

## UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

Latin American universities present change in which University Social Responsibility (RSU) stands out considered as a good capable of promoting social change commitments, through implemented training processes. In this sense, this research investigates the perception of students about the functions of the university and its social responsibility. Descriptive correlational research with a sample of 326 students from the Santiago Antúnez de Mayolo National University (UNASAM). For information processing, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure and Bartlett's Sphericity Test were used, as well as the correlation analysis between the variables. It was concluded that they meet a correlation greater than 0.700 that influence university social responsibility according to the perception of students, this means that students have a leading and favorable role in three fundamental areas such as: responsible campus, professional training and citizen and social participation.

**Keywords:** Students; Perception; Functions of the Universities; University Social Responsibility.

### INTRODUCTION

In the XXI century, in the middle of a globalized world, the university is a social institution whose mission is to transform society seeking the good of humanity and its sustainable development. Through the integral training of professionals, scientific research and extension, it has the social challenge to seek alternatives that contribute to promote socio-economic changes, perfect social organization and achieve a better adaptation to the changes of this era.

That is to say, today's universities must constitute a place in society in which innovation, imagination and creativity have their natural abode, thus, and the management of the UNASAM does not escape from this scheme to be studied.

The university in Latin America becomes responsible for the organizational and academic impact from its mediations on the social and personal life of those who form part of it and on whom it impacts. The dimension assumed lays the foundations of a vision that frames new forms and modes of production of knowledge emerging from the surrounding reality; and focuses its relevance on regional and local interest.

The instrumental function, from this perspective, becomes a priority (Turpo-Gebera, 2019, p. 19). Likewise, it involves establishing a growing relationship between the university and its environment trying as far as possible not to harm any group, but on the contrary, to vitalize it, so that its results benefit society as a whole (De La Cuesta; Kreisler; Valor, 2003, p. 12).

The university culture in our continent, registers among its antecedents, the Córdoba university movement, happened in 1918, a subject widely studied and debated in the university environment, many authors have dedicated their time to study and analyze its causes and consequences. In relation to the Córdoba movement, it is said that it was a forceful response against the University of Córdoba, Argentina, characterized for being conservative, elitist, decadent and corrupt; this university reform spread throughout the continent and achieved resonance in European universities. The Córdoba reform was not only a questioning to the university; it was also a questioning to the social order, the claim against the intervention and greater control of the State (Martín; Grünfeld; Soledad, 2018 p. 238-243).

Thus, society and university today have a close, direct, bilateral and indissoluble relationship linked to the historical, social, political, economic and cultural development of nations. Before the complexity of global, present and future challenges; university higher education has the social function of advancing our understanding of multifaceted problems with social, economic, scientific and cultural dimensions, and our ability to face them (Saldaña, 2017).

In this order of idea, Higher Education must assume social leadership in knowledge creation in order to successfully address the great global challenges, a challenge of the emerging knowledge society. The objective of this research is to determine students' perception about the university's roles in university social responsibility. In addition, it is intended to address considerations related to social and human values of higher education.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study was performed through descriptive correlational research with a quantitative approach of non-experimental design, which allows to recognize and know the existing relationship between the study variables.

The information collection was performed through the survey technique, using a questionnaire as instrument that includes a set of well-structured questions with Likert-type response options. This allows the university to know what the situation is, what its strengths are and what areas must be improved, enhanced and implemented to get favorable results.

Likewise, the sampling was performed in a stratified random way with a proportional allocation. The sample population was calculated, in each of the faculties and professional schools of the UNASAM, for a population of students who have a number of approved credits greater than or equal to 120 and who are registered since the year 2018, due to their stay at the university they present relevant information about the own functions of university and their contribution to the research was of great importance. With all the above mentioned, the survey was applied to 326 students who complied the conditions.

The questionnaires were subjected to a reliability process through a Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency test where the values obtained for each point of social responsibility indicate whether or not there is a high reliability of the instruments applied. In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity, correlation analysis and total variance were used.

