

Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics in the Opinion of Brazilian Accountancy Undergraduate Students

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICS IN THE OPINION OF BRAZILIAN ACCOUNTANCY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The interdependence of accountants' and managers' professional activities brings about decisions that can be either "socially correct" or "ethically censurable" (Fernández & Pinuer, 2016), with the potential to benefit or harm society. Beneficial decisions aggregate both social and environmental value to society, thus serving as tools to improve the relationship between organizations and their stakeholders (Barnett, 2007; Parmar Freeman, Harisson, Wicks, Purnell, & Colle, 2010; Valentinov, Roth, & Will, 2019). This kind of decision has to do with corporate social responsibility (CSR), and it involves corporate efforts to improve the process of promoting social welfare and environment protection (Barnett, 2007; Huang, Do, & Kumar, 2019).

Harmful decisions, on the other hand, have a dubious character from the moral and ethical perspective, since they may involve the perpetration of corporate fraud through accounting manipulations and managerial decisions, for example, thus culminating in corporate financial scandals like Enron, WorldCom, and Lehman Bros (Dellaportas, Alagiah, Gibson, Leung, Hutchinson, & Van Homrigh, 2005; Pakaluk & Cheffers, 2011; Stuart, Stuart, & Pedersen, 2014). Corporate scandals can be also seen in Brazilian corporate universe. The most notorious of such cases has involved at least three public companies: Petrobras, Odebrecht, and JBS. This case, investigated in the Car Wash Operation, has revealed economic, social, environmental, and political consequences yet unknown to Brazilian society (Lima, Bernardo, Miranda, & Medeiros, 2017; Silva Junior Silva Junior, Vasconcelos, Silva, Martins-Silva, Santos, & Vago, 2017).

Authors such as Dellaportas et al. (2005), Pakaluk and Cheffers (2011), Stuart et al. (2014), and Veludo-de-Oliveira, Aguiar, Queiroz and Barrichello (2014) have pointed out that these fraudulent activities in the corporate universe may be associated with failures in the educational training of accountants and managers. When it comes to accountants, Dellaportas et al. (2005), Pakaluk and Cheffers (2011), Apostolou, Dull and Schleifer (2013), Stuart et al. (2014) and Cameron and O'Leary (2015) all argue that the greatest challenge in accounting education is to provide for professional preparation that goes beyond technical skills and knowledge in order to develop students' ability to make value-based judgments.

In this context, Batisani and Ndiane (2014) and Dagiliūtė, Liobikienė and Minelgaitė (2018) highlight the key role played by Higher Education Institutions (HEINS) in transforming societies through the educational and professional preparation of leaders and decision-makers. In order to perform such a relevant social role, HEINS, and especially Accountancy undergraduate programs, have been considering issues that involve CSR (Carvalho, Alexandre, Almeida, Carvalho, & Curi, 2010; Beck & Rausch, 2014; Jorge, Peña, & Reyes, 2015) as well as moral and ethics (Dellaportas et al., 2005; Pakaluk & Cheffers, 2011; Stuart et al., 2014; Jorge et al., 2015) in their educational and professional training.

The notion of CSR proposed by Howard R. Bowen in his classical book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*, published in the USA in the beginning of the 1950s, has been going through changes (Carroll, 1991). According to Cochran (2007), CSR no longer represents a narrow, often marginalized notion, but it takes on the status of a complex, multifaceted concept, which is ever more central to much of the current corporate decision-making process. According to Azim (2016), this centrality of CSR is not exclusive to Western developed economies; it also reaches the economies of developing countries in the Eastern world.

Thus, we can assume that concerns with CSR in the corporate universe have reached global consensus, reflecting concerns with discretion in the allocation of corporate resources

destined to the improvement of social well-being (Barnett, 2007). In the literature, it is not uncommon to find issues involving CSR and the discretion in decision-making processes associated with the topic of ethics (Patrus, Carvalho Neto, Coelho, & Teodósio, 2013).

Fernández and Pinuer (2016) maintain that the topic of ethics has managers' behavior as one of its central factors in the corporate universe. For those authors, it is in organizations that managers experience an atmosphere of respect for ethical values, and where culture, attentive to what is "socially correct", is valued and experienced by all organizational members.

In line with the observations made by Barnett (2007), Patrus et al. (2013), and Fernández and Pinuer (2016), we assume in this study that CSR is linked to the ethical aspects present in business transactions, and it has in accountants and managers its main social and political actors. This is so because accountants are responsible for generating, analyzing, preparing, interpreting, and communicating information regarding the facts that change organizations' patrimonial and financial situation, and managers are responsible for making managerial decisions in view of the information given by accountants (Martins, Diniz, & Miranda, 2012; Iudícibus, Martins, & Carvalho, 2005).

