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### Social Responsibility of Higher Education Students. Motivations for its Development in Times of Covid-19 in Chile and El Salvador

*Responsabilidad social de estudiantes de educación superior. Motivaciones para su desarrollo en tiempos de Covid-19 en Chile y El Salvador*

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#### RESUMEN

La crisis de salud producto de Covid-19 ha llevado a la reflexión sobre diversos aspectos de la vida humana desde la perspectiva de su comportamiento en la sociedad. El propósito de esta investigación es analizar la responsabilidad social de los estudiantes universitarios en Chile y El Salvador, para dar paso a una AFE y un análisis de las diferencias de medias. Lo que permite identificar las motivaciones para su desarrollo e implementación. La valoración más alta se concentra en los chilenos y, en la mayoría de los casos se presentan diferencias significativas según las categorías presentadas en esta investigación. Las futuras investigaciones deben considerar varias áreas de comportamiento para los estudiantes de educación superior.

**Palabras clave:** Covid-19, comportamiento social, responsabilidad social, estudiante, educación superior

#### ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 health crisis has led to reflection on various aspects of human life from the perspective of their behavior in society. The purpose of this research is to analyze the social responsibility of university students in Chile and El Salvador, to make way for an EFA and an analysis of media differences. This allows identifying the motivations for its development and implementation. The highest valuation is concentrated in Chileans and, in most cases; differences are presented according to the categories in this investigation. Future research should consider several areas of behavior for higher education students.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, social behavior, social responsibility, student, higher education.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The global pandemic produced by Covid-19 (SARS-CoV2) has led to the development of various investigations related to medicine and health sciences (Adhikari et al., 2020), which seek to discover a vaccine that can be used to combat the spread of the virus and its emancipation. On the other hand, the same cannot be said about the investigations that consider Covid-19 and its relationship with the social sciences and, particularly, education and behavioral sciences.

The consequences of the pandemic that affects the international population today are enormous, due to the increasing number of infected and the number of deaths. On the other hand, the aforementioned health crisis is triggering a deep economic and social crisis, which comparable to the consequences unleashed by the Spanish plague of 1918-1919 (Thomas, 2020) and, with the Great Depression of 1929 (Wich, 2020). What will cause an increase in unemployment, lower wages, and decrease in poverty throughout the planet (Comisión Económica para América Latina, 2019).

The social responsibility of the various sectors and inter-sectors that make up a fabric (Valenzuela, 2020), should seek the deployment of efforts that from the perspective of behavior can deploy strategies linked to ethics that contribute to community's well-being (Téran Rosero et al., 2017; Ramírez et al., 2018; Villalobos & Ramírez (2018); Villalobos et al., 2020; Hamids, 2020). On the other hand, higher education institutions, due to their inescapable role of training future professionals, should seek to develop both disciplinary and ethical competencies, leading to decision-making that considers the context and well-being of the entire population, also conceived as a social consciousness (Mahmud et al., 2020). So, on the one hand, allows the natural adoption of prevention measures, such as social distancing (Oosterhoff., Wilson & Shook, 2020), which is the result of a greater understanding of the current reality of the population and the impact of their adequate or inadequate decisions (Lazzerini & Putoto, 2020).

Finally, this investigation's research questions are: What is the higher educational institutions' role in relation to socially responsible behavior? What are the characteristics of the social responsibilities of university students in Chile and El Salvador? For which the following research objective has been defined and analyze the social responsibility of university students in Chile and El Salvador.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

### **Overview and adverse effects of the virus**

Covid-19 is a virus that causes respiratory illnesses and high temperatures that can manifest itself from a common cold to a severe acute syndrome (Abodunrin, Oloye & Adesolaet, 2020). Its appearance has motivated the development of a series of investigations that examine that from treatment to its prevention (Schulz, Coimbra-Araújo & Costiche, 2020), the above due to its high transmissibility (Dawood, 2020). Its manifestation dates from December 2020 (Gao, Tian & Yanget, 2020), being first reported in early January as a new coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) whose origin is Wuhan, Hubei Province in China (Bhagavahula et al., 2020), triggering an epidemic in the short term that continues to affect the world population (Sohrabi et al., 2020). Placing everyone on alert, due to its socioeconomic impact (Nicola et al., 2020), which, it is estimated, will be greater the Great Depression of 1929 and the financial crisis of 2008 (Abodunrin et al., 2020). Motivating the authorities to implement strategies that are the result of an absence of antiviral treatment or vaccination (Guo et al., 2020; Stebbing et al., 2020), such as: promoting hand washing, social distancing, restricting movement, quarantining, closure of public and private institutions, among others (Bhagavathula et al., 2020). Immediately provoking the loss of skilled and experienced jobs, reduction of the labor force, increase in poverty, reduction in productivity, among others (CEPAL, 2020).

