

Management Skills and Corporate Social Responsibility in Socially Responsible SMEs of Sonora: A Theoretical and Empirical Approach

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Being a socially responsible company must be taken as a prevailing necessity for companies that want to be more competitive in an increasingly demanding society. Managers need to develop a wealth of management skills that ensure success in implementing social responsibility actions as a corporate strategy, transforming their actions into practices that raise a sense of responsibility among its employees. So that they strive to enrich communities where they operate, to improve living and working conditions for the generations to come, and to adopt a sustainable business vision. In Mexico, achieving a socially responsible company seal has become an almost impossible undertaking, as there are currently 1,007 socially responsible companies from 5,113,397 existing companies, representing a fledgling 0.019% nationally.

INTRODUCTION

Society has stopped seeing companies as simple economic entities and has begun to pay more attention to the impact they make within their communities. This change has led managers and owners of all types of companies to be more aware of management strategies and to seek its implementation to promote favorable changes both in society and in the environment (Herrera, Larrán, Lechuga & Martínez-

Martínez, 2016). This change is observed through the growing interest in the application of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in a company's effort to be more competitive in national and international markets.

CSR, as Briceño, Mejías and Moreno (2010) point out, goes beyond altruistic work or charitable donations. It involves the company's plans in the short and long term. It also involves the development of human talent and managerial skills that help a company in performing its daily activities and in overcoming the adverse conditions it may face in an increasingly changing and competitive environment.

Corporate Social Responsibility has become more important in recent years as a sign of the commitment that the company has with its various stakeholders. There are empirical studies that demonstrate how CSR has a positive influence on the financial results of companies. But little has been studied about its relationship with other performance indicators including competitive success and management skills, which as variables have generated great interest for managers due to their impact at a strategic level (Marín & Rubio, 2008).

However, despite the significant weight and influence SMEs have in the emerging Mexican economy, there are few studies where Corporate Social Responsibility is applied in companies with this configuration. This work determines which management skills have a greater correlation with CSR practices in SMEs in the state of Sonora, Mexico.

Problem

Despite all the benefits of performing Corporate Social Responsibility, there are few Mexican companies that carry the distinction of Socially Responsible Company (ESR) (Casas, Ibarra, & Olivas, 2012). In 2017, there were 1,505 companies in Mexico with the ESR distinction (Cemefi, 2017), out of a total of 5,039,911 companies. 305,602 of that are SMEs, representing an incipient 0.4924% at the national level (INEGI, 2018). There are 110,247 companies in Sonora, of which 9,860 are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (INEGI-DENUE, 2017), and only 71 bear the ESR distinction (Cemefi, 2017), which represents a low percentage of 0.72%.

Three reasons can be inferred as to why the number of ESR companies is so small. First, many Mexican companies promote themselves as socially responsible without carrying out the necessary practices or having the fundamentals that such distinction requires. Secondly, there are organizations that do not develop the managerial skills necessary to execute good CSR practices. This is in addition to not having the relevant certifications or distinctions. Lastly, companies may not know which managerial skills are necessary and cannot apply the principles of CSR (García et al., 2016).

Delimitation

The research was carried out in the cities of Hermosillo and Cajeme of the state of Sonora, which represent 83% of the population of socially responsible SMEs that by the year 2017 have obtained the ESR Distinctive.

Study's Objective

To determine what correlation that exists between management skills and corporate social responsibility in socially responsible SMEs that are developed in an emerging economy, in such a way that it serves as a reference when designing and implementing initiatives and action strategies.

Research Questions

For this study, two research questions were formulated:

1. What are the managerial skills that present a linear association with Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora?
2. What managerial skill represents the greatest relative weight and importance in relation to Corporate Social Responsibility?

Theoretical Framework

Corporate Social Responsibility can be defined as "the recognition and integration in its operations by companies, of social and environmental concerns, giving rise to business practices that meet these concerns and shape their relationships with their interlocutors" (De La Cuesta y Valor, 2003, p.11).

