A MODEL OF ACADEMIC
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY*

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Abstract

This paper develops the idea of academic social responsibility derived from the corporate social responsibility, presents the main achievements of the Romanian higher education system from the perspective of social responsibility and proposes a model of social responsibility in universities based on six dimensions determined by extensive literature review and content analysis.

Keywords: social responsibility, academic environment, education, factorial analysis

1. Introduction

The concept of social responsibility is mainly promoted by large multinational and transnational corporations, currently being on all agendas in the business world. However, it also became a prominent issue for universities, as well. Recently, attention is paid to the role higher education *can* and *should* play in promoting the development of civic values and responsibility (Colby *et al.*, 2000).

There are several reasons that explain the extension of the social responsibility concept towards universities:

- Universities form forthcoming employees in both public and private companies;
- Universities play a major educational and research role within the communities in which companies operate;
- Universities help people find a balance between their personal and social needs and wants;
- As the higher education market changes, universities need to build stronger strategic relationships with their stakeholders (e.g. students, employers, state, society etc.) in order to stay competitive;
- Universities contribute to regional lifelong learning and employability;
- The corporate involvement in universities has increased due to the broader marketization of higher education services;
- The rising of the collective awareness of students and professors creates the need for implementing initiatives related to social responsibility;
- Universities are urged to play an important role in meeting the environmental challenges by integrating the sustainability concept in their curricula.

All these contemporary changes in the university role emphasize that, by their contribution to social welfare, universities have an increasing social responsibility. This is why universities play a critical role in creating responsible global citizens in the postmodern world (Marinescu *et al.*, 2010). Their formative role, one of the pillars of their 'perennial' mission, is not diminished, but increased. Universities create 'smart power', power of influence, and one of its vectors is social responsibility.

Education in general, and higher education in particular, enables people to better respond to the postmodern society challenges implied by legal constraints and ethical principles, to accomplish tasks for the good of society and to be responsible global citizens. Making people become more socially responsible represents an essential objective for today's universities (Giacalone and Thompson, 2006). In this respect, every student's/graduate's attitude has to be centered on the ultimate goal of acting only with complete social responsibility (Sawasdikosol, 2009). Thus, corporate social responsibility of future employees is not only an item in the code of practice of one corporation or another, but an internalized personal value which is reflected upon society, for the mutual good.

As the universities have become more socially engaged, their social role has changed fundamentally. They accept 'their public responsibility for promoting social equity and an inclusive society' (EUA, 2007, p. 2). Within this paradigm shift, institutions of higher education have undertaken and have continued to create numerous programs

and initiatives to increase students' engagement with social diversity (Nelson Laird *et al.*, 2005). Two main factors seem to support the high orientation of university towards a social responsibility attitude: the changing environment in which universities operate and the challenges that higher education has been facing lately. For example, Gibbons (2005) argues that nowadays universities are affected by the new context they operate in: a rightward shift in political thinking, globalization, innovation and the knowledge economy. Under these circumstances, higher education becomes more competitive, facing a lot of challenges: massification, decrease of public funding, diversification of higher education provision, internationalization, commercialization, challenges of ICT development (Barblan, Daxner and Ivosevic, 2007; Eckstein, 2003 *apud* Vukasovic, 2008).

Barber (1997, p. 230) states that creating responsible citizens is a task 'colleges and universities can be expected to undertake, for it reflects nothing more than a recognition of and recommitment to the traditional ideal of education as preparation of young people for civic life in a free society'. In his view, the traditional and the modern mission of universities, as community builders, are reconciled. Academic CSR is thus perceived as a way through the challenges of today's markets, without abandoning its core responsibilities.

Within the complex and competitive framework of European education, the social responsibility side of academic life makes the difference in quality of education, having a great impact on the educational market and university selection. The future students will be more attracted to the institutions that develop programs with high social impact, considering the envisaged convergence of educational systems, and their reliance on common standards.

According to Newman (1985, p. 150), the crisis in education is less about declining test scores and more about the failure 'to provide the education for citizenship that is still the most important responsibility of the nation's schools and colleges'. He reformulates Barber's idea (1997), insisting on the university's role in the social contract: to educate the citizens of the nation state, to create a cultural bound to a tradition of thought, be it national, or European. This mission is recalibrated, but not abolished.

Social responsibility in the academic environment is not only a challenge, it must become a purpose of the academic environment, as young people's formation also means to create a high level of awareness about involving the members of society in solving social problems. After extensive literature review and content analysis of tertiary data, we found that the concept of social responsibility is not properly addressed in the Romanian scientific research, although actions undertaken by the Romanian universities, with significant social impact, abound.

The aim of this paper is to build a model of social responsibility in the Romanian universities based on six main dimensions:
- alumni-oriented projects;
- inter-university cooperation;
- university – high schools / other institutions cooperation;
- community-oriented university – business environment cooperation;

- community-oriented international cooperation;
- socio-cultural and ecological projects.

