

Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility from the Administrative Management in the Agricultural Sector of the Évora Region, Sinaloa

Sustentabilidad y Responsabilidad Social Empresarial desde la Gestión Administrativa en el Sector Agrícola de la Región del Évora, Sinaloa

INZUNZA-MEJÍA, Patricia Carmina†*, ESPINOZA-DURÁN, Francisco Arturo and CASTRO-CUADRAS, Dulce Livier

Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa

ID 1^{er} Autor: *Patricia Carmina, Inzunza-Mejía* / ORC ID: 0000-0001-8789-4972

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Abstract

The interest in the study of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the academic world during the last three decades is evident. Nevertheless, in the scientific literature, the sectorial research and studies on CSR oriented to the agricultural sector, are scarce and diminished. Based on this reality, this research aims to contribute to the debate and discussion, the basis for the development of an epistemic-empirical-practical model of CSR in agriculture and, more specifically, in the horticultural subsector. To do this, a literature review was made regarding the seminal theories and models of CSR management and the case study method was applied to carry out the empirical research to a company with spatiality in the city of Alhuey Angostura, in Sinaloa México, in a temporality of the last twenty years. The study shows as a result a business diagnosis for the Sinaloan horticultural company. It is concluded that, in terms of social responsibility practices, the company analyzed is more prone to social proactivity than normative and legal reactivity, as it begins to carry out social responsibility practices that it is not obliged to carry out by law. Similarly, it applies a type of strategic social responsibility and, according to the qualitative evaluations of the study, has a medium level of social responsibility with its stakeholders. According to the spatial and temporal context, the present investigation is precursory in the matter and was applied to the agricultural subsector with the longest historical trajectory of the Évora region.

Sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility, Administrative Management, Agricultural Sector, Évora Region, Sinaloa

Resumen

El objetivo es aportar bases para el desarrollo de un modelo epistémico-empírico-práctico de Responsabilidad Social Empresarial (RSE) en el sector agrícola. Bajo un enfoque metodológico cualitativo, de orden exploratorio y descriptivo, se hizo la revisión de literatura relacionada con las teorías seminales y modelos de gestión de la RSE y se aplicó el método de estudio de caso para realizar la investigación empírica en una empresa de vocación hortícola, con espacialidad en la ciudad de Alhuey Angostura, en Sinaloa México, en una temporalidad de los últimos veinte años. El estudio muestra como resultado un diagnóstico empresarial para la empresa hortícola sinaloense. Se concluye que la empresa analizada, pasa de la RSE económica a la CSR discrecional, dado que es más proclive a la proactividad social que a la reactividad normativa y legal. Desde la gestión administrativa, llevan a cabo prácticas de RSE a las que no está obligada a realizar por ley, entendiendo que la RSE es realizada a libre elección. De igual manera, aplica un tipo de responsabilidad social estratégica y, según valoraciones cualitativas propias del sector agrícola, tiene un nivel de responsabilidad social medio con sus grupos de interés. Según el contexto espacial y temporal, la presente investigación es precursora en la materia y fue aplicada al subsector agrícola hortícola con mayor trayectoria histórica en la región del Évora del estado de Sinaloa México.

Sustentabilidad, Responsabilidad Social Empresarial, Gestión Administrativa, Sector Agrícola, Región del Évora, Sinaloa

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* Correspondence to Author (email: inzunzap@uas.edu.mx)

† Researcher contributing first author.

1. Introduction

Traditionally, the purpose of the agricultural companies in the Évora region is to create value for greater profitability and thus strengthen the company economically and organizationally. The central focus of the work lies in the need to respond to what effect do social responsibility practices have on companies in the agricultural sector of the Évora Region? and what aspects influenced to determine the practice and functioning of social responsibility in the company?

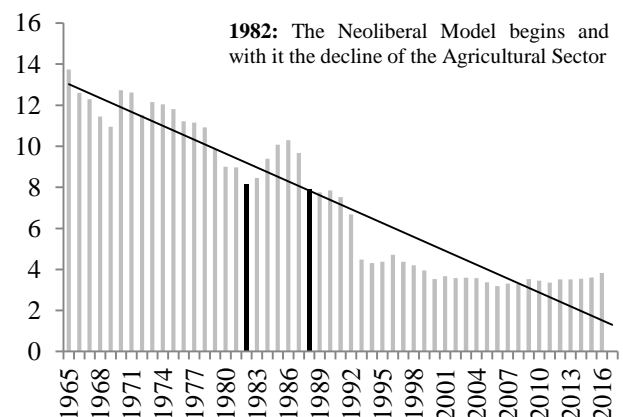
From the pronouncements of Milton Friedman the social responsibility of the company, was to create benefit for the entrepreneurs were of the branch that was; However, with the passage of time, the sciences have integrated new currents of thought that recognized the social vocation of the company and its members, demonstrating that this action in itself transcends entrepreneurs, workers and clients by incorporating groups of interest (stakeholders) as necessary recipients.

This first theoretical and empirical approach is based on scientific expressions from the area of management and business management that focus on a business strategy lowered to social responsibility. Hence, they are considered as seminal theoretical bases, the orientations of Mintzberg, Hamel and Prahalad, Porter, Druker, for their studies on business management; as well as, the scientific expressions of Perdiguero, Hernández, Barroso, Garza and González in their research about social responsibility.

These currents of thought have been gaining relevance within companies according to the characteristics and particularities of each organization and the context in which they are immersed; but there is an indisputable general consensus on the need to broaden the vision that gave rise to social responsibility in companies. Blázquez and Peretti (2012) point out that the viability and competitiveness of any company requires a focus on profitability, image and social good. This contribution presents some points in common with the seminal theoretical expressions mentioned above; given that they focus on guaranteeing the sustainability of companies. Also Duque Oliva and Carvajal Prieto (2016), express that the identity of the companies gains strength from the image. This shows that the management of profitability from the corporate image, is a strategy that has reached its maturity in the administrative sciences.