Now, in Chile, the first case of Covid-19 was notified on March 3, which led to the declaration by the president of the Republic of the State of Constitutional Exception of Catastrophe for the entire country on 18

of March 37 new cases of positive Covid-19 were reported at the time (Piñera, 2020a). Leading to the implementation of the Covid-19 Action Plan (Piñera, 2020b; Piñera, 2020c). Later, the considerations regarding total quarantine, sanitary cords, sanitary customs, mandatory isolation and measures of indefinite and temporary validity are published (Gobierno de Chile, 2020). As for education, on March 15 the Ministerio de Educación (Ministerio de Educación, 2020a) publishes the suspension of preschool and school education and, on the other hand, the suspension of face-to-face classes in higher education, such as the delivery of digital platforms, financial funds and strengthening for online education (MINEDUC, 2020b).

In contrast, in El Salvador, the first case of Covid-19 was registered on March 1. For a country with a small territorial extension and significant gravity, it places it in a very unfavorable position compared to other countries on the continent (Trilla, 2020), which is intensified by factors such as: worldwide human and animal transport, trade, agriculture expansion, deforestation and urbanization (Moreira-Soto, Troyo & Corrales-Aguilar, 2014). Which has caused panic, anxiety and fear (Afonso, 2020). Regarding education, Ministerio de Educación (MINED) of El Salvador paralyzed the educational processes, later the government designed programs and strategies with a territorial scope, which seeks to virtualize classes (MINED, 2020). Which leads to reflection on some aspects that characterize public education, which should improve during the post-pandemic stage.

### **Between social responsibility and socially responsible behavior. Building bridges**

According to Qi (2020). The late publication of Covid-19 cases is the product of habitual thinking, the characteristics of the first groups of experts sent to the zero contagion zone, which is the result of behavior based on old habits, which causes fixation errors (Zhou et al., 2020). This is aggravated due to the behavior of the Chinese scientific community that relativized the true gravity, speed, danger and impact that it is causing to the population (Liu et al., 2020), being socially irresponsible (Saturno-Hernández et al., 2015; Severino-González, Pujol-Cols & Lazzaro-Salazar, 2019), particularly from virologists (Gu & Li, 2020).

On the other hand, responsibility resulting from decision-making and its impact on society can be conceived from the perspective of social responsibility (Terán Rosero et al., 2017; Ramírez; Villalobos & Herrera, 2018; Villalobos, Ramírez & Díaz-Cid, 2019; Severino-González, Martín-Friorino & González-Soto, 2019). That is why the social responsibilities of political leaders are high (Remuzzi & Remuzzi, 2020), due to the impact that they have on the population. In this regard, the responsibility of various actors in society are added, such as the media, who through their distribution channels can generate behavior favorable or unfavorable predisposition of all the political and social events (Tapia and Bouza, 2020).

Finally, the social responsibilities of higher education institutions lay in the training of professionals' excellence, who are characterized by a socially responsible behavior (Severino-González et al., 2019). Which supports the deployment of socioemotional or emotional affective strategies in the context of risks and challenges (Annía et al., 2019; Ríos et al., 2019; Ríos et al., 2020; Valdez-García et al., 2020). Where educational strategies allow for the development of motivations for the respecting the rules of social distancing, using masks, among others; shaping a prosocial attitude and socially responsible behavior (Oosterhoff et al., 2020). Finally, greater social awareness would allow for a drastic decrease in the amount of infected individuals (Mahmud et al., 2020).

