Student perceptions of university social responsibility: Implications from an empirical study in France, Italy and Russia

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STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: IMPLICATIONS FROM AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN FRANCE, ITALY AND RUSSIA

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Abstract

This article analyses student perceptions of University Social Responsibility (USR) across three cultures (France, Italy and Russia). USR is need to strengthen civic commitment and active citizenship by university members to the communities they serve (Vasilescu, 2010). Insufficient empirical evidence currently exists to describe perceptions of key stakeholders as to what this should entail. Understanding such mind-sets is crucial to ensure effective learning adapted to the host environment (Dana, 2001).

A descriptive-empirical approach combined with a factor and multivariate analysis from an online survey of 426 students enabled a comprehensive understanding of student opinions on the role of universities within their communities. Findings suggest that French and Italian students see USR as a more individual commitment compared to their Russian counterparts.

From this, a specific approach to the education of future managers on issues of US and ethics may be developed. This also provides implications for higher education policy makers.

Keywords: University Social Responsibility, CSR, non-financial reporting, USR impacts, management of sustainable practices, France, Italy, Russia.

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Introduction

Recent trends in research on sustainable management and corporate social responsibility practices outline a growing interest in university social responsibility (USR) (Garde Sánchez et al., 2013; Pompeu et al. 2014; Reiser, 2008; Tetřevová et al., 2010; Vasilescu et al., 2010; Vázquez et al., 2014). USR is seen as the need to strengthen civic commitment and active citizenship by university members to the communities they serve (Vasilescu, 2010). USR encourages sustainable development within the long-term and tries to align the stated purpose and values of a higher education institution to its performance. Thus, universities may generate a positive social, environmental, economic and innovative impact on their communities (Belyaeva, 2016). Though general agreement exists on the principle of the need for USR there is insufficient empirical evidence giving a more accurate perception of action that what key stakeholders deem should be taken. It is crucial to understand these feelings since teaching in higher education needs be relevant to the host environment if it is to be fully effective (Dana, 2001). This article provides empirical evidence that outlines variation in student perceptions of USR across national borders. It thus enhances our understanding of didactical approaches that should be adopted by universities and has implications for higher education policy makers.

That USR should be a relatively new research field should be expected given that the social dimension of higher education was absent in the genesis of the Bologna Declaration in 1999. However, it soon became a central issue in the Ministerial declarations of London (2007) and Leuven (2009). As the societal debate has progressed on the link between globalisation and individual attitudes towards governments (Heggem and Jakobsen, 2016) the role of universities as thought leaders has inevitably become a consideration. The link between social responsibility and higher education can be considered from both a "top-down" or "bottom-up" perspective. These two perceptions are explained below.

Literature Review and Theoretical Underpinnings

The "top-down" perspective in university social responsibility

The "top-down" perspective of USR considers that universities play an "institutional" role in the creation and diffusion of knowledge (Collini, 2012) to form a better society. In this context, universities should be at the forefront of the cultivation of virtuous social practices that they pass down to their students and other major stakeholders. It is thus considered that the role of universities is to promote corporate responsibility, scientific social responsibility and citizens' social responsibility and to stimulate the contemplation of desirable values and behaviour. Consequently, universities should be engaged in social responsibility practices themselves since they have to make a commitment to their students, professors and staff, to other institutions and above all to society as role models and educators.

In line with this perception, there is a growing body of work that shows how universities can influence student values through responsible education (Epstein, 2000; Gerde and Wokutch, 1998; Hauser, 2000; Ibrahim et al., 2008; Sobczak et al., 2006; Weber et al., 2004). In fact, universities play a fundamental role in corporate social responsibility (CSR) education since they are the greatest contributors to the formation of their students who are the future entrepreneurs (e.g. Dana, 1992, 1993, 2001), business leaders and employees of their countries. The importance of business ethics/CSR education has been recognised by scholars as it can raise student ethical awareness and change their ethical attitudes (Balotsky and Steingard, 2006).

