

University social responsibility from an environmental perspective

MELBA RITA VÁSQUEZ TOMÁS
Universidad Norbert Wiener
Av. Guardia Civil 851-Chorrillos-Lima
PERU

JUDITH SOLEDAD YANGALI VICENTE
Universidad Norbert Wiener
Av. 28 de julio 293 San Vicente de Cañete
PERU

MARUJA DIONISIA BALDEÓN DE LA CRUZ
Universidad Norbert Wiener
Chosica-Lima
PERU

DELSI MARIELA HUAITA ACHA
Universidad Norbert Wiener
Av. Andrés Tinoco 270-Surco-Lima
PERU

Abstract: - The environmental problem in our country is a reality that concerns the Peruvian State, especially the education sector. For this reason, University Law 30220 [1] establishes that the USR must respond to the demands of sustainable development and society welfare. In this sense, the purpose of the study was to analyze the social responsibility policies of ten universities in Lima, in order to evaluate if the planned activities have an environmental focus. Likewise, to know the level of approval of the students of the social responsibility program that is executed within the four axes. Under the focus of a mixed study, the findings showed that there were planned social responsibility projects and activities with an environmental focus which were planned more frequently in private universities than public universities. Nevertheless, the purpose for both is to awaken the interest and commitment of the university community in the preservation of the environment. Concerning approval level, 75.6% of the surveyed students approve the implementation of social responsibility activities and state that they agree with the social and citizen training axis in a 64.8%, followed by social participation with 56.8%, social management of knowledge in a 56.4%, and sustainable campus with 47.2%. In conclusion, the USR policies must address the environmental problems of the surroundings and must be informed to the entire university community, ensuring institutional participation and commitment.

Key-words: - Sustainable campus, social participation, environmental culture, social management of knowledge, social and citizen training, university social responsibility.

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1. Introduction

Social responsibility is conceived as a policy implemented by the university with the purpose to address the impacts caused by the organization and academic activities developed by the university community (Vallaes, 2014) [2]. These impacts come from the university itself, its staff and students, as a result of the interaction with their environment, the execution of social, academic activities and the transmission and generation of

knowledge through research. In this context, university authorities are responsible for implementing, within their policies of university social responsibility (USR), actions that mitigate the effects generated by the ecological footprint of the university community. Also, they are responsible for ensuring the conservation of the natural environment, ensuring the sustainable development of society by strengthening the environmental attitudes of future professionals. In

this sense, Aguilar (2006) claims that the person is able to develop an environmental awareness when it is related to life, knowledge and experiences to interact with the environment in a responsible manner, [3]. This commits the university community to participate in the activities implemented as part of the social responsibility policies, aimed at reducing the effects produced by the organization in its interaction with the environment. Society requires competent professionals in their specialty that respond to the demands and standards of the labor market. However, people with environmental responsibility are also needed, people committed to the sustainable management of the available resources and environmental conservation. This responsibility is put into practice by companies, private and government organizations with the purpose of reducing the ecological footprint of the staff, contributing in the conservation of nature, biodiversity and the sustainability of resources for future generations (Fernandez, 2008, cited by Velez-Romero & Cano-Lara, 2016) [4]. Universities comply with submitting their USR policies, but they are not adequately disseminated to the university community generating ignorance and low participation. This is evidenced in the studies of Condori & Reyna (2019) conducted in a public university in central Peru, where 58% of participants perceive that university social responsibility is deficient, 69% said that research training is adequate, while 59% indicated that there is passivity in social participation and 60% showed that organizational management is perceived as deficient [5]. Along the same lines, Pérez & Calvo (2021) found that 54% of Paraguayan university students know the term USR as synonymous of forming socially responsible citizens, 58% were in complete agreement that the university promotes USR activities, while 71% said that they actively participate in these events proposed by the faculty, concluding that the university fulfills its role of promoting social responsibility actions [6]. Pumacayo, et al., (2020) affirms that the university fulfills the mission of providing knowledge, promoting research and social responsibility by training competent professionals capable of generating a positive impact on the environment and society [7]. And it is through research, social and citizen participation, driven by the university that will favor the formation of professionals, generators of change and with the ability to make decisions in favor of their natural environment and