## **METHODS**

### **Design and participants**

This article raises the perception of 288 higher education students from Chile and El Salvador through a quantitative approach (Hernandez, Fernández y Baptista, 2012) of a descriptive and transactional type (Canales, 2006), the instrument is a Likert-type scale, considering a non-probability sample for convenience (Otzen & Manterola, 2017), who were contacted through the snowball technique, failing to expand the number

due to the health crisis. This investigation allows us to explore the motivations that stimulate the implementation of institutional strategies that contribute to the development of social awareness as a result of the responsibilities that students have in the current Covid-19 health crisis.

**Instrument**

The questionnaire has been designed by García Ramos et al. (2016a), which has been applied in Colombia, Chile, Mexico, and Spain (García Ramos et al., 2016b; García Ramos et al., 2018c; Fonseca et al., 2019; Severino-González et al., 2019). The first section considers: sociodemographic aspects that allow for the sample to be characterized and the second section: a questionnaire with 20 statements, the scale is Likert type, where 1 is the minimum agreement value and 6 is the maximum agreement value. All dimensions have a Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.8. The initial questionnaire was submitted to AFE, the following instrument resulted as seen in Table I.

**Table I.** Final instrument

Dimensions	Items
Commitment to others and the environment	I have a global vision of the current situation in the world and I am aware of the urgent need for sustainable development.
	This awareness increases my interest as a university student in contributing to the improvement of my closest environment.
	I question what my personal position is in the face of social injustices, in the face of other people's pain.
	I consider that one of my obligations, as a person is to help others from social commitment.
Personal Discovery of values	I believe that social commitment is based on the recognition and respect of every person's dignity.
	I recognize the need to open up to others, put myself in their place and seek a common good, above individualistic interests.
	I consider that personal change to be a pervious and necessary step to change the reality around me.
	I have experienced in first person the happiness that comes from service and solidarity.
	I consider that the experience of giving oneself to others is beneficial to discover personal values.
Formation of social responsibility	I think that being a university student helps to become aware of the importance social responsibility.
	I believe that as I study and prepare thoroughly for college, I will be able to bare more social change.
	The training I will receive at college will contribute in practice to increase my social responsibility level.
	I believe that social responsibility is a skill that must be worked on at college.
Approach to professional practice from social commitment	I consider the work of my future profession will be oriented to the common good.
	I believe that good personal practices imply commitment, teamwork, perseverance, empathy, tolerance, honesty and respect.
	I believe that my personal fulfillment and my happiness go through being a professional committed to society's improvement as a whole.
	I believe that the action of a good professional has an impact on their immediate surroundings and on other is of great importance.
	I think it is realistic to say that it is possible to practice social commitment.

Source: García Ramos et al. (2016a).

## Procedures

The instrument application was developed between November 2019 and February 2020, for which the classrooms accessed themselves on the one hand and on the other, an online survey was completed, due to the health crisis. At all times, its purpose is explained, such as its confidentiality and anonymity. For processing the data, the SPSS18 program was used, for both the descriptive and inferential analyzes. For the internal validation of the data and the questionnaire, AFE, Cronbach's alpha analysis, among others, were used, applying the corresponding normality tests; explaining in this document only the cases that present statistically significant differences. As for the AFE, the principle components extraction method was used, with Varimax rotation (Montoya Suárez, 2007).

## RESULTS

### Descriptive characteristics

In table II, you can see the characteristics of the 288 students from Chile and El Salvador.

Table II. Characteristics

Variables	Characteristics	Number
Country.	Chile	154
	El Salvador	134
Gender.	Men	129
	Women	145
Permanence.	1 year	33
	2 year	33
	3 year	34
	4 year	74
	5 year	67
	6 year	47
Age (average).	Years	23
Territory.	Urban	127
	Rural	161
Occupation.	Studies and Works	108
	Only studies	180
Socio-economic Level.	Low	37
	Medium low	79
	Medium	157
	Medium high	15
	High	0
Belongs to a volunteer group.	Yes	137
	No	151

Source: Self-made.

Subsequently, the internal consistency coefficients were determined through the application of the Cronbach's alpha. Personal discovery of values = 0.936, Approach to professional practice from social commitment = 0.939, Formation of social responsibility = 0.891 and Commitment to others and the environment = .887, which is considered very high according to Nunnally & Bernstein (1994).