Aiming to analyze the matters that involve CSR and ethics, this study focused on a specific target population: Accountancy undergraduate students. The option for investigating this population is justified by, at least, three central arguments. The first one has to do with the observations made by Wong (2001), who says that higher education students represent the future members of the corporate universe and the decision-makers in a society, and that is why getting to know their opinion regarding behavioral tendencies has a significant effect on a country's future.

The second argument is related to what Miranda, Casa Nova and Cornacchione Jr. (2013a) found out: that accounting education in Brazil has been going through alterations in order to increase the number of undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as enrollments in them; to give greater emphasis on the development of accounting research; and to promote the accounting profession. As a whole, these changes place accountants' education and professional practice in the center of discussions regarding CSR and ethics in business.

In Brazilian context, accountants' educational and professional training is founded on at least three central axes, namely, (1) professional and educational regulation by federal legislation (Brasil, 1946; CNE, 2004); (2) the National Curricular Guidelines - NCG (Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais – DCN) for Accountancy undergraduate programs (CNE, 2004; Miranda, Miranda, & Araújo, 2013b); and (3) HEINS's practices (Pires Ott, & Damacena, 2010). In this context, it is the HEINS's role to educate professionals whose competencies and abilities enable them to work in all of the Accounting areas – audits, finances, management control systems, among others (Pires et al., 2010).

By considering these three axes associated with the educational and professional training of accountants, we come to the third argument that justifies our option for investigating Accountancy undergraduate students. As Laffin (2015) points out, the NCG for Accountancy undergraduate programs are informed by the "pedagogy of competences", which favors the technicist training and neglects the scientific, collaborative education in terms of social development. Such a technicist bias was identified by Padoan and Clemente (2006), who carried out a study in order to analyze interdisciplinarity in Accountancy undergraduate programs, and concluded that, from the professors' perspective, accounting education actually had a technicist bias.

Apparently, this technicist bias (Padoan & Clemente, 2006; Laffin, 2015), has to do with (1) the legalist perspective underlying accountants' professional activity (Miranda et al., 2013b), (2) the eminently utilitarian quality of the accounting discipline (Iudícibus et al., 2005), and (3) the influence of the positive theory of accounting (Watts & Zimmerman, 1986) on the education of Accountancy undergraduate students.

Considering all these aspects, this study aims to answer the following question: **what is the opinion of Accountancy undergraduate students concerning the notions of CSR and ethics?** Research was carried out through the conduction of two surveys (Babbie, 2005), herein identified as Study 1 (CSR) and Study 2 (ethics). In both of them, undergraduate students from a public university in the Southeast Region of Brazil were surveyed.

We organized this paper in three sections, besides this introduction. The second section brings the methodological procedures. Then, our focus turns to the presentation and analysis of results in both studies. In the fourth, last section, we offer the research conclusions.

2. METHOD

As to methodology, this study amounts to a descriptive, quantitative research, carried out through the application of two surveys (Babbie, 2005). We collected data via triangulation (Denzin, 1989), combining documentary research and questionnaire application. Similar methodological procedures were followed by Silva Junior, Martins-Silva, Feu, Komino, Silva and Vasconcelos (2018), and Silva Junior, Martins-Silva, Vasconcelos, Silva, Brito and Monteiro (2019).

Two types of documents were used for documentary research, namely: (1) regulatory documents, consisting of legal rules; and (2) institutional documents of the HEINS and the Accounting program itself. For the sake of clarity, we used codes to identify the documents mentioned throughout the text. Figure 1 shows those codes.

Type of document	Documents	Code
Regulatory documents (RD)	Act n. 9.295/1946 (Brasil, 1946)	RD1
	Resolution n. 10: National Curricular Guidelines - NCG (Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais - DCN) (CNE, 2004)	RD2
Institutional documents (ID)	University in numbers	ID1
	Course Pedagogical Project – CPP for the Accounting Program (Projeto Pedagógico do Curso – PPC de Ciências Contábeis)	ID2
	CSR contents in the program syllabus	ID3
	Morals and ethics contents in the program syllabus	ID4

Figure 1. Codes employed in documentary research.

We used two questionnaires in this study – the first one concerning CSR, and the second one concerning ethics. In the next subsections, we present some notes regarding the questionnaires we used in the two studies.

