

CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ACCORDING TO UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (USR)

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Abstract: In recent decades, the world has experienced great advances in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility. Educational institutions, especially those of higher education, have recently become interested in this topic as an integral part of society. In Ecuador, after the change of government and the educational transformation, the University Social Responsibility (USR) has been integrated as part of key management indicators. This article is about one of the main elements in education that is teaching. This research starts as a part of a university project that has the purpose of identifying how teaching activities contribute in social responsibility. The research takes place in nine public and private universities which are located in zone three in Ecuador. The data is quantitative and qualitative based on different surveys in a population of 67,167 students, professors, and administrators. As result, there are six challenges for teaching and the USR in Ecuador, from an external perspective: the study of new realities, planned propositions consensus, ongoing training and personal improvement, creativity, student context, professionalism and continuous evaluation.

Keywords: Teaching, University Social Responsibility (USR), teaching challenges.

DESAFÍOS EN LA DOCENCIA SEGÚN LA RESPONSABILIDAD SOCIAL UNIVERSITARIA (RSU)

Resumen: En las últimas décadas, el mundo ha experimentado avances en términos de Responsabilidad Social Corporativa. Las instituciones educativas, especialmente las de educación superior, se han interesado en este tema. En Ecuador, tras la propuesta de transformación educativa, la Responsabilidad Social Universitaria (RSU) forma parte de los indicadores clave de gestión. Este artículo analiza uno de los elementos principales de la educación, la docencia. Esta investigación, parte de un proyecto universitario, con el objeto de descubrir cómo las actividades de docencia contribuyen de forma responsable a la sociedad, mismo que, se lleva a cabo en nueve universidades públicas y privadas ubicadas en la zona tres de Ecuador, mediante la aplicación de un enfoque cualitativo, pero también con datos cuantitativos y el uso de una metodología descriptiva. La información se recoge por medio de encuestas en una población de 67,167 entre estudiantes, maestros y administradores. Como resultado, se descubre la incipiente puesta en marcha de la RSU y se plantean seis desafíos para la enseñanza y la RSU, desde una perspectiva integral: el estudio de nuevas realidades, el consenso de las propuestas planificadas, la capacitación continua y la mejora personal, la creatividad, el contexto del estudiante, la profesionalidad y la evaluación continua.

Palabra clave: Docencia, Responsabilidad Social Universitaria (RSU), Retos en la enseñanza.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the process of categorization of Ecuadorian universities, CEAACES has determined five criteria to be evaluated. Institutions that achieve these standards will be considered as quality universities and they will belong to a university category. The organization's parameter about University Social Responsibility should be highlighted as a sub-criterion to be evaluated. In [1] recognizes the Adaptation of the Institutional Evaluation Model of Universities and Polytechnic Schools 2013 in the Process of Evaluation, Accreditation and Recategorization of Universities and Polytechnic Schools 2015:

The Institution of Higher Education is seen as a system that interacts with society where activities related to the functions of Higher Education Systems are developed. Related to the interaction of institutions with society, the government evaluates the community outreach function and the objectives of the IES [2].

The characteristics that are considered for evaluation in the organization of a university are institutional planning, institutional ethics and quality management. Each of these aspects focuses on particular elements such as: strategic and operational planning, accountability, ethics, policies and procedures, information systems, academic offerings and information for evaluation.

Even though the USR is not considered in the evaluation process, the institutions' commitment to society is an essential part to achieve objectives. The task of including members not only from universities but also external members to develop integration projects in order to solve different problems in a given society [3]. Involving members of a university community, as well as society, is a factor that should be involved in higher education institutions to find objectives and viable resources, according to [4].

II. DEVELOPMENT

The USR is an issue that still has many academic challenges due to the new social requirements for educational organizations which must bring benefits to the community based on ethics, relevance and effectiveness. "The education system has not considered the discussion of ethics for many years, and recently different perspectives have promoted the debate of ethics in higher education" [4].

The USR is a new concept in our society and the available information states that there is still a greater emphasis on conceptual and methodological concepts; its application has not been applied in all university management processes. Consequently, the development of methodological tools is the most important. Vallaeys states, "if we really want to take University Social Res-

pensibility as a global and effective university management policy, it is essential to produce management tools for Social Responsibility in the higher education" [5].

In Latin America, the USR has been applied for about 10 years because of the support of an Inter-American initiative on Social Capital, Ethics and Development of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the collaboration of the The World Bank. They have been carrying out different programs to reach agreements for the integration of several institutions of Higher Education in Latin America to work together on their management approach [6].

