

# Recognition of the theme “Social Responsibility” in Higher Education Institutions. Analysis of undergraduate courses in Business Administration in the state of Rio de Janeiro

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## Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the recognition of the theme “social responsibility” in undergraduate courses in Business Administration offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) in the State of Rio de Janeiro, from the viewpoint of course coordinators, students and student organizations that undertake social practices. A qualitative survey was conducted by applying 14 (fourteen) in-depth interviews with the coordinators, directors, professors and representatives of students social organizations. In addition, 15 (fifteen) questionnaires were completed by students who worked in the surveyed social organizations. The empirical results reveal that there is still a long way to go for Social Responsibility to be effectively included in the mandatory study program of the surveyed courses in Business Administration. In most cases, disciplines addressing social responsibility are optional (in private HEIs) or non-existent (in public HEI). Nevertheless, there is a notable increase in the number of students working in student organizations and engaged in social practices, which represent an opportunity for students to get work experience in the subject. However, this is still a small percentage, considering the amount of students registered on undergraduate courses in Business Administration. The findings also reveal that the main causes of this poor involvement of students in social entities are associated with bureaucracy as well as with the low recognition HEI give to social organizations.

**Keywords:** Social Responsibility. Undergraduate Courses in Business Administration. Student Development, Social Practices.

## Valorização do tema “Responsabilidade Social” em Instituições de Ensino Superior? Análise de cursos de Administração no estado do Rio de Janeiro

### Resumo

Este artigo tem por objetivo analisar o nível de valorização do tema “responsabilidade social” em cursos de Administração de instituições de ensino superior do estado do Rio de Janeiro, por meio da percepção de coordenadores de cursos, alunos e de entidades estudantis que promovem práticas sociais. Em termos metodológicos, a pesquisa possui natureza qualitativa e resulta da realização de 14 (quatorze) entrevistas em profundidade com coordenadores, diretores, professores e alunos representantes das entidades estudantis sociais. Complementarmente, foram aplicados 15 (quinze) questionários a alunos que atuaram nas entidades sociais investigadas. Os resultados empíricos revelam que ainda há um árduo caminho para que tal temática seja efetivamente inserida na grade curricular obrigatória dos cursos de Administração investigados. Na maioria dos casos, as disciplinas que tratam sobre responsabilidade social são optativas (IES privadas) ou inexistentes (IES públicas). Apesar disso, percebe-se um crescimento no número de estudantes que atuam em Entidades Estudantis no apoio a práticas sociais, que consiste em uma forma de os alunos terem experiência prática com o tema. Esse percentual ainda é baixo, considerando o contingente total de alunos matriculados nos cursos de Administração. Os achados revelam, ainda, que as principais causas desse baixo envolvimento dos estudantes em entidades sociais estão associadas à baixa valorização das entidades sociais pelas instituições de ensino superior, bem como a questões burocráticas.

**Palavras-Chave:** Responsabilidade Social. Cursos Graduação em Administração. Desenvolvimento do aluno. Práticas sociais.

## ¿Valoración del Tema “Responsabilidad Social en Instituciones de Educación Superior? Análisis de los cursos de Administración en el estado de Rio de Janeiro

### Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar el nivel de valoración del tema Responsabilidad Social en la carrera de Administración de instituciones de enseñanza superior del estado de Rio de Janeiro, a partir de la percepción de coordinadores de carrera, alumnos y de organizaciones estudiantiles que promueven prácticas sociales. Con relación a la metodología, esta investigación es de carácter cualitativo y resulta de la realización de catorce (14) entrevistas en profundidad con coordinadores, directores, profesores, y alumnos representantes de las organizaciones estudiantiles. Complementariamente, se aplicaron quince (15) cuestionarios a alumnos que integraron las organizaciones estudiantiles investigadas. Los resultados empíricos revelan que todavía existe un largo camino por recorrer para que esta cuestión sea efectivamente incorporada al currículo obligatorio de la carrera de Administración. En la mayoría de los casos, las materias que tratan sobre Responsabilidad Social son optativas (en los casos de instituciones de enseñanza superior privadas) o ni siquiera existen (en instituciones de enseñanza superior públicas). Sin embargo, se observa un crecimiento del número de estudiantes que participan en organizaciones estudiantiles para apoyar prácticas sociales-lo que para los alumnos es una forma de adquirir experiencia práctica en el tema-. De todos modos y en virtud de la totalidad de alumnos inscriptos en la carrera de Administración, este número aún es bajo. Los resultados revelan que las principales causas de este bajo nivel de participación de los alumnos en organizaciones estudiantiles están relacionadas a cuestiones burocráticas y al poco valor dado por las instituciones de enseñanza superior a las organizaciones estudiantiles.

**Palabras clave:** Responsabilidad Social. Cursos de Graduación en Administración. Desarrollo de Alumnos. Prácticas Sociales.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, new technologies, new interaction and new ways to approach economic, social, political and technological issues expand opportunities. In this context, it is reasonable to expect that the world’s population benefits from such development, in an equitable way. However, the uniform distribution of such benefits among the various individuals remains distant from reality.

It is clear that some social groups are able to concentrate more wealth than others. This is because while certain segments of the population expand their assets, others are deprived of several resources. In extreme cases, deprived from benefits that are basic to maintain a simple life.

Against this backdrop, the search for policies and strategies that can reduce inequality depends on greater action in this direction, from several different players. Governments, companies and society as whole have realized the need to decisively contribute to minimizing social and environmental problems and seek social equality (MOURA, COMINI and TEODÓSIO, 2015).

It is possible to observe the emergence of organizations aimed at promoting social actions with an emphasis on vulnerable areas. Equally important as the growth in the number of organizations, is the performance of future administrators aware of the relevant social role that every organization should play. Therefore, students of undergraduate courses in Business Administration, in particular, can engage in social activities during the course, as well as broaden their understanding about the theme “corporate social responsibility” (CSR). During their academic life, students have the possibility to understand the

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importance of this subject in the formulation of business strategies, knowing the impacts of their decisions on vulnerable parts of society.

This article reinforces the notion that higher education institutions (HEIs) and student social organizations (SSOs) play an important role in training professionals who are socially aware and knowledgeable of their role as citizens. Therefore, some relevant questions raised by this research are: Do HEIs encourage the engagement of students in student social organizations? How is the theme “social responsibility” addressed in the curriculum of undergraduate courses in Business Administration? How is this awareness being promoted within HEIs? Are the students of Administration courses interested in the study of social responsibility and in engaging in related practical activities?