2.1. STUDY 1: THE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire used in Study 1 was developed and used in the studies carried out by Silva Junior et al. (2018) and Silva Junior et al. (2019). The CSR questionnaire was based on the classical CSR pyramid proposed by Carroll (1991), which assumes that CSR comprises four dimensions hierarchically structured in the form of a pyramid whose first dimension – the underpinning base of the other dimensions – is the economic, followed by the legal, the ethical, and the philanthropic dimensions respectively. Wong, Long and Elankumaran (2010) used a similar theoretical approach to develop their questionnaire.

This questionnaire was structured in two parts, the first one aiming to identify respondents' social-demographical characteristics, while the second one had to do with our research goals. The second part comprised 64 statements on business practices and goals, which were divided in 16 groups. Each group contained a statement related to each of the four CSR

dimensions, and each statement had to do with a different stakeholder or specific contextual aspect (employees, customers, environment, competitors, society, suppliers, shareholders, etc.).

Figure 2 illustrates 2 of the 16 groups of four statements regarding the CSR dimensions of the pyramid proposed by Carroll (1991), which were used for gathering data for this research. Group 5 (G_5) and Group 15 (G_15) had to do specifically with the environment and competitors, respectively.

G_5	Ethical	Monitoring and minimizing negative impacts of the activity on the environment	
	Legal	Enforcing legislation regarding labor safety, hygiene, and health	
	Economic	Implementing management processes that improve operational efficiency levels	
	Philanthropic	Supporting campaigns and projects that protect and improve the quality of the environment	
	-----	Sum Total	
G_15	Economic	Being aggressive in market actions so as to overcome competitors	
	Legal	Complying with legislation that regulates competitive practices	
	Ethical	Being careful and dutiful when dealing with privileged information about competitors	
	Philanthropic	Being proactive when it comes to establishing partnerships with competitors so as to develop social and environmental projects and actions	
	-----	Sum Total	

Figure 2. Example of 2 groups with the four CSR dimensions to be assessed by respondents. *Source:* Silva Junior et al. (2018) and Silva Junior et al. (2019).

As Silva Junior et al. (2018) and Silva Junior et al. (2019) in their research, we used the constant sum scale, whose sum equals 10, which means that respondents were expected to ascribe a figure, from 0 to 10, to each of the statements so that the total score in each group of statements would always amount to 10. According to Aupperle, Hatfield and Carroll (1983), this procedure is useful to avoid the possibility of a perfect society bias, which might occur with a Likert-type scale.

We ran tests of the questionnaire reliability by using Cronbach's alpha and factorial analysis. The Cronbach's alpha results showed the following values: 0.81 for the economic dimension, 0.71 for the legal dimension, 0.43 for the ethical dimension, and 0.71 for the philanthropic dimension.

As to the factorial analysis, first we carried out the exploratory factor analysis (principal components analysis), and then the factorial analysis, with the indication of 3 factors, since Aupperle et al. (1983) noticed that the economic and philanthropic dimensions join together in a single factor, but with different signs in factor loadings. Besides, those authors also noticed that there is a negative correlation between the economic dimension and the other dimensions. This aspect was also found in the data we collected for this research, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Matrix of the correlation between CSR dimensions for respondents

	Economic	Legal	Ethical	Philanthropic
Economic	1	-0.28***	-0.64***	-0.58***

Legal	-0.28***	1	-0.26***	-0.47***
Ethical	-0.64***	-0.26***	1	0.42***
Philanthropic	-0.58***	-0.47***	0.42***	1

Note. *** means $p < 0.01$; ** means $p < 0.05$; * means $p < 0.1$.

Factorial analysis results turned out to be similar to those found by Aupperle et al. (1983), since, besides the joining together of the economic and philanthropic dimensions in a single factor, the other two factors also consisted basically of the ethical and legal dimensions, each being more representative in one of the two factors. Therefore, although the Cronbach's alpha showed values under 0.7 for the ethical dimensions, 0.7 being considered the minimum required for the reliability of data (Levine, Stephan, Krehblel, & Berenson, 2015), we could consider the reliability of the questionnaire to be satisfactory. As to the analysis of data, we used descriptive statistics and the Student's *t*-test for paired two-samples so as to compare the means of the CSR dimensions from an analysis of pairs.

2.2. STUDY 2: THE ETHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

We developed the questionnaire on ethics using as a model the data collection tool developed by Faria (2000), which indicates nine ethical dilemmas, namely, authoritarianism, prejudice, injustice, self-preservation, ethical subordination, competitiveness, conformism, human belittling, and self-depreciation. This instrument was adapted in order to include the typically Brazilian moral duplicity (Srouf, 1994), that is, people's expected behavior (associated with the morals of integrity) and their actual behavior (associated with the morals of opportunism). Besides, the questionnaire encompassed three specific objects of analysis (or focuses): people in general; the relationship between managers and subordinates in labor relations; and organizations.