In the management of the businesses, different authors propose the profit-profitability hexagons as an administrative management tool. Unlike this profit-profitability model, corporate social responsibility is not only about adding a broader idea to manage the company, but about integrating the different aspects involved in sustainable management. In this way, the notion of sustainability is validated from the internal perspective, while the profitability that businessmen expect from an external vision, represented in the image of what society conceives that is and could be of the company, suggesting that a sustainable image reinforces profitability.

However, to achieve sustainability through business management and to make it profitable and have a better image before society, it is necessary to create instruments that allow measuring, evaluating, controlling and making decisions based on profitability and sustainability categories. In Mexico and particularly in Sinaloa, agricultural activity is very important economically and socially. The agricultural sector has a fundamental roll in the economy and the care of the environment of Sinaloa, given that its contribution is significant for the development of our society. However, at the national level, the importance of the agricultural sector is really relative, given that its share of GDP has been falling in real terms. Since the early 80's, the country underwent changes in its economic policy, starting the neoliberal model and with this the decline of the agricultural sector.



Graphic 1 Mexico: Evolution of the agricultural sector with respect to GDP (1960-2016)

Source: Own elaboration with information from the World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/>

From 1982 to date, the agricultural sector has not again surpassed its representation of 8%-10% compared to the GDP that was had in the decade of the 70's until the early 80's. It is observed that their participation was decreasing until stagnating in less than 4% with respect to GDP.

Figure 1 shows the data on the national accounts of the World Bank and data files on national accounts of the OECD show how the evolution of the Mexican agricultural sector and its added value have been in percentage terms with respect to GDP. Although, in the OECD economies, agriculture represents less than 1.5% of global economic production; given that, the role of agriculture in driving global economic growth varies from one country to another and, in general, its representation and importance is greater in the poorest countries. Mexico being one of the poorest developing countries in Latin America, the agricultural sector represents only about 4% of economic activity from 1999 to 2016, with a strong tendency to decrease.

2. Theoretical Framework: Background and conceptual bases

In the last twenty years, research oriented to the application and management of tools that allow influencing economic, financial, environmental, labor and social outcomes of companies has become relevant and pertinent.

These instruments range from implementing and evaluating administrative management systems with a social sense, through the design of sustainable development indicators for tourism or forestry purposes, to promote the "voluntary" donation or rounding initiative in Mexican companies that are "socially responsible".

Empirically there are records that show that since 1920 companies were concerned about performing charitable practices that could be considered as socially responsible humanitarian practices. Scientifically, it is observed that the first antecedent of the coinage of the concept dates from 1916 with the contribution made by Jean Maurice Clark, considering that there are certain relationships between social concerns and the assumption of certain economic responsibilities, for Clark begins to include the concept of solidarity and social concern within the business world.

It is with Howard Bowen (1953), when the first approaches to the concept of corporate social responsibility are given, and refers to it as the philanthropic purpose that the company links with society, considering that the main reason occupation of the company is not only economic, it must meet the needs of the interest groups around it.

However, companies prioritize and undertake an economic value, above social and environmental value; despite this, it seeks to reconcile them. However, it was Milton Friedman (1970) who reflected that the profitability of companies is incompatible with social concerns and needs, because the sole objective of the company must be to maximize the economic benefit and act in the interest of shareholders.

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been analyzed in detail since the last decade of the 20th century. As part of the ethical culture of the companies, it has gained recognition and ample academic and business relevance in the first two decades of the 21st century; by virtue of, the criteria and practices of social performance of the company.

CSR is defined as the social responsibility of top management to undertake actions that improve the welfare and interests of society and the company, developing a new way of generating and applying business strategies that allow maximum profits. However flat this definition may be, it may be difficult to understand the concept of social responsibility, due to the diversity of aspects and perspectives with which actions that could improve social wellbeing are applied along with the economic improvement of the company. . However, in all this transit of the CSR, a fundamental part is observed for its understanding from its application and development.

This part corresponds to the collaboration of employers and workers, as agents of change to achieve competitive advantages in organizations facing economic and business challenges. The report of DIRSE¹ of the year 2016, poses 2 important challenges of business competitiveness: 1. The lack of knowledge of CSR by managers or owners of companies and workers, and 2. The lack of business, labor and economic resources in companies.

Another aspect that is undesirable in companies in general and in horticulture in particular, has to do with the lack of commitment from top management to motivate workers in the implementation of CSR. Possibly this absence of motivation, is the consequence of the ignorance of the benefits of a good administrative management of CSR. This perspective of the problem that surrounds the CSR is that represented by both employers and workers, since, CSR should be implemented jointly employer-employees which is not easy.

¹ DIRSE is the acronym that refers to the Spanish Association of Directors of Social Responsibility.

Hence, the purpose of directing this research to study the role of CSR in the agricultural sector as a particular element is the necessary adoption of an environmental perspective under the revolutionary idea of sustainability.

Authors such as Steiner (1971), Sethi (1975), Carroll (1979), Drucker (1984), Cochran and Wood (1984), Husted and Allen (2000), Porter and Kramer (2002), and Daft and Marcic (2009), Daft (2010), Wesselink et al. (2017), López-Pérez et al. (2017), Souza and Alves (2018), Norberg (2018) and Schaltegger and Burritt (2018) agree on prioritizing social and environmental concerns as a source of competitive advantage in companies, where the ethics of sustainability and care for natural environment take importance in the administrative management for CSR.

On the other hand, Castillo (2015) states that corporate social responsibility activities are criticized for the lack of integration in the core business processes; so it alludes, the need for a reengineering of processes from CSR, which leads some organizations to look for CSR strategies that align profitability with social value.

This is based on the experience of a global social consulting firm based in São Paulo, Brazil, which introduces systemic thinking with a focus on CSR in business models to boost economic success. The experiences of the firm with the main multinational companies, show that the reengineering of business models to consider the social impact of operational decisions, can improve profitability and benefit the surrounding community.