Modesto Barrón, María del Rosario Zayas and Leticia González define Corporate Social Responsibility as the commitment a company makes to its interest groups and to society in general. Among other things, the term implies contributing to sustainable development, safety, health and social welfare, as well as respecting and applying both local and international norms. It also accounts for the interests and expectations of stakeholders, maintaining ethical and integral behavior, as well as transparency in their management practices (Barrón, Zayas & González, 2016).

Although there is no unified concept of Corporate Social Responsibility, its different definitions are established according to three main indicators: social, environmental and economic. Internationally, CSR is understood as the role that organizations must play for the benefit of their own community (Barroso, 2011), which in turn allows them to generate added value and provides them with a tool for differentiation within its competition sector (Santander, 2017).

In an emerging economy such as Mexico, one of the main hallmarks related to social responsibility is the Socially Responsible Company (Vázquez & Varela, 2017). It is awarded by the Mexican Center for Philanthropy (Cemefi), which defines CSR as a form of management and a manner of doing business, where companies ensure operations are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. Such companies must also recognize the interests of the different groups with which it is related to.

The importance of the role of the leader in SMEs over CSR is undeniable. Leaders are largely responsible for making the decision to adopt socially responsible policies. Additionally, it can be concluded that beyond the functions of planning, organization, direction and control, the success or failure of the organizations starts from the implementation of strategic objectives. Doing so requires certain skills on the part of the leaders in resolving the challenges or obstacles the company can face (Socha, 2017, Leyva, Espejel & Cavazos, 2017).

Based on the definition of Longenecker, Moor, Petty & Palich (cited by Leyva, 2017), management skills are made up of a set of knowledge and skills that a person needs to be efficient in performing different managerial tasks and in operating in various organizations. Katz (cited by Codina, 2017) states that managers must have three types of skills or abilities: technical skill, human skill and conceptual skill.

Socha (2017), describes conceptual skills as the most important for managers. It enables them to create innovative strategies and allows them to see problems from different perspectives. Human relations skills, on the other hand, enables leaders to work with other people, both at the individual level and in a group. It enables managers to know people, to motivate them and, above all, to understand their needs, so they can succeed in the organization. Through human skills, the manager becomes a true leader, partner and friend of his team.

Finally, technical skills pertain to knowledge and skills that a manager must possess and practice that will enable him to utilize models and techniques to efficiently meet the different requirements and needs of his work (Socha, 2017).

Management Skills

Teamwork

One managerial skill that a leader should exercise is teamwork. According to Mario Acuña, teamwork is a "coordinated" collective work method in which participants exchange their experiences with respect to their roles and functions to achieve common objectives when performing a joint task. However, the development of this ability goes beyond just gathering a group of people and assigning them a task (Colombo, 2003, cited by Socha, 2017). Teamwork could be a challenging exercise but, once implemented in the right way, helps create a better working environment. Strong labor ties are helpful in resolving conflicts and in finding favorable solutions promptly should problems arise. In this sense, the hypothesis that arises is the following:

H1: *Teamwork is positively correlated with corporate social responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora.*

Communication

This ability can be defined as a process of transmitting messages from the sender to the receiver. Within organizations, it is given upwards, downwards and laterally. Communication can be done through formal and informal means. Without it, alignment within the organization would be impossible. Communication ensures the coordination of activities, the achievement of objectives and the resolution of problems (Contreras, Barbosa & Piñeros, 2016).

Therefore, as Socha (2017) points out, communication is one of the skills that every leader or manager must possess. Communication must be assertive and must be understood as mature communication behavior, in which the person neither attacks nor submits to the will of other people, but expresses their convictions and defends their rights. Its importance within companies lies, to a large extent, in the fact that communication is the basis of other leadership skills (Hughes et al., 2007, cited by Contreras, 2016), and that poor communication can lead to conflicts and confrontations between the members of an organization (Socha, 2017). According to the foregoing, the following hypothesis is evident:

H2: *Communication is positively correlated with Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora.*

Decision-making

Decision-making as a managerial skill is of great importance within companies, since such decisions are the ones that set a pattern for success or failure in all areas of the organization. Hence, it is necessary that leaders have intrinsic and extrinsic skills that enable efficient decision-making before environmental variables, which the manager must evaluate and analyze from their technical, human and conceptual knowledge and skills (Socha, 2017). The hypothesis to be tested for this variable is:

H3: *Decision making is positively correlated with Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora.*

Negotiation

Negotiation, according to Villa (2016), pertains to the approach of two opposing parties in reaching an agreement acceptable to both sides. Negotiation skills go beyond negotiating day to day. Any idea or objective is susceptible to being negotiated. For leaders, the need to be a skilled negotiator and the ability to handle all kinds of situations through different negotiation techniques become the basis for professional success. For this particular variable, the formulated hypothesis is:

H4: *Negotiation is correlated in a positive way with Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs of the state of Sonora.*

Self-control of Emotions

Goleman (2016) emphasizes the importance of managing emotions in leaders. According to this author, emotional self-control is a competence that allows the leader to contain his anger or impatience and channel them appropriately to draw the attention of his subordinates and mobilize them towards change or toward the achievement of pre-established objectives.

In other words, emotional self-control allows leaders to maintain the peace of mind necessary to deal adequately with stressful situations that need immediate attention. Although achieving such competence usually requires great effort, emotional self-control is one of the most important management skills (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2016). The hypothesis formulated for this variable is:

H5: *Self-control of emotions is correlated in a positive way with corporate social responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora.*

For these reasons, it can be concluded that all managerial skills are interrelated. It is important for leaders of SMEs to possess such skills, since the proper management and success of companies are highly dependent on them. Likewise, it can be established that there is a correlation between the managerial skills that the leaders of SMEs possess and the application of CSR practices.

Methodology

Design of the Questionnaire

The data collection technique involved the use of a survey with 50 items distributed across the five dimensions or variables, namely: teamwork, communication, decision-making, negotiation and self-control of emotions. At the end of the questionnaire, 45 items were included to measure Corporate Social Responsibility, through three indicators: (1) Care and preservation of the environment; (2) Commitment to the community; and (3) Quality of life in the company.

The survey was divided into two parts. The first part was designed to gather general information about the respondent. The second part was designed to gather information on managerial skills and corporate social responsibility. To measure the foregoing, a six-point Likert scale was used. 1: Totally disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Partially disagree; 4: Partly agree; 5: Agree and; 6: Totally agree. The design of this scale allowed eliminating the subjectivity granted by a neutral element.

Population

For the purposes of this study, a census was conducted with the socially responsible SMEs that operate in the two study cities, with a total of 59 companies (Cemefi, 2017).

Type of Research

The research was quantitative and cross-sectional. It also explained how the managerial skills developed in the socially responsible SMEs of Sonora are correlated with Corporate Social Responsibility, through the hypotheses and research questions raised. It was a non-experimental field investigation, since the variables were not manipulated.

Data Analysis Technique

For the processing of data and information, the statistical software SPSS, v.23 was used. The reliability and internal consistency tests were carried out using the Cronbach alpha statistic. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to verify the assumptions of normality of the data. The different association analysis and hypothesis testing in search of sufficient statistical evidence were carried out using the Mann-Whitney U and the Kruskal-Wallis U tests.

To explain the statistical correlation between managerial skills and CSR, Spearman's Rho statistic was used for nonparametric tests. A multiple regression model was utilized to indicate the managerial skills that contribute the most to the phenomenon of CSR in the SMEs of the state of Sonora.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability and Validity Instrument

The Cronbach's Alpha is the most widely used statistical technique to test the internal consistency of the scale of a construct (Cronbach, 1946). The Cronbach's alpha value can be found in the range between 0 and 1, zero being a null consistency, while 1 is a perfect internal consistency.

George and Mallery (2003, p.231) suggest the following recommendations for evaluating Cronbach's alpha coefficients:

- Alpha coefficient >0.9 is excellent
- Alpha coefficient >0.8 is good

- Alpha coefficient >0.7 is acceptable
- Alpha coefficient >0.6 is questionable
- Alpha coefficient >0.5 is poor
- Alpha coefficient <0.5 is unacceptable

Table 1, shows the internal consistency of the scale in each of the dimensions that measure the management skills of socially responsible SMEs. Likewise, the inter-item correlations for each dimension are shown. It can be observed that the interval ranges between the values 0,386 and 0,596 are considered good (Merino, Navarro and García, 2014).