As a result, we obtained a twofold instrument for data collection. Its first part served to identify respondents' social-demographical characteristics, while its second part was related to research goals, and comprised 35 statements in a Likert-type scale of five points. We highlight that, out of these 35 statements, 15 characterized the expected ethical behavior and 20 characterized the actual behavior (Srouf, 1994).

In order to test the reliability of the questionnaire, particularly regarding its "expected behavior" and "actual behavior" constructs, we used Cronbach's alfa and factor analysis through the method of the principal components analysis were used. The Cronbach's alfa for the set of statements that characterized the expected behavior was 0.701, while for the set of statements that characterized the actual behavior, it was 0.751. Considering that both of them were over 0.7, we can infer that both constructs show an appropriate level of reliability (Fávero, Belfiore, Silva, & Chan, 2009).

As to the exploratory factor analysis, KMO statistics (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) showed the value 0.740. According to Fávero et al. (2009), this value can be regarded as fitting for the use of factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at 1% ($p = 0.000$), a fact that also suggests factor analysis is fitting, according to Fávero et al. (2009). We extracted twelve factors with eigenvalues over 1. However, by observing the *Scree* graph shown in Figure 3, we can notice that two of them have a considerably higher capability of explaining the total variance than the others. We assumed these two factors represent the "expected behavior" and "actual behavior" constructs.

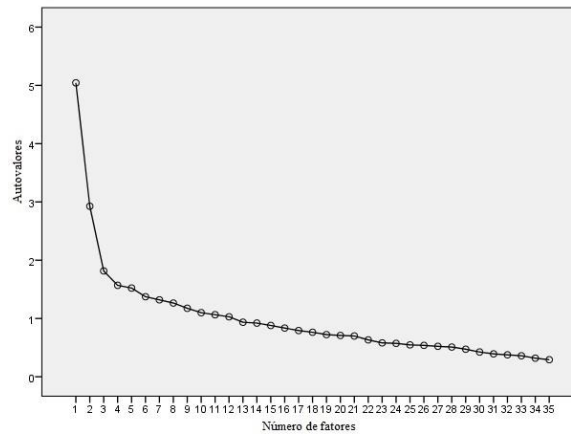


Figure 3. Scree graphic.

After noticing that two factors would be more relevant to the explanation of the total variance, we carried out the factor analysis for their identification. Table 2 shows the rotated component matrix of this factor analysis (*varimax* orthogonal rotation method), which presents two factorial scores for each of the 35 statements that compose this research.

Table 2. Rotative component matrix of the factorial analysis

Statements	Proposed	Factors		Greater participation
		1 (Actual)	2 (Expected)	
S_01	Actual	0.275	0.168	-
S_02	Actual	0.371	0.089	Actual
S_03	Actual	0.030	0.429	Expected
S_04	Expected	0.106	0.306	-
S_05	Expected	0.012	0.497	Expected
S_06	Expected	0.035	0.271	-
S_07	Actual	0.429	0.081	Actual
S_08	Actual	0.281	0.368	Expected
S_09	Expected	0.032	0.451	Expected
S_10	Expected	0.103	0.261	-
S_11	Expected	0.115	0.324	-
S_12	Expected	0.005	0.431	Expected
S_13	Actual	0.244	0.077	-
S_14	Actual	0.468	0.112	Actual
S_15	Actual	0.361	0.261	Actual
S_16	Expected	0.103	0.490	Expected
S_17	Expected	-0.033	0.648	Expected
S_18	Actual	0.550	0.095	Actual
S_19	Actual	0.522	0.189	Actual
S_20	Actual	0.110	-0.030	-
S_21	Expected	0.042	0.640	Expected
S_22	Expected	-0.029	0.261	-
S_23	Actual	0.661	-0.007	Actual
S_24	Actual	0.659	-0.014	Actual
S_25	Expected	0.155	0.620	Expected
S_26	Expected	-0.022	0.586	Expected
S_27	Actual	0.681	-0.045	Actual
S_28	Expected	-0.025	0.550	Expected

S_29	Expected	0.082	0.164	-
S_30	Actual	0.513	0.194	Actual
S_31	Actual	0.435	0.388	Actual
S_32	Actual	0.403	0.290	Actual
S_33	Actual	-0.177	-0.015	-
S_34	Actual	0.400	-0.059	Actual
S_35	Actual	0.561	-0.116	Actual

According to Fávero et al. (2009), we can understand that the factorial score with the highest absolute value tends to represent the factor which certain statement is mostly associated with (expected behavior or actual behavior). We can notice that two statements (S_03 and S_08), from the total of 35, did not associate as expected when we were developing the questionnaire, which suggests that the “expected behavior” and the “actual behavior” constructs proposed by the research are reliable enough. After establishing the reliability of the research instrument, we carried out the frequency distribution analysis of the statements in Likert-type scale.