The main objective of the study was to analyze the degree of recognition attributed to the theme “social responsibility” in undergraduate courses in Business Administration offered by HEIs in the state of Rio de Janeiro, through the perception of course coordinators, students and student organizations that promote social practices.

As for specific objectives, the study intends: (I) to analyze the extent to which the HEIs investigated (FGV-RJ, IBMEC-RJ, PUC-RJ, UFRJ and UFF) recognize teaching about and practicing social initiatives; (II) to examine how HEIs promote the engagement of students in undergraduate courses in Business Administration in student social organizations; (III) to understand how student social organizations promote social awareness to students; and (IV) to point out the reasons that lead students to participate (or not) in programs related to social initiatives.

Apparently, the role HEIs play in student training has been to potentially stimulate the recognition of social issues and learning about them, and there is evidence that the development of professional profiles sensitive to social responsibility is still at an early stage in Brazilian HEIs (OLIVEIRA et al., 2013).

As for the student organizations, they have played a complementary role in the development of social practices to be carried out by students. There are junior enterprises connected to the HEIs that seek to develop solutions adopting the approach of social entrepreneurship, conducting activities that positively impact society’s most vulnerable population (OLIVEIRA, 2003). These opportunities are beneficial when it comes to professional training, helping to prepare for business contexts that are more aligned to the notion of sustainability (OLIVEIRA et al., 2013; OLIVEIRA, 2003).

The contributions of the study are focused in two perspectives: academic and pedagogical. From the academic point of view, the research is justified because it brings elements that contribute to advance scientific research on the role of Administration Schools in training leaders committed to social responsibility, as well as to challenge HEIs to make changes aimed at quality teaching in Administration. Regarding the pedagogical aspect, the findings provide support to improve teaching methods and techniques in terms of encouraging social practices and CSR. In addition, the results contribute to the improvement and recognition of student social organizations as an opportunity for academic extension activity.

It is noteworthy that sustainability has been a topic widely discussed in organizations and in academia. Proof of this is the fact that the National Student Performance Exam (Enade-2015) included several questions that required students to understand ethics, sustainability and, above all, social responsibility.

This article presents a literature review, followed by the methodology of the research and the analysis of the data collected. After that, a section reporting the main findings is presented, followed by the final considerations.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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### Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Recent research approach the issue of CSR and associate it with business management, providing an incentive to carry out social activities, by justifying that such practice brings financial benefits to the management of organizations (DEMACARTY, 2009; ADAMS, THORNTON and SEPEHRI, 2012; TANG, HULL and ROTHENBERG, 2012; ECCLES, IOANNOU and SERAFEIM,

2014; FLAMMER, 2015). In addition, research demonstrated that adopting CSR practices contributes to influence consumer behavior (MOHR and WEBB, 2005; BECKER-OLSEN, CUDMORE and HILL, 2006; RAMAN, LIM and NAIR, 2012; WU and LIN, 2014). However, despite the relevance observed in present times, there is evidence that this topic started to be discussed in the early twentieth century, more precisely in the 1920s (SHELDON, 1924; DONHAM, 1927; 1929; FREEMAN and HASNAOUI, 2011; ANDRÁS and RAJCSÁNYI-MOLNÁR, 2015).

The theme continued to be part of academic thinking during the 1930s and 1940s, when further arguments on the subject were developed (BERLE, 1932; BARNARD, 1938; KREPS, 1940). However, it was only in the 1950s that the theme came to a definition that would later be known as the modern concept of corporate social responsibility (CARROLL, 1999). According to this definition, CSR “refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society” (BOWEN, 1953, p.6).

Such a vision thrived and found followers in the subsequent decades (DAVIS, 1960; MCGUIRE, 1963; CARROLL, 1979). However, even with the development of the theme, it became restricted to philanthropy and to being respectful towards society’s values. This was the context in which emerged a contrary view, expressed by

“[...] there is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits as long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition, without deception or fraud”. (FRIEDMAN, 1962, p. 112).

Even though Friedman’s view gained space in the debate, corporate social responsibility obtained more adepts leading to its wide dissemination in the 1970s (CARROLL, 1999). Among the definitions presented at that time, it is worthwhile highlighting the one by Carroll (1979, p. 499): “For a definition of social responsibility to fully address the entire range of obligations business has to society, it must embody the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary categories of business performance”. Decades later, the author reviewed this argument and replaced the term “discretionary” with “philanthropic” (CARROLL, 1991, p. 499).

The understanding that CSR involves several categories remains nowadays, in such a way that the term is seen as an “umbrella”, not restricted to philanthropy or ethics in organizations, and allowing the emergence of a multitude of definitions (MATTEN and MOON, 2008).

The theme found adepts all over the world, including Brazil. The definition that has been developed by several authors states CSR as a set of initiatives through which organizations seek to integrate ethical, social and environmental concerns into their relationship with clients, collaborators, suppliers, competitors, shareholders, governments and communities. The aim of these initiatives is to develop the organizations’ endeavors in a sustainable way (CONFEDERAÇÃO NACIONAL DA INDÚSTRIA, 2006; SIMÕES, 2008; ASSOCIAÇÃO VOLUNTÁRIOS PARA O SERVIÇO INTERNACIONAL, 2011).

Considering the historical context, Simões (2008) points out that the theme developed belatedly at the national level. The author says that only from the 1990s did Brazilian organizations and companies begin to disclose social reports in order to promote the best socio-environmental practices to enable more effective public policies. Among these institutes are the efforts of the Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analyzes (Ibase) and the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), organizations that have carried out diagnoses on the social practices of companies and the evolution of this context.

In the discussion about the current national context, Instituto Ethos is one of the most prominent organizations promoting CSR. The organization disseminates guidelines in the area of social responsibility and records the triple bottom line (economic, social and environmental dimensions) to guide the organizational agenda when it comes to sustainability. In addition, Instituto Ethos promotes the establishment of indicators that assess the degree of social responsibility of a company, such as values, transparency, internal public, environment, suppliers, customers, community, government, and society (ETHOS, 2015).