A multivariate correlation analysis was performed to establish the level of existing relationship between all the variables and whether there is interdependence between the variables to estimate the levels of correlation between the variables under study. Also, the main component analysis is adequate for the purposes of research with the objective to reduce variables and define factors, the variables were hierarchized and selected.

Data processing was performed by using SPSS 20.0 statistical software, and statistical tests were selected according to the measurement scale of the variables under study.

## RESULTS

The information collected in the research had a surveyed population of 326 students, on which statistical tests were performed through the SPSS 20.0 software, obtaining the results mentioned below:

The evaluation about the relevance of use of factor analysis verified through the KMO sample adequacy and Bartlett's test showed an acceptable fit goodness with a coefficient above 0.5. In particular, for each point (dimension) of social responsibility (Table 1) the values ranged from 0.896 to 0.905. Bartlett's test ( $p < 0.01$ ) showed that the correlation matrix is different from the identity matrix, which indicates the feasibility to develop the factor analysis for the determination of main components.

**Table 1: Reliability statistics of the instruments applied to students**

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	N° of items
Professional Training	0,896	10
Social Participation	0,904	10
Administrative Management	0,905	20

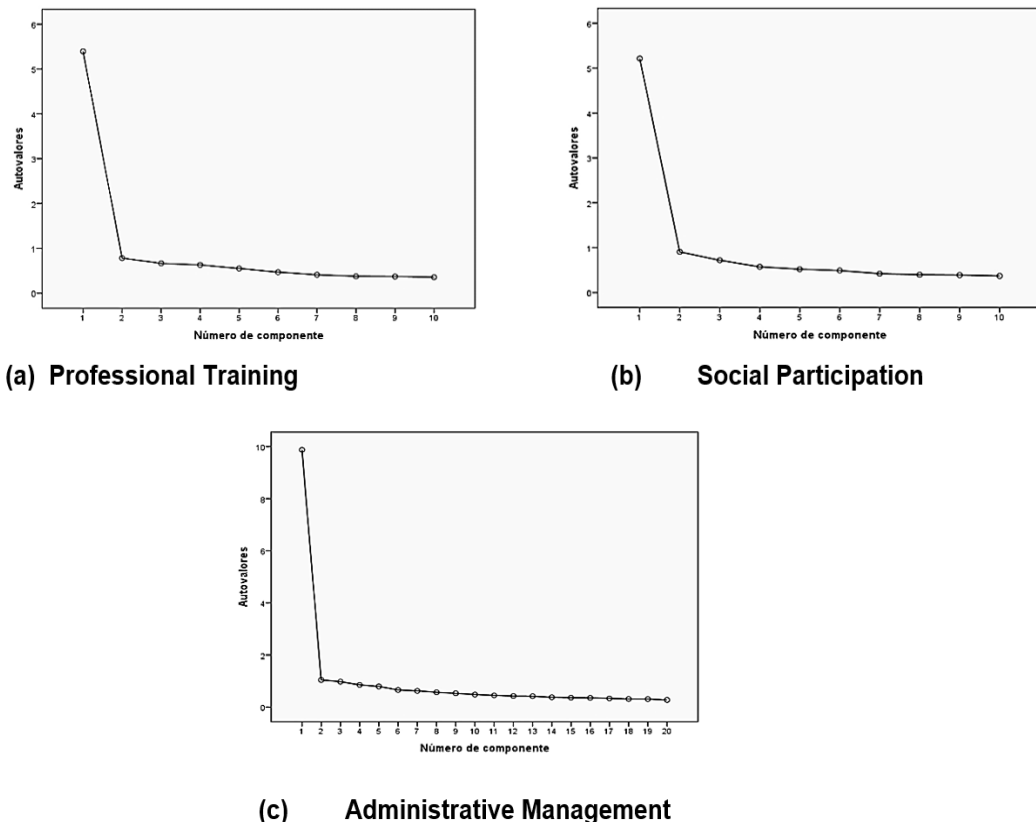
Source: Own elaboration

Through the main components factor analysis and Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization, the main factors were extracted for each dimension: Professional Training, Social Participation and Administrative Management.

