

Social Responsibility Principles in Higher Education: Confessional Institutions Management Trends

Princípios de responsabilidade social na Educação Superior: tendências na gestão de instituições confessionais

Principios de responsabilidad social en la Educación Superior: tendencias en la gestión de instituciones confesionales

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► **Abstract.** This article deals with social responsibility (SR) in the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) management, with a focus on confessional and non-profit private sector institutions. It aims to study the trends in the guiding principles within the RS, adopted in the higher education management by the Brazilian HEIs of La Salle University Network, a Christian religious education order, presents in 77 countries. A multiple case study was carried out, taking as reference the 5 HEIs maintained in Brazil by the Lasallian Brothers, by analyzing the content of the answers resulting from the application of a questionnaire to 66 university managers, who represent 57.4% of the total of managers, as well as the documentary analysis of the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) of each of the five Lasallian HEIs studied. The research reveals

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trends and specificities of university management, aggregated in four guiding principles: 1) ethical stance and actions transparency; 2) education and integral education; 3) institutional environment of reception, care and appreciation of the actors of educational action; and 4) commitment to life and the planet preservation.

► **Resumo.** Este artigo aborda a forma como se processa a questão da responsabilidade social (RS) na gestão das Instituições de Educação Superior (IES), tendo como foco específico instituições do setor privado, sem fins lucrativos e de natureza confessional. Objetiva estudar as tendências em termos dos princípios norteadores, no âmbito da RS, adotados na gestão da educação superior pelas IES da Rede La Salle existentes no Brasil. Foi realizado um estudo de caso múltiplo, tomando como referência as cinco IES mantidas no Brasil pelos Irmãos Lassalistas, por meio da análise de conteúdo dos dados resultantes da aplicação de questionário a 66 gestores universitários (57,4% do total de gestores das IES lassalistas estudadas), bem como a análise documental do Plano de Desenvolvimento Institucional (PDI) de cada uma das IES estudadas. A pesquisa revela especificidades da gestão universitária a partir da identificação de quatro princípios norteadores: 1) postura ética e transparência nas ações; 2) educação e formação integral; 3) ambiente institucional de acolhimento, cuidado e valorização dos atores da ação educativa; 4) compromisso com a vida e a preservação do planeta.

Palavras-chave:

*Responsabilidade
Social Universitária.
Educação Superior.
Rede La Salle.*

► **Resumen.** Este artículo aborda la forma como se procesa la cuestión de la responsabilidad social (RS) en la gestión de las Instituciones de Educación Superior (IES), teniendo como foco específico instituciones del sector privado, sin fines lucrativos y de naturaleza confesional. Objetiva estudiar las tendencias en términos de los principios que nordean la RS adoptados en la gestión de la educación superior por las IES de la Red La Salle existentes en el Brasil. Fue realizado un estudio de caso múltiple, tomando como referencia a las cinco IES mantenidas en el Brasil por los Hermanos Lasallistas, por medio del análisis de contenido de los datos resultantes de la aplicación de un cuestionario a 66 gestores universitarios (57,4% del total de gestores(as) de las IES lasallistas estudiadas), bien como el análisis documental del Plan de Desarrollo Institucional (PDI) de cada una de las IES estudiadas. La investigación revela especificidades de la gestión universitaria a partir de la identificación de cuatro principios rectores: 1) postura ética y transparencia en las acciones; 2) educación y formación integral; 3) ambiente institucional de acogida, cuidado y valorización de los actores de la acción educativa; y 4) compromiso con la vida y la preservación del planeta.

Palabras clave:

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Superior. Red La
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The reflection on Social Responsibility (SR) has its origins in business organizations. More conspicuously, the concern with SR in these organizations dates back to the 1950s, in the United States and Europe, when the socio-environmental effects of economic liberalism started to become visible. Throughout the time, concepts such as Corporate Social Responsibility, Social and Environmental Responsibility, Corporate Social Responsibility began to arise (Ashley, 2003; Barbieri e Cazazeira, 2009; Callado e Fensterseifer, 2009; Daher, 2006; Estigara, Pereira E Lewis, 2009; Knowles, 2012; Martins, 2008; Reetz e Tottola, 2006; Tenório et al., 2006; Vallaey, 2006).