3. Literature review

The classification of CSR at the international level has been analyzed in several seminal studies such as Levitt (1958), Friedman (1962 and 1970), Murphy (1978), Zenisek (1979), Wartick and Cochran (1985), Carroll (1991), Wood (1991a), Wood (1991b), Sethi (1995), Nasi, Nasi, Phillips and Zigidopoulos (1997), Gerde and Wokutch (1998), Lantos (2001), Joyner and Payne (2002), Van Marrewijk (2003), Watson and MacKay (2003), Garriga and Melé (2004), Waddock (2004), McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2006), Windsor (2006) and Cochran (2007). More recent studies such as Norberg (2018), Schaltegger and Burritt (2018), Dilling and Harris (2018), Rath et al. (2018), Schaltegger and Burritt (2018), Iqbal et al. (2018) Utgård (2018), Youn, et al. (2018).

Manasakis (2018), Diddi and Niehm (2017), Nejati et al. (2017), Shao et al. (2017), Mamum et al. (2017), O'Connor et al. (2017), focus on identifying the main motivations for CSR actions in the company, which has allowed to know the conditions and behavior of companies in terms of the application of CSR.

Norberg's study (2018) shows that the Swedish financial industry carries out CSR activities that justify its annual sustainability reports and in which it reveals the ethical nature of the financial industry. In a complementary manner, Iqbal et al. (2018) identify as the main engine of administrative management of CSR the global initiative to save the environment with respectful practices of technology and green banking services that promote CSR actions for customers through the channels of delivery of financial services.

In the case of companies of the financial system, it is observed that amorality stands out in most of the justifications granted by banks to undertake CSR activities, disharmonizing the responsible image that the contemporary financial industry wants to portray and disarticulating with the principles of sustainability and CSR; However, when factors such as punctuality, ease of financial management conditions and expectations of effort are linked with the interest of administrative management of CSR to care for the environment, expectations and conditions of sustainable performance are created, which generates a positive perception of customers about green banking.

For its part, Schaltegger and Burritt (2018) highlights the diverse existence of ethical motivations and different types of CSR operational activities that are linked to the sustainability of the company, for which it identifies 4 versions of ethical management: 1). The one that arises from the reactionary concern to the interests of the business, 2). The one that arises from the narcissistic concern to protect the image of the company, 3). It is the one that responds to the social and environmental concern that goes from the inside out, and 4). The one that arises from the motivation of collaboration to vulnerable groups from abroad.

Dilling and Harris (2018), explain that gaining trust with external agents is the main reason to implement CSR for the creation of long-term value of 19 Canadian public energy and mining companies listed on the stock exchange, emphasizing that the performance of CSR generates long-term value and has a positive impact on sustainability, observing improvement in the quality of disclosure in areas of governance, practical work responsibility, external relations and risk management linked to the materiality of sustainability and high exposure to environmental risk.

Regarding the mining sector, a case study is highlighted to one of the main mining companies. This study was conducted by Rath, et al. (2018) and emphasize that the main motive for conducting CSR practices are the initiatives of community development programs aimed at the mining industry, with the purpose of offering health services through the construction of hospitals, construction of roads, schools and support to small local businesses through sustainable procurement policies to local suppliers and sustainable livelihood projects that serve to reduce economic dependence and create employment opportunities. The findings suggest that the community development initiatives taken by the mining company have a positive impact on the community surrounded by the industry.

Deswanto and Siregar (2018) carry out an analysis in companies from different sectors that are listed on the Indonesian stock exchange and that participate in the environmental management performance program with the main motivation of increasing the value of the company and giving relevance to activities environmental measures to influence the financial and sustainable performance of companies.

While Chaudhary and Akhouri (2018) by studying 219 employees of various IT organizations in India recognized for their commitment to CSR, explains the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of worker participation in CSR, the intrinsic part being which has more impact from creativity as a result of work commitment, while skepticism prevails from the extrinsic side. Likewise, Souza and Alves (2018) identify CSR actions as an engine of sustainability and propose an innovative model of administrative management for sustainability that is based on CSR actions through an environmental quality management system and occupational safety in harmony with the production system adjusted to make it cleaner.

Similarly, in the Lamboglia document, et al. (2018), is considered as the main motivation at the time for the adoption of CSR practices oriented to sustainability and also to the maximization of profits in waste collection companies in Naples, where time and profits become the driving forces of sustainability through CSR strategies that affect the performance and profits of public service companies.

The motivation for social license is that Bickford, et al. (2017) document. In their study they show that in the last two decades, the main biophysical, economic and political changes in the Arctic regions come from commitment and social responsibility, which gives them greater commercial opportunities in ecotourism activities. They emphasize that the sustainability approach has allowed them to develop ecotourism as an environmental conservation experience and the sustainability of resources that come from the local culture of CSR, which is what allows them to acquire the social license to carry out commercial activities in the sector.

The studies by Nassivera et al. (2017), show that in Italy, the main reasons for developing CSR strategies is the organic consumer culture, so that companies that offer organic goods in Italy rigorously take care of the purchase of sustainable raw material; that is, they are concerned that their supply chain manages the consumption of environmental resources responsibly and supports sustainability. In the investigations for Latin American countries that Correa, Flynn and Amit (2004), Castillo (2015), Rovira, Patiño and Schaper (2017) have recorded, it is clear that most governments allow CSR to be a response from companies to its market needs and to its relevant economic counterparts, a kind of free choice, leaving sustainability out of reach.

Carroll (1991) considers that CSR practices are grouped into four categories: 1). economic responsibilities, which have a triple purpose of satisfying the client with good quality products, generating good jobs for employees and improving profitability for the shareholder; legal responsibilities, which focus on compliance with laws and government regulations of business activity; the ethical responsibilities, which are guided by the company's moral and imply a correct, fair and equitable performance with the different interest groups, and 4) the philanthropic responsibility, which seeks in an altruistic and voluntary way to contribute to the improvement of society through specific actions, such as donations.

On the other hand, Lantos (2001) also exposes four categories of CSR intervention. The first under the generation of profits as a sole purpose, complying only with the explicit rules and regulations to which business activity is bound.