society (Sosa & Marquez, 2010) [8]. Another aspect to consider is the need to implement a national strategy to incorporate environmental literacy in higher education curricula as a factor that generates motivation in decision-making in favor of a sustainable environment (Tala-Sasa, et al., 2022), [9]. In this context, the purpose of the study was to perform an analysis of the USR policies and to verify that their activities respond to the environmental approach in the organizational, academic and social generation of knowledge. The USR requires that the different parts of the institution are articulated with the purpose of implementing projects with the aim of promoting sustainable social development, the production and transmission of knowledge to contribute in the formation of its students as responsible citizens committed to their environment (Pérez, et al., 2018) [10]. Also, it requires to know the level of approval and participation of students in the responsibility activities implemented by the university. The scope of the research is to achieve the reflection of the university community with the aim of paying greater attention in the planning of RSU policies, taking into account the environmental needs of the faculty and the local environment. On the other hand, the scope is to improve the dissemination channels in order to involve the university community to participate in the proposed activities.

2. Literature review

2.1 University social responsibility

The ISO 26000 standard, considers that the social responsibility of an organization starts by taking responsibility for the impacts generated towards society and the environment, assuming the commitment to mitigate their effects [11]. In this sense, universities must ensure that their academic and social activities do not alter the structure of society and the environment. In the Latin American context, some universities develop the USR for solidarity purposes towards communities, leaving aside the environmental reality, and focusing their efforts on democratizing and providing access to knowledge free of charge to the population. However, the practice of a corporate social responsibility should be oriented to the search for the common good of the members of the host communities (Yerima-Hamman, et al., 2022) [12]. The Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (2007) define USR as a policy of ethical quality of

the performance of the university community through the responsible management of the educational, cognitive, labor and environmental impacts that the university generates [13]. Therefore, the USR must be considered as a comprehensive policy of institutional management that forces and commits the stakeholders to decrease the ecological footprint generated by the university (Vallaey, 2014) [2]. For Vallaey, De la Cruz & Sasia (2009), social responsibility reaches four fields in the university [14]: (a) organizational field, where policies should be oriented to address the pollution generated by the carbon footprint left by the university community. For this, it must promote a sustainable university campus where the practice of a culture of recycling and preservation of green areas becomes an agreement to be fulfilled by the parties involved, favoring their environmental training. (b) educational field, where the university's purpose is the professional and ethical training of the individual. The curriculum, teaching processes and educational practice should prepare the future professional to respond to the demands of the labor market, without neglecting their professional ethics and of course their pro-environmental attitudes. (c) of knowledge field, where the university through research promotes the production of knowledge in accordance with its lines of research, which should be oriented to the SDGs. (d) social field, where the university, being part of society, should interact with the community and the productive sectors. Therefore, it fulfilled the mission of training intellectual capital in actors committed to social and environmental issues. Vallaey (sf) proposes four management axes that the university assumes as an organization in a responsible manner: (i) Sustainable campus: implementation of strategies and actions to ensure good institutional practices in environmental management issues on university campuses. (ii) Social and citizen training: approaching citizenship and social responsibility issues in the curriculum (sustainable development, professional and civic ethics), in addition to solidarity volunteering. (iii) Social management of knowledge: promotion of research oriented to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and agreements with institutions to conduct research in favor of the environment. (iv) Social participation: active participation in the community, integration of academic training with social projection and the existence of agreements with external actors for development programs [15].

Regarding the environmental issue and under an altruistic, awareness-raising and disseminating perspective, the USR seeks to transform through action, realities where environmental deterioration has become evident generating a negative impact on the population. The university is responsible for the formation of future professionals in the ethical, axiological and pro-environmental attitudes with the ability to make decisions and respond to social and environmental problems.

2.2 Environmental culture

The process and result of environmental influences that are going to prepare the person to understand and explain from a cognitive, practical and axiological perspective the implication of environmental conservation in improving the quality of life and the sustainable development of nature is what we understand as environmental culture (Pérez de Villa, 2015) [16]. It is also defined as the set of values, customs, thoughts and actions that the person possesses, and demonstrates it by using natural resources in a balanced and sustainable way avoiding the deterioration and pollution of the environment (Angeles, 2021) [17]. Environmental culture is deployed as a path towards the conservation of environmental ecosystems, projecting the sustainability of peoples of the world. The deployment of values that it demands, and the awareness that is generated should be inculcated from home, with the example shown by the family, through simple actions such as sorting solid waste, recycling, reusing materials and promoting green areas at home (Yangali, et al., 2021) [18].

The environmental problems that afflict humanity force higher educational institutions to become involved as agents of change in the sustainable behaviors of future professionals, and from the classrooms, the implementation of research projects for action in favor of the planet should be encouraged. Sustainable behavior is defined as effective, deliberate and anticipated actions that result in the preservation of natural resources and species, ensuring the individual and social welfare of human generations (Corral-Verdugo & Queiroz, 2004) [19].