3. RESULTS: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

We structured this section in four subsections. The first one brings information about the Accountancy undergraduate program. The second shows the respondents’ social-demographical profile of both studies. The third and fourth subsections present, respectively the results obtained in Study 1 and in Study 2 and their analysis.

3.1. THE ACCOUNTANCY UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

The Accountancy undergraduate program of the HEINS we studied was created in the 1960s. By then, classes were offered only in the evening. By the end of the 2000s, it started to offer classes also in the afternoon. Its CPP includes definitions of the alumni’s profile, the goal of the course, its curricular structure, faculty, among other aspects. As to alumni’s profile, the CPP highlights that the course is committed to train professionals with scientific and technical knowledge, offering solid humanist education so that they can face the demands of both business and social fields, interdisciplinarily applying their knowledge (ID2). We could see that both the CPP (ID2) and the program comply with Brazilian regulatory laws (RD1 and RD2).

When it comes to our main focus of interest in this research, which is the access to contents related to CSR and ethics, we point out that both shifts of the course offer the disciplines of philosophy and ethics, social accounting, environmental accounting, and accounting for non-profit institutions (elective and required courses). Besides these disciplines, contents related to social-environmental issues are approached in advanced topics in accounting, complementary activities, and in extension and research projects.

3.2. RESPONDENTS’ SOCIAL-DEMOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF BOTH STUDIES (CSR AND ETHICS)

The population analyzed in this study comprised 789 students. The difference between Study 1 and Study 2 was the sample size, which, in the first one, was 221 valid questionnaires (28.01% of the total population), while in the second, it was 256 of them (32.44% of the total population). Thus, this subsection brings respondents’ social-demographical characteristics from Study 1, as shown in Table 3 and Study 2 in Table 4.

Table 3. Respondents’ social-demographical profile (Study 1 – CSR)

Shift	Have attended CSR disciplines	
	No	
Morning	107 48.42%	117 52.94%

Evening	114	51.58%	Yes (complete/attending)	104	47.06%
Term			Another undergraduate degree		
Beginning (1st, 2nd, or 3rd)	96	43.44%	No	182	82.35%
Middle (4th, 5th, or 6th)	113	51.13%	Yes (complete/attending)	39	17.65%
End (7th or 8th)	12	5.43%	Graduate degree (<i>stricto</i> and/or <i>lato</i>)		
Sex			No		
Male	98	44.34%	Yes (complete/attending)	208	94.12%
Female	123	55.66%	Professional activity		
Age group			None		
From 16 to 25 years old	163	73.76%	Trainee	52	23.53%
From 26 to 35 years old	46	20.81%	Employee	65	29.41%
Over 35 years old	12	5.43%	Businessperson	10	4.52%
Marital Status			Other		
Single/Divorced	181	81.90%	Activity sector		
Married	40	18.10%	Not applicable	91	41.18%
Have attended Morals and Ethics disciplines			Private		
No	14	6.34%	Public	44	19.91%
Attending	29	13.12%	Mixed	9	4.07%
Yes	178	80.54%	Non-profit	3	1.36%

Table 4. Respondents' social-demographical profile (Study 2 – ethics)

Shift			Have attended CSR disciplines		
Morning	110	42.97%	No	139	54.30%
Evening	146	57.03%	Yes (complete/attending)	117	45.70%
Term			Another undergraduate degree		
Beginning (1st, 2nd, or 3rd)	61	23.83%	No	213	83.20%
Middle (4th, 5th, or 6th)	118	46.09%	Yes (complete/attending)	43	16.80%
End (7th or 8th)	77	30.08%	Graduate degree (<i>stricto</i> and/or <i>lato</i>)		
Sex			No		
Male	114	44.53%	Yes (complete/attending)	240	93.75%
Female	142	55.47%	Professional activity		
Age group			None		
From 16 to 25 years old	182	71.09%	Trainee	67	26.17%
From 26 to 35 years old	57	22.27%	Employee	64	25.00%
Over 35 years old	17	6.64%	Businessperson	9	3.52%
Marital Status			Other		
Single/Divorced	211	82.42%	Activity sector		
Married	45	17.58%	Not applicable	84	32.81%
Have attended Morals and Ethics disciplines			Private		
No	25	9.77%	Public	119	46.48%
Attending	27	10.55%	Mixed	32	12.50%
Yes	204	79.69%	Non-profit	12	4.69%
				9	3.52%

As a whole, the social-demographical data indicate that most of the respondents are female, between 16 and 25 years old, single, and they have already attended or are attending to disciplines related to morals and ethics. They also have a professional activity. According to this profile, it is relevant to notice that there is relative balance between the number of students who have already attended the CSR discipline, and the number of those who have not.