The correlation analysis between the variables revealed high levels of correlation and interdependence with significance levels from 1% to 5% with determinants of 0.012 in professional training, 0.009 in social participation and 0.0000134 in administrative management. For the dimension corresponding to *Professional Training*, the rotated components matrix obtained four main components that explain 74.123% of the total variance.

Similarly, for the *Social Participation* dimension, four main components were obtained which together explain 74.687% of the total variance. Similarly, for the *Administrative Management* dimension, six main components were obtained that explain 70.951% of the total variance. Additionally, through the analysis of sedimentation graphics confirmed the extraction of the main components as shown in Figure 1. For the *Professional Training* dimension, the sedimentation analysis in Figure 1(a) reinforces the proposal to improve the grouping of items because the strong change in slope happens in the first four components, evidencing sedimentation in the components beyond the fourth.

The same behavior happens with the *Social Participation* dimension (Figure 1(b)), where the first four components are also the most significant. For the *Administrative Management* dimension, sedimentation happens from the sixth component, in other words, the first six components are the ones that provide the most information about *Administrative Management* (Figure 1(c)).



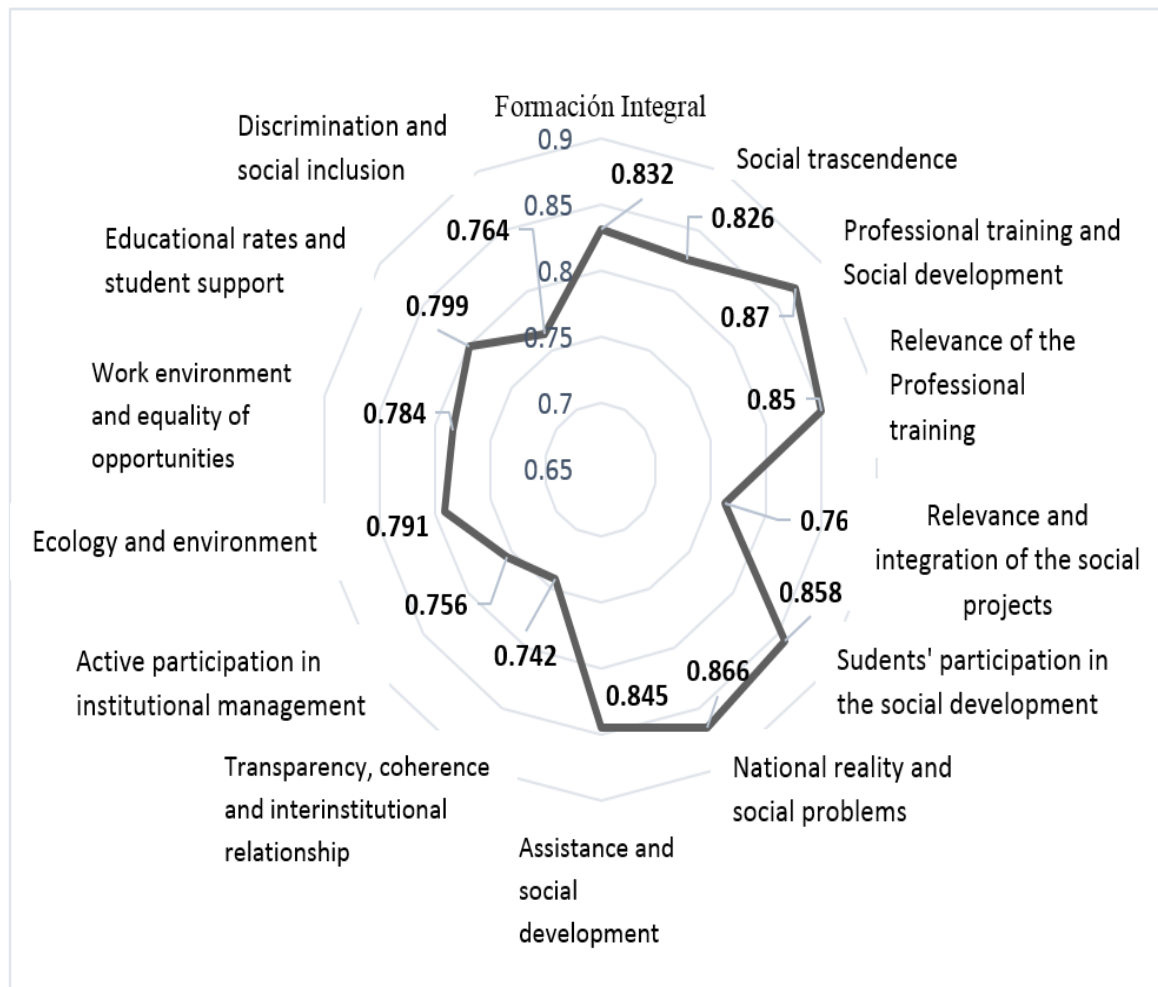
**Figure 1: Sedimentation graphics for each dimension (a) Professional Training, (b) Social Participation and (c) Administrative Management of the agreement with student's perception**