3. Method

The study was characterized by being of a mixed approach, where the qualitative part preceded the quantitative one, allowing the obtaining of information, product of the execution of techniques

and application of instruments with the purpose of carrying out a deeper analysis of the phenomenon studied (Creswell, 2010 cited in Arispe et al., 2020) [20]. The investigation began with the documentary analysis of the social responsibility policies of ten universities in Lima (Pacific University, San Ignacio de Loyola, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Norbert Wiener University, Major University of San Marcos, University of Applied Sciences, Southern Scientific University, National University of Engineering, Cayetano Heredia University and Federico Villarreal National University), which were selected taking into account the availability of information on the web page of these universities Secondly, through visits to these university campuses and the use of the field diary as an instrument that favors the systematization of information, reflection and criticism of reality (Luna, et al., 2022) [21], it was possible to record and describe the USR experiences implemented in the university campuses. For the descriptive part of the research, through the survey and the application of a questionnaire to 250 students of these universities, it was possible to know the level of approval and participation in the activities planned in each axis of the USR such as sustainable campus, social and citizen training, social management of knowledge and social participation (Vallaes, 2014) [2].

4. Results and Discussion

When analyzing the social responsibility policies, the development of projects and initiatives with an environmental focus was evidenced within the four axis of the USR.

Sustainable university campuses, the universities have deployed actions aimed at **reducing the consumption of electrical energy**, for which they have adopted measures such as: the installation of energy-saving lighting, construction of modern infrastructure that take advantage of natural light and the use of solar panels. Initiatives such as the development of the "*Connected with the Planet*" program, which, in partnership with telephone companies, installed solar recharging modules for cell phones. Regarding **management of responsible water consumption**, universities are responsibly taking charge by using flow regulators in the sinks, allowing savings of 50%, installing toilets with devices that reduce water consumption by 20% per flush, which optimizes the faucet systems, organizing campaigns to promote the

proper closing of pipes and responsible consumption. **In waste and dumping management**, several initiatives were carried out, such as the placement of containers and garbage cans classified by color according to the type of waste (paper, plastic, organic, glass) on campus, recycling campaigns for plastic bottles, paper, batteries, batteries, electrical and electronic waste, the latter in partnership with media companies. From the universities studied, three of them have agreements with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as "SOS Children's Villages Peru " and " Burned Child Aid Association (ANIQUEM)", who support these campaigns to collect unused solid material and then manage an adequate and safe recycling process. Another campaign carried out by the private university since 2018 is "*Recycling: I take care of the environment*" which consists of collecting plastic bottles (PET), and as an incentive a cloth bag is given for every 20 bottles, thus encouraging the segregation of solid waste and the disuse of plastic bags. The solid waste generated in the university institutions must be managed in accordance with the National Environmental Action Plan (2011), which aims to reduce waste generation, improve segregation through selective collection, recycling, and reuse of electronic and electrical waste [22]. As for greywater treatment, we can point to the experience of the *National University of Engineering*, which developed the project "*quantification, characterization, treatment and reuse of graywater*". Regarding the preservation of green areas on university campuses, we can mention initiatives such as the promotion of tree planting in their facilities, the placement of plants in offices, organization of "Green Campus" campaigns that seek to engage students in the care of these living spaces that contribute to mitigate the effects of global warming. Gray water treatment projects ensure sufficient irrigation of green areas, reducing water consumption. Another experience carried out as part of Pacific university USR program is the Akapacha Fest is a sustainability festival: An initiative that aims to promote sustainable development goals and raise awareness among students, teachers and administrative staff.

For the social and university training axis: The university authorities had to rethink the curriculum, subjects such as: environmental law and social responsibility, natural resource management, strategic management of social responsibility, sustainable management of exportable supply,

business project, environmental sustainability and social responsibility, environmental culture, among others related to the subject to be developed in a mandatory manner in undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Students participate in academic events in agreement with national and international organizations in order to share their research and experiences put into practice in the care of the environment. There are also campaigns and programs aimed at employees and students to strengthen the permanent respect for the planet, conducting awareness workshops for the formation of environmental leaders. In 2021, an interesting experience was the organization of the Musuq Wayra festival, where socio-environmental initiatives of students and teachers seeking to transform the problematic reality of the country were disseminated. Likewise, the volunteer programs of the universities gained great relevance for training and supporting actions that strengthen values, generate commitment and selfless work of students such as beach cleanup campaigns.