3.3. STUDY 1: WHAT DO RESPONDENTS THINK OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?

In order to ascertain students' opinion regarding CSR, we ran a mean test, as Aupperle et al. (1983) did, as well as tests for differences in means, comparing the CSR dimensions. Through the Student's *t*-test for paired two samples, we compared the means of the dimensions, assessing them in pairs. The means found for the four CSR dimensions and their differences are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Means found in the four CSR dimensions and tests for differences in means

Dimensions	Means	
Economic	2.18	
Legal	2.49	
Ethical	2.34	
Philanthropic	2.38	
Analyses	T-Statistics	Bilateral p-value
Economic vs Legal	-5.698	0.00
Economic vs Ethical	-3.192	0.00
Economic vs Philanthropic	-3.297	0.00
Legal vs Ethical	3.249	0.00
Legal vs Philanthropic	2.138	0.03
Ethical vs Philanthropic	-0.866	0.39

Note. significant differences in means are shown in bold.

As we can see, while the legal dimension obtained the highest mean, the economic dimension had the lowest mean amongst the dimensions. Therefore, for respondents, the CSR pyramid has the following hierarchical structure, as to its dimensions: the legal, the philanthropic, the ethical, and the economic. As to the differences in means, research data indicate that, at a statistical significance level of at least 5%, there is a difference between the mean of the economic dimension and the means of the other CSR dimensions. These results suggest that respondents do seem to disfavor the economic dimension in relation to the others.

Generally, for Accountancy undergraduate students the notion of CSR does entail a hierarchical relationship between the dimensions existing in the pyramid proposed by Carroll (1991). However, unlike what was proposed by Carroll (1991), the hierarchical order of the pyramid is altered, so that the legal dimension is the base of the pyramid (and the most important dimension), followed by the philanthropic, ethical, and economic dimensions, respectively. Apparently, possible explanations for these results may have to do with accountants' educational and professional training.

As to the high relevance of the legal dimension of CSR, the educational and professional training of accountants in Brazil has been traditionally informed by the "pedagogy of competences", which favors technical education (Laffin, 2015), whose main aspect is to prepare organizations' accounting in order to comply with legal requirements (both internal and external) and Brazilian Exchequer. In other words, accountants' education and practice is pervaded by the idea of compliance (Santos, Guevara, Amorin, & Ferraz Neto, 2012), that is, the observance of legal rules that regulate organizations' accounting, especially with a view to tax collection (Miranda et al., 2013).

The evidence of this "pedagogy of competences" (Laffin, 2015) and the legalistic bias (Santos et al., 2012; Miranda et al., 2013b) can be observed in the CPP (ID2) as well as in the syllabi of elective courses whose contents are related to CSR (ID3). As a whole, both the CPP and the courses failed to adopt a critical approach to the implications of accounting professional

activity for society, especially when it comes to contents that explore corporate efforts to promote social welfare and environment protection (Barnett, 2007).

As to the low relevance of the economic dimension of CSR, results point to a radically different alternative to the notion of CSR proposed by Friedman (2014), who maintains that organizations have a single social responsibility: the generation of profit for shareholders. Thus, economic issues such as profitability for shareholders, productivity, and competition, would only be taken into account after organizations had met the demands from the legal, philanthropic and ethical dimensions.

3.4. STUDY 2: WHAT DO RESPONDENTS THINK OF ETHICS?

Results related to respondents' opinion on ethics are shown in Tables 6, 7 and 8. Table 6 presents the statements focused on people, while Tables 7 and 8 bring, respectively, statements focused on the relationship between managers and subordinates in labor relations and statements focused on organizations.