Consistent with this view and helping in the adoption of these practices nationwide is the National Confederation of Industry (CNI). The organization understands corporate social responsibility as a set of initiatives that: (I) advocate the development of

sustainable businesses, from economic, social and environmental points of view; (II) are manifested by the voluntary nature; (III) are aimed at their different audiences or stakeholders; (IV) are focused on the ethical dimension of their relationships with these publics, as well as on the quality of the company’s impacts on society and the environment (CONFEDERAÇÃO NACIONAL DA INDÚSTRIA, 2006).

On the other hand, Oliveira and Barbosa (2004) argue that CSR is characterized by: (I) being an individual undertaking with possible partnerships; (II) producing goods and services for the company and the community; (III) having as a measure of performance the return to stakeholders; (IV) aiming to add strategic value to the business and meet expectations from the market and in terms of perception of society/consumers. It is worth noting that, for the authors, CSR differs from social entrepreneurship because in the latter the performance measure goes beyond the return to those involved, and the initiative’s success is measured by the impact and the social transformation (OLIVEIRA and BARBOSA, 2004).

Considering the discussion above, it is possible to verify that corporate social responsibility aims to support an inclusive sustainable economic development. By promoting CSR practices, companies can generate benefits to society by increasing the quality of life of those involved in productive processes and promoting benefits for shareholders and society as a whole. In addition, a well-conducted social initiative guarantees companies a prominent position in the communities where they operate, which is a decisive factor in business self-preservation (BERTONCELLO and CHANG JÚNIOR, 2007).

## RECOGNITION OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PRACTICES

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The need to recognize and show the value of socially responsible practices has been under discussion for several years. Sethi (1975) emphasizes the need for a change in the behavior or positioning of companies and indicates that the negative image of some of them is due to company ignorance and lack of empathy towards society.

Wan-Jan (2006, p.180) adds saying “[...] CSR has also been described as a tool to build good corporate reputation”. Porter and Kramer (2006) agree, understanding that CSR can be an ally of company strategy.

However, it is worthwhile remembering that the need to recognize these practices arises from the importance of the sustainable use of common access resources. One of the first authors to discuss this understanding was Hardin (1968). He argues that those who use a common good enter an inevitable process, which results in the destruction of the very resources on which they depend. This concern was later reworded by Ostrom et al. (1999, p.278), demonstrating how challenging sustainable development can be:

[...] some of the most difficult challenges concern the management of large-scale resources that depend on international cooperation, such as fresh water in international basins or large marine ecosystems. Institutional diversity may be as important as biological diversity for our long-term survival.

Even with the need for international cooperation, problems such as social inequalities persist, which could hinder the process of mutual aid. Kondo (2009, p.6) warns that such social problems derive from the way new technologies are acquired and identifies the emergence of inequities in this process:

“[...] the benefits and costs deriving from technology are not evenly distributed among the population. The wealthier segment of the population benefits more from the positive results of technology and less from its unintended bad consequences”.

In economic and social terms, the author identifies that “Due to the very reason that the neoliberal belief is concerned only with increased efficiency in society, human needs are not taken into consideration” (KONDO, 2009, p. 7). It is possible to observe the emphasis given to the concentration of wealth, instead of on equal distribution, causes social inequalities and the unsustainable use of resources by people.

Kanie, Haas, Andresen et al. (2013) point out that development in an unsustainable way has created a very serious situation, and problems have already reached or are reaching a point of irreversible change, with negative consequences for a healthy planet. However, with greater social commitment on the part of organizations and society, it would be possible to have a positive impact on both social and environmental awareness (KONDO, 2009; MOURA, COMINI and TEODÓSIO, 2015).

In addition, Kondo (2009, p. 31) says:

“These socially committed firms and organizations would work to fulfill simultaneously the roles of raising the consciousness of society about social and environmental issues and creating productive organizations that fully take into consideration the environment and the people”.

It is in this context that the process of recognizing, of giving value to socially responsible practices, has recently begun. Several measures to promote a solution to such social problems are becoming part of the agendas and projects, both in the private and public sectors.

Some authors, such as Moura, Comini and Teodósio (2015, p. 444), point out: “In the last decades, civil society organizations (CSOs), governments, and corporations have been fighting social and environmental problems, particularly in developing countries”. Among these emerging economies, it is observed that Brazil has sought to promote greater awareness among the population in general (MOURA, COMINI and TEODÓSIO, 2015).

The connection between social organizations and the private sector is becoming not only increasingly common, but also necessary in order to cause and expand the desired social impact. Two goals previously seen as incompatible – financial sustainability and the creation of social value – have become inseparable, and, together, they are the linchpin of the operations of such organizations. (MOURA, COMINI and TEODÓSIO, 2015, p. 458).

Mollicone (2003) identifies that the private sector and partnerships with civil society are growing due to the perceived deficiency of the public sector in dealing with social issues. According to the author, the theme of social responsibility is extremely important, since it engages companies in issues of public interest, strengthening the nonprofit sector and alleviating the costs for governments.

Considering this scenario, there is a growing demand for company managers to be able to promote solutions that maximize both financial and social aspects (MOURA, COMINI and TEODÓSIO, 2015). Of course, corporate social responsibility, which is one of the common ways of working on social issues in the context of Business Administration, will increasingly permeate the managerial environment.

## **INCLUSION OF PRACTICES AND SOCIAL PROJECTS IN UNDERGRADUATE COURSES IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

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Taking into consideration the above, it is crucial to understand how the theme of social responsibility unfolds within HEIs, which promote the education of young people who will act as administrators in the future. In this way, it is imperative to discuss the key competencies needed of socially responsible administrators.

The first step is to discuss the concept of competence, which represents, according to Perrenoud (2001, p. 20), “... all the resources we mobilize to act”. Such resources are vast, and scholarly or common sources, are shared or private and are part of these resources. The author identifies several attempts to establish a concept of competence, sometimes taking an erudite or intuitive connotation. Among the different definitions, competence is identified as the ability of a subject to mobilize all or part of their cognitive and affective resources to face a family of complex situations (PERRENOUD, 2001). There are authors who point out that the term constitutes a considerably old idea, being (re-)conceptualized and (re-)valued at the present

time (FLEURY and FLEURY, 2001). In these terms, “competence” results from the combination of multiple knowledge: know-how, how to act, how to be; all able to provide effective responses to the challenges arising from the current business context (SPENCER and SPENCER, 1993).