The second, based on compliance with legal regulations for the generation of profits in a limited scope, since the company, in addition to complying with the law, respects the laws of business activity. The third groups social welfare actions, which make the company address the threats and opportunities as negative externalities and take into account all stakeholders in their decisions.

The fourth category corresponds to social benefits in a strategic way, for which the company must be at the service of the community and use its resources in a more efficient way. Likewise, Garriga and Melé (2004) classify the activities and approaches of CSR into four theoretical categories related to benefits (instrumental theoretical perspective), political performance (political theories), social demands (integrative and intervention theories) and ethical values (ethical theories).

According to Friedman (1970), Murray and Montanari (1986), Litz (1996), Porter and Kramer, (2002, 2006 and 2011), in instrumental theories, the company is seen only as a means to create wealth and, for this, it focuses on the social activities that allow this objective to be achieved. From these, three theoretical subcategories related to the maximization of value for the shareholder (as the maximum criterion for evaluating the company's social activities), the strategies for achieving competitive advantages (such as social investments in a competitive context, dynamic capabilities) that are based on natural resources and inclusion of the base of the economic pyramid) and marketing related to some cause.

While in political theories, Davis (1960), Donaldson and Dunfee (1994), Wood and Lodgson (2002) emphasize that the social power that the company is acquiring as it is inserted into society is related through a social contract implicit between the company and the community in which it participates, whose conditions are given by the influence that each company has on the economy.

These researchers have managed three theoretical subcategories, which corresponds to the theory of corporate constitutionalism that focuses on social power and the iron law of responsibility; as well as, the integrating theory of the social contract that focuses on the macrosocial theoretical contract and microsocial empirical contract, and finally the relational theory of corporate citizenship in its three levels (corporate philanthropy, initial CSR and CSR as a contribution to development and solution of the global problems of the society).

Within the categorical categorization of Garriga and Melé (2004), Integrative theories are also found that based on what was expressed by Carroll (1979), Jones (1980), Vogel (1986) and Wilcox (2005) it is highlighted that the company it focuses on the identification, classification and response to social demands, such as compliance with laws, public policies and the balanced management of the interests of the company's stakeholders (entrepreneurs, workers, customers and suppliers). Under integrative theories, companies generally seek to legitimize themselves socially and acquire greater social prestige. To achieve this goal, four theoretical subcategories based on the management of social issues, the principle of public responsibility, the management of stakeholders or stakeholders and social performance or corporate social action are proposed.

Finally, Freeman and Reed (1983), Habermas (1987), Kaku (1997), González (2002), García-Marza (2005) build ethical theories based on business activities that respond to the fulfillment of human rights, labor rights, protection of the environment and the consolidation of sustainable development for society. They argue that in order to achieve this, the company must develop concrete ethical practices, values and principles that demonstrate what is and is not to be done, in order to build a stronger and better society.

In this regard, Peña Miranda and Serra Cantallops (2013), explain that in general, ethical theories promote that companies build the common good and contribute to the development of a more solidary, just and equitable world for all. It can be inferred that the different theories exposed make it clear that CSR is a practice with solid theoretical and empirical bases on which strategies are designed and apply actions of business economic agents, but also, the concept has not yet been admitted and defended in a homogeneous manner generating confusion in its application, Peña Miranda, Serra Cantallops and Muñoz González (2017).

Based on this, one can then consider that CSR is an overcrowded concept; However, due to the epistemological anarchic function with which it is perceived, assimilated and applied, it is not yet a plain concept, nor is it a homogenically accepted concept.

3.1 CSR in the agricultural sector

The most recent scientific information consultation, registers that Lasorella and Siggia (2018), Deswanto and Siregar (2018), Wolff, Gondran and Brodhag (2017) recognize that the main challenge of the agricultural sector is the growing change of food preferences of the population, along with the degradation of the soil of these last 20 years, water contamination and food insecurity; however, they emphasize that the adoption of CSR to address environmental initiatives, leads to transfer their production to more developed markets, so they consider that social and economic environmental strategies through CSR for sustainability, are a key factor in the growth of the agricultural sector

On the other hand, Bakos and Dumitrascu (2017), in support of agricultural ecosystem services and with multi-agent modeling, propose a risk and crisis management model in which sustainability, administrative management and CSR are merged to lead agricultural organizations towards a sustainable business behavior that allows them to describe the emerging behavior of these business systems, resulting in a crisis communication model, based on the adaptability characteristic of holons in agricultural production.

Also, Sánchez-Hernández, Robina-Ramírez, and De Clercq (2017), maintain that CSR for the sustainable management of water are an opportunity for companies in the South African field to obtain competitive advantages in the market. Similarly, Arnold (2017) documents the most current research reports, highlighting through the case study method that the practice of CSR in water supply and distribution companies in Germany and its link with the agricultural sector and others sectors is conditional on the ISO 26000 regulations.

In these analyzes, as a result of the increasing contamination of water, it is exposed that CSR focuses on business impacts on society by applying the normative constraints of ISO 26000 and management tools, demonstrating that the elements of this standard regarding sustainable use of energy and sustainable water management systems for agriculture, are marginally communicated and therefore, applied with little seriousness, making CSR is little credible.

Nassivera et al. (2017) highlight the importance of consumer attitudes towards CSR in the processing industries of agricultural products and their willingness to pay for organic agricultural products. In Castilla-Polo and Gallardo-Vázquez (2016), under the qualitative methodology with case study approach, they present the case study of two agricultural cooperatives recognized for their socially responsible actions but different in their attitude, before the dissemination efforts showed that the perspective of social outreach is convergent in both cooperatives, but not its practical application as social recognition, what the variables of social disclosure are little highlighted, regardless of the territory or economic sector of the companies.

Kader et al. (2016), are limited in making a study about the international debate and the perception of consumers about the scarce benefit in the production and consumption of food from genetically modified organisms or transgenic foods and its relationship with the CSR that suppliers implement in the treatment of these foods, in order to create consumer awareness of genetically modified foods, as well as serving as a basis for strategic decision making by CSR providers and the public sector to formulate policies that promote social benefit and commercial of genetically modified products; However, they do not clarify the social impact of CSR.