In social management of knowledge, Peruvian university law N°30220 [1], establishes professional training and research as functions of the university, the latter is developed taking into account the lines of research. In this sense, universities have contemplated incorporating within them: climate change and health, environmental management, sustainable development, environmental education, among others related to the SDG. Among the relevant experiences in this area, we can point out the collaboration of a private university for 20 years with the "United Nations Environment Program" (UNEP), through the research area of natural resources and environmental economics. Research efforts are focused on the identification and analysis of environmental topics with an impact on the country and the Latin American region. Likewise, the organization of "social responsibility initiative contests" aimed at students with the objective of presenting projects that contribute to the development of society has been well received. Regarding social participation, the universities carried out actions that favored the development of communities, signing agreements with municipalities, local governments and environmental NGOs for waste management and support in the event of natural disasters. In this context, some institutions joined international initiatives that promote the SDGs: the Global Compact and the Principles for Responsible

Management Education (PRME). The Water, Climate and Development Program, implemented by Global Water Partnership South America in the context of the "The Coastal Child" phenomenon that affected several communities in the Lima region. In this sense, the private university proposed to meet the needs of the affected population through volunteer work. Currently, research is being carried out in these communities with the intention of providing alternative solutions to this problem that occurs every year, demonstrating public commitment. Likewise, contests such as "Actions that inspire" are held to promote a culture of social and environmental responsibility, sustainability, innovation and entrepreneurship through initiatives that can be presented by students and collaborators, where the winners receive a small seed capital to implement their proposals for environmental improvement.

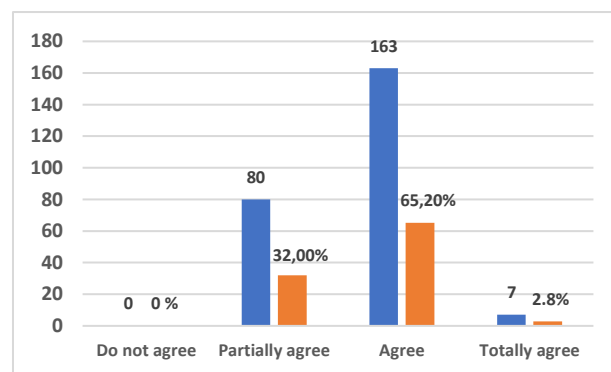


Fig. 1: Approval of USR by university students

The findings found in figure 1, affirm that 65.20% of the surveyed students agree that university social responsibility with an environmental focus should be developed on university campuses in such a way that it strengthens the attitudes and values, therefore, the environmental awareness of students, promoting their commitment and participation in projects aimed at environmental conservation.

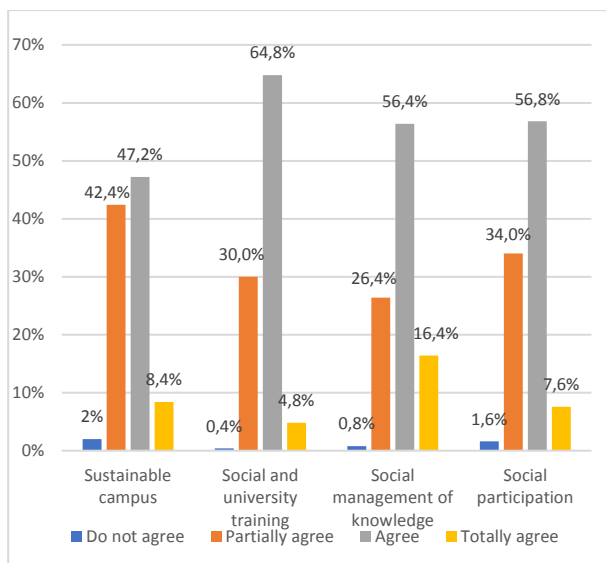


Fig. 2: Approval of the USR axes

Figure 2 shows that students agree with the development of the USR axes with an environmental approach in universities. 64.8% of the participants agree with the axis of social and university education, justifying the need to include subjects related to environmental education and training in the curricula. Also, volunteering is an available resource that the university has to involve its students in environmental conservation projects. Regarding the sustainable campus axis, 47.2% of those surveyed consider that they agree with the activities developed in the university faculty, the most common being the recycling campaigns and the use of containers classified by color. However, when analyzing the social responsibility policies, it was found that few environmental sustainability activities are put into practice in each university and in others, there is a lack of interest in having an environmentally responsible and sustainable space. 56.8% agree with the social participation for the wellbeing of the communities through the establishment of agreements with private institutions, municipalities and non-governmental organizations that contribute to the realization of events that mobilize the community to collaborate in the care of ecosystems. Other results showed that 56.4% agree with the social management of knowledge axis, recognizing that the university offers them the opportunity to carry out research within the line of research related to the environmental approach and the objectives of sustainable development with the purpose of addressing the environmental problems of their locality.