TABLE 1
INTER-ITEM CORRELATIONS AND CRONBACH'S ALPHA FOR THE VARIABLES

Management Skill	No of items	r_{ij}	Cronbach alpha (α)
Teamwork	10	0,495	0,811
Communication	10	0,386	0,738
Making decisions	10	0,546	0,847
Negotiation	10	0,399	0,761
Self-control of emotions	10	0,596	0,874

Note: r_{ij} : inter-item correlation average.

Source: Own elaboration, based on the data processed in the SPSS, v23

Behavior and Distribution of Data

To analyze the behavior and distribution of the data obtained, the normality test was applied to confirm that the data had a normal distribution with respect to the arithmetic mean. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test was used for data samples greater than 30.

The data are shown in Table 2. It is indicative that they do not follow a normal distribution. Hence, the decision was made to apply non-parametric tests to the data to test each of the hypotheses.

TABLE 2
DATA NORMALITY TEST

Variable (Management Skill)	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	gl	Sig.
X ₁ : Teamwork	0,174	59	0,000
X ₂ : Communication	0,124	59	0,024
X ₃ : Decision making	0,134	59	0,010
X ₄ : Negotiation	0,062	59	0,200
X ₅ : Self-control of emotions	0,143	59	0,004
Y: Corporate Social Responsibility	0,121	59	0,032

Source: Prepared by the, based on the data obtained in the SPSS, v.23

Spearman's Rho correlations

The null hypotheses proposed for this test are:

H₀: *There is no linear relationship between Teamwork and corporate social responsibility.*

We found a statistically significant, moderate and directly proportional linear relationship between teamwork and corporate social responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora ($r_s=0.453$, $p<0.01$), so the hypothesis is rejected null

H0: *There is no linear relationship between communication and corporate social responsibility.*

A statistically significant, weak and directly proportional linear relationship was found between communication as a management skill and CSR in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora (rs=0.340, p<0.01). The null hypothesis is rejected.

H0: *There is no linear relationship between decision-making and Corporate Social Responsibility.*

We did not find a statistically significant linear relationship between decision-making as a management skill and CSR in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora (rs=0.246, p>0.05), therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

H0: *There is no linear relationship between negotiation and Corporate Social Responsibility.*

We found a weak, statistically significant, and directly proportional linear relationship between negotiation as a management skill and CSR in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora (rs=0.270, p<0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected.

H0: *There is no linear relationship between self-control of emotions and Corporate Social Responsibility.*

A statistically significant, moderate and directly proportional linear relationship was found between self-control of emotions as a management skill and CSR in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora (rs=0.406, p<0.01). The null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE 3
PRESENTS THE CORRELATIONS THROUGH SPEARMAN'S RHO BETWEEN
MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND CSR IN SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE SMES

Table 3. Rho correlations of Spearman.

Variables	Y_ (RSE)	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X ₅
Y = RSE Spearman correlation	1					
Next (bilateral)						
N	59					
X ₁ Spearman correlation	0,453**	1				
Next (bilateral)	0,000					
N	59	59				
X ₂ Correlation Spearman	0,340**	0,536**	1			
Sig. (bilateral)	0,008	0,000				
N	59	59	59			
X ₃ Spearman Correlation	0,246	0,471**	0,467**	1		
Sig. (bilateral)	0,060	0,000	0,000			
N	59	59	59	59		
X ₄ Correlation Spearman	0,270*	0,642**	0,558**	0,762**	1	
Next (bilateral)	0,001	0,000	0,000	0,000		
N	59	59	59	59	59	
X ₅ Spearman correlation	0,406**	0,267**	0,358**	0,459**	0,496*	1
Next. (bilateral)	0,001	0,041	0,005	0,000	0,000	
N	59	59	59	59	59	59

*.The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

**..The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on the data obtained in the SPSS, v.23

The Multiple Linear Regression Model

Table 4 shows the summary of the multiple regression model for management skills and CSR in SMEs socially responsible. We obtained a linear correlation coefficient ($R=0.556$) and a coefficient of determination ($R^2= 0,309$). This indicates that the goodness of fit is sufficient, since the variables X_1 and X_5 explain the 30.9% of the variability in CSR.