Source: Own elaboration

From the analysis of sedimentation graphics, the factors with the highest correlation that have an impact on social responsibility were extracted. Originally, for the *Professional Training* dimension there were 10 variables (items) from which, from the rotation matrix, 3 variables were extracted.

Likewise, for the *Social Participation* dimension, there were 10 variables from which 2 variables were extracted. Similarly, for the *Administrative Management* dimension, there were 20 variables that were reduced to 9.

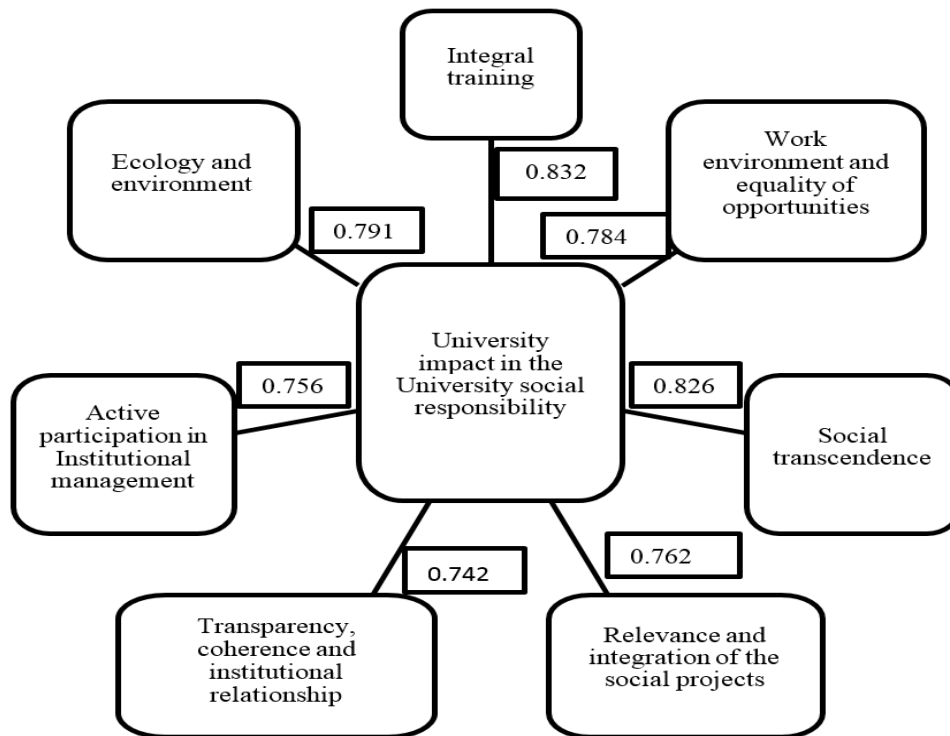
The criteria used to extract the variables were those whose correlation obtained was greater than or equal to 0.700. Figure 2 shows a radial graphic showing those extracted factors with a correlation greater than 0.700 that influence in university social responsibility according to the perception of the undergraduate students surveyed.