In turn, Gondim (2002) suggests that the professional profile that an HEI seeks to provide students with, is based on three main groups: (I) competences derived from logical and abstract reasoning, criticism and comprehension of general knowledge; (II) specialized skills linked to the profession; and (III) behavioral and attitudinal competences that are therefore linked to psychological traits and personal abilities of the individual.

On the other hand, Oliveira and Barbosa (2004) argue that the skills required for the entrepreneur working for a social cause are: (I) to know how to adopt a business-minded approach in working to solve social problems; (II) be sensitive to social problems; (III) have the ability to interact with diverse sectors of society, from communities to governments.

Melo Neto and Froes (2002) add that a “social entrepreneur” is a leader prepared to work in organizations with a social mission, or a professional who carries out social responsibility projects in a given company. In these terms, it is possible to distinguish between the competencies required for the social entrepreneur and those needed by the conventional manager. While the measure of success of the first is the social impact (the number of beneficiaries of the social program, for instance), the conventional entrepreneur is evaluated by the company’s financial result.

Corroborating this idea, many authors argue that in spite of a great effort in the development of technical skills within the courses, it is important that behavioral skills are also developed (GONDIM, 2002; SCORSOLINI-COMIN, MATIAS and INOCENTE, 2008).

It is noted that the education in Business Administration has privileged technical training in order to reinforce the clear concern with the labor market. This practice eventually leads the HEIs to invest less in other skills. There is evidence that the education in Administration has emphasized the development of instrumental rationality based on financial results. Aspects related to social practices are rarely studied during the course (SOUZA, CARVALHO and XAVIER, 2003; OLIVEIRA et al., 2013).

The guidelines of undergraduate courses in Business Administration and Accounting privilege technical qualification of Administrators and Accountants in decision-making and implementation of actions in organizations reinforcing market values. Ethics, when contemplated, does not present itself as a guiding element for the three groups analyzed (profile, competence and skills, and curricular content), which allows to infer a certain degree of incoherence or a search for social legitimacy, even though there is a clear concern about professional practice or the ‘organizational field’ (business world). Education thus appears from the standpoint of a possible separation between the world of work and the world of life. (SOUZA, CARVALHO and XAVIER, 2003, p. 9).

Rethinking the education and skills development of undergraduate students of Business Administration becomes important when the intention is to prepare people who can make decisions that include perspectives other than financial, such as ethical and social issues. In a scenario in which CSR becomes more relevant, exploring such skills in Administration courses can contribute to form socially responsible citizens (SOUZA, CARVALHO and XAVIER, 2003).

It is evident that the role that educational institutions have in forming the student has worked as one of the possible stimuli. Authors identify the recognition of the social issue within educational institutions. However, some studies indicate that, in spite of the value of the theme, there is still much to be done within undergraduate courses in Business Administration in Brazilian HEIs. It is noticed that:

[...] the inclusion of disciplines related to commitments to the community, social projects, environment, among other issues, is not yet institutionalized, since it depends on the students’ interest in attending elective courses and/or the training of professors teaching the course. (OLIVEIRA, 2014, p. 152).

It is also worth noting that several curricula of the courses studied focus on a functional perspective and emphasize traditional disciplines of the Administration field (financial management, marketing, production, among others), with a small emphasis on compulsory subjects that deal with social issues (OLIVEIRA, 2014 ).

It is also identified that

[...] behavioral and attitudinal skills related to issues such as cooperation, entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, ethics, are little emphasized in Administration courses in the country. Technical competencies are clearly prioritized, indicating the importance of reflecting on process of education in Administration. (OLIVEIRA et al., 2013, p. 5).

It is observed, therefore, that the HEIs guide their curricula mainly on the provision of theoretical and practical knowledge focused on traditional and technical aspects of Administration and, therefore, do not explore as much the development of the other skills essential to form the professional profile. A recent and complementary form of providing training that include the CSR is the experience of academic extension activities.

It is worth emphasizing that, according to the legislation, “[...] the three pillars – teaching, research and extension – form a fundamental base for Brazilian university, and they cannot be compartmentalized” (MOITA and ANDRADE, 2009, p.269). In the constitution, article 207 states: “the universities have didactic-scientific and administrative autonomy, as well as autonomy when it comes to financial and patrimonial management. The universities will obey the principle of inseparability between teaching, research and extension” (BRASIL, 1988).

Silva (2000, p.3) identifies extension activities as: “[...] the articulator between the university and social needs, with a task: to promote the social commitment of this institution”. Thus, the author points out that:

Extension acquires its own space in the structure in the form of Dean, coordination, etc. justifying such apparatus to ensure that the demands of society are absorbed. It is the academic extension representing the “social consciousness of the university”. To overcome the fragmentary vision that eventually forms, it is proposed to articulate extension with teaching and research, which is even enshrined in law. (SILVA, 2000, p. 8).

However, authors realize that the inseparable connection between teaching, research and extension is not yet part of the practice of many professors, “[...] either because undergraduate courses’ emphasis is on teaching, or because post-graduate the focus is research” (MOITA and ANDRADE, 2009, p. 269).

In the almost two hundred years of higher education in Brazil, educational legislation has gradually registered the effort to transform the knowledge transmission model into a model of production and transmission of scientific knowledge, combining research and teaching, as a result of access to universities. More recently, extension has emerged as the third element of academic achievement, responding to the criticisms and pressures undergone by the university from sectors and social demands. (MOITA and ANDRADE, 2009 p. 269).

As a possible extension provided by the HEIs, student organizations are established within the HEI offering courses on Business Administration and are presented as a way for students to gain social skills.

## **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS: RECOGNITION AND GROWTH OF JUNIOR ENTERPRISES IN BRAZIL**

Considering the recent recognition given to student organizations, authors show that the number of these entities has grown within HEIs in the past few years. Among the reasons that explain this growth, some studies indicate the interest of students and HEIs themselves in creating these organizations, observing that they are able to encourage the development of skills that complement those provided by HEIs (OLIVEIRA, 2003; OLIVEIRA et al., 2013).



The Junior Enterprise is an organization connected to an HEI (Higher Education Institution) and managed entirely by students, both in terms of services provided and projects operated and in terms of the organization’s administration. HEI professors supervise the technical work conducted by the students when providing services, so the students do not work alone. The main goal is to establish a relationship between theory and practice within the teaching process and offer a better professional qualification. It does not seek profit; instead, it seeks to prepare young professionals for the future labor market. (OLIVEIRA, 2003, p.3).