Our main conclusion points out that, although some components of the social responsibility in the academic environment, as identified by us, are more visible and more promoted than the others, all six contribute to an explanatory model of what academic social responsibility should mean, thus compelling universities to equilibrate their involvement on all the proposed dimensions.

2. Corporate versus academic social responsibility

This following section aims at establishing the conceptual framework of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and University Social Responsibility (USR) and at emphasizing the increasing relevance of USR and of its various forms of expression.

Although interest in CSR might be traced back to the 18th century, over the last few decades this field of research has attracted unprecedented attention in the context of modern organizations. A large number of authors (Albareda, 2008; Carroll, 1999; Jackson and Apostolakou, 2010; Jamali, 2008; Jamali *et al.*, 2008; Luetkenhorst, 2004; Matten and Moon, 2008; Sharma and Talwar, 2005; Smeureanu *et al.*, 2011; Snider *et al.*, 2003; Waddock, 2004) aim at establishing the conceptual framework of CSR and at outlining its importance in today's society. Literature considers multiple facets, such as: the purpose of CSR in an organization, its forms of expression, factors stimulating the CSR activity, its functions, its forms of implementation and communication etc.

CSR is defined as a set of policies, practices and programs conducted by an organization, which are intended to ensure that the organization acts as to maximize the positive impact of its activity on society. Simply put, CSR is the commitment of an organization to contribute to the sustainable development of its employees, local community and global society (Jamali *et al.*, 2010). CSR is a company's moral responsibility for social welfare (Abreu *et al.*, 2005).

CSR has emerged as an interface between transnational corporations and the corporate accountability movement, as a result of globalization and fundamental changes which occurred in the societal structure. Globalization implied a 'darker' side of business activity, which was revealed by various environmental and social crises. These crises were so visible due to the growing presence of corporations in roles that traditionally belonged to public authorities, which made them vulnerable, in terms of reputation. In response to the increasing pressure of global civil society, a series of responsible practices have arisen and several CSR practices were adopted by companies (Albareda, 2008).

The necessity of increased social engagement also in non-profit organizations emerged as a natural consequence of social development. Therefore, sound corporate governance is now a mainstream issue of concern not only in the business world, but also in the academic environment. The World Declaration on Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action, which was drawn up at the World Conference on Higher Education, organized by UNESCO in Paris in October 1998, states that

social responsibility is increasingly considered an intrinsic aspect of higher education – and of universities in particular. This view is shared by many representatives of the academic sector and has even become a kind of axiom (University World News, 2010).

There are many initiatives supporting and promoting the idea of social responsibility of universities. Among this we mention the Social Responsibility of Universities Observatory and Universidad Construye País' (University Builds Country) from Chile. In 2009, the first International Conference on University Social Responsibility was organized, whose purpose is to establish a dialogue between attending universities, which address their responsibility to society, and to establish a culture of social responsibility. Some universities have already created a social responsibility team (US Fed News Service, 2010), proving that SR is a real and long-term oriented concern.

A university's mission, as underlined in the introductory part as well, is strongly linked to its social responsibility function. Social responsibility should play a central role in universities, as they are considered responsible for educating future leaders and channeling social forces to contribute to the common good. From this point of view, social responsibility of universities should be the core of academia itself. The academia should develop foresight capabilities, that is, to anticipate the needs that might occur within the society and therefore to educate the young generations accordingly (Jiménez de la Jara, 2007; Marinescu *et al.*, 2010).

Vasilescu *et al.* (2010) advance the concept of University Social Responsibility (USR). USR is defined as 'the need to strengthen civic commitment and active citizenship; it is about volunteering, about an ethical approach, developing a sense of civil citizenship by encouraging the students, the academic staff to provide social services to their local community or to promote ecological, environmental commitment for local and global sustainable development' (Vasilescu *et al.*, 2010, p. 4178). It may be seen that all dimensions of CSR are encompassed in this university-focused reformulation of the concept. Given that, usually, universities are not-for-profit organizations, there is an implicit overlap between a social responsibility which 'goes without saying' – to educate their graduates in the spirit of the humanistic values, and a sustainable, conceptualized social responsibility. This is why we consider worthwhile to separate the two and insist on the systematic social responsibility, and on the systematic training for social responsibility in universities, as contrasted with their implicit social role. While, in corporations, the distinction between *working for profit* and *working for 'more than profit'*, for the social welfare and development, is clearly outlined, in universities, obviously, it is not, and this complicates the picture. In the context, we claim that our analytic endeavor is necessary and meaningful.

Reiser (2007) identifies four types of impact that USR might have: organizational (socially and environmentally responsible university life which has to represent an ethical example), cognitive (social responsibility of scientific output), social (emergence and growth of communities of mutual learning towards social development) and educational (students' preparation towards a responsible citizenship). Hrubos (2011) argues that USR also implies assisting the world to get past the global economic crisis, by using university-generated and transmitted knowledge to find solutions to business problems.

