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The Place of the Concept of Social Responsibility in Education

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Abstract

The concept of social responsibility has a very important place in education. Education should not be limited to the transfer of academic knowledge; At the same time, it is important to give students a sense of responsibility towards society. Including the concept of social responsibility in the education system allows individuals to understand how they can contribute to their society instead of focusing only on their own achievements. This, in turn, contributes to the formation of a more just, respectful and sustainable society. In this article, the definition of the concept of social responsibility, its place in education and the findings obtained as a result of literature research are included.

INTRODUCTION

Social responsibility refers to the responsibility of an individual or institution for the general good of society. Social responsibility is an ethical focus that aims to be responsible for practices that benefit society by taking action for individuals (Ganti, 2024). This responsibility includes environmental, economic and social dimensions. Corporate social responsibility (CSR), on the other hand, refers to the efforts of organizations to fulfill this responsibility (Fernando, 2024). There is a strong relationship between education, social responsibility and corporate social responsibility.

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Education is the basis of social responsibility. The primary role of educational institutions is to prepare students to pursue their future professions (Jankal & Jankalova, 2017). Individuals who have received a good education gain sensitivity to social problems and can think solution-oriented. Therefore, educational institutions and programs provide an important platform to increase social responsibility awareness. The values given to students through education contribute to their future becoming responsible leaders in the corporate world.

In the corporate world, the understanding of social responsibility of companies is becoming increasingly important. Instead of just making a profit, businesses recognize the need to contribute to their communities and the environment. In this context, educational institutions and businesses can contribute to a more sustainable world of the future by collaborating and equipping young generations with a sense of social responsibility.

In this context, the relationship between education, social responsibility and corporate social responsibility is an important dynamic that enables society to move towards a better future. Educational institutions play a role that adds value to businesses and society by educating individuals with a sense of social responsibility.

Businesses, on the other hand, act with an understanding of social responsibility and strive to increase the general welfare of the society. In this way, the synergy between education and business is an important force for a fairer, more sustainable world. In this article, the definition of the concept of social responsibility, its place in education and the findings obtained as a result of literature research are included.

Literature

Social Responsibility

In 2010, an international standard called ISO 26000 was published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). This standard is designed to help organizations assess and address their social responsibilities. ISO 26000-2010: The Social Responsibility Guideline defines that an organization must bear responsibility for its impact on society and the environment through transparent and ethical behavior. This responsibility includes (American Society for Quality, 2024):
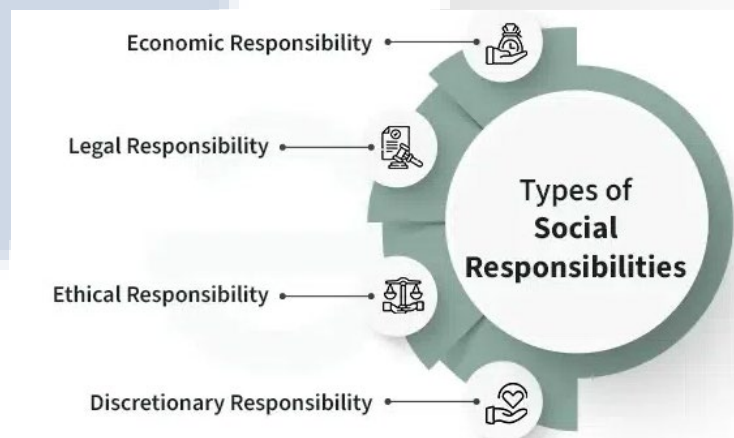
- To contribute to sustainable development, health and welfare of society,

- Taking into account the expectations of the stakeholders,

- To comply with applicable laws and comply with international norms of conduct,

- To be implemented in an integrated way throughout the organization and to be valid in relationships.

Basic Issues and Basic Principles of Social Responsibility

ISO 26000-2010: Social Responsibility Guidelines define seven key social responsibility issues

(American Society for Quality, 2024):

- Organizational governance

- Human rights

- Workforce applications

- Environment

- Fair business practices

- Consumer issues

- Community involvement and development

Figure 1. Social Responsibilities of a Business
Source: url-1: (Geeks for Geeks, 2024)

Vallaeys (2015; Jankal & Jankalova, 2017), the main characteristics of social responsibility that can also be applied in educational institutions are as follows:

The effects they cause are the responsibility of the organizations. The negative effects (social and environmental) of their activities (ideally) should be phased out. This is the commitment they are being asked to make.

- Social responsibility requires a management approach to reduce negative impacts and promote sustainable practices by aiming at the sustainable development of

society.

- While compliant with the law, social responsibility is not limited by the law; It operates in compliance with the law and takes action to support the overall good of society.

- Social responsibility requires cooperation and coordination among stakeholders to address negative impacts. By finding solutions on the basis of shared responsibility, value-oriented approaches are developed in which everyone can benefit.