According to Brasil Júnior, an organization that gathers all the junior enterprises in Brazil, it is estimated that there are currently approximately 236 junior enterprises in the country (BRASIL JÚNIOR, 2015). In Brazil this type of organization was first established in the 1980s, and three Business Administration courses promoted them in their faculties: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Fundação Álvaro Armando Penteado and Escola Politécnica de Universidade de São Paulo (USP) (OLIVEIRA, 2003).

Although junior enterprises focus their efforts on promoting projects in traditional areas of administration, it is observed that a new horizon for this type of company is beginning to emerge, since these organizations have included social projects in their agendas (OLIVEIRA, 2003; OLIVEIRA et al., 2013).

Oliveira (2003, p.3) points out: “[...] Recently, it has been possible to observe the emergence of junior enterprises in the social field – for example in FGV and the FEA Júnior, both offering consultancy for social initiatives – developing social responsibility projects, social activities and working to improve management in nonprofit organizations”. In addition, the author confirms the view that, “among the various possibilities, the junior enterprise emerges as a viable and creative alternative and has a strong impact both in the area of academic extension and in the training and research for professional qualification” (OLIVEIRA, 2003, p.12).

It should be emphasized that the idea of the junior enterprise contemplates the three pillars of university education, that is, teaching, research and extension (OLIVEIRA, 2003). Thus, this practice has been in place for students to develop not only technical skills, but also behavioral competences.

The importance that this type of organization can have in student’s training is noteworthy. In addition to complementing the education of undergraduate students, it can generate positive impacts, both in the professional, academic and personal dimensions.

It is worth emphasizing that it is through junior enterprises that students have an opportunity to approach nonprofit organizations and therefore understand social issues and engage in this kind of project. According to the authors, there is a growing tendency for junior enterprises to work together with companies that have a social mission, where students can be exposed to and deal with social issues, which contributes to a more human education, forging people aware of their citizenship (OLIVEIRA, 2003; OLIVEIRA et al., 2013).

In a research on junior enterprises, 41.5% (54 out of 130) respondents consider to have participated in experiences related to social issues whilst involved in junior enterprises operating in their HEI. The researchers, however, pointed out: “... it is important to observe the high percentage of students who did not know how to respond when asked about activities that would enable this type of experience. Considering that the respondents are students who have been in the HEI for some years” (OLIVEIRA et al., 2014, p.151).

These researchers have identified some practices that, if properly employed, contribute to forge leaders in the social field:

(I) participation in research on social issues; (II) involvement of business administration students in extension projects developed by the university; (III) performance of the junior enterprise related to the course of Business Administration in social projects. (OLIVEIRA et al. 2014, p.160).

One of the obstacles, according to these authors, is related to the students’ lack of interest and permanence in projects and activities in the social area.

Therefore, is important for HEIs to recognize and encourage the proliferation of these practices in academic extension. The engagement of students in student social organizations can contribute to train administrators able (among other things) to work in corporate social responsibility.

## METHOD

Considering the intention to understand social phenomena in depth observing their context, this research adopted a qualitative approach. The contributions of this approach allow a holistic understanding of the problem studied and the relationships established within this context (GODOY, 1995; MARCONI and LAKATOS, 2006).

Qualitative research is also appropriate in order to generate descriptive data and enables an exhaustive understanding of the phenomenon as a whole. In this way, it is an appropriate approach when there is ambiguity in the theory, or when the variables are intertwined (GODOY, 1995; MARCONI and LAKATOS, 2006).

The main sources of evidence in qualitative studies are the data collected through interviews, documents and archives, physical artifacts, questionnaires, as well as data from direct and indirect observation (EISENHARDT, 1989; YIN, 2005). Hence, data collected for this research was based on in-depth interviews and direct observation of 05 coordinators of undergraduate courses in Business Administration in HEIs in Rio de Janeiro (FGV-RJ, IBMEC-RJ, PUC-RJ, UFRJ and UFF); 02 directors of Business Administration departments in public HEIs, 04 professors responsible for student organizations called Enactus and 04 student representatives of the same student organizations (Enacuts). The study counted on a total of 14 interviewees (see Chart 1).

**Chart 1**  
**List of interviewees**

N.	Interviewees	State
1	Ex-coordinator undergraduate course in Business Administration	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
2	Coordinator undergraduate course in Business Administration	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
3	Coordinator undergraduate course in Business Administration	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
4	Coordinator undergraduate course in Business Administration	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
5	Director of Business Administration department	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
6	Director of Business Administration department	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
7	Professor responsible for Enactus	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
8	Professor responsible for Enactus	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
9	Professor responsible for Enactus	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
10	Professor responsible for Enactus	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
11	Student representing Enactus	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
12	Student representing Enactus	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
13	Student representing Enactus	Rio de Janeiro, RJ
14	Student representing Enactus	Rio de Janeiro, RJ

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In order to select the institutions to be approached in this research, we observed the results the HEI obtained in the last evaluations conducted by the Ministry of Education and chose those better positioned. The ease of access to the interviewees was also one of the criteria.

Enactus is an international non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring students from higher education institutions to improve the world through entrepreneurial action (ENACTUS, 2015). Some relevant aspects are:

- The student organization seeks to promote that students work on social issues, developing their cognitive skills. This allows for an understanding of social issues, which is important in an administrator’s daily life;
- Develop specialized skills, offering students the opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired in HEIs and to experience them in practice;
- Promote behavioral and attitudinal skills, by placing students in the environment in which social practices need to be implemented in order to promote intelligent social solutions for communities.

Enactus provides a platform for students to create community development projects that put people’s ingenuity and talent at the center of improving their livelihoods (ENACTUS, 2015). In these junior enterprises, students are guided by educators and supported by business leaders, and the organizations provide training and recognize the importance of acting for social impact.

The data obtained through interviews was studied using the method of content analysis by category. This procedure consists of using techniques of systematization, interpretation and description of the content of the data collected in order to understand the discourse, to deepen its characteristics and to extract the most important details. In this way, it was possible to examine several dimensions of the interviewees’ responses and make inferences based on them. To facilitate this step, categories of analysis were created based on the literature, and then reviewed considering the research evidence (GODOY, 1995).