**Figure 2: Higher correlation factors extracted from the rotated main component matrix for the three dimensions considered**

Source: Own elaboration

From the set of 14 factors, 7 factors were selected from which 9 variables were chosen that showed higher correlation and that jointly contribute to the achievement of professional training, social participation and administrative management. The factors, according to the students' perception, that most influenced in the university social responsibility are shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Selected factors of greater impact of the University on social responsibility according to the perception of undergraduate students**

Source: Own elaboration

## DISCUSSION

University higher education is one of the main drivers of society evolution. Therefore, investing in education is fundamental to ensure a prosperous and competitive socioeconomic system. Moreover, higher education has a high responsibility to society, because they are in charge of preparing the professionals for future.

In that sense, authors like Gallardo Pino and Martínez Pérez, explain that:

*"The universities' mission is to create knowledge and train scientists and professionals oriented to satisfy the country's development needs. The issues of poverty, social disintegration, development of social capital, protection of natural resources, in other words, sustainable development should be at the center of their concerns." (2014, p. 65).*

From the above, it follows that the University, as a socially responsible institution of higher education, has among its obligations to train people who assume ethical commitments and contribute to the sustainability of society. In this way, social responsibility is the key to achieve a change in higher education, so that future professionals acquire in their integral training principles that guarantee the sustainability of their social and ecological environment. The role played by the university within training is strategic for global development; being anticipator of trends, generator of knowledge and trainers of great professionals of society, with which an interaction must be performed (Navas; Romero 2016, p.187-196).

Therefore, its vocation is called to materialize change in institutions, teachers, students and the society that integrates it, as far as possible it establishes connections for the

transit of knowledge between institutions and the rest of actors, "bringing academic processes closer to the needs and demands of each locality and creating premises to raise university relevance and impact on society" (Medina et al. 2017, p. 790).

Now, in order to analyze the impact context of the university on the university social responsibility, a survey was conducted through a Cronbach's alpha internal consistency test, the reliability index of the stratified internal consistency type was evaluated in 3 dimensions, for the surveys conducted to undergraduate students. Obtaining indexes close to 1, this means that the instrument used in the research has a high degree of goodness of fit of consistent measures and these are stable over time. In addition, Bartlett's sphericity obtained a p-value < 0.05, which indicates that the correlation matrix is different from the identity matrix, giving the feasibility to develop a factor analysis to find the main components.

Through the analysis of correlation and total variance, the existing relationship between variables was found. Obtaining values of 0.012, 0.009 and 0.00001 for the dimensions Professional Training, Social Participation and Administrative Management respectively, which gives evidence of high levels of correlation and interdependence between variables. Likewise, the total variance was explained by the main components which were 4, 4 and 6 for the dimensions Professional Training, Social Participation and Administrative Management respectively through the rotated components matrix. In addition, the main components were extracted through the analysis of sedimentation graphics, giving that for the dimensions they were 4, 4 and 6 respectively, which provide greater significance.

The results of this research managed to identify 7 factors that are highly correlated with University Social Responsibility, which corroborated the results of the research made by (Marco, Sarmiento and Pinto (2018, p. 298-308)), who analyzed the perception of universities in the implementation of Social Responsibility and visualized the level of social commitment of activities in the vision of leaders, coordinators, teachers and technicians. In their results, they pointed out that university social responsibility implies organization, institutional mission, projects and citizen training practices.

Therefore, taking into account the referred antecedents and the crisis in which university higher education is developing, it is feasible to find spaces for reflection that allow integrating the functions of university (Céspedes, 2019; Medina, Et Al., 2017; Vallaeys, 2019, P. 93-116). This under the teleology of promoting the achievement of objectives and strengthening its work with high levels of relevance, in close harmony with social problems and needs. In the same order, Vallaeys, De La Cruz and Sasia's research (2009) states that the most suitable way to define university social responsibility must take into account the impact that the institution generates in its environment.