According to [7] three questions are introduced by De Ferrari, J. M., Delpiano, C., and Fernández, C., (Coord.), which should be answered by the Institutions of Higher Education (IES). These are: What are the university responsibilities? Who is involved in the process? And, what is necessary to be responsible?

A university is socially responsible when it has principles and policies which direct its development based on the requirements of its society as set out by ethical responsibilities and values to guide the traditional functions of management, teaching, community outreach and investigation. A university which is not responsible within its society is one that does not do research or does not diagnose social needs by considering knowledge as the most important part [8]. Some universities are changing paradigms, and they are using the USR as a process in which they can:

- Look for solutions related to social problems to the benefit of the country
- Use the solutions to build knowledge
- Contribute to the transformation of the social, political, economic structures of the country

This research fundamentally deals with teaching. The USR from teaching has, as its purpose, to improve and guarantee a better standard of living for students as an integrated member of a society, in which there is communication, collaboration and strategies that allow achieving goals in that society. Nowadays, it is considered that every educational institution and its teaching process must be adapted to the changes of the 21st century. It is necessary to consider teaching as a rigorous, coherent and predictive activity where the educational sciences have their practical and productive goals based on the guide of the university professor establishing theoretical and practical relationships in student training [8].

In the present, new ways of teaching must be established because of new roles in education. A radical chan-

ge in teaching and learning methods is for professors to assume Social Responsibility in class. The objective is to assume the role throughout student changes and social transformations, thus becoming guides for them by providing the necessary tools to develop their social skills.

Appropriate university training incorporates responsibility with students into professors' training. All the persons involved in this process are responsible for the future development in society. If the new professionals do not have the capacity to work on the challenges and social needs, the university mission would be unproductive. The professor must humanize knowledge, looking for critical reflection and appropriate proposals that lead to a better social life.

The goal is to train professors in the approach of the USR and promote Project-Based Learning (PBL) on community scenarios by applying the solution of real problems. It is about being creative and showing how the student can learn by training and doing socially useful things [9].

The main social responsibilities of the professors are to:

- Share knowledge with students.
- Support students' own knowledge as a means to learn how to succeed.
- Develop didactic methodologies for each student.
- Develop a set of strategies related to their academic training and activities that guarantee knowledge management.
- Promote student participation in the construction of knowledge.

In the future, university training should be developed in five fundamental aspects: problematic situations, collaborative work, individual formation, community formation and creation of spaces [10].

The exploratory research carried out in national libraries, theses and research projects in Ecuador lead us to establish that there is lack of information on the subject related to the USR in the country and tools that measure the level of applicability of the USR in the areas of teaching, research, community outreach and management.

A new challenge has also evolved in higher education in recent years as "the absence of ethics and corruption have been affecting the academic world in the recent years" [11].

The ethical and social training of future generations - especially regarding their academic development - is in danger because it is difficult to link knowledge with

the value of responsibility in the society [12]. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt ethical actions for a true systemic change, starting with the measurement of the current levels of theoretical applicability to clarify the educational task ahead.

According to a research carried out by [13], the USR must be applied in university institutions in a correct way for future practices towards other institutions.

According to [14], universities have multilevel learning environments in which it is necessary to look for formal curriculums in order to improve academic quality. In addition, it is necessary to focus on implicit dimensions of the learning process in order to generate significant learning. According to [15], the USR is nowadays applied in different universities in Latin America and discrimination by gender, race, economic status or political orientation has been reduced which has improved the academic level. Discrimination is a condition that must disappear in universities to promote better student performance [16].

III.METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research was bibliographic and field research, as described below:

Bibliographically, national documents are analyzed, linked to university activities such as PNBV, contributions from the CES, CEACES, SENASCYT, IES, and contributions from national and foreign authors, from texts and related articles [17], [18], [19].

Field research is carried out in zone three of Ecuador which are composed by the provinces of Chimborazo, Tungurahua, Pastaza, and Cotopaxi working with a population of 67,167 individuals: 3454 (5%) professors, 61134 (91%) students, and 2579 (4%) administrative staff from nine public and private universities that are located in the following cities: in Ambato: Technical University, Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, Autonomous University of the Andes and Indoamérica Technological University; in Chimborazo: Polytechnic Superior School and National University; in Cotopaxi: Technical University and Polytechnic Superior School of the ARMY; and in Pastaza: Amazon State University. The surveys are applied with 5% margin of error and 95% real data based on the location of the university (number of students in each university). This procedure is carried out for students, professors, and administrative staff.