Table 1. Level of approval of the USR in the universities of Lima

Level		Accumulated		
		Frequency	Percentage	Percentage
Low		6	2.4	2.4
Medium		189	75.6	78.0
High		55	22.0	100.0
Total		250	100.0	

Source: the author

Table 1 describes the level of approval of University social responsibility, where 189 students expressed their agreement, representing 75.6% of the total number of those surveyed, reaching a medium level. While 22% considered their approval to be at a high level. These results show that there is still a need for greater dissemination of the activities promoted by the university as part of the planning of USR policies, with the aim of inviting volunteer students and the university community in general to be actors in the environmental preservation of the campus and its local environment, and not mere observers.

Table 2. Levels of distribution of the dimensions of University Social Responsibility

	Low		Medium		High		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sustainable campus	25	10.00	148	59.20	77	30.80	250	100
Social and citizen training	10	4.00	140	56.00	100	40.00	250	100
Social Management of knowledge	6	2.40	114	45.60	130	52.00	250	100
Social participation	19	7.60	143	57.20	88	35.20	250	100

Source: the author

Table 2 shows the level of approval of the axes of social responsibility, the findings are encouraging for the universities participating in the study. In sustainable campus, 59.20% was obtained at the medium level, followed by social participation with 57.20%, and social and citizen training with 56%. However, it is necessary to review and update the USR plans in these axes, taking into account the environmental reality of the campus and its local environment, in order to motivate the participation of the university community. The social management of knowledge axis reached a high

level with 52%, which leads us to infer that studies are being generated within the line of research related to the objectives of sustainable development and environmental culture.

5. Discussion

We analyzed the social responsibility action plans of ten universities in Lima in order to evaluate that they have an environmental approach in the organizational, academic, knowledge generation and social participation areas. The information consulted in the documents confirmed that the four axes are favorably attended in these last years, which would be in accordance with what is stipulated in the University law 30220 [1], the ISO 26000 [11] and Vallaeys (2014) [2] who specify that the USR policies must be implemented in the university campuses under an impact approach. With regard to knowing the percentage of approval, 65.20% of students agree that universities work with orientation to policies and actions that promote USR at all levels, since this allows the entire educational community to be part of them; which coincides with Aguilar & Velásquez (2018) who state that it is able to develop environmental awareness from a commitment assumed with the natural environment. Likewise, an average level of approval of 75.6% was reached with the activities implemented by the university as part of the USR policies. These results would evidence the lack of knowledge of a sector of the student population with this planning [23]. The university community, being environmentally aware, is capable of making decisions in this area, becoming an extraordinary potential that society needs for the conservation of the environment and the sustainable use of resources, proposing a comprehensive environmental program with environmental care and education policies that reorient the mission of the universities, establishing the institutional commitment to generate environmental knowledge and research (Bernal & Díaz, 2020) [24].

In the sustainable university campus field, the documentary review corroborated that the evaluated universities mostly promote actions within their facilities in order to optimize and preserve natural resources, extending the participation to stakeholders, who are the individuals that affect and can be affected by the activities developed in the university (AA1000 Standard, 2011) [25]. However, the engagement of

these groups (teachers, students, administrative staff and the community) is relevant for the organization, if it wishes to achieve its objectives. The results indicated that 47.2% of the students surveyed agree with the activities carried out for the environment within the university. These statistical data obtained are consistent with the findings of Lopez & Ahumada (2018), who in their research with students at the Autonomous University of Baja California, 61% stated that they agreed with the 4R practices on campus and to reward the best environmental care initiatives in the cloister [26]. We were concerned with the results of Mendoza et al., (2019), in a study with 15395, it was found that 80% of students indicated they had a lack of knowledge about environmental values, 63.5% did not recognize the commitment of their alma mater with environmental culture, recycling campaigns reach 30% of acceptance and the environmental practices with the highest demand are saving water and energy consumption [27]. In the field of social and citizen training, the university entities under analysis have made changes in their curricula, especially in subjects related to the environment and social responsibility, which should be compulsory in undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Likewise, activities that actively promote the participation of students and teachers through volunteering or festivals are carried out, which seek to awaken interest in preserving the environment. 64.8% of the students who took part in the study agreed with this approach because they considered that it contributes to improving their training as professionals. In this regard, Condori & Reyna (2019) found that 70% of university students consider that training with SR approach is adequate in their campus [5]. For Pegalajar et al., (2021), university academic training should contemplate aspects of social responsibility that allow the development of knowledge and attitudes in accordance with the social commitment that the future professional should assume with the natural environment [28]. In this line, Pérez et al., (2018) refers that in order to promote sustainable social development, there must be articulation between all areas of an institution which allows implementing projects under the mentioned approach [10].