The "bottom-up" perspective in university social responsibility

The "bottom-up" perspective considers that high-level competition in world-class universities leads to them inferring the need to improve their attractiveness to key stakeholders. From this standpoint, learners are seen as the driving force pushing higher education institution (HEI) behaviour from below. Indeed, many universities have already achieved a deeper understanding of how sustainable practices, combining economic, social and environmental factors, lead to lower reputation risks, strengthened competitiveness, increased academic staff efficiency and student loyalty and improved external image (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2015; Lozano, 2011; Nejati et al., 2015).

According to this approach, universities will adopt more responsible practices in the expectation of capturing the best students. This reflects a market driven form of social conduct (Daudigeos and Valiorgue, 2011; Thomas, 2014) and a trend towards understanding of student choice models (Nemar and Vrontis, 2016). This application on one aspect of education quality is thus seen as improving the attractiveness for key stakeholders globally (Heggem and Jakobsen, 2016).

One of the major challenges to improving the perceived value of HEI is the need to intensify socially responsible behaviour towards major stakeholders. Indeed, this can result in improving their reputation, in creating a positive contribution to the business and social community, and in the economic and social development of the regions where they operate. Students today seem to be more globalised and attuned to social aspects of world progress. However, there is little empirical research concerning their degree of concern through studies from different countries on the importance of the role of the university with regard to social responsibility. Previous studies have focused on the relationship between topics narrowly related to externalities such as Academia's response *to the new challenges of globalization*, by approaching current *social changes* and the *impact of the executives' ethical attitudes and behaviour on their CSR* orientation (Vasquez et al., 2014; Weber et al., 2004).

As we have show, there are two different perspectives to USR. However, the relationship between universities and social responsibility is usually dynamic rather than being confined to a single one-directional model. The university system can be considered as a key actor of innovation within national economic systems, since its main objectives are the production and dissemination of knowledge. The function of universities is less and less that of provider of a public services and is moving instead towards a more complex role as an active protagonist of the cultural, economic and political scene. Moreover, universities are involved in high quality and future (or forward) oriented education and they cannot avoid sustainable management issues at any level of their studies or careers. The courses they offer need to be relevant to the host environment (Dana, 2001) if they are to have a positive influence on their key stakeholders.

Cross-cultural aspects to this research

A further aspect to this dynamic two-way perspective of USR is that of cultural issues. These may exist at a national, regional and institutional level. In universities located in societies that score high in power distance (Hofstede, 1980), professors and senior managers must be very clear when defining and practicing sustainability issues in courses, classes and on campus (Loureiro and

Kaufmann, 2014).

In France, it has been suggested that there are few cases to train student key competencies in sustainability (Gombert-Courvoisier et al., 2014) and to bring sustainability to standardized practice in Academia (Chauvey at al., 2015). Trade unions and governments are also seen as having an influence on governmental management (Antal and Sobczak, 2007; Havard and Sobczak, 2014). Italian universities, according to the process of change and innovation induced by current reforms, are especially involved in the phenomenon of CSR and USR. In particular, the growing attention to social and environmental sustainability has led in recent years to the development of experimental practices, the creation of new teaching programmes and introduction of reporting tools (Cisi and Corazza, 2016). In Russia, the teaching of business ethics and CSR at university level is a relatively new phenomenon but has become increasingly important for business scholars and executives in the past few years (Belyaeva, 2015). Clearly, there are different movements and degrees of development for USR integration between countries.

Researchers also note that as well as cross-cultural understanding of sustainability and social responsibility, there seem to be institutional differences. For instance, according to Matten and Moon (2008), organisation in Europe for CSR or USR is more implicit in the formal or informal institutional business environment. Studies have found that there are very different CSR constructions and conceptual understandings in different social and cultural backgrounds (e.g. Boxenbaum, 2006). Therefore, USR as well as its mother theory, CSR, have evolved differently not only between Western and Eastern European counterparts but also within those regions. Thus, variations in stakeholder perceptions in different geographical areas seem highly plausible. The world outlook of the "bottom-up" approach for implementing USR is endorsed by many studies on various aspects of stakeholder feedback and their perceptions (Balotsky and Steingard, 2006; Burcea and Marinescu, 2011; Sobczak et al., 2006). Various cross-country studies illustrate that countries/cultures possess different value priorities that appear to bring changes in social responsibility views and practices (see, for example, Alas, 2006; Scholtens and Lammertjan, 2007; Smith and Hume, 2005).