In addition to the interviews, a structured questionnaire was elaborated with questions separated in three groups: open questions, closed questions and multiple choice. This questionnaire was applied to 15 students attending the course of Business Administration and who are participating, or participated, in an Enactus in one of the HEIs researched. This questionnaire allowed to explore objective and subjective aspects, the behavior and opinions of the respondents on the themes researched (TERENCE and ESCRIVÃO FILHO, 2006; MARCONI and LAKATOS, 2006). In this way, the students’ opinions were analyzed, and the results allowed confronting their perceptions with those of the professors and coordinators on the themes of the research.

Regarding the profile of the students, it is important to observe that 11 of them were from FGV-RJ, which is explained by the fact that the Enactus of this HEI is the student social organization that has received more Business Administration students in recent years in comparison to others. Enactus of PUC-RJ, for instance, since its creation has had only one active student of Business Administration, and for a short period. So, from Enactus of UFRJ only one student of Business Administration completed the questionnaire.

Among the respondents, 08 students currently participate in the Enactus of their respective HEI, while 07 students participated in the past (not more than 2 years before the research). Regarding how long was the time students have participated in Enactus, 09 students participate or participated in the organization during a semester of the undergraduate course in Business Administration. Finally, it was observed that the 15 students work or worked, on average, in one to three projects within the student organization Enactus.

The combined use of several sources of evidence – literature review, interviews, questionnaires and direct observation – allowed the complementation of information obtained from each source. This technique allows the connection of multiple sources of evidence to analyze the same phenomenon, which allows the triangulation of the findings (EISENHARDT, 1989; YIN, 2005).

## DATA ANALYSIS

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### Promoting and recognizing CSR in undergraduate courses in Business Administration

Regarding the private undergraduate courses in Business Administration, several coordinators and students reported that teaching social and CSR practices is carried out through elective courses (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, and 14). Regarding the mandatory courses, most of the respondents identified that some courses superficially approach the theme of social issues, such as: Ethics, Politics and Environmental Management, Philosophy, Social Sciences and Brazilian Institutions, etc. (Interviews 1, 2, 7, 9, 11 and 14).

It is worth emphasizing the perception of coordinators interviewed (interviews 1 and 2), who indicate the recognition of the social theme:

Every university needs to be concerned with three basic points: teaching, research and extension. For extension, as a professor and coordinator, I was interested in promoting social issues for undergraduates, mainly through student organizations. (Interview 1).

Social issues are an essential subject, and teaching in undergraduate courses would fail and would not fulfill their mission without touching this subject. An HEI needs to work to clarify these issues among students and raise social aware. As a coordinator, I would like to expand these social activities and stimulate social entrepreneurship so that we become an institution not only inclusive, but with significant impact. (Interview 2).

Even so, the CSR approach is not a priority and is a theme superficially explored. Students representing Enactus corroborate this perception. The coordinator from interview 2 states:

There is a great deal of concern with academic excellence; including a spirit of competition within each class because of the awards. I believe that there is need for a parallel work with the aim of raising awareness so students put this merit in perspective. I mean that the student then understands that the course does not measure excellence in a larger context. The awards are given for academic excellence, but there is the social part, which is not included in this evaluation. These are voluntary actions students are doing on their own, when they do. (Interview 2).

Regarding the undergraduate courses in Business Administration in public institutions, the coordinators interviewed (interviews 5 and 6) informed that they cannot easily address CSR and social issues in their lectures, even in the case of elective lectures. The respondent from interview 5 says:

Our undergraduate course does not promote any social activity, and when it happens, it is because of personal effort of very few professors who personally understand that this theme should be approached. They decide to offer some knowledge to students about social issues. We do not approach this subject, because the subject is not explicitly part of our pedagogical project. (Interview 5).

Respondents reveal that CSR is insufficiently addressed in public institutions, and acknowledge that this occurs only when professors voluntarily decide to explore these subjects in their courses (as pointed out in interviews 5 and 6). However, there are few professors working on the theme, as said by the respondent from interview 5:

The dynamics of society is much faster than the updating of pedagogical projects, so our institution is outdated. This theme was not fashionable before and now that it is, our course does not have the means to address it [...] I also must say that our course has some anomalies, such as a faculty that is not mostly from the area of Business Administration, and few have experience in companies and organizations. How people who have no experience on the subject of Corporate Social Responsibility, which I see that is mainly learned by practice ... it becomes difficult to explore these issues in our HEI. (Interview 5).

Based on empirical findings, it is observed that one of the factors that influence the approach of the CSR in the courses, according to the interviews, is the interest (or not) that professors and the department have regarding the subject. Professors argue that engagement would be greater if there was recognition of these practices at the institutional level (Interviews 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14).

Therefore, the approach to social issues must be motivated by both the HEI and the departments. Although a number of private HEIs are working to offer these social practices, some of these institutions may be relegating these issues in order to focus on preparing a professional with more technical skills, which they believe are the skills most demanded by the labor market.

An Enactus coordinator and one of its representatives from a private HEI pointed out that, because the course positioning is more geared towards “market desires”, the social approach is explored in a very incipient way (Interviews 4, 10, and 15). Most of the students stated that there is a low incentive to learn these practices and they had to learn them, mainly, on their own and with the occasional support from some professors.

Finally, the coordinators and professors of another private HEI consider that the approach to these issues, besides being an institutional cause, is also raised by the undergraduate departments of this HEI. They identify that such issues are passed on to students through promotion of awareness-raising initiatives, student programs and internships that address such practices, such as through junior social enterprises (Interviews 1, 2, and 7).

In order to complete the undergraduate courses in Business Administration, the Ministry of Education implemented a requirement for students to fulfill a schedule of complementary activities. Interviewees acknowledge that such supplementary hours can also be acquired through participation in social projects and junior enterprises (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9).

I realize that the students have worked on many social issues within student organizations, especially those focused on these practices. The students were able to access a rich discussion that the classroom alone would not offer, because aspects such as responsibility and solidarity were developed in these junior enterprises. In the course I was working on, I realized that at the beginning these projects served to address the demands of curricular extension, but at the end something far better happened than I had imagined in terms of student learning and the demonstration of that learning. (Interview 1).