The Role of the Concept of Social Responsibility in Education

The concept of social responsibility plays an important role in education because it helps younger generations develop their social consciousness and sense of responsibility. Educational institutions not only provide academic knowledge to students, but also aim to raise them as individuals who are responsible for society by equipping them with ethical values. Social responsibility helps students learn important values such as empathy, a sense of justice, cooperation, and environmental awareness, and integrate these values into their lives.

The concept of social responsibility in education has begun to attract great attention in recent years. Educational institutions are seen to have an increasingly broader role in addressing societal issues and improving the well-being of students and communities (Huang, 2020). This shift towards a more socially responsible approach to education recognizes the interconnectedness of society and education and the importance of preparing students to be active and engaged members of their communities. For example, in a study of education and social change in a particular country, researchers can analyze the extent to which educational institutions contribute to or challenge opaque social structures and power dynamics (Fend, 2001).

In this context, it allows researchers to examine how educational institutions reinforce or challenge existing power structures and the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. By examining the relationship between education and social responsibility in society, researchers can identify opportunities for educational institutions to actively address and alleviate social problems (Leviste and Trinidad, 2020).

Social responsibility in education emphasizes not only the individual achievements of students, but also their capacity to contribute to their society and environment. Students have the opportunity to understand social needs, produce solutions and contribute to social change through social responsibility projects and volunteer activities. Such experiences enable students to consider not only their own interests but also the needs of others and develop empathetic leadership skills.

In addition, the concept of social responsibility in education encourages students to become sensitive to global issues and act responsibly as global citizens. In this context, educational institutions try to increase students' awareness of global responsibility by addressing global issues such as sustainable development, cultural diversity, human rights, and justice.

The concept of social responsibility in education plays an important role for a more just, sustainable and peaceful world by contributing to the individual and social development of students. By integrating this concept into their curricula, educational institutions undertake an important mission to raise future generations as socially responsible leaders. Summarize;

- Education teaches individuals that they are part of society and have responsibilities to the people around them. This awareness enables students to be sensitive to social problems.

- Social responsibility develops students' ability to empathize and understand other people's needs. This, in turn, increases collaboration and communication skills.

- Education provides students with competence in producing solutions to social problems and creating change. Individuals equipped with a sense of social responsibility can make positive changes in their communities.

- Social responsibility helps students understand and embrace core values such as human rights, justice, and honesty. These values lead individuals to live an ethical life and contribute to their society.

- The concept of social responsibility supports the personal development of students. Taking responsibility increases self-esteem and reinforces an individual's self-confidence.

- Social responsibility in education encourages students to actively participate in their communities. This strengthens the sense of citizenship, which is the basis of a democratic society.

In recent years, the increase in competition in universities; forced universities to implement different strategies, including CSR practices, to attract and retain students (Sánchez, Bolívar, & Hernández, 2013). Therefore, CSR in universities is associated with the Sustainable Development Goal. In this context, all SDGs should be integrated into the institution and should be able to make an impact in the service of society in various ways.

In a study conducted in Colombia (Fuentes Doria et al., 2020), the Contribution of Culture and Arts to Sustainable Development (CSR) practices in higher education institutions were associated with peace agreements. This study emphasizes how institutions can contribute through teaching activities by understanding CSR as a fundamental element of their mission and vision.

In the research carried out by Moraes Abrahão et al. (2024), it was concluded that teachers are not fully aware of the role of social issues in their lessons and do not include these topics in their students' lessons.

While education shapes the mental and cultural building blocks of society in general, universities in particular take on a more specialized role. Educational institutions serve as an essential tool for the transfer of knowledge.

UNESCO (2017; In the words of Baniawwad, 2022, education is the foundation of economic, social and environmental development. Long-term sustainability and promoting learning in society are key to development and progress worldwide. Universities function as centers of knowledge and skills for society and contribute to the scientific, social, cultural and economic growth of society. In addition, universities promote mutual understanding, strengthen civil society, and preserve cultural diversity. The relationship between universities and society is reciprocal and they are interactive, both influence each other, and they are influenced by each other.

To understand the needs of society, universities add value and knowledge to their information systems, research, and practices. Universities produce human outputs that can meet the growing demands and visions of society. To increase efforts and participation in fulfilling responsibility, facing contemporary challenges, the solidarity of community members and institutions is essential (Baniawwad, 2022).

Corporate Social Responsibility

Carroll (1979) defined corporate social responsibility as a structure that includes the expectations of society from organizations at a certain point in terms of economic, legal, ethical and voluntary. In this definition, Carroll argues that these responsibilities must be fulfilled not only for a company's own benefit, but also for the general good of society. In this context, organizations can be considered as parties to a social contract in which they have to make decisions in the interests of society (Andreasen & Drumwright, 2001; Rahim et al., 2011).