Reporting differences on USR per country or per region also exist within academic circles (Haski-Leventhal, 2012). Sustainability reporting is an uncommon and diverse practice in many countries as there are no harmonised standards. Indicators are selected based on multiple approaches (Fonseca at al., 2011; Urbanski and Filho, 2015). For example, the general lack of environmental management systems and the trend emerging to formalize the objectives of sustainability is associated with the use of the performance cycle in Italy (Vagnoni and Cavicchi, 2015). Universities are expected to apply social responsibility to support regional and national innovation systems, with a primary role in developing the competitiveness of Europe's economies.

Such differences are important because a 2011 study revealed that economic development, social equity and education in sustainability are the major drivers for achieving sustainability in HEIs (Waheed, 2011). Lozano (2006) suggested Assessment of Sustainability in Universities, which outlined key aspects to access the USR. Impact-based USR models (Vasquez et al., 2014) define the key impacts – educational, cognitive, organisational and social, which are bonding social responsibility to the way universities manage their impacts on people, society, economy and nature around them. Driver-based USR Model (Belyaeva, 2015) suggests measuring USR impact index in educational, promotional, ecological or social indicators to help to define the nature of the current strategy priorities.

From the above discussion, we estimate that raising CSR awareness of students through influencing value systems would vary from country to country based on cross-cultural differences. It has become clear that every university will implement their own form of social responsibility. In this regard, it is essential to identify common and distinctive features in the social policy of other institutions and to perform an analysis of university students from different countries. Cross-cultural sensitivity is the acceptance of alternative value sets and behavioural norms found in different cultures (Paul et al., 2011). Prior to this study, it would appear that this had not been

empirically tested. Therefore, our study aims to compare empirically three different European countries that have different cultural and national backgrounds; France, Italy and Russia.

Research Methodology

Sample Selection

Three European countries, namely France, Italy and Russia were chosen for our research. In each country, similar institutions with similar student profiles were selected. The three institutions are the Grenoble EM, France, the University of Turin, Italy and the Graduate School of Economics and Management (GSEM) at the Ural Federal University in Russia. All three institutions are highly active in issues of accreditation, internationalisation and CSR.

Grenoble Ecole de Management is a French *Grande Ecole*. The school has triple accreditation (EQUIS, AACSB & AMBA) and a high degree of internationalisation (Thomas et al., 2015). It currently has more than 35 degree and non-degree programmes at Bachelor, Master, Doctoral and Executive Education levels. Students from 3 international business programmes students participated in the survey. The school is a signatory of Global Compact, PRME and has active social mobility, handicap and diversity programmes. The University of Turin (Italy), which was first in Italy to publish GRI non-financial report in 2014, was represented by the School of Management and Economics and its English-taught programmes undergraduate and graduate students on International Business. The Ural Federal University (Russia) was represented by the Graduate School of Economics and Management and its EPAS accredited undergraduate "International Business and Economics" English-taught programme students. The University promotes itself as a socially responsible organisation and works on the first non-financial report in accordance with GRI-standard.

The study was carried out on an online survey dataset consisting of 426 entries obtained from undergraduate and graduate students enrolled to English-taught business programmes at three Universities found in France, Italy and Russia. The online survey was completed between September and December 2015. A stratified random sampling method was used to obtain representative data covering a relatively even distribution of observations from different observation groups. Only responses from 320 participants can be considered valid. This gives a 75% response rate. Although there were 16 nationalities in the sample, we selected a sample per country of current education, rather than by national approaches. Table 1, presents a breakdown of the sample according to the country of study, the gender and the current Higher Degree programme they are enrolled in. (see table 1).