Regarding the third axis, social management of knowledge, students expressed agreement with this axis in a 56.4%, considering that the USR plans of the universities consulted show that they carry out

strategies to create and disseminate knowledge, some have agreements with international entities, most of them hold congresses, symposiums, conferences, among others; They are committed to competitions in which students and teachers participate by presenting projects incorporating social responsibility issues, they offer bonuses to promote research, which is consistent with Condori & Reyna (2021) since 69% of university students indicated that research training with a SR approach is adequate [5]; all this is also aligned with University Law 30220 [1], which is emphatic in stating that the university's main functions are to train professionals and research, the latter including lines of research consistent with the needs or demands of society. In this regard, it should be specified that promoting scientific research means aligning with the development of the curriculum and evaluation, for which the link between the subjects where social projects are developed with an academic proposal that addresses social problems should be evidenced (Rubio et al., 2020) [29]. As research increases in the institutions, social responsibility will be greater. In this sense, research practice favors the formation of principles and values of students (La Cruz et al., 2022) [30].

Finally, regarding the fourth axis of social participation, 56.8% of the students indicated that they agree with social participation for the welfare of the communities. This is related to what was also found in the analysis of the policies of this axis in the universities of the sample, where it is evident that most of them have established agreements with NGOs, or in other cases with private institutions, municipalities, regional governments, who work hand in hand trying to establish solutions to problems that afflict the communities, promoting in this sense the participation of the entire community, as well as students, teachers and researchers, in order to care for and improve the environment. This is also related to the study by Pérez & Calvo (2021), since the authors found that 58% of university students in Paraguay were in complete agreement with the promotion of USR activities, and 71% indicated that they participate permanently and actively in the activities proposed by the university [6]; as mentioned by Corral & Queiroz (2004), who argue that sustainable behavior is the various actions that are deployed in order to preserve natural resources, seeking individual and collective well-being [19].

The main beneficiary of promoting USR policies or practices is society, considering that all its activities are aimed at improving its development; in this sense, they should ensure that the activities they carry out are aimed at strengthening all its components in order to achieve a good positioning of the university (La Cruz et al., 2022) [30]. The findings in the study denote the need for universities to pay more attention to USR policies, planning and programming of activities that contribute to the formation of an environmental culture. In this regard Yangali et al., (2021) argue that the development of this culture has a transformative mission in students because it seeks to promote the conservation of environmental ecosystems, from their participation and civic engagement [18].

6. Conclusions

The findings revealed that the students agree in 64.8%, with the activities that are implemented in the social and civic education axis, 56.8% with Social Participation, 56.4% with Social Knowledge Management and 47, 2% with a sustainable campus. These results invite universities to reflect on the need to reformulate RSU policies as a response to the social and environmental problems of the community, based on the implementation of projects related to the SDGs. Likewise, improve dissemination channels in order to encourage the participation and training of volunteer groups on university campuses. Regarding knowledge management, universities must consider within their lines of research, those that are directed to environmental education with the purpose of executing initiatives and projects that contribute to the preservation of the environment on their campus and for the benefit of their community region. In addition to establishing agreements with public and private institutions to implement projects of a social and environmental nature for the benefit of the university community and society. It is a reality that global environmental problems need to be addressed from various sectors and it is the universities that assume the responsibility of training professionals committed to sustainable development and environmental protection. For this reason, the university cloisters from their mission, vision, profiles and curriculum must be aligned with the environmental approach.

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Contribution of Individual Authors to the Creation of a Scientific Article (Ghostwriting Policy)

-Melba Vásquez Tomás was the researcher responsible for the study and team leader. She conceived the research subject, methodological design of the study and writing of the article.

-Judith Yangali Vicente reviewed and analyzed the documentation.

-Maruja Baldeón De la Cruz reviewed and analyzed the documentation.

-Delsi Huaita Acha was responsible for the quantitative data collection and processing.

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The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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