In line with what was proposed by the aforementioned authors, this research found a high correlation between the variables Work Environment and Equal Opportunities, Social Transcendence, Relevance and Integration of Social Projects and Ecology, and Environment with university social responsibility. It should be understood that university social responsibility is not a solidarity action that serves a certain area of the university community because this should be subscribed as an institutional policy in charge of the social agents based on the evaluation of their needs, therefore, it is an

indicator that is based on community demand (Aguirre; De Pelekais; Paz, 2012, p. 11-20).

Similarly, the research is aligned with what is stated in the university law 30220 endorsed by SUNEDU, which in chapter XIII introduces University Social Responsibility through articles 124 and 125, which aims to regulate the system of HEIs in Peru and promote the educational quality of university institutions as key entities in national development. Likewise, Lescher, Lescher and Caira (2015, p 196-207) infer that the prevalence of a USR model positions universities as actors generating knowledge potentially applicable in the solution of social problems.

However, they have a moderate impact on the aforementioned problems, due to the lack of a greater interrelationship with some relevant stakeholders such as the government, private company and non-governmental organizations. Consequently, the impact of the 7 variables shown in Figure 3 can be enhanced as long as the obstacles to the interrelationship with key social actors are reduced.

Thus, the three variables strongly interrelated with university social responsibility pointed out by the research were Integral training (1), Transparency, coherence and Institutional relationship (2) and Active participation in institutional management (3). This is consistent with the results of Valdés and Villegas (2017, p. 55-62), who pointed out that the foundation of university social responsibility should be the integral, scientific and humanistic training of individuals that allows research, diagnosis and design of sociocultural management strategies, not only as resource for the preservation of national identities, but as an alternative for the solution of conflicts and needs that are generated in any social training; thereby supporting the promotion of values.

The participating students in this research, expressed that they know the factors that affect the prevalence of university social responsibility, which is in accordance with what was expressed by Rodríguez, Cano and Vélez (2018, p. 24), as a conclusion of their research. The aforementioned authors explained that universities train professionals who respond with solutions to social problems, "students perceive the efforts of university in orienting the curriculum to form citizens with a commitment to service, but they leave in evidence, although in a low percentage, that the experiential experience of what is learned in classrooms needs to be strengthened" (Rodríguez et al. 2018, p. 35).

Consequently, it is imperative that higher education institutions establish and disseminate their model of university social responsibility, in order to maintain a permanent attitude of response to the social needs diagnosed and to be known, which also influences the optimization of social participation.

## CONCLUSIONS

When reviewing the strategies that are part of UNASAM's management instruments, it was observed that students recognize the main elements that characterize management, in pursuit of the sustainability of UNASAM's model of university social responsibility. The strategies proposed to cover the four dimensions identified and include social, economic and environmental aspects.

By identifying factors and variables for each of the dimensions: social management of knowledge, management of professional training, management of social participation



and administrative management (social aspect, economic aspect and environmental aspect) of research, it is necessary to propose timely strategies to guide the implementation of UNASAM's social responsibility model.

In this sense, the discussion about application of university social responsibility is a topic with many edges to be addressed, to achieve university transformation is not simple, for this there must be a consensus among the members of the university community and the elements that make up society, it is necessary then, the confluence of many factors, including: socio-economic development, appropriate institutionalism, the strengthening of democracy, social peace, inclusion of sustainable policies, in addition to the accompaniment of subjective principles concerning a positioning of the actors of university and national context, which favor change, in such a way that a real transformation takes place.

Likewise, it will be necessary to continue creating mechanisms to disseminate the degree to which these principles are followed, which will result in an improvement in the image of this institution and the perception of its social value by civil society. From the reflection presented, it is possible to point out the new role that UNASAM's management should play in the social scenario. In this sense, the universities must be modernized to guide and promote learning through resources that promote knowledge. This change should have as a central point, to provide students with the opportunity to develop and promote research in today's society.

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