(INSERT TABLE 1 HERE)

Research Instrument

We used an English questionnaire as the research instrument to collect the data about the students' USR awareness and related perceptions. Cross-sectional design and a stratified sampling method were applied in preparing and delivering the questionnaire. The questionnaire was delivered via a "Survey Monkey" link available on the online teaching platforms used in the different institutions. Students taking the survey were all studying in English and had a high command of the language, therefore it not deemed necessary to translate the survey into different languages. A pilot group of non-native and native English speaking students had worked extensively on the questionnaire to ensure that there was no ambiguity in the questions and changes were then made in accordance with their suggestions before full distribution of the survey.

The online survey was based on work done in previous studies and an extensive literature review (Belyaeva, 2015; Burcea and Marinescu, 2011; González-Rodríguez, 2012; Ibrahim, 2008; Paul et al., 2011). Respondents took between fifteen to twenty minutes to complete the 38 item questionnaire. The questions were grouped into seven main themes. For the analysis of this article data from three of these themes has been used. The themes are USR and CSR awareness, attitudes towards responsible universities and drivers and actors towards responsible Universities (cut per ecological, economic and social vectors).

Some of the items were presented in a Likert scale format using a five- point response scale, from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree while others required a ranking from most important to least important.

Data analysis technique

The nature of the data allows for several type of analysis. Specifically, in the preliminary stage of the study we applied descriptive statistics and ANOVA in order to address the presence of cross-country differences. Further on, we applied multivariate analysis to understand which items and related variables were significant for our study and, therefore, carried out an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

In order to relate together the different constructs investigated by the survey questionnaire and due to the limitations of some data analysis techniques (i.e. Multiple regression) (Haenlein and Kaplan, 2004), we adopted a Structural Equation Modelling approach (SEM). Specifically, we decided to apply PLS-SEM as it can be used when there are no assumptions about data distribution, applications have little available theory, sample sizes are small and predictive accuracy is paramount (Bagozzi, 1988; Hwang et al., 2010; Wong, 2011). All of the above apply to our survey. SmartPLS 3.0 software (Ringle et al., 2015) was used to estimate the path model by means of empirical data. To validate the cognitive properties of a perceived construct both measurement and structural models were analysed simultaneously.

Findings and Discussion

Descriptive and ANOVA results

Firstly, we asked the students to describe USR by choosing the three most important items among twelve constructs (table 2). Overall the three major constructs selected by the students (disregarding their country) to describe USR were: "*Increases human rights, responsibility and freedom"(69%), "Responsibility for impacts on people and nature (69,5%)","Promoting equality of chances for all interested parties (minorities, etc.) for a qualitative education" (69%).*

Whilst, the three construct that have been mostly disregarded in describing USR were: "*Impossible utopia today (12,8%)", "Unnecessary cost and effort (11,3%)", "Covers charity only (7,4%)".*

This shows evidence of much deeper USR understanding among students than might have been anticipated. International students from 3 countries disregarded the 'easy' options for implementing USR through charity. In fact, the quality of education and responsible corporate positioning in the communities were deemed to be more important.

The cross-country analysis provided more insights. Although the first quartile collecting the least chosen constructs is consistent between the three countries, significant differences arise when comparing the countries. For instance, while in Russia students consider USR a "*State Level Responsibility"* by placing it at the top of their choices. In Italy and France, this construct was less important and resulting in a quartile II positioning. In Russia students describe USR as a

"Precondition of survival for all organisations" by placing it within their top choices. Respondents in France placed in quartile III and in Italy quartile II. Finally, among the other relevant differences, we can highlight that students in Italy and in Russia agreed that USR is something that *"Increases human rights, responsibility and freedom."* This opinion was not shared to the same degree by the students in France.

These differences were confirmed by the subsequent analysis of the Tukey post-hoc test that highlighted significant differences in the following constructs:

- *State level responsibility (different between Russia and each of the two other countries; F=7,778, p=.00)*
- *Ethics of interdependence instead of egoism (different between Russia and each of the two other countries; F= 15,985 ,p=.00)*
- *Long-term effects that matter more than the momentary benefits or damages (different between France and each of the two other countries, F= 10,199 ,p=.00)*
- *Prevents and reduces cost, troubles and effort (different between France and each of the two other countries; F=13,193, p=.00)*

Such findings confirm that culture plays an important role in a country with higher power distance such as Russia. There is a preference to "top-down" normative approach to USR rather than a "bottom-up" one. Table 2, provides the descriptive statistics of the perceived descriptions of USR and the significant means' cross-country differences according to the ANOVA analysis.

