The Theoretical Impact and Approach of Social Responsibility in Companies Management

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to understand, by a theoretical point of view, the potential impact of Social Responsibility practices in company's management, taking in consideration several aspects and sundry approaches, by analysing the main defined strategies and policies.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The concept is related with a philosophical and moral idea of corporate behaviour to the development of legally binding regulations, cultural and climate organizational characteristics.

Findings: It is determined that development must be based on a Sustainable Economy while aligning these actions with the Sustainable Development Goals established and at the same time the economic performance of the companies.

Conclusion: For a Social Responsibility Strategy, it is also crucial that the Human Resources departments, the commercial and marketing areas share and expose the actions that have an impact on the society where they are installed.

Practical Implications: Works on the establishment of this commitment and identification with the company through Social Responsibility policies have highlighted the role of management and leadership style in facilitating or not these processes.

Contribution to Literature: As new, the management team, as in other facets, has an important role to play in choosing exactly the specific objectives that have a direct impact on the company's environment and on the society of which the employees are a part, regarding and including the productivity aspects.

Keywords: social responsibility, companies, management, strategy, impact

1. Introduction

In the recent time, Social Responsibility has been gaining importance, not only in the increase in related scientific literature (Latapí et al., 2019), but also in its inclusion in the strategic plans of companies. The concept itself has evolved from a philosophical and moral idea of corporate behavior to the development of legally binding regulations that began in the 1970s (Carroll, 2008).

The concept of Social Responsibility is being defined at the same time as it merges with that of Sustainability, both gaining strength when they begin to be treated together. Historically, the concept began to be introduced at the international level with events such as the Montreal Agreement in 1987, to address the ozone layer hole; in 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was held, which began to define actions aimed at companies and the economy. In Europe, in 2001, the "Green Paper" was presented in Brussels (Official Journal of the European Union) in which, finally and specifically, it is proposed to "Promote a European framework for corporate social responsibility".

The "Green Book" exemplifies what had been happening in the social, business and political spheres: since the emergence of the concept, the idea of Social Responsibility has been absorbing and including procedures that in the various institutions were developed in a more isolated way and that are now grouped under a single concept. This approach is supported in three main dimensions, known as "The Triple Bottom Line" (TBL) proposed by Elkington in 1994, - Society, Economy and Environment, also known as "triple P": People, Planet and Profit. According to

Artaraz (2002): "the integrated interpretation of these three dimensions implies considering the economic system within the natural systems, and not above them, i.e., applying a global and not a unidimensional interpretation" (Akanpaadgi, 2023).

2. State of the Art and Methodology

In 2015, the European CSR presented the Enterprise 2020 Manifesto (CSR Europe 2016), which aims to establish a model for Corporate Governance in Europe. It is determined that development must be based on a Sustainable Economy while aligning these actions with the Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations in the same year. The Enterprise Manifesto of 2015 establishes the objectives to be achieved by the year 2020 and which it brings together in five dimensions (Latapí et al. 2019): Social impact; Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction; Financial stability; Employee engagement through individual development; Environmental impact.

In parallel, the World Economic Forum in Davos 2020 focuses in turn on the commitments that companies should have in aspects, among others, such as: Collaboration for the creation of shared and sustained value; Fair competition; Zero tolerance for corruption, dignity and respect for its personnel; Supplier relations and human rights vigilance throughout the supply chain; Support for the society where it is located and leadership for a circular economy.

2.1 Methodological Framework

Figure 1. Data analytics in Table 1

Content analyses of Enterprise Manifesto, SDG agenda and World Economic Forum, as referred in Table 1, consolidated in the text explanation related with the literature, (Nave and Ferreira, 2019).

The concept of social responsibility is reflected in the elements of reporting above mentioned.

As Nave and Ferreira (2019) expose, Sustainability is treated as an objective of companies to reduce the impact of their activities on the environment, but also at a social and economic level. The monitoring of these activities, certifications and audits have made business ethics a value incorporated in the daily activities of companies both from the external and internal point of view.