TABLE 4
SUMMARY OF THE MULTIPLE REGRESSION MODEL

Model	R	R ²	R ² corrected	Statistical				
				Substitution in R ²	Substitution in F	gl1	gl2	Sig. Substitution F
1	0,556 ^a	0,309	0,284	0,078	6,325	1	56	0,015

a.Predictor variables: (Constant), X_1 , X_5

Dependent variable: Y = RSE

Source: Prepared by the based on the data obtained in the SPSS, v.23

The statistic ($F=12,506$, $p < 0,000$) contrasts the null hypothesis that the population value of R is zero. Therefore, it indicates that there is a significant linear relationship between the dependent variable (Corporate Social Responsibility) and the two independent variables analyzed as a whole (Teamwork and self-control of emotions), as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
SUMMARY OF THE ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7,019	2	3,509	12,506	0.000
Residual	15,715	56	0,281		
Total	22,733	58			

a. Dependent variable: Y=RSE

b. Predictors: (Constant), X_1 , X_5

Source: Own elaboration, based on the data obtained in the SPSS, v.23

The non-standardized coefficients of the model are shown in Table 6. The coefficient corresponding to the Constant has been called β_0 , while the coefficients are X_1 , X_5 , are β_1 and β_5 , respectively. The standardized regression coefficients β , allow us to assess that the variable with the highest weight (importance) in the regression equation is X_1 : Teamwork with a value of 0.360; while X_5 : Self-control of emotions, represents a value of 0,304.

TABLE 6
STANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

Model	No Standardized Coefficients		Coefficients Typified	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	Beta		
(Constant)	1,264	0,809		1,563	0,124
X ₁	0,467	0,157	0,360	2,974	0,004
X ₅	0,267	0,106	0,304	2,515	0,015

Source: Own elaboration, based on the data obtained in the SPSS, v.23

With the value obtained in the Durbin-Watson statistic (DW = 1.836), independence can be assumed among the residues, since it is in the range greater than 1.5 and less than 2.5 (Rositas, 2014).

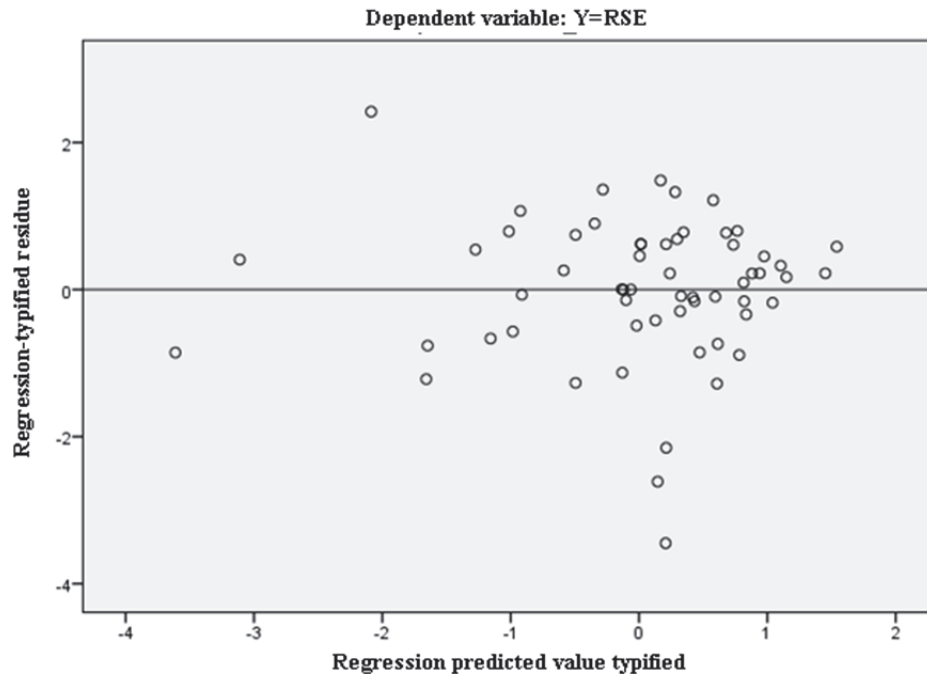
TABLE 7
COLLINEARITY COEFFICIENTS

Model	Collinearity statistics	
	tolerance	FIV
(constant)		
X ₁	0.843	1.186
X ₅	0.843	1.186