(INSERT TABLE 2 HERE)

Furthermore, six constructs were presented to the students to understand the implications of a Responsible University. The construct recognized as the most important (ranking from 1 to 6) was *"Providing adequate and high-quality education"* whilst the least important was *"Support of charity in the region"*. From a cross-country perspective, the one-way ANOVA and Tukey post-hoc tests show that the importance of the constructs was selected differently according to the country of study. Namely, there is a significant difference *(F=5,764, p=.02)* between the three countries' means for *"Ethical behaviour towards all partners, employees and students"*. Here Italy (4,19) affords a greater importance than France (3,93) and Russia (3,47). Moreover, another significant difference in the resulting means is the one between France and Russia for *"Care about all contract and non contract stakeholders"*. This finding confirms again that students from a country with higher power distance prefer a "top-down" rather than a "bottom-up" approach to USR. Table 2, provides the descriptive statistics of the perceived implications of USR and the significant means' transnational differences according to the ANOVA analysis.

(INSERT TABLE 3 HERE)

We also asked the students if they perceived USR as something different from CSR and we found some noteworthy results. Table 4 presents a break-down of the results. The students in Russia considered USR less similar to CSR than the students in Italy and France. However, the one-way ANOVA followed by the Tukey post-hoc test showed that only the difference between participants in Russia and France is significant *(F=4,449, p=.01)*. This finding can be linked to the difference between sustainability and CSR approaches existing between countries and regions and confirmed by the differences in sustainability reporting.

(INSERT TABLE 4 HERE)

Moreover, the majority of the students from the three regions considered that that USR is an important socio-economic driver for the region to which it belongs. Table 4 these results.

The students were required to rank the top drivers of a responsible university among 8 possible items. According to the overall means, the top four drivers were (in descending order): "*Being a 'wealthy' university (profitable)*", "*Responsibility toward ecology*", "*Responsibility toward local government*" and "*Being internationally recognized*".

It is interesting that "*Responsibility toward students' expectations*" and "*Responsibility toward employers' expectations*" were not considered to be that important in the promotion of the social and economic status of a region. This could imply that students underestimate their own stakeholder power.

(INSERT TABLE 5 HERE)

From a cross-country perspective, the ANOVA analysis highlighted significant differences for the top drivers. The "*Meeting requirements of current society trends*" criterion was considered less important by students in Italy than in France ($F=3.088$, $p=.047$). "*Responsibility toward local community*" was deemed less important by students in Russia than by those in Italy ($F=3.192$, $p=.042$). Among the least chosen drivers, "*Being wealthy university*", was the more preferred by students in France compared to those in Italy and Russia ($F=3.628$, $p=.028$). This confirms the fact that students are relevant stakeholders that understand the importance of USR. However, such issues should be adapted to the specific features of their own communities. Table 6, provides highlights about such perceived drivers of USR.

Finally, given that students are one the most important stakeholder groups for universities, we asked them which would be the most important role for a university today. Among six statements describing possible roles for universities, they were asked to select the three most important ones. The following three constructs were selected most often:

1. "*Providing competitive education conditions*".
2. "*Developing social and cultural development in the region*".
3. "*Developing new economic incentives in the region*".

Indeed, students highlight the need for an active role of universities in their local regions to foster economic development and innovation. However, from a cross-country perspective, we tested for some differences among the three groups of students, and we found significant differences between Italian and Russian students about the importance of the following constructs:

- "*Government Servant in terms of education and regulation policy*" (with Italian students considering it less important than Russian ones, $F=7.103$ $p=.001$).
- "*Develops social and cultural development in the region*" (with Italian students considering it more important than Russian ones, $F=5.547$ $p=0.004$).
- "*Changes community behaviour towards ethical and responsible way of performing*" (with Russian students considering less important than Italian ones, $F=6.050$, $p=0.003$)

Russian and French students' replies resulted in a significant difference in the following construct:
- "*Influences governmental policy in socio-cultural sphere*" (with French students considering it less important than Russians, $F=3.215$ $p=0.042$)

An outline of such results is provided in Table 6.