Higher Education Institutions (HEIS), as complex organizations, included on their agenda the commitment to Social Responsibility in Higher Education (SRHE) or University Social Responsibility (USR)¹ due to external pressures at the international level through formulations of the major multilateral agencies (Calderón, Pedro e Vargas, 2011), as well as supranational and national organizations, involving in some contexts normative aspects within the regulatory legislations of higher education (Martí-Noguera, Calderón and Fernandez-Godenzi, 2018). With this in mind, the discussions about SR in HEIs (such as the ones in the business field), in a systemic perspective, go beyond ways of relations with society and focus on issues such as management processes and practices, relationships with employees, the curricular organization and student formation, among others. According to Tenório et al. (2006, p. 20):

[...] there is the understanding that companies are inserted in a complex environment, where their activities have an impact on different social agents, the community and the society. Therefore, the business orientation towards meeting the shareholders' interests becomes insufficient, and it is necessary to incorporate social objectives into the business plan as a way of integrating companies into society.

Jiménez, Fontecilla and Troncoso. (2006, p. 63) highlight that USR is the

[...] capacity that a university has to divulge and implement a set of principles and values, both general and specific, by means of four key processes: management, teaching, research and university extension, responding to the university community itself and to the country where it belongs.

¹ In this study, the terms SRHE and USR are considered as synonyms that entail the diversity and all the institutions operating in the higher education field, which in Brazil comprehend universities, higher education institutions, schools, technical institutions and centres of technological education.

In this perspective, according to Vallaey (2006, p. 39),

University Social Responsibility demands, from a holistic view, the articulation of various sectors of the institution, in a project of social promotion of ethical principles and equitable and sustainable social development, aimed at the production and transmission of responsible knowledge and training of professional and responsible citizens..

In Brazil, SRHE is one of the indicators evaluated by the National System of Evaluation of Higher Education (*Sistema Nacional de Avaliação de Educação Superior*, SINAES). This system has the “mission to evaluate graduation, highlighting aspects that foster the improvement of both higher education and academic training of Brazilian students” (Inep, 2016, p.21). Given the existence of an indicator oriented to assess the SRHEs within the SINAES, HEIs are compelled to reflect on the investments and necessary resources to be directed for such actions and how they impact on the educational enterprise and the institutional mission. In addition to this, the impact resulting from the USA actions in terms of social intervention is taken into consideration as well. The opportunities for the academic community to implement social responsibility, from the perspective of projects or other actions, indicated by the document of the SINAES, consider people education as a core.

We corroborate Sobrinho’s stance (2005, pp. 170-171), when the author emphasizes that knowledge and training in higher education need to have “a great sense of social relevance” by establishing “an ethics of social responsibility that may integrate academic actors and agents from the organized civil society with public agendas, focused on meeting the populations demands”, aiming at “the formation of people with citizenship as its highest value”. Thus, to fulfil its public function (Sobrinho, 2015), the HEIs, articulated to technical professional formation, have the role of educating, morally and intellectually, the people, taking “the social issue as a reference” (Pegoraro, 2015). Therefore, in order to enable USA actions, it is paramount to articulate the activities of teaching, research and extension, the latter being understood as a privileged *locus*. However, according to Calderón et al. (2011: 1187), it is necessary to distinguish between university extension and SRHE, considering that

This is a theoretical entanglement that has gradually been overcome, insofar as the concept of SSRS and the concept of social commitment were linked to the discussions about the social function of HEIs. In turn, university extension has been identified as one of three university activities, along with teaching and research, which enable HEIs to fulfil their social responsibility.

Within this theoretical framework, this article studies the trends in terms of guiding principles within the scope of the SRHE, adopted in the management of HEIs in the private

sector, not for profit and of confessional nature, having as analytical reference the HEIs of the La Salle Network in Brazil . This is a study resulting from a research based on a multiple case study, whose research problem was *What are the principles of Social Responsibility that guide the management of Brazilian Lasallian HEIs?*

METHOD

Design

For Yin (2010:24), “the case study is used in many situations in order to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, political and related phenomena.” In this way, “the ‘case’ can also be some event or entity [...] the case studies have been carried out on decisions, programs, implementation process and organizational change” (Idem: 51, author’s highlight). The research analysis units were five Lasallian HEIs located in Brazil, which represent the total set of HEIs maintained by the La Salle Network in the country. Therefore, the selection was carried out for convenience without using a probabilistic sample. Based on the Brazilian legislation, the HEIs that constitute the field of study are categorized as follows: a) in terms of administration and maintenance: they are private, non-profit community institutions; and, b) in terms of academic organization: three are colleges, one is a university centre and one is a university.

In qualitative research the study participants play a fundamental role, since they are the ones who will give the information. As Yin points out (2005, p. 117),

The more the respondent assists [...] the more his role will approach the role of an “informer”, from being a mere respondent. Key informants are always critical to the success of a case study. Not only do these people give the researcher insights and interpretations about a subject, but they can also suggest sources in which corroborative or opposing evidence can be sought - and one can begin to search for such evidence. (author’s highlight).