Table 1. Comparison of some of the main points of the Enterprise 2020 Manifesto, 2030 SDG Agenda and the World Economic Forum

Enterprise 2020 Manifesto (2015)	2030 SDG Agenda (2015)	World Economic Forum (2020)
Social impact	Goal 1:End poverty in all its forms everywhere	Collaboration for shared and sustained value creation
Commitment of employees through their individual development	Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.	Fair competition
Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction	Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.	Zero tolerance for corruption, dignity and respect for your personnel
	Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and Foster innovation.	Supplier relations and human rights monitoring throughout the supply chain
Financial stability	Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.	Support to the society in which it is located and leadership for a circular economy
Environmental impact	Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact.	

The term Corporate Social Responsibility becomes a complete and complex model of management, which includes very diverse aspects such as Environmental Care (de Camargo et al., 2019), Efficiency and Productivity analysis (Hasan et al. 2018), Organizational Culture (Übius and Alas, 2009), Communication processes, either internal (Bednárik, 2019), or external (Reilly and Larya 2018), Employee Engagement (Collier and Esteban, 2007, Mueller et al., 2012;), and Worker Attitudes (Bauman and Skitka, 2012; Glavas and Kelley, 2014), Job Satisfaction ((Valentine and Fleischman, 2008; De Roeck et al., 2014), Job Performance ((Madueno et al., 2016), Motivation (Hofman and Newman, 2014), Leadership Styles fostered from Management (Contreras et al, 2010; Kim and Thapa, 2018); Javed et al., 2020), the relationship with the Social Environment where the companies are located (Mayers, 2015), and even the Economic Development of their geographical areas of influence (Jamali et al. 2017). In short, it can be understood as an optimization of all the resources available and related to the company, whether internal or external.

3. Results

From the earliest studies (Freeman, 1984) it was clearly established that the success of an organization depends on its ability to manage the relationships between the different stakeholders. Among these agents, employees are one of the main ones, so that the relationships with them, their attitudes and their reactions must be considered so that the objectives of the company, under the values of Social Responsibility, can be achieved. Therefore, although Social Responsibility has been defined differently in each company, in each of them, internally, it results in a change of attitudes of the related agents (stakeholders), a process of acquisition of new attitudes, "a personal transformation" to match personal, corporate and social interests (Übius and Alas, 2009). In this sense, we must take into account the idea of Vilanova et al. (2009), which argues that Social Responsibility and Competitiveness would be related by a continuous process of learning and innovation and that these corporate values, which are part of Social Responsibility, would be under permanent revision.

Bauman and Skitka, (2012) established that there is a relationship between three elements: the company's policies on Social Responsibility, the improvement of the company's reputation due to the implementation of these policies and good labor relations. More recently, Sánchez-Torné et al. (2020) also emphasized that Social Responsibility improves the workplace, referring in particular to the promotion of equal opportunities, good wage management and care for workers. We find again a circular scheme that describes how a company that takes care of its workers under the parameters of Social Responsibility, is perceived better, therefore, acquires better reputation and thus improves its productivity and profits, which in turn result in improvements to workers and their local environment (Wilton et al,

2019). Therefore, there is a relationship between success in Social Responsibility and certain variables classically managed by the Human Resources department, which also feed back respectively.

4. Discussion

From the point of view of Social Responsibility, it is also crucial that the Human Resources departments as well as the commercial and marketing areas share and expose the actions that have an impact on the society where they are installed, being part of it and not being oblivious to what happens in them.

4.1 Attitudes

With respect to employee attitudes, it should be noted that the relationship between these and Social Responsibility is two-way. On the one hand, it has been confirmed that the previous attitude of employees and in general the position of local communities regarding sustainability objectives, facilitate the implementation of Social Responsibility policies in the companies to which they belong (Wilton et al, 2019). On the other hand, the fact that companies adopt these objectives within their policies, modifies employees' attitudes through the improvement of the company's reputation and, finally, they align themselves with the company's objectives, developing a certain sense of corporate pride. In this line are the works of May et al. (2021), in which they present two ways in which Social Responsibility initiatives could change the behaviors, especially ecological behaviors, of employees: either directly, through the implementation of certain internal policies, or by improving trust between the organization and its employees, which would lead to the need for employees to align their behavior with that of the company with which they identify.