Two main aspects should be considered when approaching the issue of social responsibility in universities. According to Bok (1982) the first one is related to the moral development of students: how universities might use their strategic position to encourage students to think more deeply about ethical issues and to strengthen their powers of moral reasoning. Several authors even support the theory that the current global crisis is rooted in the imperfections of the educational system, especially the famous business schools. They argue that management theories taught in these universities do not foster responsibility and accountability and do not focus on value-based leadership and management. Ethics is not a central topic in the universities. Universities should focus more on the development of skills like critical thinking and moral reasoning (Agoston, 2010; Podolny, 2009). Therefore, universities should analyze their curricula and reconsider some aspects related to social responsibility, in order to develop their formative side, overwhelmed, nowadays, by the per-formative concern.

The second aspect regarding the social responsibility of universities refers to the projects which have a direct social impact and are conducted by universities. More and more universities embrace measures of performance and key indicators common in business, are run by professional managers and have often been referred to as enterprise universities (Nagy and Robb, 2008). Considering the last years' dynamics of the academic environment, universities have to adopt a more aggressive approach in order to market their programs and be more competitive. Similar to the business sector, this approach implies also an intensive USR activity. The consumers buy products/services from the companies that they trust and the students attend the programs of the universities that they trust. In their competition for students, universities must become aware of the fact that they have to undertake projects which have social impact in order to engage students' sympathy and trust. Nagy and Robb (2008) express their concerns regarding the capacity of the universities to be or to become good social players. They state that the majority of academics have been so far reluctant to engage in public debates and there is a risk that 'the public interest will have no place in the corporatized university of the 21st century unless academics increase their critic and conscience activities' (p. 1414). Thus, the human resource in the university is mainly responsible for altering the list of priorities, and for becoming consistent and aligned with the values they preach. Uninvolved and civically absent staff obviously can't train civically engaged graduates. Role models have a word to say in the reinvention of universities.

Although the idea of social responsibilities in universities is highly debated recently, relatively few studies examine or analyze the social impact of particular projects or activities the universities promote or are involved in. Nelson Laird *et al*. (2005) examined how 'diversity courses' promote the importance students place on taking personal responsibility for social issues and problems. Based on a correlation matrix, the social action engagement construct was composed of seven items that measure the importance students place on creating social awareness, volunteering for a cause, and working to eliminate poverty. This approach is a starting point for our pilot research in social responsibility in Romanian universities of today.

3. Social responsibility side of Romanian universities

In Romania, social responsibility is not a concept that universities focus on. According to the available data, there are not topics dedicated exclusively to academic social responsibility. As far as the literature review is concerned, only few papers develop the topic of social responsibility in Romanian universities (e.g. Burcea and Marinescu, 2011; Marinescu *et al.*, 2010; Vasilescu *et al.*, 2010). A possible explanation resides in the fact that the Romanian educational system is still inertial and bureaucratic, making it difficult to change the curricula.

CSR can be approached from a material point of view – this being the most debated and wide spread, or from a more non-material point of view – recently brought to focus. The first category includes the protection of regional habitats (natural ecosystems), use of reusable, recyclable materials and goods, energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy sources, sound waste management (waste separation at source) (Lukman *et al.*, 2009).

Romanian universities house some of these initiatives, either individually or group lead, and only rarely and unsystematically, institution-lead. This highlights the need existing in Romanian universities for rules and regulations, for formal procedures, on a more regular basis than some periodical campaigns for informing and maintaining the interest (meetings, seminars, workshops, curriculum and extra curriculum programs).

The second category involves the sustainability inclusion in the curricula, cooperation with alumni, cooperation with other universities, high-schools and educational institutions, cooperation with enterprises and communities within the region, international cooperation, and also social campaigns. All these should be regarded from the positive behavioral change perspective (Lukman *et al.*, 2009).

In Romania, there are few interdisciplinary courses (generally in technical universities), several problem-oriented study programs, few social campaigns run by universities, and much more frequent social campaigns initiated by students, students' associations and NGOs.

We further develop the identified dimensions of university social responsibility, as illustrated by the specific case of the Romanian universities. They are: relationship with the alumni, social recognition of professors' work, various cooperation programs, and university-business partnerships.

In order to well serve its market, the university should cooperate with graduates and develop an Alumni association. Almost all Romanian universities understood this USR aspect. We could mention Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies Alumni or Babeş-Bolyai University Alumni that ease the relation between universities and their graduates, between students and graduates, through online seminars (webinars), meetings, team buildings, volunteering (labor of love) etc.

Much more visible are the several awards nominating the best professors in some contests organized by more than 60 students associations, with the purpose of rewarding performance, interdisciplinary vision and pedagogical skills in Romanian universities. The most representative are *Bologna Professors' Gala*, *Professoria Gala – Dinu Patriciu Foundation*, and *CODECS Foundation for Leadership Gala of educational awards*.

In terms of cooperation with other universities, high-schools and educational institutions, we mention the following examples of good practice: *Junior Summer University*, an educational project implemented at national level by Students Organization from Babeș-Bolyai University (OSUBB) in 2008, the first one of this type in Eastern European countries, offers to eleventh grade students the possibility to test the university's environment – Babeș-Bolyai University, in particular – by becoming students for two weeks, in order to make the best career choice after their graduation. A similar project has been developed by Team Work Association of Bucharest University which is a partner in a national project 'We are not indifferent, we are your friends', where students help children from poor families or orphans using the motto 'we form ourselves by forming the others'.