On the other hand, Famiola and Adiwoso (2016), analyze CSR in the institutional diffusion of the multinational subsidiaries of companies of the agroalimentary industry of Indonesia, finding that the internal pressures (institutional cognitive and local regulations) within the multinational organizations are the main drivers of their CSR practices.

It has been seen that while regulation in a host country is essential for SRE compliance of its subsidiaries, this does not contribute to good CSR practices. The symbiosis and similarity of CSR patterns among subsidiaries and subsidiaries had less to do with institutional pressures, but more with the pressures of the agricultural sector on food production. Likewise, Hartmann (2011) considers that CSR is of great relevance for agri-food companies due to its high dependence on the economy, the environment and society, Poetz, Haas and Balzarova (2012) propose "new" CSR initiatives in agroindustry with a sustainable perspective, highlighting that agribusiness companies have become more proactive in applying CSR towards sustainability, which allows them to compete with traditional niches.

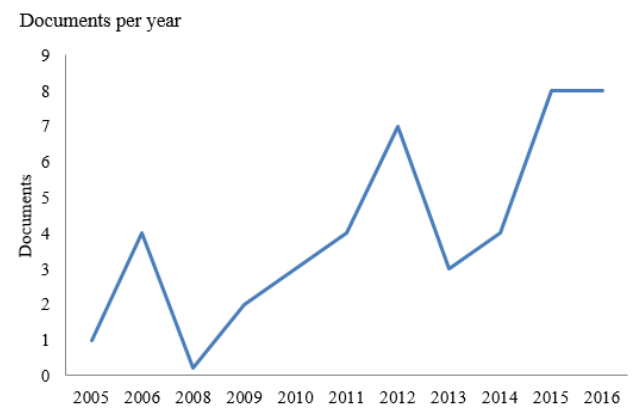
This while recognizing that in perspective, the agro-food company has various challenges due to the heterogeneity of the companies and the diversity associated with CSR approaches. Another aspect related to CSR is food security, in this respect Seminur Topal (2005), Sajardo and Serra (2009), from a global perspective, make an introspection from the past to the future about the depletion of natural resources and the necessary apologetics production and consumption of food, finding that the lack of uniformity in the application of the regulation puts at risk not only food security, but also, food production systems, the improvement of the quality of life and education with ethical values for a better world.

In this perspective, it is substantial to indicate that the most finished and ordered theoretical reviews of articles related to CSR in the agricultural sector for their ethical vision and critical judgment have been made by Victoria (2005) in Spain, Seminur Topal (2005).) in Turkey, Avendaño Ruiz, et al. (2015), Caamal Cauich, et al. (2010) in Mexico, Cañizares (2016) in Argentina, Famiola and Adiwoso (2016) in Germany, Arnold (2017) in Austria, and also what was done by Strandberg (2010) of the IESE Business School of the University of Navarra, perform a final and explicit work to review and analyze the articles on the subject of the issue have been published between 2005 and 2018 in scientific journals, academics and business magazines in the field of agricultural study.

Likewise for Mexico, in the study of Villafán Vidales and Ayala Ortiz (2014), by means of the multicass study method, the level of CSR of the avocado companies of Uruapan Michoacán is analyzed for what they built an CSR index and sustainability based on the CEMEFI model under the process of analytical hierarchy in twelve avocado companies that were interviewed and evaluated during July and December 2010, found a medium level of application of CSR (51.58%) of the application of standards or indicators of CEMEFI (Mexican Center for Philanthropy). Also for Mexico there are a couple of more studies, that of Campos López (2016), and Avendaño Ruiz, et al. (2015), in which it is emphasized that corporate social responsibility is the vehicle for companies to move towards sustainability. Under the specific theme that links CSR with the horticultural activity itself in Sinaloa, we find a work by Verdugo López (2012), which describes the development of the CSR process in the Sinaloan company under a case study, with which It is recognized that it has been a topic that has not been widely explored in the academic field.

It also highlights the need for the adoption of effective practices that guarantee the safety of food production, concluding that putting CSR into practice is limited for the horticultural sector, due to the cost, times and movements involved in developing it, losing motivation to do so.

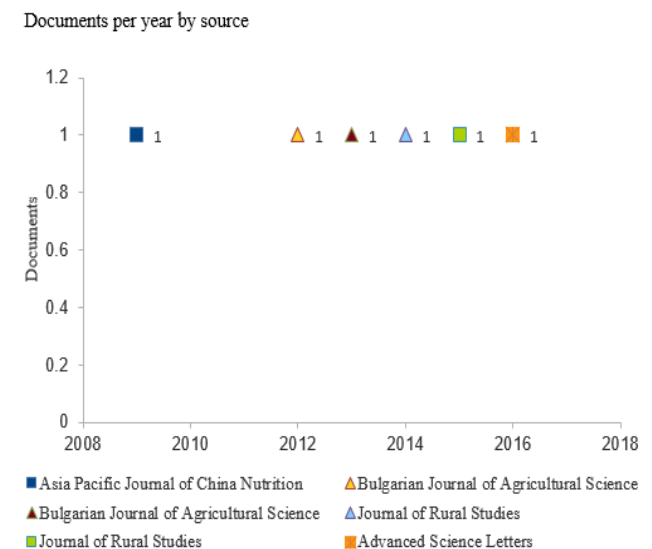
In addition, by means of an exploration by Scopus, using a search profile with the keywords "social responsibility" and "agricultural sector", for the period from 2005 to 2018 a result of 221 documents was obtained, among which 46 scientific articles stand out.



Graphic 2 Document management per year about social responsibility in the agricultural sector

Source: Scopus

Subsequently, the analysis of the query was revised by year and by source.