### Exploratory Factorial Analysis

For the development of the EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO= 0.965) was evaluated to determine the appropriateness of an AFE, which allows determining in principle that the aforementioned analysis is pertinent, which is confirmed by the Barlett sphericity test, where  $\chi^2= 4942,918$ ;  $g|= 158$ ;  $p<0,0001$ . To then apply the principal component method and the Varimax extraction. Regarding the characteristics of the final questionnaire. It is made up of 18 items. Dimension 1. Personal discovery of values (v8, v10, v9, v6 and v7), 2. Approach to professional practice from social commitment (v16, v18, v19, v20 and v17), 3. Formation of social responsibility (v11, v14, v13 and v15) and 4. Commitment to others and the environment (v3, v2, v1 and v5). V12 and v4 were eliminated, since they do not contribute to final explanation from the statistical and epistemological point of view of the social responsibilities of university students in Chile and El Salvador. Regarding the total explained variance, it is 79.3% (see Table III).

**Table III.** Matrix of rotated components of the student social responsibility survey

Variables	Dimensions			
	Personal Discovery of values	Approach of professional practice from social commitment	Formation of social responsibility	Commitment to others and the environment
v8	0.773			
v10	0.706			
v9	0.694			
v6	0.670			
v7	0.657			
v16		0.714		
v18		0.708		
v19		0.691		
v20		0.654		
v17		0.643		
v11			0.825	
v14			0.818	
v13			0.721	
v15			0.502	
v3				0.809
v2				0.765
v1				0.614
v5				0.592

Source: Self-made.

### Inferential analysis

Next, the mean differences will be analyzed according to the subgroups that make up the samples of this investigation. Previously, the normality test was applied in each case to determine the destruction of the data. This is important in order to determine the proper use of parametric or non-parametric tests.

Table IV shows statistically significant differences in each of the dimensions, finding the highest values within the Chilean cases. Now, particularly the highest value is identified in the personal discovery of value dimension, which the result of the efforts developed by the higher education institutions leading to the acknowledgement of the human being from the respect for human dignity perspective (Mean =5.15; SD = 0.96; Median =5.4).

**Table IV.** Descriptions according to Chile and El Salvador.

Dimensions	Country	Mean	SD	Median	Mann Whitney's U
Personal Discovery of values.	Chile	5.15	0.96	5.4	0.00
	El Salvador	4.26	1.25	4.2	
Approach of professional practice from social commitment.	Chile	5.12	0.95	5.4	0.00
	El Salvador	4.12	1.15	4.2	
Formation of social responsibility.	Chile	4.77	1.09	5.0	0.00
	El Salvador	4.15	1.29	4.25	
Commitment to others and the environment.	Chile	5.12	0.855	5.25	0.00
	El Salvador	4.07	1.21	4.25	

Source: Self-made.

In Table V, it can be seen, for each dimensions, significant correlations are presented, the strongest being the Commitment to others and environment dimension ( $R= 0.33$ ) and the weakest being the Personal Discovery of values dimension ( $R=0.27$ ).

**Table V.** Descriptions according to age group

Dimensions	Mean	SD	Statistical decision	Spearman Correlation (R)
Personal Discovery of values.	4.74	1.19	Significant	0.27
Approach of professional practice from social commitment.	4.6	1.16	Significant	0.29
Formation of social responsibility.	4.48	1.22	Significant	0.24
Commitment to others and the environment.	4.63	1.15	Significant	0.33

Source: Self-made.

Table VI, it can be seen that in each of the dimensions there are significant differences. For this reason, it can be asserted that the longer the students remain in the respective higher education faculties, the greater the Discovery of their responsibilities both personally and socially by virtue of professional practice. In addition, they recognize the need in training in social responsibility, as in turn, the greater the commitment they recognize possessing with others and the environment.