Table 6. Statements focused on people

Ethical dilemma	Statements (expected behavior)	Disagree	Agree
Injustice	S_11 - In the everyday running of organizations, people should be tolerant of differences and inequality.	4.69%	90.63%
Competitiveness	S_21 - People should always comply with society's moral values in all circumstances.	3.13%	82.81%
Conformism	S_5 - People should always behave ethically, whatever the situation may be.	2.73%	92.97%
Conformism	S_16 - Anyone whose attitude is dishonest inside organizations should be exemplarily punished.	7.42%	83.59%
Conformism	S_22 - Loyalty to colleagues and friends is an unnegotiable principle of behavior in all circumstances and situations.	13.28%	67.19%
Ethical dilemma	Statements (actual behavior)	Disagree	Agree
Injustice	S_27 - In order to achieve personal promotion or recognition, people usually belittle others, manipulate information, and twist data.	24.61%	55.47%
Competitiveness	S_19 - People behave in ways that are not always seen as ethical by society in order to stay in competitive organizations.	5.86%	77.34%
Conformism	S_23 - People tend to seek for rewards and favors from the group they belong to, accepting this group's rules.	8.59%	68.36%
Conformism	S_2 - People behave in ways that are appreciated by others in order to avoid being rejected by them, even when they disagree with such behavior.	10.55%	68.75%

Conformism	S_24 - Between the risk of unemployment and the resort to behavior that is not always suitable, people prefer to secure their jobs.	13.67%	69.14%
Human Belittling	S_13 - When people do not achieve the performance expected by organizations, they first tend to consider that it is due to their own inability.	24.22%	45.70%
Self-depreciation	S_8 - In the globalized world, one notices that people are getting more and more afraid that they do not measure up to the requirements of the contemporary labor world.	3.13%	87.50%

Table 7. Statements focused on labor relations (managers and subordinates)

Ethical dilemma	Statements (expected behavior)	Disagree	Agree
Authoritarianism	S_12 - The dialogue should be the best managerial and behavioral strategy at the workplace.	0.78%	94.53%
Authoritarianism	S_29 - People whose behavior is authoritarian are not able to occupy managerial positions.	25.39%	40.23%
Prejudice	S_10 - People whose behavior is jaundiced are not able to occupy managerial positions.	8.98%	78.52%
Injustice	S_25 - Managers should always comply rigorously with moral and ethical values.	1.56%	85.16%
Self-preservation	S_4 - People who tend to be unfair in their actions are not able to be in managerial positions.	16.02%	59.77%
Ethical Subordination	S_17 - The manager in a team should be an example of moral and ethical behavior to his/her subordinates.	0.78%	94.92%
Competitiveness	S_26 - Subordinates expect their manager to have a moral and ethical behavior.	1.95%	91.80%
Conformism	S_9 - A good manager is someone who behaves ethically even when circumventing (“jeitinho”) might be more advantageous.	7.42%	78.91%
Ethical dilemma	Statements (actual behavior)	Disagree	Agree
Authoritarianism	S_33 - In the organizational environment, debate and criticism are usually straightforward and open.	49.61%	23.83%
Authoritarianism	S_34 - Managers adopt an authoritative style in order to manage effectively and attain good results.	21.88%	46.09%
Prejudice	S_32 - There is discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, skin	6.25%	80.47%

	color, race, ethnicity, religious creed, etc., even if not explicitly, in organizations.		
Injustice	S_1 - -- People tend to criticize their peers and superiors in informal environments (inside or outside the organization) rather than in their presence.	6.25%	81.25%
Self-preservation	S_18 - Professionals are biased and tendentious in corporate relations when offering information that promotes their personal interest.	10.94%	61.33%
Ethical Subordination	S_14 - When competition intensifies, those who do not meet the needs of the labor system are dismissed by organizations.	10.16%	60.55%
Competitiveness	S_35 - Managers do “whatever it takes” in order to stay competitive in organizations with high levels of competition.	21.88%	51.95%
Conformism	S_31 - The prospect of salary increase and promotion makes people review their behavior, adapting it to the behavior expected by the organization.	1.95%	85.16%

Table 8. Statements focused on organizations

Ethical dilemma	Statements (expected behavior)	Disagree	Agree
Prejudice	S_28 - Competitive organizations should always adopt outlooks that society consider morally and ethically proper.	1.56%	86.72%
Self-preservation	S_6 - In this modern world, organizations should prefer a cooperative individual to a competitive one.	9.38%	66.80%
Ethical dilemma	Statements (actual behavior)	Disagree	Agree
Prejudice	S_15 - In organizations, there are veiled forms of discrimination on the grounds of type of activity, professional education, skills, competencies, etc.	5.08%	74.22%
Self-preservation	S_30 - The statement “if anyone has to be dismissed, then I hope it is not me”, even when not openly expressed, is a motto within organizations.	11.72%	64.45%
Ethical Subordination	S_7 - Competition between organizations forces them to adopt outlooks that society does not always consider to be ethical.	17.19%	57.81%
Human Belittling	S_20 - In organizations, basic human needs related to emotions are as important as those related to technical competencies.	42.58%	32.81%

S_3 - Organizations are always demanding better performance, more dedication, and availability of people.	1.17%	95.70%
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The set of answers regarding respondents' opinion on people, the relationship between managers and subordinates in labor relations, and organizations, indicates the existence of the typically Brazilian moral duality (Srouf, 1994). This duality is manifest in the opinion of respondents who adopt the morals of integrity to inform their opinion on the expected behavior, and the morals of opportunism to inform their position as to the actual behavior.

