership, tolerance, management, teamwork, self-learning, among others, in order to solve problems and/or needs demanded by society, being necessary to reformulate new strategic curricular axes\(^{(22)}\).

Teachers should be leaders and innovators, and their teaching should be based on ethics, as people who work with people, and give a morally good sense to the reciprocal relationship that is established. However, in a study carried out in Ecuador, they report that teaching is one of the areas in which isolated actions and little participation in community outreach programs or projects are observed\(^{(23)}\).

It is necessary to note that the RSU are actions that will lead a training from the university classrooms considering a curricular design that is built from practice. The transforming profile of the teacher is also important, since it will lead the future professional to various spaces with the possibility of building educational processes and linking the regional as a source of knowledge and the co-creation of scenarios for discussion and open reflection on issues that generate local, regional, national and international impact\(^{(24)}\).

The USR is then an unrenounceable moral commitment that at the same time generates new relevant knowledge for the solution of social problems, and the formation of professionals committed to society, who contribute to improve the levels of social welfare and sustainable human development. However, it is worrying to see that 89.4% of students have a low degree of social responsibility\(^{(25)}\).

Rodriguez, upon identifying the lack of strategies for teaching social responsibility in students, conducted an experimental study in which he concluded that the educational game in university students reinforces learning, innovation, critical judgment, research and decision making with social responsibility for the open solution of social problems\(^{(26)}\).

A socially responsible educational commitment leads to access to comprehensive education where the student's research skills and abilities are strengthened.
In this sense, the university must be conservative, regenerative and generative; that is, it must not be complacent, develop a critical conscience and adapt to the demands of society by disseminating the knowledge, ideas and values of the heritage we received from the past and combine them with modernity\(^{(27)}\).

**Cognitive Category**

It is pertinent to renew the academic practice based on early and staggered formative research, which should be a route to transfer and build knowledge with social sensitivity, to explore the national, Ibero-Latin American and world situation, in a dialogue of knowledge between academia and society in order to increase social awareness, beyond economic interests, being evidenced in the curriculum, leading to a holistic formation of the student\(^{(28)}\).

The results show that comprehensive training is deficient and does not incorporate social responsibility, so it is necessary to propose educational policies that generate the commitment of the academic community, thus the need for the creation and structuring of a new model of comprehensive management to develop transversal practices to the curriculum, contributing together to territorial development under the university social responsibility\(^{(28)}\).

It is pertinent to evaluate research competence from the point of view of university social responsibility; in the case of teachers, they must possess the competencies required to promote research from an interdisciplinary approach. This implies a preparation to investigate their reality. However, many teachers consider research as an overload that they do not assume due to insufficient preparation. In this context, a study was carried out in Cuba where a proposal of indicators was presented to evaluate the research competencies of novice university teachers in two dimensions of skills and attitudes; however, these indicators have not been validated\(^{(28)}\).

The culture of peace must be part of the university educational quality and accreditation models, which focuses in a balanced way on the pillars of knowledge: learning to know, to do, to be and to live together that lead to processes of social transformation that involve the RSU\(^{(30)}\).

However, in most cases peace is invisible in the curricular plans as a leading and integrating dimension of academic life, being a transcendental aspect for mental health that promotes a socially responsible and ethical behavior; therefore, a new contract between the university and society is required for a sustainable and equitable human development\(^{(30)}\).

**Social Participation Category**

The meaning of USR in Latin America shows a clear tendency to give greater importance to the participation of internal and external stakeholders, in order to contribute to sustainable and fair human development, evaluating the social and environmental impacts of higher education institutions; to this end, the efficient and ethical management of universities is fundamental. It does not address aspects of research and improvement processes\(^{(31)}\).

A study carried out at UNACAR shows that socially responsible management is projected through social participation, which is presented with an assistentialist tendency expressed in the humanitarian aid axis. The most frequent approaches addressed in the actions are: local development, environment and equity\(^{(32)}\).

**CONCLUSION**

The USR is a moral commitment impossible to renounce; it is important in university management to promote sustainable development with ethics and respect for human rights; it is necessary the participation of committed actors, considering that currently, it has an assistentialist and reductionist approach, little support, socialization and implementation and lack of unified criteria.

Its practice allows gender equality, opportunities and environmental culture with eco-efficiency. It is necessary to have teachers whose capabilities are innovative, with leadership and promote sustainable projects. Likewise, the university must be conservative, regenerative and generative. To this end, an integral management model must be created in which the curriculum incorporates early and progressive research and promotes a culture of peace with equity. It is suggested to create spaces for reflection that make possible the definitive institutionalization of the RSU.


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