(INSERT TABLE 6 HERE)

Multivariate analysis

In the second stage of our analysis, we carried an EFA among the variables included in our study. Factor analysis is a multivariate statistical procedure designed to reduce a large number of variables into a smaller set of variables (also referred to as factors), as well as establishing underlying dimensions between measured variables and latent constructs, and thereby allowing the formation and refinement of a theory. Importantly, we tested if some of the items included in the last section of the questionnaire could be linked to some latent construct. Specifically, EFA was applied to investigate the student attitudes towards CSR by asking them to rank their interest in working in sustainable companies, getting updated about CSR and USR practices. Therefore, among the 11 items, we were able to define the following two factors accounting for 65.34% of the items. Table 7 provides the results of such analysis.

(INSERT TABLE 7 HERE)

Moreover, by controlling for the students' country of study and their current educational levels, we found significant influences on all the previous constructs. Specifically, students studying in France understand USR as an integrative term in regulative and behavioural subject, while their counterpart in Russia might prefer more goal oriented and specific application of USR. Furthermore, the level of education (from undergraduates to MBA or PhD Programmes) shapes the practical and social understanding of USR effects and dynamics in all studied countries. The last result highlights the evolution of ideas towards the understanding of USR and the need from practical-oriented solutions.

Limitations and further research

Due to its exploratory character this research has several limitations. Our research shows that although there are slight differences in cross-country student perceptions of USR and their differentiation of University and Social responsibility (Russian students differentiate the most), they all consider USR as a regional driver for development although from different perspectives (French – wealthiest University, Italian – as a growing care of communities and external stakeholders). Clearly though, the number of countries and stakeholder groups surveyed is of a narrow scope. It would thus be beneficial to replicate the study on a greater amount of students from different cultures to build up a more complete view of student perceptions of USR across regional and national boundaries.

It would also be useful to extend this enquiry to other members of the academic community including professors, administrative staff and other internal and external stakeholders. Future research might include the expression of the opinions of academics and managers on the question of integrating the principles of social responsibility into general development strategy of universities based on a multi-stakeholder approach.

It should also be noted that the researcher were aware that that Russian Universities still lack a proven record of sound cooperation within their communities (Golubev et al., 2011) even if certain universities have developed an educational framework for sustainability (Belyaeva, 2015). In France, universities are attempting to develop standardized practice in sustainability (Chauvey at al., 2015), but widespread implementation is still needed (Gombert-Courvoisier et al., 2014). In Italy the growing attention to social and environmental sustainability has intensified in recent years reflecting changes in the Italian model of competitive advantage (Cantele et al. 2016), the creation of new teaching programmes and introduction of reporting tools (Cisi and Corazza, 2016). It would thus be useful to track progress in this field over time as the teaching of USR becomes more embedded in the different cultures.

Conclusion

The purpose of conducting the above described research was to create an agenda for future research and policies for socially responsible universities. The internationalization of education standards, often seen now as imperative (Guillotin and Mangematin, 2015), follows globalization and calls for conformity in programmes throughout the world. However, the interrelationship between personal values, education values and the future role of business at the global level has remained an issue of limited understanding in previous research.

Our research reveals the impact of the different cross-cultural and organisation differences in USR perception between the students of France, Italy and Russia. Interesting to note, that the education degree also impacts the perception of University social responsibility, PhD students expect more organisational and strategic actions from Academia, while undergraduate students would like to use cultural and ecological drivers. The results correlate with the previous research *proving that ethical attitudes and leaders behaviour shape internal stakeholders USR* orientation (Vasquez et al., 2014).

The survey revealed some gaps in integrating sustainable practices into daily university life from the student perspective. Management within universities may wish to use these results to help them work more closely with internal stakeholders in order to disseminate the knowledge to external stakeholders. That would help to create an agenda and guidelines for internationally recognised socially responsible Universities. One of the novel results is to find students being unaware that are the key stakeholders for the University. Taking into account that the majority of future leaders graduate from Universities, there is a question both to the Academia structure and perception of future global managers.