Other authors such as Glavas and Kelley (2014) have also found that social responsibility has an additional effect on employee attitudes, which is not only limited to attitudes about the environment but also those towards the company itself. These authors point out that it is the relational (social) component of social responsibility that causes this attitudinal extrapolation.

4.2 The Positive Impact

Previously, Mueller (2012) had found that Social Responsibility was positively related to affective employee engagement, especially in societies with higher human orientation and sensitivity towards collectivism. It is also found in the study of Zhou et al. (2018) that from a certain perceived (high) level of Social Responsibility, employee engagement is exponentially excited. Thus, the relationship described by Edmans in 2012 between the psychological variables of workers as individuals and the economic variables of the company as a corporation can be explained: the more Social Responsibility is perceived by employees, the more it excites their commitment, which, in turn, the more financial success redounds to the company. These benefits are of strategic importance to many companies because high job satisfaction and affective engagement contribute to superior financial performance (Zhou et al., 2018).

It is interesting to note the findings of Hofman and Newman in 2014, which establish a difference in this organizational commitment of employees depending on whether the Social Responsibility practices of the company are directed to agents internal to the company (for example, the conditions of the employees themselves) or to external agents. The relationship only exists in the first case. In their study they also found differences in gender orientation and collectivism, which they concluded could be motivational tools, provided they were applied to these specific differentiated groups.

The findings of De Roeck et al. (2014), indicate that perceived Social Responsibility is positively related to job satisfaction through its effects on general perceptions of fairness and organizational identification. These results suggest that employees appear to use Social Responsibility initiatives to evaluate the character of their organization and identify with it. Consequently, Social Responsibility initiatives are of particular importance as a means of supporting organizational efforts to build strong relationships with employees and thereby improve employee attitudes at work.

4.3 Leadership and Strategy Solutions

Leadership, is a topic with treatment and particular importance in this process of transformation and in the case in particular through changes in the shareholder body, the change of generation and especially by the inclusion of the professional management team. In fact, the transition from leadership to most functional and operational teams was also promoted, from the normal state to the ground state, seeking to focus on teamwork, joint coordination and cohesion, focusing on others rather than on themselves, being more client-oriented and flexible rather than internal focus and only in control activities. The leadership approach is considered in a value chain, as a model for the management and follow-up of the evolution of the company's processes, supported by the leadership action plan that

concretely acts in the strategic, tactical and operational variants, always managing the creation flows of value: (i) productive; (ii) materials; (iii) information (Romana & Gestoso, 2022).

Strategy and Unfolding - We believe that the best solution would be to treat the theme under three fundamental points of action and implementation: (1) The business chain, supported by the concepts of diversity and segmentation of markets and Ansoff products, including a geographical criterion; (2) Competitiveness of the company, through the good management of inventories, costs and waste of activities; (3) Quality, improving Prevention and Evaluation procedures, managing and following internal and external failures, naturally centred on customer complaints and nonconformities of processes (Romana & Gestoso, 2022).

The Behavioural Performance was and is being supported in the development of the leadership capacities of all the coordinators and directors of the company and in the management of competences, of the knowledge and the talent of all the people, through actions of Coaching that methodologically based on the cycles of experimentation, training and practice of processes. The "KATA Coaching" improvement cycles, according to (Romana & Gestoso, 2022), are based on the Production Management System created for the company and on process flow optimization tools.