Participants

Participants on the study were the managers who work in these HEIs, namely, those who hold positions as Rector, Director, Academic Dean, Dean of Development, Director, Administrative, Academic Director, *Lato Sensu* Postgraduate Coordinator, Extension Coordinator, Graduate Course Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator of Undergraduate Course, Coordinator of Academic Nucleus, Coordinator of Social Scholarships and Institutional Prosecutor. A total of 66 managers, representing 57,4% of the total group of managers who work in the Lasallian HEIs accepted to participate in the study and answered the questionnaire.

Their ages range between 30 and 79 years, of which 39 (59.1%) are male and 27 (40.9%) are female. On the other hand, 19 of them (28.8%) work in colleges and 47 (71.2%) in university centres. Time experience of these managers in HEI varies between 0 and 39 years, and regarding the position they play in the Lasallian Institution where they work, it varies between 0 and 19 years. With regard to initial training, at undergraduate level, 66 (100%) managers have completed the undergraduate course. In terms of continuing education, 49 (74.2%) managers reported that they had completed a specialization course, 01 (1.5%) manager is completing it and 16 (24.2%) managers have not started it, yet. In terms of continuing education, 52 (78.8%) managers reported that they had finished the course, 02 (3%) managers are completing it and 12 (18%) 2%) managers have not started it. As for training at the doctoral level, 26 (39.4%) managers reported having completed the course, 12 (18.2%) managers are completing it and 28 (42.4%) managers have not started it.

Instrument

The data gathering was carried out by means of a questionnaire (Rudio, 2004; Hair *et al.*, 2005; Marconi e Lakatos, 2006; Gil, 2008; Laville, Dionne, 1999) with closed and open questions made available online, and through documentary analysis (Godoy, 1995; Pádua, 2004; Appolinário, 2009) of the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) of each of the institutions investigated. This document is considered a fundamental tool for the planning and management of HEIs. The IDP presents institutional data, such as: work philosophy; mission, vision, values and strategic objectives; the pedagogical guidelines; the organizational structure and academic activities developed and / or intended to be developed during the plan validity period.

Procedure

For the analysis of the topics extracted from the material selected, we use the Content Analysis Technique proposed by Bardin (1988). Content analysis is a set of techniques that make inferences about the production and / or reception of a certain message through systematic procedures of description of the content, (Bardin, 1988). Based on the analysis of the thematic incidence of the data collected from the informants, the information was catalogued in four main principles in which a set of indicators was listed in operational terms.

Results

Statements of the surveyed managers were systematized, based on the Content Analysis Technique, in four guiding principles from Lasallian HEIs management, regarding Social Responsibility, namely: a) ethical stance and transparency in actions; b) quality education and integral training; c) institutional environment of embrace, care and appreciation of the

stakeholders in the educational action; and d) commitment to life and planet preservation. Each of these principles is the result of a set of analysed dimensions, based on the literature review on SR in organizations, also considering the specificities related to the HEI studied with regard to the SRHE or USR. The elements established in the SINAES were considered in relation to the RS indicator. Each dimension was evaluated based on a scale containing four levels, and an alternative called unknown, as shown in figure 1.

Let us reflect on each one of the principles and its corresponding dimensions.

LEVEL 1:	The institution does not have it.
LEVEL 2:	The institution does have it because it is a legal request, but it is not part of its institutional identity and culture.
LEVEL 3:	The institution does have it because, apart from being a legal requirement, it is part of its institutional identity and culture.
LEVEL 4:	The institution does have it because apart from being a legal requirement, it is part of its institutional identity and culture, and besides it considers that such dimension/ aspect is a way to consolidate its Social Responsibility.
I DON'T KNOW:	I don't have enough information to respond to what is requested in the item.

Figure 1.

Evaluation scale. Source: own authorship, 2017.

Principle 1: ethical stance and transparency in actions

In educational institutions, as organizations, the values and transparency in the actions developed are fundamental to the institutional credibility, both in relation to the relationship with its internal and external public. Therefore, according to Macêdo et al. (2006:67), “Organizations that have created a transparent climate of trust and mutual respect have valuable resources to generate internal and external credibility and an incentive for success” (Macêdo et al., 2003: 67). Ethical stance and transparency in actions are based on three fundamental premises: the coherence between the principles of the institution and its performance, the democratic management, and the communication of institutional actions. In this principle, seven dimensions were analysed, as shown in table 1.