A functional aspect of Romanian universities CSR, despite a discouraging communist heritage, is the link with companies. More than ever, companies develop educational programs (aimed at improving links with local communities). If today's educational system caters neither to the market needs, nor to its beneficiaries' expectations, this fact is due to the insufficient exploitation of the aforementioned opportunity.

The opportunity was adequately exploited by Babeș-Bolyai University, which proved to be interested in its students' transition from education to active life. The University won two years ago a project financed with EU money meant to help students find the most appropriate job, by providing them with 15,000 practical stages, while still freshmen (Boboc, 2010). As a result, more than 50% of this university's graduates are employed within the first six months after the graduation, 77.2% of them working with labor contract and 80% of those interviewed having a job related to their specialization.

All the initiatives mentioned above are part of the SR's *ad-hoc* approach (which refers to an imprecise practice of muddling through) and/or comprehensive approach (involving a management system that follows the main principles of the ISO 14001 standard). Regarding the third dimension, the formal approach (adoption of a certified or registered management system such as ISO 14001, EMAS, OHSAS 18001 and/or SA8000) (Spellerberg *et al.*, 2004), it becomes obvious that Romanian universities are poorly represented. Thus, we may say that Romanian universities are still in the incipient stage (research projects, participation at conferences, seminars, workshops). One example includes the partnership between Romanian universities with Romanian Society for Quality Assurance (SRAC), INIMM (National Institute for Small and Medium Enterprises), which organized in 2008 the seminar 'Innovation backing in Romanian organizations. Innovative tools for successful companies', part of Product Information Management (PIM) European Project (SRAC, 2008).

Last but not least, the social and cultural campaigns initiated by students, students associations and/or universities, highlighting the social responsibility, are, among others: the social campaign *I wash my hands* run by a team from Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca or *Take it easy!* campaign focused on possible negative effects of the stress, run by another team of students from the same university; Botanic Garden project *The*

garden of my town initiated in 2006 by Team Work Association of Bucharest University; in 2008, Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies helped Carol I University Central Library from Bucharest by donating books, being nominated by this institution the donor of the year.

To conclude with, good will is not enough for creating a vibrant environment and for stimulating the real implementation of the social responsibility including sustainable development practices, in companies, or universities. Social campaigns in universities should be approved by the university's board (university's Senate and rectors), by the professors, the auxiliary personnel and, last but not least, by the students. Otherwise, their aim is not a realistic one, mainly because of the great variety of culture and values displayed by the faculties and students. However, if these individuals educated at university will behave and work in their future lives according to sustainability principles taught in universities (e.g. separating waste and saving energy, walking, cycling or using public transportation instead of commuting by car), then the university is acting as a positive actor in the community (Lukman *et al.*, 2009).

4. Methodology

The methodology of our research is structured as follows: research objectives, research hypotheses, research design, and research methods.

The main objective of our research is to build a regression model of social responsibility (SR) in Romanian universities, based on independent variables used in previous studies or proposed by the authors. An adjacent objective was to express academic SR as a factorial score of the dimensions considered. We tested the theoretical model we propose for academic social responsibility on real data collected from three leading Romanian universities, from two academic 'capitals' of the country, prominent university cities. The three universities of our sample are: Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, University of Bucharest and Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca. From these universities, we have analyzed the social responsibility of the business schools following Starkey and Tempest (2008) discussion on the need of a sense of purpose among business schools. Their main premise is that, among the faculties, CSR has a clearer sense of purpose for technical universities, schools of medicine, or agriculture than for schools of business, according to Derek Bok (2003), former President of Harvard University. The two authors find arguments for Bok's statement in the multiplicity and diversity of stakeholders of the business schools, and in their conflicting interests. Thus, 'which community to serve' is a question intimately related with the need for the business schools to redefine their mission. Starkey and Tempest (2008, p. 389) end up with the idea that:

> 'business schools have a crucial role to play in the shaping of the future of the university, of business, of society, and of the world we live in and would hope to live in future. We need to embrace this responsibility with an extended and clear sense of our purpose and our potential'.

We take their premise as the starting point of our research, targeted mainly at business schools, which are, according to the two professors, somehow uninvolved in academic CSR. We investigate, thus, the direction of involvement in Romanian business schools, located in a university of Economics and, respectively, in two large 'generalist' universities.

Our first hypothesis is that business schools, due to their close relationship with the corporate world, tend to copy businesses, in terms of social responsibility strategies, while our second hypothesis states that international models of social responsibility tend to diffuse in Romanian universities.