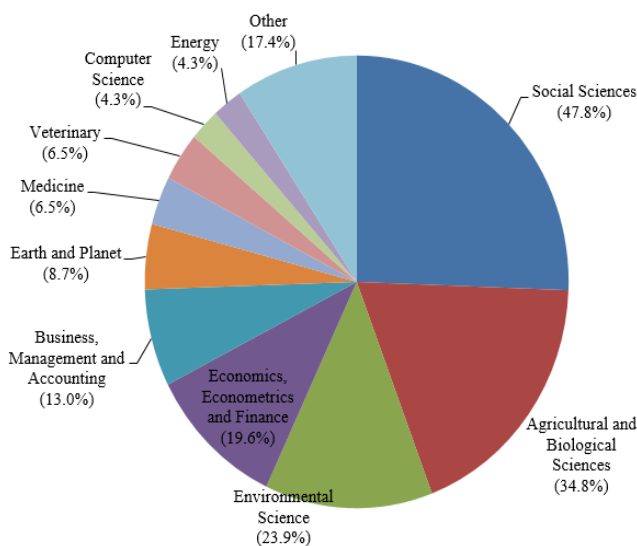
Graphic 3 Document management by year and source about social responsibility in the agricultural sector

Source: Scopus

Average production was not significant, being the social responsibility journal, the source in which most scientific articles are recorded. There is very little research about the CSR process linked to agricultural organizations.

The exploration carried out through Scopus, indicates that in 12 years very few articles of CSR have been written in the agricultural sector, which have been grouped into 4 business and social categories as follows: Unethical actions (22), Profitability and corporate responsibility (9), Caring for the environment (11), Agri-food problems and challenges (4). As can be inferred from Figure 4, the part of the labor perspective and the application of CSR from its operating scheme, is left aside. From this group of categories, the fields of knowledge in which they are most affected were analyzed, and the social sciences were found to be the main field of study with 22 articles (47.8%), agricultural and technological sciences with 16 published articles (34.8%), followed by the field of the environment with 11 articles (23.9%) and the economic and business sciences with 15 articles (19.6% and 13.0% respectively). This registry review of articles in scientific journals of the four main categories identified, properly indicates its impact on five areas of knowledge.

Documents by subject



Graphic 4 Document management by field of knowledge about social responsibility in the agricultural sector
Source: Scopus

This shows that on average there are just under 4 articles published on CSR in the agricultural sector worldwide per year, highlighting a greater participation of scientists from the United States, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, Australia, Indonesia, Bulgaria, Canada, China and France Internationally, a very poor figure for a subject as relevant as CSR, in one of the most important economic sectors worldwide, such as agriculture.

It should be noted that studies conducted by Mexican researchers have located two housed in indexed scientific journals and 1 under the modality of book. After the analysis of the CSR literature in the agricultural sector, the evidence of scarce CSR research in the agricultural sector is recorded, in comparison with other areas that link CSR and, what is more alarming, the low level of business practices of CSR that occurs in the agricultural sector that is linked to food security, the environment and social welfare.

The above is attributed; among other things, the ignorance of the practices and benefits of CSR, as well as the fact that government structures in the Sinaloan agricultural system have minimized the decision to apply CSR concepts in agricultural production, which has originated, example, that the dialogue between groups and interests, mainly workers, businessmen and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), in CSR matters is represented by ignorance, distrust and prejudice among the participants.

4. Methodology developed

The research methodology used for this work is based on the case study method, considered a proven approach for its application in highly temporally and spatially focused studies. It is recognized the existence of abundant bibliography on this type of research method, ranging from Yin (1989 and 2003), Eisenhardt (1989), Stake (2000), Voss, Tsiriktsis and Frohlich (2002), Bisquerra (2009), Peña Miranda and Serra Cantallops (2013) and Peña Miranda, Serra Cantallops and Muñoz (2017).

Following the guidelines of Yin (2003), the case study of this empirical research is oriented to the analysis and study of a current and contemporary fact within its context of business life. In practice, the foundation of this method for the context of business research is that its objective is to analyze the company in a comprehensive manner, by describing situations, explaining times and movements based on theories, hiring the same and the identification of causes and effects of business management that is carried out to achieve profitability and social viability for example.

The mechanisms of social structures change constantly in time and space, which suggests that generalizations about social systems should be considered fundamental contributions to proceed to generate causal explanations of the past, which could be considered valid in the present effects and future situational predictions.

Under this notoriety, agricultural activity is, by its nature, a primary activity of the economy, but also, due to its mechanisms and social links, it is an activity with broad social ties; so, considering that agricultural activity has a strong social component, it is pertinent and scientifically valid to study it from the case study approach.

Research under this method allows to collect evidence in situ application of CSR in the field or "establishment" where agricultural activity takes place. At first, a diagnosis of CSR of San Pedro Hortícola Brothers and qualitative classification categories to consider as central contribution of the study is done. For further understanding, we continue with the exhibition of the four stages that were developed:

Once an exploration of the international and national context of the agricultural sector has been carried out, a review of the scientific literature on the main theories of social responsibility is made, aimed at its practical application, for which the management and use of scientific information housed in databases was made of scientific information. The analysis of practical cases of CSR developed by international horticultural companies was continued. Likewise, secondary information was collected from the company chosen for the study and the published information on CSR was analyzed. Immediately, primary information was obtained through a situational diagnosis regarding Social Responsibility in the horticultural companies of the Évora region. The diagnosis was made through a questionnaire applied to 25 horticultural entrepreneurs of a total of 98 with permanent establishment in the region.

The research instrument focused on the analysis of the different areas in which the horticultural company could apply or apply social responsibility. The last stage corresponded to the observation, analysis, systematization and drafting of the case study. Once the information was obtained and processed, the general diagnostic document for the horticultural sector of the Évora Region was prepared.

An additional stage consisted in choosing a case study of the 98 detected, making periodic visits to the horticultural company San Pedro Hermanos, located in the union of Alhuey Angostura, Sinaloa. With a total of twelve visits, during four months in a row, the situation of social responsibility practices in the company was recorded.

4.1 Case study

As previously mentioned, it is evident that in the scientific literature there are few works and researches that link the CSR with the agricultural sector and even more in regional companies of the sector. In this context and with the aim of contributing to the discussion and construction of practical epistemic CSR models, an applied research was carried out in a horticultural company in the community of Alhuey Angostura, in the state of Sinaloa, Mexico.