Table 1
Ethical stance and transparency in actions

PRINCIPLE 1: ETHICAL STANCE AND TRANSPARENCY IN ACTIONS					
Dimensions	Level 1 %	Level 2 %	Level 3 %	Level 4 %	Don't know %
Institutional Development Plan	0	2	7	56	1,5
Coherence between institutional principles and actions.	0	0	24,2	75,8	0
Code of Ethics explained and available in an institution document.	10,6	3	12,1	53	21,2
Social balance explained and available in na institution document.	4,5	7,6	10,6	57,6	19,7
Website with available information regarding Social Responsibility within the institution.	4,5	6,1	21,2	53	15,2
Democratic management through instances of participation (Councils, Student body, etc.).	0	3	10	84,8	1,5
Coherence between the institution principles and its actions.	0	0	24,2	75,8	0

Source: Managers' responses to questionnaire, 2017.

When asked about the existence of the IDP, according to the data presented in table 1, 56 (84.8%) managers indicate that the IES has an Institutional Development Plan, which constitutes the Institution Identity and means of expression of the SR. It was found that 50 (75.8%) managers consider that there is coherence between the institutional principles and the actions developed by the institution. In a way, this coherence indicates the existence

of a collective commitment on the part of the employees of each HEI, regardless of their function, mission, vision and institutional principles. It also suggests that if employees are committed to HEI, it means that there is agreement between the principles of the institution and their own principles. Regarding the existence of a Code of Ethics in the institutions where they operate, 35 (53%) managers show that the institution has a Code of Ethics because, in addition to being a legal requirement, it is part of the organization identity and culture, and they consider that such dimension / aspect is a way to consolidate its SR. It was noticed that 38 (57.6%) managers state that Social Balance is part of the institutional identity and culture, pointing out at the SR in their organizations. It is noteworthy that 13 (19.7%) managers indicated a lack of knowledge about Social Balance, which leads us to wonder if the availability of such a document exists among employees or, if there is such disclosure, the managers who reported lack of knowledge did not have the initiative and / or interest in accessing the Social Balance document. However, for the proper interpretation of this fact it would be necessary to identify those managers who indicated ignorance, ascertaining whether they belong to the same institution (which would indicate that that particular IES needs to review the way they publicize the social balance) or if they are managers from different HEIs. Of the total set, 49 managers (74.2%) indicate that Lasallian HEIs make their actions public through the institutional website. It is worth reflecting the fact that 10 managers (15.2%) said this issue was unbeknownst to them and 3 managers (4.5%) pointed out that the IES does not have an institutional page. This fact deserves further study, in order to understand the meaning of such responses, considering that the existence of the institutional page is a legal requirement. According to 51 (77.3%) managers, institutional management is conducted in a democratic way, being this type of management an integral part of institutional identity and culture and a way of acting with social responsibility. It was found that 50 (75.8%) managers consider that there is coherence between the institutional principles and the actions developed. Such coherence indicates, to a certain extent, the collective commitment of the employees of each HEI, regardless of their role, mission, vision and institutional principles. It also suggests that if employees are committed to HEI, it means that there is agreement between the institution principles and their own principles.

Principle 2: education and integral formation

The complexity of doing educational in higher education is evident, since more than training a professional, the concern should be focused on forming a person with a set of values that rule a life guided by ethical conduct, responsible and consider the dignity of life in all its forms. According to Thomasis (2006: 62-63), “we must study, investigate, and demonstrate to our students how we and they can transform our societies into socially responsible systems.” In this principle eleven dimensions were analysed, as shown in table 2.

Table 2
Quality education and integral formation

Dimensions	Level 1 %	Level 2 %	Level 3 %	Level 4 %	I don't know %
Pedagogical projects of courses with curricular components that consider ethical formation.	0	1,5	13,6	84,8	0
Pedagogical projects of courses with curricular components that consider education in human rights.	0	1,5	15,2	78,8	4,5
Pedagogical projects of courses with components that consider the practice of citizenship.	0	3	12,1	84,8	0
Actions oriented towards the practice of Social Responsibility, promoted by undergraduation courses.	0	6,1	12,1	77,3	4,5
Revitalization of pedagogical projects of courses.	0	3	16,7	75,8	4,5
Interdisciplinary actions in each undergraduation course.	0	4,5	21,2	69,7	4,5
Interdisciplinary actions between undergraduation courses.	1,5	3	28,8	65,2	1,5
Programmes/projects/actions to promote volunteer work.	0	4,5	16,7	78,8	0
Emphasis on scientific research initiation.	1,5	7,6	25,8	63,6	1,5
Emphasis on research.	4,5	15,2	22,7	54,5	3
Emphasis on extracurricular courses	1,5	15,2	28,8	51,5	3

Sources: Managers' responses to questionnaire, 2017.

According to data presented in table 2, Pedagogical Projects offered in the Lasallian HEIs have curricular components that include ethical education (65 managers, 98.4%), human rights education (52 managers, 78.8%) and the practice of citizenship (64 managers, 96.9%). The revitalization of the pedagogical projects of the courses is mentioned by 61 managers (92.5%).