The research design refers to setting the social responsibility dimensions taken into account, based on the literature review and, respectively, the criteria for assessing the SR involvement of business schools. The six dimensions taken into account express the categories of SR-related projects universities usually get involved in. Our research aimed to test these dimensions, provided by literature, in the particular case of three Romanian universities. In connection with the changing roles of the universities enumerated in the beginning of our research (see section 1), we have built a hypothetical model of university social responsibility, to be tested by the methods above. The six dimensions chosen are: 1) alumni-oriented projects; 2) inter-university cooperation; 3) university – high-schools / other institutions cooperation; 4) community-oriented university – business environment cooperation; 5) community-oriented international cooperation; 6) socio-cultural and ecological projects. The dimensions involve vertical linkage – dimensions 1 and 3, and horizontal linkage – dimensions 2, 4, 5, and 6. Both types of linkages are quoted in CSR-related literature (see, for instance, Lee's, 2010, analysis of health governance). These dimensions were inferred from the scientific literature and each of them can be subscribed to one of the taxonomies of university corporate responsibility presented in the above sections, namely: projects with a direct social impact and development of students' civic duty awareness (Burcea and Marinescu, 2011; Reiser, 2007), respectively material and non-material initiatives regarding USR (Lukman *et al.*, 2009), which imply either an *ad-hoc* or a comprehensive approach (Spellerberg *et al.*, 2004). Based on the aforementioned underlying categories, the authors aimed at establishing an original construct for the evaluation of USR by developing several quantifiable dimensions of USR.

The focus of our analysis is, mainly, the perceptual component of academic CSR, that is, the way university CSR is accounted for in research literature and in general, in the media, as a tool for university marketization. After having reviewed the social impact (via specialized media, i.e., business newspapers, *Capital* and *Ziarul Financiar*, and general media, *Gândul* and *Adevărul*) of the Romanian universities' CSR, we have chosen the three representative universities, having the highest scores on all considered items: a) general awareness about the university; b) visibility of the CSR actions; c) actions taken by the university to marketize its CSR activities; d) research studies dedicated to university CSR activities; e) links between university CSR and industry

CSR. The five items were measured as follows:
   a) number of mentions of the university per academic year in the general media;
   b) number of mentions of the university CSR actions per academic year in both the general and the specialized media;
   c) number of CSR campaigns advertised in the media per academic year;
   d) number of research studies published in visible scientific journals (included in at least three research data bases) per academic year;
   e) number of university – business partnerships concerning CSR actions per academic year.

   The dimensions of USR were evaluated, for the three Romanian universities considered, based on three criteria: their *extension*, *periodicity* and *impact*. In other words, a ratio balancing resources involved and visibility obtained, on the one hand, and regularity / sustainability of the projects fitting a particular dimension, was pursued. The assessment was mainly qualitative, based on the judgments and evaluations obtained during the interviews conducted with twenty experts who occupy top and middle management positions in the Academy of Economic Studies, and fifteen experts in similar positions in both Babeș Bolyai and University of Bucharest, the total number of experts interviewed amounting to 50. The difference in the number of experts is motivated by the difference in the number of students, between the universities considered, and in the corresponding difference in the number of managerial positions (five top management positions and 25 middle management positions in the Business School from AES; four top management positions and 18 middle management positions in the Business School from Babeș Bolyai University; four top management positions and 17 middle management positions in the Business School from University of Bucharest). We have treated as top management positions the members of the faculty board, and as middle management positions the members of the faculty council and/or assimilated commissions. The selection method may introduce a bias, as some experts in the educational field, due to various reasons (age, other engagements), may not be included in these structures. However, we believe that our selection gives a fair picture of the management in place, and of its opinions and attitudes.

   As far as the research methodology is concerned, we have used two complementary methods: the factorial decomposition of USR and OLS regression. The choice is motivated by the fact that OLS is used to estimate the parameters in exploratory factor analysis. We used factor analysis to create a single dependent variable, in a field which has been little investigated, from the quantitative point of view.

   Factor analysis was previously used in analyzing corporate social responsibility. We quote Maoli (2009), who advanced three dimensions of knowledge intensive ventures' CSR: corporate citizenship, social opportunity recognition, and social innovation orientation. Also, Paul *et al.* (2011) use factor analysis to assess the employee sensitivity to corporate social performance. They have also identified three factors, namely *socially responsible company*, *job preferences* (based on the level of CSR of the company), and *discrimination*.

Quazi and O'Brien (2000) performed a classical factor analysis of a survey targeting managers. They established four positions that a company can take: a) CSR limited to the legal requirements and PR; b) CSR as philanthropy; c) CSR as a way of costs-cutting; d) CSR as source of tangible and intangible prosperity.

In our analysis, each dimension's weight in the CSR of each university was expressed on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 stands for *non-significant* and 5 for *significant*). The resulted grid constituted the input of structural equation modeling and of OLS (ordinary least squares methods) in SPSS 16, the later method investigating the degree to which each of the proposed dimensions explains university SR. For each new dimension added a new model was estimated, and its explanatory power was compared with the one of the previous models.

The results are presented in the next section.