This research is a pioneer in the matter from the context of the Évora region, configured by 3 municipalities of Sinaloa (Angostura, Salvadora Alvarado and Mocerito). The horticultural company "San Pedro Hermanos" was born in 1978 with the production of green beans, Italian squash, eggplant, tomato, melon and watermelon, its processes were conditioned by its main financial partners (investors from the United States), guaranteeing this, that the production was distributed by them.

Over the course of fifteen consecutive years, it was considered one of the leading companies in the production and marketing of vegetables and legumes. In addition, considering a family business with greater experience and recognition, has been exposed to the development of public and private projects with dual economic and social purpose that allowed the continuous improvement in their processes to achieve greater profitability and welfare of its workers.

This activity that showed it as a socially responsible company, has been carried out under empirical and non-normative knowledge, which has meant non-certification in CSR processes. With the present study, the horticultural company "San Pedro Hermanos" or better known as "Empaque San Pedro", becomes the first agricultural company in the Évora region that participates in an applied research project in CSR, with the objective of central to reincorporarse again successfully to the agricultural sector and also with the purpose of linking the academy with entrepreneurship.

The results presented are important for all companies in the sector, since it can become a specific sequence route in the start-up and execution of the CSR from a formal and regulatory perspective.

5. Results

The company Hortícola San Pedro Hermanos, has as mission to guarantee a socially responsible horticultural production in benefit of the market and society in particular. With a vision oriented to be the best horticultural company in the Évora Region, with export vocation.

Specifically, in Empaque San Pedro, an integral analysis was carried out of four (4) areas of socially responsible management related to its stakeholders (Stakeholders) and related to the CSR, both internally and externally the company. These areas are: Social environment, Environmental environment, Workers and Competition.

For this, a diagnostic instrument was used, based on 10 international guidelines and the sustainable development model, for two fundamental reasons:

The first, because it is a company in the agricultural sector and, in this sense, the model of sustainable development has been carried out and promoted by the World Labor Organization, to verify conditions for continuous improvement in the development of the agricultural sector.

On the other hand, a qualitative classification has been made for the company based on the CSR practices carried out, with the aim of identifying in a practical way the different actions that the company executes in relation to the CSR.

The classification allows knowing the formality of their CSR actions; that is, to identify how close it is to the recommendations of the accrediting bodies of CSR, and thus to know the level of CSR application in which it is developed, for which, it is analyzed from the gestational and progressive stage (historically speaking), for then continue with the development stage.

The classification of socially responsible companies that is used more generally in recent studies of CSR is the one that has been proposed by Carroll (1991 and 1999) and extended by Peña Miranda and Serra Cantallops (2013) of those who follow these criteria for the present study.

Hence, companies that develop CSR practices, regardless of the business or economic activity carried out, can be classified into 6 groups: Inactive, Reactive and Philanthropic, Reactive legal, Active, Proactive and Leader.

It is striking that each type of company is identified by its classification in the evolutionary stage, and also, the type and level of CSR is defined according to its commitment.

Type of company	Application feature of the CSR
Inactive company	It is the one that does not perform and does not show evidence of the practice of CSR, since it does not conceive the term Social Responsibility in a formal and disciplinary way.
Philanthropic Reactive Company	It is one that performs and demonstrates isolated practices of philanthropy.
Reactive Legal Company	It is the one that is limited to strict compliance with the rules and current legislation.
Active Company	It is the committed company that carries out CSR practices with a strategic nature, to which it is not obliged by law and with which it seeks greater profitability.
Proactive Company	It is the one that integrates the CSR to the business strategy by initiative and without proper order; that is, without observing compliance with laws and regulations because they are not obliged to do so. It is very similar to the active company.
Leading Company	It is the one that is committed to the public policies of the government, which implies attending the orientations of the 17 sustainable development objectives (SDGs) proposed by the United Nations with the purpose of achieving economic and sustainable development.

Table 1 Type of Company according to the social commitment when applying the CSR. *Source: Carroll (1991), and Peña Miranda and Serra Cantallops (2013)*

Next, the management area of the company is analyzed. To describe the main results, four categories are determined: a). Social environment, b). Environmental environment, c). Workers, and d). Competition. These categories are measured from the levels of reliability of CSR that is exposed in the model of Peña Miranda and Serra Cantallops (2013) of maximum, high, medium high, medium low, low and zero.

Type of company	Type of CSR level	Type of CSR	Quantitative Assessment
Inactive	Null	Null	Qualitative
Reactive Philanthropy	Low	Philanthropy	0-19
pica	Medium low	pica	(Null)
Reactive Legal	Medium high	Basic	20-39
Active	High	Tactic	(Deficient)
Proactive	Maximum	Strategic	40-59 (Insufficient)

Table 2. Level of CSR practices in organizations *Source: Peña Miranda and Serra Cantallops (2013)*

In the previous table quantitative assessment criteria are established that refer to CSR practices that a company applies, represented in a percentage. These criteria, standardized by international organizations, also denote a qualitative assessment. In this sense, the following comprehensive analysis of the level of CSR applied in the company Agrícola de estudio is presented.

a). Social Environment: Within the positive, in the studied company, one has clarity of the productive processes and of the economic and administrative activities; the limitations that the company has in the rural community where it is developed are identified; we act in good faith by supporting special people (Down syndrome and older adults), giving them the opportunity to carry out a simple "work" and "remunerated" activity; actions of solidarity and social action are carried out, such as simulations of firemen and red cross.