According to the responses of 60 managers (91.9%), placed between levels 3 and 4, there are interdisciplinary actions that permeate the pedagogical achievement in each undergraduate course. As to the interdisciplinarity among the courses offered by HEIs, 62 managers (94.0%) indicate that there is an institutional mobilization for the development of interdisciplinary actions among undergraduate courses. The incentive to volunteer work is pointed out by 52 managers (78,85). Out of the general group of managers, 51 (77.2%) show the emphasis given by HEI in the research, and 59 managers (89.45%) indicate scientific initiation as a way to promote training of future researchers. We observed that extension actions still lack visibility, since only 34 (51.5%) managers indicated level 4 for their HEI.

In higher education, academic success is related to the level of autonomy, commitment and decision making by scholars. Thus, all the formative process whose structure is based on pedagogical premises that materialize through the curricular matrix and its modes of effectiveness in the daily life must mobilize individual and collective student-centred practices. Extracurricular courses, articulated to teaching and research, constitute a space of excellence for the strengthening of a learner-centred approach, while enables the insertion of academics in the social context.

Principle 3: institutional environment of welcoming, care and appreciation of stakeholders in educational actions.

When we refer to stakeholders in educational action, we are aware of those who, in an HEI, are directly or indirectly responsible for the educational process (institutional leaders, technical and administrative personnel, teachers, academics and the external community). Regarding the institutional environment, it is understood as the result of the harmonious articulation between facilities (educational spaces, equipment, etc.), organizational management (structure and mode of management) and legal standards (external and internal legal mechanisms that regulate what is done in the institution). The ways of relation people establish in this environment can favour or hinder the achievement of the mission, the principles (values) and the objectives of a given institution. Care provided to all members of the educational communities is translated in the constant pursuit for respect to human beings in its multiple dimensions.

The environment focuses on development, motivation, expectations and on the individual and collective performance of those who carried out their duties. Considering each employee as a component of the human capital (Davenport, 2001) of any institution, the more they feel welcomed, appreciated and recognized, the better their performance will be. Embrace, care and appreciation of the employees of a given HEI are not only expressed by differentiated salaries and career plans. Despite the importance of these elements in any professional career, motivation and the feeling of well-being are also resulting from the employee's identification and commitment to the institution. In this process of identification and commitment, the

relation that each employee establishes with the institutional identity, specifically by means of its mission, vision and principles (or values), impacts hugely. The greater the identification between the personal values of each employee and the institutional values, the greater the level of commitment and dedication will be, according to studies carried out by Tamayo (2005), Mendonça and Tamayo (2005) and Schwartz (2005). Consequently, the institutional climate and culture are dimensions to be considered to promote a healthy environment for employees. In the principle *institutional environment of welcoming, care and appreciation of stakeholders of educational actions*, 26 dimensions were analysed.

Regarding the relation with employees, Martins (2008, p.16) explains that an organization that act with social responsibility with its internal clients,

[...] is one that obviously follows the requirements of labor legislation and implements compatible wage policies, but also seeks, above all, the personal development of employees. In order to do so, it invests in permanent training (essential in the Knowledge Society) and contributes to raising awareness of citizenship (for example, by stimulating voluntary work). All this in a healthy, safe, respectful work environment in every way.

The relationship of the HEIs with their employees was evaluated through sixteen dimensions, as shown in table 3.

Given the data presented in table 3, it is possible to realize that the Career Plan is consolidated in Lasallian HEIs' identity and culture. Responses from 54 managers (83.4%) are placed between levels 3 and 4. It is found that 55 managers (83.3%) are aware that the appreciation of diversity (inclusion of people with disabilities, different races, ethnicities and socioeconomic conditions within HEI's organization chart) makes explicit the commitment of Lasallian HEIs to Social Responsibility. Regarding recruitment, selection, follow-up and dismissal processes, managers' responses are placed levels 3 and 4. As for the recruitment process and the selection process, 57 managers (84.8%) and 60 managers (90, 9%), respectively, consider that both processes occur in a clear and objective way. Functional monitoring was pointed out by 59 managers (72.8%) as an action present in the Lasallian HEIs. For 45 managers (68.1%), in the Lasallian HEIs the dismissal of employees is based on clear criteria known to employees, but may be improved in order to upgrade the level of excellence, making Social Responsibility evident. There is some complexity in the process that culminates in the decision to hire a new employee. Herein lies the fact that institutions shall have a management team made up of people with relevant skills and extremely aligned to the institution identity, since a successful staff selection will largely depend upon their perceptions and insight. It was noted that 58 managers (87.9%) stated that Lasallian HEIs invest in staff training and development programs / projects, being this procedure a component of the institution identity and culture. Regarding health coverage for employees, 53 managers (80.3%) said that the Lasallian HEIs offer health care for their employees. However, when asked about extensive health coverage for