5. Results and discussions

As the data used is cross-sectional (three universities observed at the same point in time), we considered OLS method adequate. Before applying least squares forecasting, we expressed SR using factor analysis, to outline the relationships between the latent variable (SR) and its indicators. Our analysis was a CFA (confirmatory factor analysis), based on the relationships observed in literature between the considered variables. Missing data were estimated using EM (expectation-maximization) algorithm.

The factorial score of SR (RMSEA = 0.003, CFI = 0.952, TLI = 0.97, RMR = 0.01) is presented in Figure 1 below. The root mean square error of approximation less than 0.05 indicates a good fit between the model and the observed data, as well as the comparative fit index greater than .95.

It can be seen that the scores for socio-cultural projects (b = .47, p < .01), international cooperation (b = .54, p < .001) and alumni-oriented projects (b = .51, p < .001) are close and high, which can be explained by their perceived visibility. The measurement errors associated with these variables (ε_1 = .44, ε_2 = .21, ε_3 = .02) are correspondingly low, except for the error associated with socio-cultural projects, which may be explained by the relative volatility of projects falling into this category, with respect to typologies. The effect the three indicators have on academic SR explains by the fact that all these projects tend to be very visible, as they involve conferences, events, media, and they are also quoted (e.g. social campaigns) in visible positions on the universities' websites. Also, they tend to have a certain regularity, which contributes to their high scores. Thus, we expect them to influence more the model, meaning that the factorial analysis confirms the theoretical assumptions.

Not significant, in our evaluation, are the dimensions concerning university – high-school cooperation (b = .06, p > .05) or inter-university cooperation (b = .23, p > .05), as they only create the premises for SR, strengthening the university – community links. The main problem outlined by the model is the correlation between university – business environment cooperation and SR (b = .11, p > .05). It may be seen that the correlation is not significant in this model, meaning that SR is not influenced by business – university
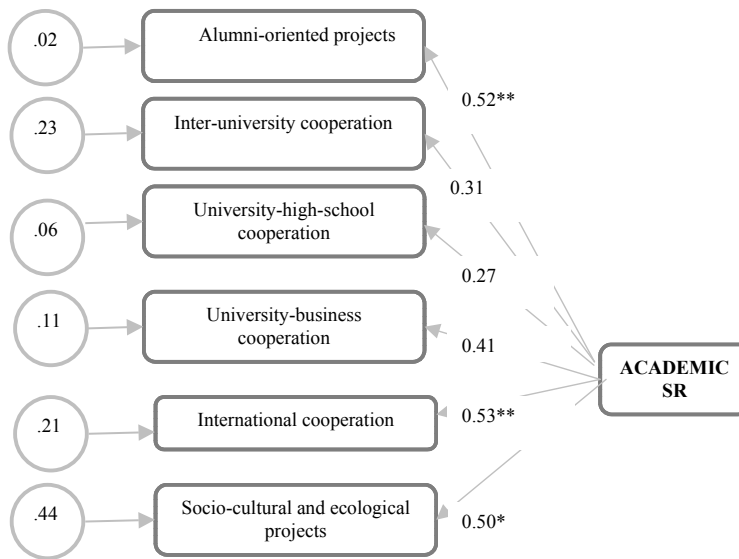
Figure 1: The factorial score of Academic SR

Figure 1 presents the factorial score of academic SR (RMSEA = 0.002, CFI = 0.952, TLI = 0.97, RMR = 0.01). The root mean square error of approximation less than 0.05 indicates a good fit between the model and the observed data, as well as the comparative fit index greater than .95. Statistical significance is indicated by the following: * = $p < .01$; ** = $p < .001$. Factor loading from socio-cultural and ecological projects to SR was fixed to 1.

relationships and the supposition that universities tend to copy the business environment, in developing SR strategies, is not valid. Rather, universities develop their own SR models. The relations established between universities and businesses have to be more community-oriented, so that business involvement of the university is perceived as an important component of CSR.

The results of the multiple regression analysis for Academic SR are presented in Table 1 below.

The main assumption of the analysis was that added variables account for the variance not explained by the first group of variables, explaining the changes in SR perception in universities. It may be seen that the most significant change in R^2 appears when the second variable (international cooperation) is added, while the adding of university-business cooperation produces a modest change in R^2. This finding rejects, as proven by the structural equations model above, our first hypothesis, while it confirms our second one.

This is in line with the findings of the factorial analysis, where international cooperation seemed to be the most related to SR, while university-business cooperation had no influence on SR.

The first group of variables included alumni-oriented projects, inter-university cooperation and university-high school cooperation, as they are more related to the academic environment, and presumably easier for the universities to get involved in.

Table 1: Regression coefficients for Academic SR

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	5.032	4.131	3.531	3.720
Alumni-oriented projects	0.371	0.336	- 0.044	0.051
Inter-university cooperation	0.215	0.214	0.104	0.041
University-high – school cooperation	0.051	- 0.018	- 0.091	- 0.044
University – business cooperation		- 0.029	- 0.121	0.098
International cooperation			0.199	0.071
Socio-cultural projects				0.245
R^2 adjusted	1.1%	2.3%	7.4%	13%
Change in R^2		1.2%	5.1%	5.6%

Then, in the second model, university-business cooperation is added, which is negatively correlated with academic SR. The general perception that universities use business environment links to attract funds may contribute to this perception, that business relations are complementary to SR.