There is no standard definition of corporate social responsibility (Van Marrewijk, 2003). Official publications and literature on corporate social responsibility (CSR) from academic journals, business journals, books, and reports of international organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and associations, have been followed since the early 1930s and are still important today (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019).
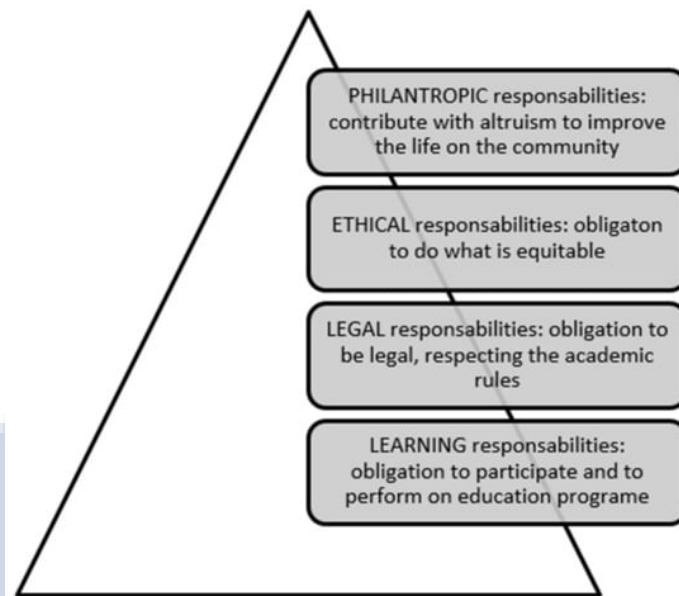
The concept of CSR covers the behaviors of institutions and organizations aimed at providing benefits to the society and the tasks to be performed for the target audience whose purposes are appropriate. Social responsibility behaviors, which are becoming more and more important day by day in the times we live in, have become expected from institutions and organizations.

It is possible to state that organizations that adopt CSR perform better and this has positive effects on productivity and organizational competitiveness (Tang et al., 2012). CSR is traditionally divided into four categories (Stobierski, 2021):

- Environmental: It is the belief that organizations should act as environmentally friendly as possible.
- Philanthropy: It refers to the goal of an organization to actively make the world and society a better place.
- Ethics: It is about ensuring that an organization operates in a fair and ethical manner.
- Economic responsibility: The practice of supporting all of an organization's financial decisions with a commitment to do good.

Figure 2 illustrates how the theory of corporate social responsibility is applied in the academic field. The primary task of the students is to focus on the learning objectives of the formal education program; that is, to participate in the educational process and to be successful. Universities focus on the micro-ethical aspect of students (ethical issues in professional and research practices) in relation to ethical responsibilities, while ignoring the organizational, social, legal, and political context. In the courses taught within the scope of social responsibility, students are expected to learn the macro-ethical side of business. In this learning process, building relationships with external partners is an important step (UNICEF, 2014; Berei, 2020). Students' philanthropic responsibility, on the other hand, refers to their contributions to the society to voluntarily improve the quality of life of other individuals to whom they belong (Berei, 2020).

Figure 2. The Caroll pyramid adapted for academic Context

Source: (Berei, 2020)

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices are spreading rapidly in both developed and developing countries. CSR has now been accepted as a management strategy, formalized, deeply integrated as a practice that benefits businesses and society, and has become part of corporate structures, policies and practices. With the logic of being beneficial for businesses and society, CSR has been adopted primarily with the idea of "business scenario" (Caroll, 2016).

Result

In our age, it has become a necessity for corporate structures and organizations to fulfill their corporate social responsibilities. Social stakeholders have now demonstrated that they have dominance in the growth of institutions due to their activities and studies. When the researches are examined, it is seen that there are a limited number of studies showing that the concepts of social responsibility and corporate social responsibility are related to education. This situation shows that the address of these important issues in the field of education is not yet sufficiently established. In particular, the role of teachers in the lessons of social issues and the lack of awareness of students about these issues indicate that the education system should make more efforts in this direction.

At this point, educational institutions and educators should make the concepts of social responsibility and corporate social responsibility an important part of the curriculum and provide opportunities for students to internalize these issues. Appropriate materials and educational resources should be provided for teachers to integrate these topics into their training programs, and teachers should be encouraged to receive training on these topics.

The social power that has come from the past to the present and will shape the future of the practices within the scope of corporate social responsibility and therefore after this time will continue to direct corporate social responsibilities as it progresses stronger day by day with all its stakeholders. In this context, the expectations of social values will guide the strategic success studies of institutional structures and organizations together with social values within the legal ground.

As a result, emphasizing the concepts of social responsibility and corporate social responsibility in education and transferring these issues to students will contribute to the growth of a more conscious and responsible society in the future. In this context, it is important that educators, administrators, and relevant stakeholders work collaboratively to achieve this goal.

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