

Expanded abstract

Relationship between cooperative values and CSR. Case of Mondragon Corporation

The concern and care about the environment and society are part of the essence of the Social Responsibility of organizations and this fact has been integrated and formalized in corporations as sustainable development. Both concepts started to be used at the end of the 20th century, really gaining importance in the 90s due to different financial scandals.

The Mondragon Corporation has been an example of integration: it shares the principles of cooperativism with the elements of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), implementing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of CSR in the cooperative values since its beginning. Both, cooperative principles and CSR, start from the same basis.

This article not only defines concepts or the CSR applied to the Mondragon Corporation, but goes beyond by establishing the difference between cooperative and CSR values, and how the first ones have contributed to the creation of the second ones within the Corporation.

The research design has been developed according to a mixed-type methodology, combining qualitative (content analysis and interview) and quantitative (survey) techniques. On the one hand, key people (4) were interviewed: directors of companies that form Mondragon and its former president. On the other hand, surveys (195) have been conducted on different workers of the corporation's companies. In addition, to investigate the real application of CSR in cooperatives, it has been studied whether Mondragon companies publish CSR reports on their web pages.

Regarding the results obtained from the interviews, the CSR term has not been especially known and used in cooperatives. Although in recent years the concept has gained strength and notoriety, everything which implies and represents is not fully understood. A definition and principles defining everything that implies developing CSR actions have yet to be established. The implementation of ISO standards has contributed to this integration of CSR in the different companies that form the corporation.

Considering the results of the surveys, within the organization the cooperative principles and values are better known than CSR itself. People identify the principles of cooperativism and CSR, whether they are women, men, young people, veterans, educated, uneducated or wherever they reside. The meanings are known and supported not only from the highest management, but also from the most basic level in a cooperative.

Regarding analysis of data of the reports published on their websites, all cooperatives have an internal responsibility policy, which is committed to society, workers and the environment. However, the analysed data shows that these organizations must improve in standardizing and promoting CSR on their websites. Cooperatives should start giving more time and space to publishing data and actions on liability issues, either by publishing activities or accounts

carried out in that area. Given that cooperatives have this type of exercise in their DNA, it is necessary to make them visible, taking into account the relevance that this issue is acquiring in the corporate world due to social demands. Beyond policies and reports, it is important for organizations to have a special CSR section on their website, since it would increase interest in the issue and their commitment would be reflected and known more extrinsically.

As conclusion, we can affirm that the cooperative has always been committed and responsible towards its environment, and its main objective has been to instil these values in its workers. The actions and tasks they fulfil in order to improve the society can be found in the publications on their websites, apart from the fact that the employees have shown great knowledge of these principles that govern Mondragon. The result of this has been the great evolution that the Corporation and its companies have experienced in social, environmental and economic aspects, always in search of continuous improvement. Moreover, the study shows that the population, in general, is becoming aware of the importance of the assimilation and implementation of social responsibility.

The cooperative principles and values contain in their *raison d'être* aspects that constitute CSR today. In other words, the elements that form CSR are inherent to cooperative societies. Their business configuration, their values, principles and culture mean that these companies themselves acquire behaviours typical of the three main areas of CSR (social, economic and environmental). Among the cooperative principles are free membership, democratic organization, instrumental and subordinate character of capital, retributive solidarity, social transformation, labour sovereignty, intercooperation, participation in management, universal character and education, principles that are similar to the elements that characterize CSR.

Even if the cooperative employees speak of principles and values in its fields, the change of era, globalization, internationalization and customer requests have made the term CSR gain strength; this is why reports have begun to be published or responsibility policies are incorporating. Therefore, CSR is not only an element of cooperative societies, but also a part of their social strategy when it comes to gaining competitive advantage and business success. De facto, more than an element, it is a behaviour rooted in its identity and culture and it is its well-established principles, which ensure that cooperatives exert their responsibility towards their members and society with total transparency.

In conclusion, the companies that form Mondragon have worked for decades to improve the quality of life of their employees, their community and their environment, and are increasingly making commitments to more distant communities and environments. This is accomplished in several ways: offering a medical service, improving the facilities of their plants, applying an equitable payment and cooperating with each other. Sensitivity and awareness have caused continuous development, where now known CSR has always been present in the DNA of the cooperative.

The cooperative principles and values are still alive and internalised, and are recognized and praised by various local, national and international organizations. In addition, it has been verified that the Mondragon cooperatives continue to strive for constant improvement, contributing to the community, providing solidarity, mutual aid, democracy, responsibility and

equity. The commitment and work produce results, but its members are aware of the need to evolve and adapt to society's new needs and demands. This fact provides the original value of the study: the translation of the interrelationship between CSR and cooperative values in a theoretical way to a practical case applied to an organization that represents an example of implementation and integration of CSR and cooperative values in its business line.

The research presents data that can be a starting point for further studies on this phenomenon, with a greater projection at the international level. Mondragon's analysis presents a limitation to extrapolate and draw conclusions regarding the relationship between cooperative values and CSR in a global way. The comparative analysis with other organizations with similar characteristics in other countries would be an interesting contribution to build a global X-ray of this issue that is so necessary for the social impulse of the organizations.