**Table VI.** Description according the year in the institution.

Dimensions	Years	Mean	SD	Median	Differences
Personal Discovery of values.	1	4.39	1.16	4.6	0.00
	2	4.36	1.42	4.2	
	3	4.4	1.21	4.4	
	4	4.7	1.07	4.7	
	5	5.1	1.08	5.4	
	6	5.1	1.17	5.4	
Approach of professional practice from social commitment.	1	4.21	0.9	4.2	0.00
	2	4.4	1.4	4.4	
	3	4.14	1.2	4.2	
	4	4.7	0.9	4.6	
	5	5.1	1.12	5.4	
	6	4.9	1.2	5.2	

Formation of social responsibility.	1	4.12	1.19	4	0.00
	2	4.14	1.39	4	
	3	4.11	1.15	4	
	4	4.53	1.13	4.62	
	5	4.87	1.19	5.3	
	6	4.61	1.2	5	
Commitment to others and the environment.	1	4.18	1.12	4.25	0.00
	2	4.23	1.39	4.25	
	3	4.14	1.26	4	
	4	4.59	1.07	4.5	
	5	5	0.95	5.25	
	6	5.1	1.01	5.25	

Source: Self-made.

In Table VII, shows significant differences in each of the dimensions. In the Personal Discovery of values dimension ( $p=0.00$ ), where those from rural areas (Mean =4.91; SD = 1.1; Median =5.2), have a higher valuation than those who come from urban places. On the other hand, the same happens according to the Approach to professional practice based on social commitment dimension ( $p=0.00$ ), where those from rural areas (Mean =4.83; Median =1.1; SD=5.2) recognize greater responsibilities than residents of urban areas.

Table VII. Description according to territory (Urban/Rural)

Dimensions	Territory	Mean	SD	Median	Differences
Personal Discovery of values.	Urban	4.52	1.3	4.6	0.00
	Rural	4.91	1.1	5.2	
Approach of professional practice from social commitment.	Urban	4.4	1.2	4.6	0.00
	Rural	4.83	1.1	5.2	
Formation of social responsibility.	Urban	4.4	1.3	4.5	0.00
	Rural	4.5	1.2	4.8	
Commitment to others and the environment.	Urban	4.3	1.23	5	0.00
	Rural	4.9	1.04	4.5	

Source: Self-made.

On the other hand, in Table VIII, it can be seen that significant differences are presented in all dimensions, since in all cases the p-values are less than 0.05. It can be identified that the dimension that presents the highest valuation is Personal Discovery of values, particularly of those who declare to study and work (Mean =5; SD= 1.12; Median =4.5). In all cases, the highest values are found to be related to the group that indicates studying and working.

Table VIII. Descriptions according to occupation

Dimensions	Occupation	Mean	SD	Median	Differences
Personal Discovery of values.	Study and work	5	1.12	5.4	0.00
	Only study	4.6	1.2	4.8	
Approach of professional practice from social commitment.	Study and work	4.9	1.1	5.2	0.00
	Only study	4.5	1.2	4.6	
Formation of social responsibility.	Study and work	4.7	1.2	4.9	0.00
	Only study	4.4	1.2	4.5	
Commitment to others and the environment.	Study and work	4.9	1.12	5.25	0.00
	Only study	4.4	1.14	4.5	

Source: Self-made.



## CONCLUSION

The main objective of this article is to analyze the social responsibility of university students in Chile and El Salvador, for which a quantitative study has been carried out, the results of which aim to highlight the importance of comprehensive training for future professionals, considering the current health crisis as a decisive factor that contributes to the implementation of strategies that lead to the development of social awareness and social responsibility of future decision-makers.

Among the results, it can be pointed out that there is a difference in the assessment of social responsibilities that Chilean and Salvadoran university students possess. Where students in Chile acknowledge having greater responsibilities. What should motivate El Salvadoran students to develop actions that intervene their educational model, which allows a better understanding of the context, which can allow for the natural deployment of the measures that are being promoted to decrease the contagion product of the SARS-COV2 transmissibility level, such as confinement, social distance, and use of gloves, masks and alcohol gel, among others.

Finally, public authorities point out that the population must learn to live with Covid-19, because it is a virus that has accompanied the international community for a long period of time. The call is to gradually return to normal activities, not falling into a false triumphalism that leads to the careless product of not considering preventive measures. That is why, it is necessary to promote a safe return leading to the re-sharing of personal and social responsibilities by each of the actors that make up society

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