Table 3

Institutional environment of welcoming, care and appreciation of stakeholders of educational actions – Relationship with HES employees

PRINCIPLE 3: INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF WELCOMING, CARE AND APPRECIATION OF STAKEHOLDERS OF EDUCATIONAL ACTION. HES RELATIONSHIP WITH EMPLOYEES					
Dimensions	Level 1 %	Level 2 %	Level 3 %	Level 4 %	I don't know %
Career plan.	1,5	15,2	18,2	65,2	0
Appreciation of diversity (inclusion of people with disabilities, different race, ethnicity and socioeconomic conditions within the HEI organization chart).	0	4,5	12,1	83,3	0
Staff recruitment with clear requirements and publicized criteria	0	10,6	21,2	63,6	4,5
Staff selection carried out through criteria and exempt from any discrimination practice.	0	4,5	12,1	78,8	4,5
Staff follow up on duties and roles.	0	4,5	22,7	66,7	6,1
Employees detachment based on processes they are aware of.	3	10,6	24,2	43,9	18,2
Programmes/projects/training actions and staff development..	1,5	7,6	18,2	69,7	3
Health coverage for employees.	3	4,5	19,7	60,6	12,1
Extended health coverage for employee's dependants.	7,6	6,1	18,2	45,5	22,7
Financial incentive for employees training and education.	10,6	6,1	21,2	47	15,2
Financial incentive for the education of employee's dependants.	6,1	3	28,8	40,9	21,2
Work environment with adequate conditions for the employee's work performance.	0	0	22,7	77,3	0
Internal committee for accident prevention.	3	4,5	15,2	69,7	7,6
Programmes/projects/incentive actions for volunteer work.	1,5	4,5	12,1	81,8	0
Programmes/projects/actions oriented to quality of life within the work environment.	6,1	12,1	18,2	60,6	3
Actions oriented to publicize policies and Institutional Planning.	0	7,6	22,7	66,7	3

Source: Managers' responses to questionnaire, 2017.

employees' dependents, answers varied between lack of knowledge (15 managers, 22.7%), levels 1 and 2 (9 managers, 13.7%) and levels 3 and 4 (42 managers, 63.7%). Based on these information, it is possible to infer that each HEI adopts a specific system, and there is no common line of action between them with regard to health insurance. According to 44 managers (68.2%), HEIs invest in induction and continuous training for their employees, and there is also a financial incentive for their dependents' education, according to 46 managers (69.7%). Managers' responses are placed predominantly between levels 3 (22.7%) and 4 (77.3%), indicating that the work environment in Lasallian HEIs is favourable to each employee's role performance. It is noted that 40 (60.6%) managers say that their HEI has programmes, projects and actions oriented to quality of life at the workplace. It can be seen that 56 managers (84.9%) confirm the existence of the Internal Committee for Prevention of Accidents. The incentive to volunteer work, according to 62 managers (93.9%), is a consolidated action in Lasallian HEIs. On the other hand, 59 managers state that the HEIs in which they operate (89.4%) have actions aimed at publicizing Policies and Institutional Planning.

The relationship between HEIs and students was assessed using seven dimensions, as shown in table 4.

Table 4

Institutional environment of welcoming, care and appreciation of stakeholders in educational actions – Relationship with HEI students

PRINCIPLE 4: INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF WELCOMING, CARE AND APPRECIATION OF STAKEHOLDERS IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIONS. Relationship with students					
Dimensions	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	I don't know
	%	%	%	%	%
Appreciation of diversity, availability of spaces and conditions for accessibility.	0	1,5	15,2	83,3	0
Availability of interpreters for deaf students.	9,1	4,5	7,6	53	25,8
Programmes /projects/actions to promote volunteer work.	0	4,5	16,7	78,8	0
Interpersonal relations between employees and students guided by respect.	0	0	12,1	87,9	0
Programmes/projects/actions aimed at integrating employees and students.	0	1,5	19,7	74,2	4,5
Programmes/projects/actions that reach out to low income students.	0	0	18,2	78,8	3
Programmes/projects/actions that enable support to students with learning disabilities.	1,5	6,1	15,2	68,2	9,1

Source: Managers' responses to questionnaire, 2017.

In view of the managers' responses, as indicated in table 4, it is evident that Lasallian HEIs are willing to embrace people with some kind of disability, going beyond what is determined by legal provisions. According to 55 managers, (83.3%), there is appreciation of diversity, availability of spaces and conditions for accessibility, as well as the availability of interpreters for deaf students. Of the total number of respondents, 52 managers (78.85) consider that volunteer incentive programmes / projects contribute to the fulfilment of Social Responsibility in HEIs.