The data collection is applied in the nine universities. There is not any distinction in gender and academic level. The surveys had 30 questions and they were applied randomly. The survey analyzes qualitative variables such as: knowledge, academic freedom, relevant

training, academic offer, flexible schedules, extracurricular activities, and teaching planning. The questions are related to the research variables and management indicators based on Ecuadorian laws. The survey is validated by four professors, sixteen students, and two administrators. Each item was analyzed based on content, understanding, and suggestions.

For the analysis was used the IBM SPSS software - version 23 - as a statistical tool with a descriptive scope for tabulation. The inductive logic method was used as suggested by [20], based on field work, in each of the universities, where the survey was applied by means of surveys to then determine the perception of professors, students and administrative staff. In addition, the information was liked with two interviews for an academic vice-chancellor and administrator of human talent from different institutions to get some conclusions about teaching aspects.

IV.RESULTS

In the surveys and interviews there are questions related to teaching, research, community outreach and management, with a wide range of material for analysis. Therefore, the results are divided into different parts. For this research, it is only presented the results related to teaching and its relationship with the USR describing the following aspects:

Teachers and students are the main actors in the generation and acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary that every educational task must be focused on a specific purpose.

From the students' survey, 78% state that knowledge is a mechanism for improvement and creativity. However, 54,1% mention that the university professor does not know how to transmit clear concepts to the students. They agree that 73% of teachers use memory as a teaching and evaluation mechanism. Therefore, the student reproduces them mechanically. These results suggest that universities should motivate critical thinking in students to generate new results and knowledge through the application of new strategies. Professors state that 97% knowledge is an effective mechanism of improvement and creativity.

In order to have an appropriate environment of teaching, a parameter related to freedom of teaching - space where the professor develops all strengths - is considered. On average in the nine universities, students present similar results. 65,44% say there is not freedom of teaching. In spite of this, the professors consider that 80% have freedom of teaching using creativity and own methodologies. The administrative staff considers 83.28% that there is freedom of teaching. The

interviews, in the academic area, show that professors spend a high percentage of their work in administrative actions and sometimes neglect teaching, which can be considered irresponsible.

Since 2007, the universities of Ecuador have been very strict with the activities of professors because there are more institutions that control different requirements such as: getting a master's degree to teach. However, the survey for professors and administrative staff shows that only 68% agree that universities select teachers correctly while 63% of students agree with this idea. The same opinion in the administrative staff is kept: a master's degree is a requirement for the accreditation of universities and requirement to hire university professors, even they do not have experience, pedagogy, etc.

69.17% of students agree that the institutions strengthen their skills where knowledge allows them to be carried out in the professional, personal, family and social fields. 81% of HEIs private professors describe that their universities focus on the comprehensive education of students; while 73% of HEIs public professor consider it in that way. Professors describe that the students must not only be experts in an area of study, but also in their work with the society. The responsible professional student with the society will not only focus on the production, but also be concerned about a balance between personal goals and the community.

The participants in the surveys agree with 73% that the university promotes continuous training in their area of competence. This data indicates that although professors do different activities at university, it is necessary to do more. The university must generate more preparation spaces through agreements that allow the development not only of students and professors, but also a development of the private or public area. The surveys state it is necessary to provide an academic offer based on real needs of society.

There is a high percentage of students, 84%, who consider that study schedules should be checked, because the time that is assigned for teaching is not well used during the class. So higher education institutions should analyze how to manage schedules in different university careers to improve the learning process. This can be considered as a future study project at the university level.

The alternative of extracurricular activities, such as support and teaching methodology - is important. Students and professors, 79% and 77% respectively, support it. They state it should be promoted with the support of internal and/or external human talent, material, economic resources, etc., which could promote the research.

Only 39.38% agree that it is necessary a professor's planning. The interviews state that it takes several hours to plan and there is less effectiveness in teaching. This result should aim to design different study guides that adapt to each context.

To summarize some inputs, in graphic No 1: the main results obtained - from zone three of Ecuador - are integrated with the support of students, professors and administrative staff, as challenges of the professor who needs to integrate the USR in the university classrooms.

The authors consider that they are the first steps, as a contribution to society.

According to that affirmation, a few questions are made: Is it time to make other academic proposals that facilitate the integration of students to the labor field, in the case of practical careers and social areas? Is the university timetable system obsolete? What impact would an alternative proposal have on the university society in which the use of technology prevails, with little presence of the student?