In other words, the interviewees understand the junior enterprise as a source of curricular extension activity for students, which should be widely recognized in the university context, as it contributes providing complementary skills (especially regarding social development) to the technical ones that are part of the training in Administration (Interviews 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 14).

Coordinators, professors and representatives of Enactus have indicated that student social organizations, more specifically the Enactus junior enterprises, have played a key role in the engagement of students in social issues. Activities dealing with social issues allow the development and application of the theory of Administration in practice, focusing on social issues and social and environmental responsibility (Interviews 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14).

Several respondents observe that junior social enterprises – Enactus – are an excellent source of learning regarding social issues (Interviews 1, 3, 10, 11 and 13). The coordinators interviewed point out that the projects developed by undergraduate students generate positive impacts in communities of Rio de Janeiro. Students observe the applicability of their learning in Administration and manage to promote social actions through these student organizations with projects that provide solutions to communities’ urgent needs.

In spite of this, public HEIs, due to bureaucratic issues, have shown little accessibility to the expansion of these student social organizations within their structures. It is understood that the junior social enterprises working in these public HEIs do not receive enough support due to lack of institutional recognition regarding these practices (Interviews 8 and 12).

## **RECOGNITION OF STUDENT SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS IN HEIS: PERCEPTION OF COORDINATORS, PROFESSORS, ENACTUS REPRESENTATIVES AND STUDENTS**

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The findings indicate that professors are the main players helping student organizations to grow and helping students to perform their tasks in the best possible way. In addition to this support from professors undergraduate courses in Business

Administration provide financial support and usually allocate a place within the HEI for the student organizations to carry out and develop social projects (Interviews 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14).

The initiative to encourage work on social issues via junior enterprises such as Enactus, has been widely supported by professors and coordinators (Interviews 1, 2, 11 and 14). The interviewees of private HEIs clearly indicate that the support is broad and not limited to the professors of the undergraduate courses in Business Administration. Professors from other departments (Law, Engineering, Mathematics, Economics, Social Service), also provide support considering that students of these courses are also interested in engaging in the student organization.

Thus, professors generally show an interest in supporting student organizations and provide academic and professional support to students who participate in Enactus (Interviews 11, 12, 13 and 14).

Enactus representatives of some HEIs observed that, in spite of this support, coordinators encourage little participation of students in the activities carried out by junior enterprises (Interviews 11 and 13). The incentive is considered insufficient to inspire a greater interest of the students.

Our HEI ended up reducing the incentive: this is not to be confused with discouragement. The institution has reduced the promotion, limiting the presentation of student organizations to specific periods, such as in university fairs, where all student organizations participate and compete for the students (Interview 13).

The students who answered the questionnaire also had this perception. Most emphasize that HEIs provide little incentive to engage in these student social organizations. Many students perceive that the organizations are not encouraging engagement and none of the students attributed the reason for their engagement to the incentive of the course’s coordination.

Thus, findings show that all students indicated that the HEI did not highly promote social projects to the students. Many responded that they feel that the HEI ends up promoting a competition between the junior enterprises and other organizations, instead of encouraging the cooperation and participation in all the opportunities offered in the context of the higher education institution, including the junior social enterprises.

Regarding public HEIs, the interviewees report that there is no great incentive for engaging students in Enactus. The student organization is considered as another “study group” (Interviews 8 and 11). Thus, there is an incomprehension on the part of the HEI regarding the social role of the organization. Enactus representative explains that:

[...] we tried to get support in our university, but they voted that we should not be recognized, because they believe that public universities cannot have such strong ties with a private organization like Enactus, which is actually an international NGO and a student organization. (Interview 11).

Based on the data analyzed, it can be inferred that public HEIs have not been concerned with students’ engagement in themes and social practices, while some private HEIs have recognized these themes by supporting student organizations and junior enterprises.

As for the contingent of undergraduate students who are interested in these practices, the coordinators of some of the private HEIs pointed out that between 5% and 10% of the student body (10 to 20, on average) participate in Enactus. The professor responsible for supporting Enactus mentioned that there is growing interest from Business Administration students, who started to recognize the relevance of these practices (Interviews 1, 7, 11).

Thus, it is concluded that, although the number of Business Administration students attending Enactus is not yet representative in comparison to the total number of students, they are the ones that are most interested in participating in the selection processes, compared to the number of students from other courses.

The findings indicated that one of the factors influencing the contingent in these entities is the physical proximity between the student organization and the area in which the projects are carried out. If one of them is too far from the others, students begin to lose interest in participating in these practices (Interviews 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14).

Enactus from our university came about through the encouragement of the undergraduate course in Engineering and our meetings happen in places that are over 20km from the campus of Business Administration course. Therefore, given this distance, the students of Business Administration do not tend to enroll in our selection process. Currently we have approximately 40 members, mainly students of Engineering courses, such as Production Engineering, which has similar characteristics to Administration. However, no Business Administration students participate in the organization at the moment, and they say this is because of the distance. (Interview 12).

Moreover, the findings pointed out that students need incentives to engage in such practices, as many would not voluntarily engage.

When the interviewees were asked about the reasons that encourage the students to participate in the junior social enterprises, it was noticed that there is not a voluntary and spontaneous interest on the part of the students (Interviews 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13). One of the coordinators reveals that:

Students, when seeking complementary or extension activities such as the ones related to social issues, are not necessarily doing so for the project itself, but may be participating to fulfill their workload and for other purposes. I realize that they can be very commercial in that sense. (Interview 3).

Such reports raise the question of whether recognition is attributed because of the desire to contribute to the common good or because of the access to individual benefits (such as, for example, evidence of complementary activities required by the Ministry of Education).

Regarding the answers of the questionnaires, it was observed that 14% (2 students) would like to have some incentive beyond the complementary hours, and observe that, if there were, more students would be interested in the junior social enterprises. This perception was also shared by some of the Enactus representatives and professors (Interviews 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13).

## **SOCIAL IMPACT OF ENACTUS ON STUDENTS AND THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED**

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All Enactus representatives say that the organization’s aim is to empower students, training them, and enabling projects that promote social impact in communities in Rio de Janeiro (Interviews 11, 12, 13 and 14). One Enactus representative says:

Enactus is a global organization working with several actors, empowering them both socially and in terms of sustainability. It is expected that, with the contribution of the students who learn at the same time as they act in the projects, it is possible to develop and promote viable opportunities within communities, stimulating economic and social aspects. (Interview 11).