Interpersonal relationships are an essential component for the constitution of healthy environments and promoters of human development. The answers from the 64 managers (100%) who responded to the questionnaire, placed at levels 3 and 4, indicate that respect among all those who make up the Educational Community is a priority. Integration between employees and students is confirmed by 49 managers (74.2%). It is noted that the institutions emphasize commitment and engagement to common actions, encouraging a spirit of solidarity and community. The existence of programs / projects / actions that enable access to education for low-income students is indicated by 52 managers (78.8%), and there are also concerns about students with some type of learning disabilities, according to 45 managers (68.2%).

The relationship of the HEIs with the community was evaluated through three dimensions, as shown in table 5.

Table 5

Institutional environment of welcoming, care and appreciation of stakeholders in educational actions – Relationship with the community

PRINCIPLE 3: INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF WELCOMING, CARE AND APPRECIATION OF STAKEHOLDERS IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIONS. Relationship with the community					
Dimensions	Level 1 %	Level 2 %	Level 3 %	Level 4 %	I don't know %
Free programmes/projects/actions of social nature targeting vulnerable groups, communities and/or people.	1,5	4,5	19,7	69,7	4,5
Programmes/projects/actions in partnership with local communities.	0	4,5	18,2	71,2	6,1
Research oriented to resolve social issues.	0	4,5	24,2	57,6	10,6

Source: Managers' responses to questionnaire, 2017.

It can be seen that 59 managers (89.4%) say that there are free programs / projects of a social nature, aimed at groups, communities and / or people in situations of social vulnerability. Several of these actions are referred to as evidence of the responsible actions from Lasallian HEIs. The relationship and commitment undertaken by the HEIs regarding community demands are carried out through partnerships, as indicated by 59 managers (89.4%), denoting the emphasis on community leadership. According to 54 managers' responses (81.8%), the investment made by the Lassalistas HEIs prioritizes research aimed at solving social problems.

Principle 4: commitment to life and planet preservation

Commitment to life, in its various forms and caring for the planet, is a duty of all. Special role in this scenario is destined to HEI, because they are responsible for the training of future professionals (Meza Rueda, 2010). Schieler et al. (2015: 49) are downright when they say that:

A Christian university must take into account the Gospels' preference for the poor. This does not mean that only the poor will study in university, neither the university must abandon its mission for academic excellence – the excellence that is needed to solve the complex issues of our times.

Undoubtedly, one of the complex problems of our time is the question of sustainability, specifically environmental. In their educational proposal, Lasallians express the need to learn to “take care of our home”, emphasizing sustainability and environmental awareness. According to Rivera Venegas (2015: 62):

[...]it is important that a university that claims to be socially responsible, such as the Lasallian, has within its priorities the fight for human rights; the provision of tools to establish an organized civil society, where citizens have elements to exercise vigilance and control; the generation of reflection that reveals the value of transparency and the fight against corruption; the promotion of an economy with a human face; the demand for quality standards that do not ignore the value of the human; the fight against poverty and injustice; training to ensure the protection and proper use of the environment, for democracy, for the pursuit of sustainable and equitable global development.

In the principle *commitment to life and the preservation of the planet*, four dimensions were analysed, as shown in table 6.

Table 6*Commitment to life and preservation of the planet*

PRINCIPLE 4: COMMITMENT TO LIFE AND PRESERVATION OF THE PLANET					
Dimensions	Level 1 %	Level 2 %	Level 3 %	Level 4 %	I don't know %
Programmes/projects/actions of environmental education for employees.	3	16,7	21,2	45,5	13,6
Programmes/projects/actions oriented to sensible use of resources (water, energy, paper, etc.).	3	12,1	24,2	51,5	9,1
Garbage collection within the institution premises.	4,5	9,1	19,7	62,1	4,5
Programmes/projects/actions of environmental education for local communities.	6,1	7,6	30,3	40,9	15,2

Source: Managers' responses to questionnaire, 2017.

Regarding environmental education for employees, 44 managers' responses (67.7%) are placed between levels 3 and 4, indicating that this dimension needs more attention from Lasallian HEIs. It is possible to verify the existence of programs / projects / actions aimed at the sensible use of resources (water, energy, paper, etc.) in Lasallian HEIs, with 50 managers (75.7%) indicating that this is a concern within the institutional culture and identity. The selective collection of garbage is indicated as a consolidated action by 54 managers (81.8%). As it can be seen, SR, according to the managers surveyed, is related to the Institutions' stance in terms of relationship and commitment to the local community where they are inserted, and to regional, national and international development, having as a motto the strengthening of individual and collective leadership. In other words, HEIs have the mission of contributing to a society and a better world for all. According to Amorim (2009: 132):

These days more organizations are seeking balance with the community in which they are inserted and with other realities that can affect or be affected by them. It is the search for a sustainable society, where productive forces and nature can live together without being annihilated or annihilated. It is a new ethical awareness and social responsibility that organizations are being led to assume, by choice or by demands of the global market.