Management Indicators that allow us to naturally follow the evolution of results and simultaneously stimulate the setting of objectives, indicators of competitiveness, quantitative and qualitative indicators have been developed, as well as operational, economic and financial indicators. We also change here the management position of the company at all levels, considering the contribution of people and areas to the overall results. It reflects the strategy's unfolding, based on its valorisation and follow-up, through the integrated monitoring elements, supported by the Scorecard model, and the integration of management tools (Romana & Gestoso, 2022).

4.4 Management Model in Place

We conclude definitively that modern management systems can adapt to centennial organizations and function in perfect harmony with the experience demonstrated over time, considering that the critical success factors are based on the formation and transformation of leadership styles, and effective management programs communication, (Romana & Gestoso, 2022).

The performance is often based on creativity, considering the behavioural binomial of using local thinking to develop global action strategies.

Although we understand that there is a reserve of productivity, that the performance of the business fabric is associated with low levels of effectiveness, which can be resolved with the application of global management models such as LEAN Management (Romana & Gestoso, 2022).

Given the increasing demand of markets, the introduction of new and more demanding customers and the most effective approach in terms of quality.

The strongest penetration in the international area of business, agricultural and transportation units, and of course the gathering of customers in the current business, combined with industry and the automotive markets, also created the need for the Company Management to evolve at all levels.

With the implementation of the Management Model, which at the beginning of the walk, we did not have the idea that we could proceed in this direction, we conclude that the modular and systemic logic allows to verify that:

All organizations, their teams and all people need a defined path to be motivated in pursuit of common goals.

The key tools or elements for defining common goals is strategy definition through the creation and development of strategic, coherent and participatory maps.

The consolidation of the strategic maps must be carried out in a management system that is the strategic plan, embodied in terms of valuation and rational in the budget and business plans.

It is fundamental that the strategies supported in the motivation of the people and in the definition and follow-up of objectives, are implemented by appealing to what are called successful strategies through the execution capacity, by the functional areas.

Areas in which the priorities for action are defined, the strategies to be developed, the target areas of action, indicators of progress and objectives, according to Grant (2002), allows the success of the implementations.

Risk Analysis and Initial Diagnosis - the involvement of the most experienced teams in this phase was central to defining the main problems and opportunities for improvement (Romana & Gestoso, 2022).

The task holders in the various processes are the most knowledgeable of their difficulties, and if they know how to solve it is another issue, for that we had to change.

Project for Change and Organizational Development, was developed and implemented based on the following aspects: Management System - Consolidation and Sustainability (context); Phased implementation methodology, designating pilot areas and then expanding to the entire organization; To advance with the improvement cycles as a way of acting jointly throughout the company, allowing to install the spirit of continuous and permanent improvement, throughout the entire value chain; Follow-up model - based on the "Balanced Scorecard" tool, and showing the four perspectives of management indicators (financial, customers, internal processes and learning and growth), allowing to raise the level of management performance, integration between areas and improvement of reference values; and Evolution according to the management model, which allows us to measure and follow over time the qualitative and quantitative improvements, as well as the technical and behavioural aspects (Romana & Gestoso, 2022).

4.5 The Way to Lean Management

We came here to the Lean Management Model (LMM) through the program called "LEAN Transformation", based on the implementation of the PDCA and focused on the triangle base of the action (Purpose, Processes and People), improving management indicators in values between 25% and 50%, from productivity, material flows and information flows.

We evaluated the LEAN implementation levels according to the LAI (LEI Advancement Initiative) Model, through the six parameters of the defined scale: (1) Involvement of People; (2) Value Creation; (3) Value Chain; (4) Flow of Processes; (5) Notion of "PULL"; (6) Index of Perfection, obtaining (66%) of the level of implementation, considering the scale we will have more (34%), of opportunity for improvement.

Leadership Behaviour, according to (Romana & Gestoso, 2022), should be focused on management by example, having all people involved and committed, putting know-how ahead of "think what," instilling principles of continuous improvement, testing before opting for solutions to market problems or needs, building trust in teams and people, developing mutual trust, developing people first and foremost as products, accomplishing all this and dealing with day-to-day functions.