Among the negative aspects of the social environment, it is observed that there is no record or documentary evidence of the social relations that are exercised in the community of influence or with its interest groups; the social security of special persons who perform simple and remunerated activities is not formally guaranteed; there is no operating manual for social action practices nor are technical reports prepared that detail them and that contain the objectives that are achieved; In addition, there is no record of compliance with goals. Hence, the horticultural company San Pedro Hermanos, is at a low average level in the application of the CSR with respect to the social environment.

b). Environmental environment: The positive aspect is that in the company, behaviors characteristic of the care and protection of the environment are identified, such as the disposition they give to solid waste when separating garbage; however, the negative is that no documents are registered that show the disposition that is given to the solid and toxic waste that they use; the commitment of caring for the environment in the mission and in the vision is not declared; no records and evaluations of the actions that affect or erode in the environment (soil, air, natural resources and waste disposal) are identified; no environmental audits are carried out to verify the adequate use of natural resources, water treatment, gas emissions to the atmosphere (very little activity in the company), or adequate disposal of toxic waste.

In addition, in the practice of packing and packaging the products, environmental impacts are minimized; there is no evidence of risk and contingency plans, nor attention to environmental management programs or smoke-free company. In this sense, the horticultural company San Pedro Hermanos, is at a low level with zero tendency in the application of the CSR with respect to the environmental environment.

c). Workers: The positive thing is that they manage value training workshops with the company's staff, showing that the relationship with the workers is cordial and respectful; compliance with the fundamental rights expressed in our constitution is met, which is complemented with respect for human rights; Attention is given to the adequate working conditions; Equity and equality are promoted; the hiring of minors is rejected; the principles of solidarity with disgraced workers are promoted; the preparation and training of workers is promoted and carried out; it is financially supported by a scholarship to workers who wish to train at the higher level; In addition to the salary, support is given for the construction of modest homes, religious, political, ethnic and racial affiliation are respected; there are conditions to reconcile work life with personal and family life, adapting schedules and conditions; health is assured through medical attention with individuals; contingency plans are applied that allow the prevention of risks and accidents at work.

The negative is that it is not possible to guarantee the social security of all 68 workers. Therefore, the company is at a high average level of application of the CSR with respect to the category of workers.

d). Competitors: The positive thing is that there is camaraderie and cordiality among the horticultural colleagues of the region; absolute respect is retained in the production and commercialization of the others, given that they are members of the Association of Farmers of the Rio Mocerito that establishes the conditions of purchase sale; you always have the willingness to make economic integration agreements to strengthen the commercialization conditions; it participates in a common way in regional agricultural forums in which the prices and mechanisms of commercialization of its products are discussed and their experiences of success and failure are exchanged.

The negative is that there is no evidence of collaboration agreements and agreement of conditions. Based on this, the horticultural company is in high level of application of CSR in terms of competitors; you only need to document and formalize the agreements that require these conditions of collaboration.

6. Conclusions

The pronouncements of Lasorella and Siggia (2018) are retaken to leave open some questions that to date the agricultural sector should consider. Can we produce enough food to feed the population growth that is expected to be 9 billion projected by 2050? How can the CSR refer to companies that move to developing markets, assuming responsibility for their impact on society and the environment and guaranteeing food production? What is the role of companies in facing the critical problems of human development and environmental sustainability in developing countries?

In this context, according to Lasorella and Siggia (2018) the possible research priorities in CSR are to increase the competitiveness of companies through the intensification of sustainable agriculture, quality of life, new improved technologies and innovation capacity with a *modus operandi* different in Europe and in developing markets such as Asia, Africa and Latin America; without forgetting the fundamental role of sustainable development that constitutes one of the greatest opportunities in the history of trade.

It is important to mention that the studies of the CSR in the Mexican agricultural sector are very scarce, those that have been analyzed are interesting in the orientation and practice of the CSR, which will allow Mexican agribusinesses to maintain a competitive position and apply improvement actions continues to meet economic, environmental and social expectations. All the analyzes carried out agree that the practice of CSR in business management, It encompasses economic, administrative, political and social aspects that make the company adopt ethical, moral, cultural, efficiency, competitiveness and high profitability characteristics.

Although, at the international level, the CSR has been a topic of great interest for the academy for more than 20 years, for entrepreneurs it has been an issue that implies an additional cost and to which they do not attribute profitability benefits.

It is also observed that the CSR as a practice of continuous improvement is accepted in a generalized way, but not easily adopted; due mainly to the lack of knowledge of its scope and benefit, in addition to incurring additional costs, which discourages the employer.

The concept is divergent among scholars of the subject, and among the enabling agencies to certify this practice. The CSR is considered from several perspectives that by the fact of performing a single practice, in only one of the aforementioned categories, the company is already considered socially responsible. In addition, it is observed that CSR practices, by definition, have generated inaccuracies and confusions, to the point of applying and implementing it in a different way.

Even though the purpose of the CSR is to guarantee that the company has a good image before the society that allows it to compete and remain in the market, this is not a guarantee of increasing its profits. While the benefits are greater for workers and the environment, this does not guarantee that employees will see their salary and benefits increased; nor is permanent social security guaranteed by contracting them with tax regimes that are similar to salaries and under the fee scheme.

From the theoretical analyzes referred to in this document, it can be shown that the way of understanding and applying the CSR is different among countries, entities and localities; therefore, it is different between economic activities and business magnitudes. The differences can be attributed to the culture and economic and social conditions between countries. However; It is clear that these differences and the lack of generally accepted CSR application standards are not the pretext for companies to ignore it, minimize it and not apply it. This lack of consensus, both from academia and research, and from the business sector, could be an area of opportunity to improve business management and increase profitability.

For the case of study that concerns us (San Pedro Hermanos Horticultural Company) and under the considerations framed in these 4 categories, it is concluded that with regard to CSR practices, the company is active with a perspective to be proactive, given that it practices CSR to which it is not obligated; likewise, it applies an intuitive and tactical CSR, with purposes of profitability and business stability as aspects that influenced to determine the practice and functioning of social responsibility in the company.

The level of CSR that is valued in the company, according to what was established by Carroll (1991 and 1999), evidences medium-order effects with an orange label and with many possibilities of switching to a yellow label (the optimum would be the green label for compliance) to 100%); therefore, an acceptable CSR is applied qualitatively with many areas of opportunity tending to continuous improvement.

It will only be necessary to adopt the measures of the certifying bodies that issue the badges and certifications in all the areas to be considered (environment, social environment, workers and competitors).

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