On the one hand, this duality manifests itself in the fact that respondents adopt the morals of integrity to inform the expected behavior. In this case, the public dimension and values such as honesty, loyalty, appropriateness, respect for truth and legality, and commitment to rightness, prevail when it comes to the expected behavior. On the other hand, when it comes to the actual behavior, respondents adopt the morals of opportunism, in which the private dimension and values such as eagerness for quick enrichment, legitimacy of the maximum personal advantage, selfishness, and the sanction of "cunning", prevail (Srouf, 1994).

A possible explanation for these results is also related to the educational and professional training of accountants in Brazilian context. As we have already mentioned here, accountants' education has been informed by the "pedagogy of competences", with technician bias (Padoan & Clemente, 2006; Laffin, 2015). In Brazilian context, this kind of pedagogy has a strong educational orientation toward the legalist perspective of accountants' professional practice (Miranda et al., 2013b) and the utilitarian bias of the accounting discipline (Watts & Zimmerman, 1986; Iudícibus et al., 2005, Vosselman, 2016) on the education of Accountancy undergraduate students. As a whole, these aspects create a gap between discourse and practice, so that the morals of integrity stay in discourse, while the morals of opportunism appear in the actual behavior.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to analyze the opinion of Accountancy undergraduate students at a Brazilian public university regarding their notion of CSR and ethics. Methodologically, we carried out two surveys and collected data through triangulation (Denzin, 1989) by combining documentary research and the application of questionnaires.

The synthesis of Study 1 results revealed that, for respondents, the CSR pyramid is hierarchically structured in dimensions, as that proposed by Carroll (1991), but their order is different. For respondents the hierarchical sequence of dimensions has the legal dimension in the base of the pyramid, followed by the philanthropic, ethical, and economic dimensions.

As to Study 2, results indicated the existence of a moral duality in respondents' behavioral pattern regarding the ethical dilemmas we investigated (Srouf, 1994). This moral duality revealed that respondents adopt the morals of integrity to inform the expected behavior and the morals of opportunism to refer to actual behavior.

The analysis of the results of both studies indicated points of convergence and divergence that seem to be mediated by the "pedagogy of competences" (Laffin, 2015). In principle, the technician (Padoan & Clemente, 2006; Laffin, 2015) and legalist (Miranda et al., 2013b) bias existing in the CSR structure that has the legal dimension as the base of the pyramid shows a point of convergence with the morals of opportunism, which anchors the actual behavior (Srouf, 1994). In other words, even adopting an opportunistic attitude, respondents admit that CSR is informed by the legal (Miranda et al., 2013) and compliance (Santos et al., 2012) aspects inherent to the accounting professional practice.

The point of divergence in the results obtained in both studies refers to a seeming contradiction in respondents considering the CSR philanthropic dimension to be more

important than the economic dimension. From an ethical point of view, the morals of opportunism existing in the actual behavior (Srour, 1994) do not anchor this kind of attitude. This sort of behavior is founded in the morals of integrity, present in the expected behavior (Srour, 1994). Thus, we can infer that respondents adopted a position toward philanthropy, which may have been influenced by the “politically correct discourse” (Cabral, 2013), that is, by what is said and done in the public dimension (morals of integrity), but which does not materialize, in practice, in the private dimension (morals of opportunism) (Srour, 1994).

These aspects led us to ponder the possible failure of the educational training to develop students’ ability to make value-based judgments (Dellaportas et al., 2005; Pakaluk & Cheffers, 2011; Stuart et al., 2014; Cameron & O’Leary, 2015). In this case, as Laffin (2015) pointed out, it is important to rethink accountants’ educational training, so that it becomes more scientific and collaborative in terms of social development.

This study has some limitations, the main ones being the fact that we investigated only the opinion of students from a single university, and it was quantitatively done through two surveys. As suggestions for further studies, it would be relevant to deepen the understanding of research results by conducting a qualitative study of the same population, for example, via focal groups. We hope the results of the two studies herein may contribute to the study field that encompasses CSR, morals and ethics, especially by connecting these two concepts and the educational and professional training issue, which has an effect on the development of nations.

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