There are countless intangible ways in which a university benefits the society beyond its walls, as well as the society within them. Therefore, the implications of this study are relevant and paramount to shape the understanding of USR. Our findings can help universities approaching their social responsibility practice for the first time, by providing how different topics are perceived by students as key stakeholders. Pioneering universities in social responsibility can also benefit from the results we have provided, by means of comparing and assessing their own practices. Moreover, public bodies, governments and standard setters need to shape and improve their regulating activity and could be interested in knowing the bottom line and real outcome of USR practices in France, Italy and Russia.

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Table 1. Breakdown of the sample according to Country, Gender and Degree Programme.

	Gender		Current Degree Programme				Total
COUNTRY	Male	Female	Bachelor	Master	MBA	PhD	
France	60	115	25	145	3	2	175
Italy	45	100	115	22	6	2	145
Russia	45	61	91	12	2	1	106
Total	150 (35%)	276 (65%)	231 (54%)	179 (42%)	11 (3%)	5 (1%)	426 (100%)

Table 2. Students' perceived description of USR.

Description	Countries	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
1) Increases human rights, responsibility and freedom.	France	74	.70	.460
	Italy	70	.71	.455
	Russia	59	.64	.483
	Total	203	.69	.464
2) Responsibility for impacts on people and nature.	France	74	.86	.344
	Italy	70	.67	.473
	Russia	59	.51	.504
	Total	203	.69	.462
3) Promoting equality of chances for all interested parties (minorities, etc) for a qualitative education	France	74	.85	.358
	Italy	70	.69	.468
	Russia	59	.49	.504
	Total	203	.69	.464
4) Long-term effects that matter more than the momentary benefits or damages.	France	74	.82*	.383
	Italy	70	.51*	.503
	Russia	59	.53*	.504
	Total	203	.63	.484
5) Ethics of interdependence instead of egoism.	France	74	.72*	.454
	Italy	70	.61*	.490
	Russia	59	.27*	.448
	Total	203	.55	.499
6) It prevents cheating, corruption, egoism etc.	France	74	.47	.503
	Italy	70	.53	.503
	Russia	59	.51	.504
	Total	203	.50	.501
7) State level responsibility.	France	74	.41*	.494
	Italy	70	.40*	.493
	Russia	59	.69*	.464
	Total	203	.49	.501
8) Precondition of survival for all organisations (enterprises, associations, institutions).	France	74	.55	.500
	Italy	70	.37	.487
	Russia	59	.53	.504
	Total	203	.48	.501
9) Prevents and reduces cost, troubles and effort.	France	74	.18*	.383
	Italy	70	.56*	.500
	Russia	59	.46*	.502
	Total	203	.39	.489
10) Unnecessary utopia today.	France	74	.04	.199
	Italy	70	.11	.320
	Russia	59	.25	.439

		Total	203	.13	.335
11) Unnecessary cost and effort.		France	74	.03	.163
		Italy	70	.17	.380
		Russia	59	.15	.363
		Total	203	.11	.318
12) Covers charity only.		France	74	.03	.163
		Italy	70	.07	.259
		Russia	59	.14	.345
		Total	203	.07	.262

*Significant means differences (p<.05)

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the perceived implications of USR

USR Implications	*Countries*	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev*
1. Providing adequate and high-quality education	France	156	**4.71**	1.411
	Italy	94	**4.67**	1.290
	Russia	87	**4.40**	1.458
	Total	337	**4.62**	1.393
2.Care about employees, professors and students interests	France	144	**4.20**	1.351
	Italy	92	**4.10**	1.461
	Russia	81	**4.40**	1.472
	Total	317	**4.22**	1.415
3. Ethical behaviour towards all partners, employees and students	France	150	**3.93***	1.400
	Italy	91	**4.19***	1.414
	Russia	81	**3.47***	1.379
	Total	322	**3.89**	1.419
4. Creating Cultural Leadership and Future Responsible leaders	France	160	**3.93**	1.488
	Italy	99	**3.76**	1.572
	Russia	82	**3.68**	1.481
	Total	341	**3.82**	1.511
5. Care about all contract and non contract stakeholders	France	150	**2.90***	1.460
	Italy	87	**3.21**	1.518
	Russia	75	**3.48***	1.528
	Total	312	**3.12**	1.507
6. Support of charity in the region	France	162	**1.98**	1.462
	Italy	98	**2.30**	1.607
	Russia	86	**2.31**	1.689
	Total	346	**2.15**	1.566

*Significant means differences (p<.05).