The third model also includes international cooperation, which is stronger correlated to SR, as it increases the visibility of the university, and goes in line with other projects referring to the academic sphere, as international cooperation is mainly cooperation with foreign universities.

The fourth model includes, in addition, socio-cultural projects, which are positively correlated with academic SR, for the reasons discussed also in relation to the structural equation modeling above.

The last model, including all dimensions, is the most explanatory, as shown by the change in adjusted R^2.

6. Conclusions

Despite a growing number of national reports and committees focusing on issues of social responsibility, minimal attention is paid to the role that higher education can and should play in promoting the development of civic values and responsibility. However, it is generally agreed in the literature that excessive individualism, faculty reward systems, and a de-emphasis on service in many research universities foster a climate of disengagement and move higher education away from its larger purpose: 'to participate in the building of a more just society and to make the nation more civil and secure' (Nelson Laird *et al.*, 2005). Further, a climate of disengagement leaves students unprepared for their roles as democratic decision makers in an increasingly diverse society with complex social problems.

The analysis revealed that the six dimensions of academic SR that we proposed, based on literature scanning and interpreting, have different impacts, according to their visibility, still, the model including all these dimensions is the most explanatory for what academic SR should mean. Universities should, then, try to equilibrate their involvement on each of these dimensions, and to avoid the trap of focusing more on those dimensions leading to an easy popularity, while neglecting lengthier processes of pro-society and pro-environment education of their students.

The main limitations of the paper arise from the scarcity of secondary and tertiary data on the topic, the only primary data being obtained from the five interviews conducted with the faculties' representatives. The collection of primary data, through surveys and a larger number of interviews targeting faculty members, but also students and community members would help, in a further research, to surpass this methodological shortcoming.

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Annex 1. The dimensions of academic SR in AES, UB, BBU

Dimensions	Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest (AES)	University of Bucharest (UB)	Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (BBU)
Alumni projects	- Conferences where alumni interact with students as in the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Office) alumni conference, their alumni being former or present AES students; - Website dedicated to the creation of a professional and social network for alumni; - The Alumni ASE association, whose honorary president is Mugur Isărescu, Governor of National Bank of Romania.	- Social network of alumni, in the virtual space.	- Alumni BBU, founded in 1996, facilitating the link between the alumni and the university, as well as their involvement in mutual projects; - Webinars, in cooperation with Sociology and Social Assistance faculty alumni; - Volunteering.
Inter-university and university – high school/ other institutions cooperation	- In 2008, AES was nominated donor of the year by the University Central Library, due to its involvement in the reconstruction of the library's collections; - Various partnerships with universities in other towns (e.g. 'Lucian Blaga' University of Sibiu) for summer schools targeting the professional and personal development of the participants, impacting upon the community; - Collaboration with the Alliance of the Centenary High schools, improving its notoriety among high school students; - Multicultural and holistic education, stimulated by students and professors scholarships and mobilities (Socrates-Erasmus being the most widespread).	- Was granted in 2000 the Excellency Diploma, by the Ministry of Education, for reforms in the domain, turned into largely adopted practices; - National project 'We are not indifferent, we are friends' with SAM no. 3, a special school were over 600 deprived or disabled young people between 14 and 22 study; - Summer Romanian language and culture courses; - Lectures and other activities for high schools; - Collaborates with the Alliance of the Centenary High schools; - In 2010 granted diplomas to the best students from Bucharest high schools, increasing its visibility.	- Junior Summer University was implemented in 2008 by the students' association in BBU at the national level, a premiere for CEE countries. Through this project, 11th grade students can become students for two weeks, and be more informed in choosing their future faculty; - Internal mobility programs, and CEEPUS, ERASMUS etc.

| Cooperation with the business environment | - Market studies, targeted to various companies, to identify their needs and sustainable development potential;
- Benefits for those companies conducting trainings, supporting the labour market integration of students etc.;
- Partnerships in tooling lecture and conference rooms in AES, as well as an internet hall, with the support of the Embassy of South Korea and the Korean Ministry of Technology and Information (open to the general public, not only to students);
- Significant book donations to ASEM, its similar institution in the Republic of Moldova;
- Toyota conferences;
- Samsung sponsored MBA scholarships in Korea;
- Mobilities sponsored by Roland Berger;
- Raiffeissen supplements the quantum of Erasmus scholarships;
- BRD Bank and AES organized together the civic responsibility program 'Citizen Act';
- Ursus Breweries scholarships;
- Conferences co-sponsorship with ABN Amro;
- Scholarships in cooperation with BCR-Erste Bank for participating in Danubia summer school, now in its tenth edition;
- Various internships and contents organized together with the business environment. | - Market studies for identifying sustainable development opportunities;
- Various ecologic and social projects, under the heading 'Universitatea se implică!' (The University Gets Involved!);
- In the Open Amphitheater students meet business environment representatives and people involved in social projects. | - The strategic project The convergence of University education with active life, financed from Structural Funds, helping graduates to find their suitable workplace, assuring internships for 15,000 bachelor and master students. |