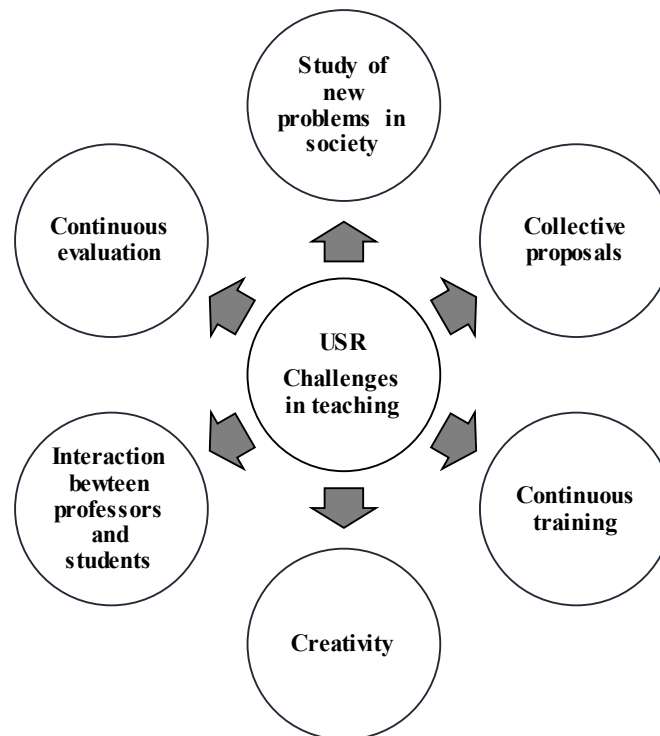


Figure 1. Challenges of Teaching and University Social Responsibility in Ecuador

The 6 challenges of teaching and the USR in Ecuador, are proposals to the problems mentioned above. These challenges are independent and at the same time they are related to each other with a vision of teaching from external contexts: study of new problems in society, collective proposals, continuous training, creativity, continuous evaluation, and context of the student and professionalism.

Study of new problems in society: The university education is not static because it responds to own local situations and to global needs. What is it necessary to change? The planning in universities must respond to: social local or international problems with appropriate careers such as reforestation, territorial planning, integration of technology in agricultural production, university virtual education, among others; through the

application of new educational models.

Collective proposals: By getting some ideas from the surveys and interviews, it is necessary that the universities have consensus as the Private University of Loja does through a program with CEDIA and inter-university research; or with local university programs and the government. This continues to be a very important challenge such as the formation of research networks, the consolidation of strategic alliances, the consensus of contents and the distinction of services. In this way students can choose one or another university, or career.

Continuous training: it is not enough for professors to present a degree required by HEIs, it is important continuous training to have academic staff of high level, in the areas of research, technical, social, pedagogical, etc. Continuous preparation is the challenge and res-

possibility of professors.

Creativity: It is a requirement for professors and students. Professors must be able to motivate and reach the student with interesting content through the use of new educational practices such as: gamification, simulation, and technologies in the classroom, with changes of roles and leadership in training, emerging methodologies such as: MOOC, Mobile Learning, Challenge Based Learning, Design Thinking, Project Based Learning, active learning, among others. In the other hand, students must learn in active spaces and continuous process.

Context of the student and professionalism: several pedagogical alternatives propose a formation based on the previous knowledge, like the constructivism and the Ignatian pedagogy. However, it is necessary to consider the reality of the society, which can affect significantly such as personal, family, economic situation, interests, needs, short and long term goals. The challenge of the university professor starts from the first contact with the student to be a true guide until the end of his preparation.

Continuous evaluation: This is a research which requires several challenges from the professors based on social vocation and responsibility towards the people who are part of a university. It is important to evaluate the previous processes and make appropriate decisions to improve the role of the professor based on the needs of society.

V.CONCLUSIONS

Based on different authors, the society is changing a lot and the results of those changes are better when the purposes are aim for social benefits. In this process, universities have been involved in recent years due to learning centers in the future of the society. However, it is important the compromise of each institution to achieve this goal which is called University Social Responsibility (USR). Universities have been working with scientific contribution, legal contribution, production, new proposals, but there are many things to do.

Based on the research, the results show that professors, students, and administrative staff do not fulfill this aim related to social responsibility. Teaching is not completely done with knowledge, creativity, and critical thinking where there is a combination between methodologies in the past and the future. In addition, there is lack of teaching training and teaching resources. Based on these problems, six USR have been identified: studies of new problems in the society, collective proposals, continuous training, creativity, permanent evaluation, and professionalism. To achieve these challenges, it is necessary the compromise of the university,

external people and the society.

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RESUMEN CURRICULAR



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