Analysis of the data and results of the management indicators, which according to the authors were divided into categories: (i) Competitiveness (with changes between 40% and 80%), whether qualitative or quantitative; (ii) Operating, Economic and Financial (with changes between 3.2% and 46.7%) (Romana & Gestoso, 2022).

5. Conclusion

In any case, works on the establishment of this commitment and identification with the company through Social Responsibility policies have highlighted the role of management and leadership style in facilitating or not these processes. As early as 2008, Valentine and Fleischman indicated that it was the managers who should be the first to operate with these ethical codes: they stressed the importance of taking into account their ability to react to ethical situations in the processes of promoting employees to supervisory positions. More recently Javed et al. (2020) have found that the relationships between Social Responsibility with firm reputation and employee performance are influenced by responsible and adaptive leadership, and in their studies they suggested that leaders with strong values would develop excessive Social Responsibility policies that, conversely, would harm performance.

Studies mention the term "ethical leadership" to refer to these responsible management processes. Kim and Thapa (2018) found results according to which this ethical leadership influenced Social Responsibility and also operational performance. In turn, and as mentioned above, this perception of the company's involvement in Social Responsibility, improved its market position and increased its business performance, which contributed to economic success. Leadership styles, clarity in the definition of objectives, management in decision making, communication, climate and other aspects related to the structure of the organization, have an important effect on internal Social Responsibility, and may or may not favor the satisfaction and perceived well-being of employees. It is no longer enough to be profitable and comply with legal duties and obligations, but to understand how it is benefiting and positively influencing individuals and groups related to the business. Recently, in the review of studies on the subject by Macassa et al. (2021), they identified that most of the studies were aimed at understanding the impact of CSR strategies on employee job satisfaction.

These HR actions, such as attitude change, motivation or leadership styles are developed within a specific organizational climate framework and make up what is known as organizational culture. Collier and Esteban (2007) pointed out two aspects of how this occurs: the first is contextual and refers to the fact that organizational climate

and culture would affect employees' attitudes and behaviours, depending on whether Social Responsibility policies are expressed in the company as its own values, as actions to be fulfilled in performance or as a business strategy; the other aspect is perceptual and refers to the fact that motivation and commitment will be influenced depending on the possibility of aligning personal identity and image with that of the organization, as well as the perception about Management's attitude towards the performance of these ethical behaviours. Only employees whose values and vision are fully aligned with those of the organization will handle these situations effectively.

Regarding performance and efficiency, Madueno et al. 2016 describes that the priority management of employee and customer issues contributes more to the achievement of competitive performance than the management of environmental practices and, especially, the development of practices related to society. In another sense, in Newman et al. (2020) we also find a positive relationship between the adoption of initiatives and efficiency, but in this case this relationship is more direct if these initiatives are socially responsible acts focused on the local community.

Thus, as mentioned above, the success of the implementation of these Social Responsibility policies depends to a large extent on the cultural environment in which the company is located. If these ideas are common and customary in the population where the company is located and are part of the social and political norms of nearby localities, it is easier that they are already somehow in the minds of managers and workers and easier to develop them, and even that they have arisen from a demand of the latter through their representatives. As Mayers indicated in 2015, communities, when they perceive that the company's objectives include the sustainable development of the area, share with the company the interest in its business objectives, which they somehow understand also contribute to the economic development of the area.

In this sense, the management team, as in other facets, has an important role to play in choosing exactly the specific objectives that have a direct impact on the company's environment and on the society of which the employees are a part. It should not be forgotten that these Social Responsibility objectives are in addition to a series of rules and regulations specific to each company, which ultimately involve more tasks, points to be considered, and self-assessment audits for workers and managers, who must perceive the added value of the same.

5.1 Future Research Lines and Limitations to the Study

As future research lines we will develop a quantitative study, in order to understand the adherence of the real practice to this conceptual study, taking in consideration the new waves of (SDG – Sustainable Development Goals), that will be the continuing consolidation of the research strategy, as we understand this point as a limitation of current study.

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