Dimensions	Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest (AES)	University of Bucharest (UB)	Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (BBU)
International cooperation	- AES cooperates with over 60 universities in 51 countries, for international exchanges of students and professors. - AES includes a French and a German Lectorate, organizing jointly the Evenings of French and German Film. Also, the Russian Cultural Centre organized the Russian Film Gala; - The event 'Vienna/ Austria - centre of education and science' in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce of Austria and the Austrian Embassy in March, 1-2, 2010; - Seven master programs/ MBAs with foreign partners (Romanian-German MBA, MBA INDE, Romanian Candian MBA, Master Business Accounting ACCA, Management of Business Enterprise and Territory, Risk Management and Actuarial Mathematics, EUCOREM- Customer Relationship Management); - In 2009/2010 – 85 Erasmus agreements and 130 framework agreements with partners from over 30 countries; - Over 300 AES students in mobilities per year, yearly 500 foreign students and 80 students in mobilities; - Member of international associations: EUA - European Universities Network, ASECU-Association of Economic Universities of South and Eastern Europe and Black Sea Region and AUF-Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie.	- Collaborates with over 150 foreign universities world through Socrates-Erasmus and has 26 visiting professors from abroad, from DAAD, USIA, Sasakawa, Fulbright, Volkswagen Foundations.	- BBU founded a Centre for International Cooperation, monitoring relationships with foreign universities (5 from Austria, 4 from Belgium, 1 from Bulgaria, 1 from Croatia, 1 from Ciprus, 52 from France, 18 from Germany, 5 from Greece, 15 from Hungary, 3 from Israel, 13 - Italy, 2 – The Netherlands, 3 - Norway, 5 - Poland, etc); - Partnerships and memberships: International Association of Universities, Magna Charta Observatory, The Alliance of Universities for Democracy, Danube Rectors' Conference, Santander Group, Committee for Higher Education of the European Council, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, Regional Conference of the Rectors of Central and European Francophone Universities, Association of the Faculties/Institutions of Letters and Humanities of French-Speaking Universities, Association of Danube Universities, Inter University Centre Dubrovnik, Association of Carpathian Region Universities, Association for Teacher Education in Europe, LeoNet, European University Association, Global University Network for Innovation .

| Socio-cultural and ecological projects | - Free access to cultural events: sculpture and picture exhibitions of the artists: Valentin Tanase, Eugen Ilina, Liviu Brezeanu, Vasile Grigore, Viorel Margineanu;
- A suite of conferences and spectacles by: Dan Puric, Florin Chilian, Tudor Gheorghe, Marina Constantinescu;
- The Students' Senate organizes the Movie Evenings for Students, with renowned films;
- The Academy of Hope, coordinated by professor Maracine, raising funds for elders etc.
- First of March and Easter fares, where students exhibit their art crafts, and the funds raised are donated to elders, orphans etc.
- Fund raising for the floods in 2008 and 2010;
- Donations of logistics and books - 790 computers and 3074 other equipments - to105 schools - 11 from Bucharest and 94 in the country;
- The students not affording to pay the tax can work part-time for AES in the dorms and library, instead of the money for their studies;
- The dorms recycle waste, in collaboration with Linkedtogreen.ro, and the initiative is a very successful one. | - Within the Team Work Association - volunteers students help and learn children from poor families or orphans, under the motto 'we form us teaching to others' (in 2009 there were 4,000 attendants);
- Donations within the Scientific Association Affairs, Ethics and Responsibility: December 2009 - 42 donations (100 lei each), and in March 2010, another 46 grants (85 lei each);
- Project Botanic Garden - The Garden of My Town, which involved over 800 students;
- Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, has entered the competition Gala professoria - Foundation Patriciu CODECS Foundation for Leadership and Master of Education program was awarded to support education in all its forms, helping the formation of individuals with a strong sense of initiative, with a special civic consciousness and a real sense of responsibility;
- Awards Gala in education, awards of 2009 - Special Jury Prize, Professor of section, second place at the section faculty of the year. | - Social campaign I wash my hands, addresses the issue of washing hands and counter the outcome of this social behavior (low levels of population health, increasing absences from work);
- Campaign Take It Easy! lead by a team of students from the Faculty of Political Science, Public Administration and Communication, campaign trying to warn the world about the seriousness of accumulated daily stress and the effects it has on the body;
- First Place at the Gala Teacher Bologna (over the three editions it obtained the highest number of nominations, 40 as a number);
- Awards Gala in Education - Award 2009 - second place, section teacher of the year;
- Night of Museums, third edition, which facilitates public access to the University Museum, Museum of Mineralogy, Museum of Paleontology - Stratigraphy and Vivarium;
- Contemporary photo exhibition of China, aspirations and dreams harmony, exhibition supported in collaboration by Confucius Institute, UBB and China Embassy in Romania. |