Coherent with this view, professors and coordinators interviewed recognize the power that Enactus has in training professionals to come up with creative and entrepreneurial solutions (Interviews 1, 9, 10 and 12).

It should be noted that the students who answered the questionnaire evaluated that the learning acquired in these themes and the recognition of the importance of acting for social impact tend to be very positive. Of the respondents, many rated learning as very good and few rated the learning obtained as average – respondents that rated learning as ‘average’ declared that because they did not have enough knowledge about “social entrepreneurship” and projects requiring CSR and addressing social issues.

Enactus representatives also point out that the knowledge that the organization provides to the students is given by the promotion of practices focused on entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and the development of soft skills, since students need to constantly interact with a diversity of cultures and people’s conditions, being exposed to other realities. (Interviews 1, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14).

In order to encourage a professionalization of the students within Enactus, the organizations establish a hierarchy with well-defined roles and attributions, that is, they define sectors that are very characteristic of Administration such as Marketing, Human Resources, Finance and Projects. (Interviews 11, 12, 13 and 14).

Some organizations, however, have complementary and distinct sectors such as innovation and quality (Interview 12) or, in other cases, prefer a more horizontal and less hierarchical performance, in which all play different roles within a particular Enactus (Interviewee 11). It should be emphasized that these organizations promote a constant rotation of the students in different areas of the enterprise, in order to promote a holistic organizational knowledge:

Although our organization does not receive support from the HEIs, we are very organized, because all the students who participate in our organization have at least two assignments: (I) act on a project (be it a project in progress – senior – or in research aimed at attracting new projects); and (II) act in one of the administrative areas of Enactus. (Interview 12).

Interviews showed that in some HEIs it is recommended that undergraduate students do not engage in internships in the first semesters of the university (these HEIs request that basic education cycles should be completed before the internships). Thus, in the first semesters, students are encouraged to participate in other academic activities, such as scientific initiation and student organizations – such as Enactus (Interviews 7 and 11).

Thus, it is observed that HEIs seek to promote student organizations in general, with emphasis on students at the beginning of the courses. By promoting presentations of Enactus representatives and through “word of mouth”, students receive information and decide if they are interested in engaging in this type of socially focused activity (Interviews 11, 12, 13 and 14).

Regarding the problems faced by Enactus, its representatives identify that the demands from the undergraduate courses make it difficult for students to participate more actively in the student organization (Interviews 11, 12 and 13). Since courses often demand a lot of study and request for research and other academic tasks, students find it difficult to reconcile academic demands with the demands of the student organization.

A major difficulty of our Enactus is that the educational institution demands a lot in terms of study and schedule. Students get overwhelmed and have no support if they want to engage more and play a bigger role in the student organization. (Interview 11).

Finally, data show that a large number of respondents identified with this social project and would like to work in companies that adopt such an approach. Several students also responded that they would be in favor of looking for job offers in organizations that promote social practice. Few students answered “neither favorable nor unfavorable”, or that they would not be interested in looking for opportunities associated with social issues.

The main causes of students’ lack of interest are related to the “low payment” offered by organizations focused on these practices and, in other cases, the “willingness to work in traditional companies”.

## CONCLUSION

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There is a growing need to develop trained professionals on economic, social and environmental responsibility. Companies have been pressured to act broadly, leaving behind the overemphasis on financial gain and contributing to initiatives aimed at reducing social problems in the region where they are located. Therefore, training professionals in order to develop social and environmental awareness as well as the ability to handle activities related to social welfare should be stimulated within HEIs. For this reason, the theme ‘CSR’ has been widely debated both in academia and in business management.

The data obtained reveal that there is a need to promote social issues within private undergraduate courses in Business Administration. These issues are worked within the courses through the promotion of academic extension activities.

Despite the efforts of some private HEIs in promoting discussion and learning about social and CSR issues in undergraduate courses in Business Administration, the view that such issues should not be addressed is still present in some institutions. It is a view based on the notion that students need a high load of technical skills in order to match the demands of the labor



market, disregarding the field covered by nonprofit organizations. It is possible that this view changes with time, because there is evidence that the market itself begins to value social issues.

In the context of public HEIs, their undergraduate courses in Business Administration are still based on traditional teaching, where such subjects are not addressed. In practice, one of the main obstacles to include social themes in the courses is the bureaucratic process necessary for updating the curriculum in public HEIs. This means that contemporary issues are being neglected and, as a consequence, student’s education in terms of citizenship and social awareness tends to be compromised.

to develop behavioral and social skills as well as technical skills. Moreover, the Ministry of Education is the entity that can recognize the need to promote these practices through undergraduate courses in Business Administration. Together, these two institutions are the main players to stimulate student social learning.

As an academic extension activity, complementary to an education towards citizenship, junior social enterprises (such as Enactus) represent one of the main spaces for student training to act on social issues. The participation of students in these entities consists of effective learning from the point of view of behavioral and social skills.

However, public HEIs offer limited support for these students’ organizations to work. Conflicts and lack of recognition inhibit the promotion of a practice that promotes the training of socially responsible professionals in public HEIs undergraduate courses.

Private HEIs, however, recognize the relevance of these junior enterprises and, in general, provide the means for them to grow within the academic environment. Professors from these HEIs provide support for students to be able to properly perform the tasks required by the junior social enterprise.

Despite the recognition of social issues and CSR as themes to be addressed in private HEIs, it was possible to observe that the institutions do not effectively stimulate the participation of students in nonprofits and social initiatives. The empirical findings reveal that the focus of the private HEIs is on the promotion of academic extension activities in the student curriculum, not specifically academic extension related to social issues. Thus, there are still few students engaged in this area.

Another important aspect presented here is related to student intentions to engage in these practices. The student activities in nonprofits do not occur spontaneously, since the students seek some return when they engage in these organizations. Among the benefits envisaged are fulfilling courses’ requirements for complementary activities and validating activities as part of the curriculum to obtain the degree. The interviews showed that a kind of “commercial/trading aspect” persists among students regarding these activities.

Finally, the growing recognition of CSR and other issues related to social practices leads to the fact that students of Business Administration are becoming interested in working in areas of companies related to sustainability. It is possible to observe students who, after completing the course, decided to engage in social entrepreneurship through establishing nonprofits or foundations in order to improve society.

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