In the general analysis of the total set of 46 dimensions evaluated, 17 reached a mark equal to or higher than 70% in level 4, indicating that Lasallian HEIs are increasingly seeking the level of excellence regarding SR. It is worth mentioning that one of the factors that may have influenced the fact that the percentage of responses in some of the dimensions assessed was not equal to or greater than 70% is the understanding about the concept and scope of Social Responsibility that still seems to be restricted or related to social actions. We emphasize

this fact because we defend the idea, based on the assumptions of authors that we deepen in this investigation, that Social Responsibility permeates all the actions of a certain institution, ranging from its identity to its modus operandi. After presenting and discussing the principles of Social Responsibility of Lasallian HEIs, in the next section we present the final considerations.

DISCUSSION

The research reveals specificities of university management from the identification of four guiding principles: 1) ethical stance and transparency in actions; 2) quality education and integral formation; 3) institutional environment of welcoming, care and appreciation of stakeholders of educational actions; and 4) commitment to life and the preservation of the planet. We emphasize that this set of principles is aligned with the mainstream trends that deepen both the concept and the ways of effectiveness and the respective indicators of Social Responsibility evaluation. Thus, they are based on concepts and contents to be revisited, in view of the need to raise awareness among academic communities regarding social responsibility.

The principles also indicate the road undertaken by the Lasallians in Brazil and the challenges and perspectives that remain faithful to their mission and identity, which are achieved by means of the implementation of their Educational Ideals in the daily life of the communities they support. Bearing in mind the theoretical reference framework and the findings of the research, it is possible to perceive that the commitment and the responsibility toward the social environment are present from the onset of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who seek, through education, to establish the commitment assumed, especially with vulnerable members of a society. We corroborate the position of Rivera Venegas (2015: 61), when the author states that,

The issue of social responsibility (SR) cannot be limited to the fulfilment of institutional interests within a legal framework, and to their defense, disregarding the impacts and secondary consequences that generate their actions in the social and environmental context. Ethically, interest is demanded for the effects (internal and external, near or distant) that the corporation generates in present and future reality, more if there is the recognition that its members are called to be protagonists of the solution of the most acute problems of society. The university cannot fail to be sensitive to the society in which it develops. It has to be accountable for its actions and the consequences that derive therefrom.

The overall formation of scholars, apart from the educational path considered in the curricula of each course, is carried out through interdisciplinary projects involving the community; programmes, projects and actions focused on activities implemented alongside vulnerable members of the community; programmes, projects and actions focused on raising awareness on the need to preserve the environment. For Pegoraro (2015, p. 28):

Academics graduated from university can play a significant role in building social projects, and this is the result of the university's contribution to society. This training can represent something much greater than the mere acquisition of knowledge and skills that prepare them for the exercise of some profession. It may also be concerned with developing a clear awareness of the major problems facing humanity today that affect the discourse of our history, producing tragedies in communities, which reach the limit of the irreversible. An important aspect with regard to university graduates is that they work towards the improvement of our human conditions in society, translating into social reality, because of the educators' work, besides professional quality, commitments to ethics, with culture, with aesthetics and, finally, with citizenship.

In this sense, the challenge facing Lasallian HEIs is to increasingly provide, through the curriculum of each course, spaces and times for academics, from the beginning of their formative process, to experience and commit themselves to the welfare of the community, encountering the demands of its surroundings and proposing, through its area of training, strategies for solving problems. As Vintro (2003: 50), we defend *"education as a collective, social, conscious and intentional project that directs its eyes towards a better future"* (emphasis added). Therefore, the consolidation of the Social Responsibility concept requires that people and groups be trained to make a commitment and act on values that promote the well-being of the community.

Finally, the findings are related to the conceptions and the reality of a group of five Brazilian Lasallian HEIs analysed, seen from the perspective of 66 managers who accepted to participate in the study. Thus, considering it to be a multisystem study, the findings are not to be generalized, but can serve as an analytical reference for the study of other organizational contexts. In the same way, we understand that the constant reflections in the course of our study are not restricted to Lasallian education, but can contribute greatly to other educational networks, particularly for HEIs. In other words, the results found may contribute to the reflection about the purpose of HEIs, regardless of whether they are Brazilian, public or private, confessional or not.

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