Chapter 6
How Personal Values Affect Social Responsibility in Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Recent research has investigated how personal values of university stakeholders shape social responsibility of universities. Interest of universities for their responsibility toward society, beyond fundamental academic goals related to creating, transferring and preserving knowledge in society has become more widespread since 1970s. As social responsibility has evolved, universities have started to look into questions about mechanisms through which beliefs, values, attitudes impact their socially responsible behavior. This chapter provides an insight into the role of university stakeholders' personal values to creation of social responsibility of higher education institutions and explain how their values accelerate development of broader society. Findings enable new understanding of current state of social responsibility in higher education and suggest possible solutions for its improvment.

INTRODUCTION

The rising importance of sustainability was in the last decades expressed through various initiatives to preserve the environment for future generations emerged (Dunlap & Mertig, 1990; Elkington, 2004). These initiatives have been used in different names, forms and shapes, like triple bottom line (Elking-

ton, 2004), corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Foote et al., 2010), SR (Blackburn, 2007; Potocan et al., 2013), Agenda 21 (Bullard, 1998), sustainable development (Beckerman, 1994), and sustainability (Clayton & Radcliffe, 1996). We will use terms SR and sustainability interchangeable.

Looking from the perspective of various types of organizations, SR is extensively present and studied in business organizations (Schultz, 2001; Nordlund & Garvill, 2002; Cordano et al., 2011; Cirnu & Kuralt, 2013), while in some other types of organizations, the interest for sustainability is significantly lower. This lack is most clearly seen with lower number of studies in considered field. For instance, one emerging stream is dedicated to the ethics in public administration, focusing on ethical working and behavior of public administration organizations (Bowman & Knox, 2008; Fiorino, 2010; Jelovac et al., 2011; Kovac, 2013; Nedelko & Potocan, 2013). In frame of "non-profit sector", the integration of sustainability into higher education organizations is occurring at an accelerated pace. This is confirmed with plethora of studies about sustainability or SR in higher education (Newman et al., 2004; McNamara, 2010; Gosselin et al., 2013; Figueiró & Raufflet, 2015; Hoover & Harder, 2015).

Various studies in this field emphasized several ways to enhance the SR of higher education institutions. Very commonly are addressed changes in curricula, where the focus in on implementing sustainability and SR principles into the curriculum (Figueiró & Raufflet, 2015) in order to have an impact on rising students' level of SR – i.e. through their perception. For instance, Gosselin et al. (2013) reported, based on three case studies, that curricula were reformed in a way that enable students to learn about behavioral sciences, life sciences, Earth and atmospheric sciences, social sciences, etc., in order to broader their understanding of SR. Figueiró and Raufflet (2015) additionally, reported that among 78 papers analyzed, dealing with management education, only 5 papers were dealing with green or sustainable campuses. Warwick (2016) emphasized vital role of students as change agents in the process of heightening SR level of higher education organizations, Wright and Wilton (2012) assigned vital role in increasing role to the management of educational institutions. Hoover and Harder (2015) reported about hidden complexity of organizational change for sustainability in higher education, emphasizing for instance, organizational culture, personal characteristics, individual knowledge, etc. Another promising option to enhance sustainability of higher education is also development of stronger ties between higher education organizations and the community in order to becoming more socially responsible (Chambers & Gopaul, 2008).

Turning to the most important drivers of SR, in business literature are very frequently emphasized personal values, as an important driver of organizational as well as individual behavior regarding SR (Stern & Dietz, 1994; Karp, 1996; Schultz & Zelezny, 1999). Based on an overview of existing studies, a lot of evidences exist about the importance of personal values for shaping SR of business organizations (Kemmelmeier et al., 2002; Dietz et al., 2005), but on the other hand there is lack of studies clarifying the role of personal values in shaping SR of higher education organizations.

Among plethora of alternatives to enhance sustainability of higher education, the least attention is dedicated to the development of stronger ties between higher education organizations and the community. Turning to the role of stakeholders, the crucial role for increasing sustainability of higher education can be assigned to the various stakeholders of higher education – namely management of educational institutions, teachers, students and society.

Based on above findings about (1) increasing role of sustainability of higher education organizations with enhancing the links with the community, (2) the crucial role of various stakeholders and (3) the key role of personal values for shaping SR behavior, we want to highlight the role of personal values of various stakeholders – i.e. managers and teachers in higher education institutions, students and the values

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