Table 4. Students' perception of USR an important socio-economic driver for the region.

	N	*Mean*	Std. Dev.
RUSSIA	94	**.94**	.246
ITALY	121	**.93**	.263

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FRANCE	163	**.97**	.173
Total	**378**	**.95**	**.224**

*Significant means differences (p<.05).

Table 5 - Drivers of USR

Description	*Countries*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*
1.Responsibility toward students' expectations	France	3.70	2.704
	Italy	3.82	2.687
	Russia	3.80	2.582
	Total	3.76	2.663
2. Responsibility toward employers' expectations	France	4.07	1.971
	Italy	4.31	2.032
	Russia	3.99	2.254
	Total	4.12	2.055
3.Meeting requirements of current society trends	France	4.16*	2.255
	Italy	4.89*	2.248
	Russia	4.53	2.107
	Total	4.45	2.233
4.Responsibility toward local community	France	4.66	2.167
	Italy	4.08*	1.890
	Russia	4.80*	1.898
	Total	4.53	2.045
5.Being internationally recognised	France	4.53	2.105
	Italy	4.49	2.326
	Russia	4.82	2.102
	Total	4.59	2.165
6.Responsibility toward local government	France	4.59	2.101
	Italy	5.02	2.017
	Russia	4.82	2.064
	Total	4.76	2.071
7.Responsibility toward ecology	France	4.93	2.233
	Italy	4.76	2.350
	Russia	4.59	2.704
	Total	4.80	2.381
8.Being wealthy university (profitable)	France	5.36	2.357
	Italy	4.62	2.511
	Russia	4.66	2.386
	Total	4.99	2.428

*Significant means differences (p<.05).

Table 6 – Perception of Universities Role

Description	*Countries*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*
1. Provides competitive education conditions	France	.79	.406
	Italy	.70	.462
	Russia	.69	.466
	Total	.74	.437
2. Develops social and cultural development in the region	France	.71	.457
	Italy	.82*	.387
	Russia	.58*	.497

	Total	.71	.456
3. Develops new economic incentives in the region	France	.57	.496
	Italy	.48	.503
	Russia	.66	.476
	Total	.57	.496
4. Changes communities behaviour towards ethical and responsible way of performing	France	.47	.501
	Italy	.63*	.487
	Russia	.35*	.481
	Total	.49	.501
5. Government Servant in terms of education and regulation policy	France	.28	.451
	Italy	.13*	.341
	Russia	.39*	.492
	Total	.27	.443
6. Influences governmental policy in socio-cultural sphere	France	.17*	.380
	Italy	.24	.430
	Russia	.32*	.471
	Total	.23	.420

*Significant means differences (p<.05).

Table 7- Positive and Negative Attitudes towards CSR and USR

Positive attitude vs CSR and USR	*Negative attitude vs CSR and USR*
I like to hear about companies and universities that are socially responsible (loading 0.791)	I would accept a job at a company with a poor reputation for social responsibility if it paid well. (loading 0.723)
I am favorably impressed by universities that win awards for their corporate social performance (loading 0.725)	I would take a job for a company that had poor environmental practices if it paid well. (loading 0.620)
I would like my university to be recognized as socially responsible (loading 0.831).	I would take a job for a company that had a poor record in hiring and promoting ethnic minorities if it paid well. (loading 0.627)
I would like to work for a company that provides leadership for organisations in the community. (loading 0.750)	Although I had courses on CSR and Sustainability it is not a big concern when I look for a job. (loading 0.624)
I would like to work for a company that encourages employees to volunteer in the community. (loading 0.711)	
I respect companies that support charities in their communities (loading 0.762).	