Source: Own elaboration, based on the data obtained in the SPSS, v.23

The dispersion diagram of the ZPRED and ZRESID variables allows the detection of relations of the non-linear type among the variables. Image 1 shows the residuals and forecasts are independent, since the points in the diagram do not follow any association or clear linear pattern.

FIGURE 1
DISPERSION DIAGRAM OF FORECAST TYPIFIED BY TYPIFIED WASTE



Source: Own elaboration, based on the data obtained in the SPSS, v.23

Formulae 1a and 1b, show the minimum-quadratic regression equation obtained from non-standardized coefficients in direct scores, which indicates partially that, the two variables or managerial skills contribute in a significant way to explain the corporate social responsibility of socially responsible SMEs as a dependent variable of the study.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_5 X_5 \tag{1}$$

$$Y (RSE) = 1,264 + 0,467 * X_1 + 0,267 * X_5 \tag{2}$$

In response to the research questions, it can be inferred that the managerial skills that present a linear association with Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs are: Teamwork, Communication, Negotiation and Self-control of emotions. It is important to mention that managers of SMEs should not stop developing and applying the four managerial skills since these are related and they reflect the fundamental purpose of a socially responsible company. It also enables a company to meet national and international standards on CSR.

With respect to the other research question, the managerial skill with greater weight (importance) in the regression model is Teamwork. Hence, it is important that managers of SMEs collaborate effectively within and across teams, departments or work units.

Table 8 shows the decisions for each of the hypotheses proposed in terms of management skills and CSR in socially responsible SMEs proposed for this research work.

TABLE 8
STATISTICAL TEST FOR THE HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis	Description	t-value	P-value*	Decision
H ₁	Teamwork is positively correlated with Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora.	2.974	0.004	accepted
H ₂	Communication is correlated positively with Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora.	-0.718	0.476	Not accepted
H ₃	Decision-making is positively correlated with Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora.	0.775	0.442	Not accepted
H ₄	Negotiation is positively correlated with Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora.	-1,732	0.089	Not accepted
H ₅	Self-control of emotions is positively correlated with Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora.	2.515	0.015	accepted

*Sig. $\alpha=.05$ ($t>2.015$)

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on the data obtained from the SPSS, v.23

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has a theoretical implication to knowledge about the linear association that exists between management skills and Corporate Social Responsibility in socially responsible SMEs in the state of Sonora. It is important that Mexican businessmen show more interest in integrating CSR as a long-term corporate strategy, since it represents expansion, development, success, investment, technology, domain, permanence and increase in profitability, as reflected by the various researches carried out in this subject of study.

Similarly, the practical implication is made through a regression model to measure the relationship between managerial skills and CSR in socially responsible SMEs. It is important to mention that the generated model has considered the introduction of only two management skills as variables that have an explanatory relationship with CSR in SMEs, which are: Teamwork and Self-control of emotions. Both pertain to the ability to work collaboratively to achieve agreements and positions of continuous improvement, as well as adapt to changes to be more productive and competitive.

Finally, it has verified literature and empirical studies carried out in other contexts that state that managerial skills are correlated with the dimensions that measure Corporate Social Responsibility. This is why it becomes imperative that the leaders of SMEs have these skills and abilities, since the correct and proper management can achieve competitive positioning for companies.

FUTURE LINES OF RESEARCH

Include other managerial skills in order to study their correlation with the dimensions of Corporate Social Responsibility, as well as expand the population of companies to carry out a greater analysis and understand how consumers perceive an emerging economy like Mexico. It can also include the performance of companies that call themselves socially responsible and try to explain why so few companies (0.07%) in the state of Sonora have achieved the distinction of being socially responsible companies.

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