

University Stakeholder Management and University Social Responsibility

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Abstract: The article further develops the theoretical resources of stakeholder theory, stakeholder management and corporate social responsibility, created for the needs of enterprises. It deals with the possibility of using them for the needs of universities. The theory is interconnected with the outcomes of the survey in the areas of university stakeholder management and university social responsibility. The paper defines university stakeholders, suggests their classification and gives some recommendations on selection and application of the strategy for negotiation with individual university stakeholders. Attention is also paid to relationships between stakeholders and social responsibility concept. The basic resources of the university social responsibility are described and its key areas and problems are identified on the example of Czech universities.

Key-Words: University, Stakeholder, Stakeholder Theory, Stakeholder Management, Stakeholder Management Strategies, Corporate Social Responsibility, University Social Responsibility

1 Introduction

In the present turbulent environment of globalization, more and more severe competition and developing economic crises, it is essential to search for new sources of the economic and social growth and development. To be successful in this, we can use the strong potential of universities. The term “university” is generally understood as a “higher education institution” [48]. In the broader concept, it is an educational institution providing high school graduates with tertiary education and further education [41]. These institutions provide bachelor, master and doctoral courses, as well as lifelong learning programs. The primary functions of contemporary universities include the triad of teaching, research, and community service [20], [38].

However, especially universities in the former socialist countries play only a marginal role, and it is necessary to make them accept certain changes. Above all, they have to make sure that their curricula are of high quality and stem from the needs of the stakeholders. Further, they have to increase the quality and effectiveness of both the research and education processes, emphasizing multisource funding. And last but not least, they have to initiate successful communication with all the relevant stakeholders [43].

The above implies the key role of the university stakeholders from the point of view of participation of the university research and education potential in the development of national economies, their coalitions and the entire world. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the stakeholder concept from the point of view of universities.

In doing so, we can draw on the detailed stakeholder theory for enterprises (significant examples include books by Alkhafaji [4], Brummer [7], Clarkson [14], Freeman [23], and articles by Buchholz & Rosenthal [8], Carroll [10], Clarkson [13], Cohen [16], Freeman [24]) and also on the opinions of Donaldson and Preston [19] and Jones and Wicks [32], who argue that the stakeholder concept can be applied in other organizations (not only in firms). However, we have to consider certain university specifics (e.g. extensive multi-application effects and positive externalities, education as public goods, strict regulation; as for public universities, also absence of tuition fees, and almost 100 percents dependence on the state budget, limited financial sources).

Another possibility of a change and, at the same time, a potential opportunity for universities is application of the social responsibility concept, which is closely related to the stakeholder concept. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the university social responsibility concept. And the basis can lie in the works from the area of corporate social responsibility (e.g. Aupperle, Carroll & Hatfield [5]; Bowen [6]; Carroll [9]; Carroll [12]; Clarkson [13]; Davis [17]; Davis & Blomstrom [18]; Hohnen [29]; Pavlík, Bělčík, Srpová, Kunz & Kužel [37]; Pinkston & Carroll [40]; Wartick & Cochran [49]; Wood [52]).

We organize the paper as follows. Firstly, we review the literature on stakeholder theory and stakeholder management as the basic resource. Subsequently, we identify university stakeholders and classify university stakeholders from the point of view of their influence. We then describe potential stakeholder management

strategies from the literature and discuss their application focusing on university stakeholders. We also assess the stakeholder management strategies being used by the public and private universities in the Czech Republic to deal with their stakeholders, and then we propose changes in their application. Next, we briefly review the literature on corporate social responsibility and identify relationships between stakeholders and corporate social responsibility. Finally, we discuss the university social responsibility concept.

2 Stakeholders and University Stakeholders

The firm (or any organization) is characterized by relationships with many groups and individuals ("stakeholders"), each with the power to affect its performance and/or with a stake in its performance [23], [31], [34].

The stakeholders, also designated as "interest groups" or "constituencies", are "any individual or group who can affect or is affected by the actions, decisions, policies, practices, or goals of the organizations" [11]; "persons or interests that have a stake, something to gain or lose as a result of its (the organization's) activities" [14]. The stakeholder is "an individual or group that has some kind of stake in what business does and may also affect the organization in some fashion" [8]. The term "stake" can also be explained as "claim", "interest" or "right".

The question is what a stakeholder is. The typical stakeholders are customers, suppliers, employees, owners, competitors, governments and their institutions, communities, media, environmental groups and consumer protection groups. According to Starik [42], stakeholders include not only actual stakeholders but also potential stakeholders. Starik [42] argues that stakeholders can be also the Earth's atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere. The question of what a stakeholder is may be determined by the users' concept. The term stakeholder could include physical human form, non-human natural environment, past or future generations, non-living objects, or non-physical mental-emotional constructs [42].

In our opinion, the subjects that can be considered as the relevant stakeholders are those representing certain opportunities or threats for the organization. From the point of view of universities, they are their students and graduates (university students "are viewed as either the products or the customers of faculties" [27], [22], [35]), the course applicants, their employees, the Ministry of Education, the grant agencies, the sponsors, other educational institutions, businesses, suppliers, the governments on the central, regional and local levels, the

public authorities (e.g. the tax authorities, health insurance companies, social security administration, etc.), and the public. As for private universities, they also include the owners and other investors.

3 Stakeholder Theory and Stakeholder Management

Stakeholder theory contends that organizations have obligations to a wide range of different constituents [15]. Wartick [50] argues that stakeholder theory posits the idea that the organization is merely an aggregation of stakeholders who are attempting to advance their interests (self-interests as well as other-regarding interests).

Donaldson and Preston [19] categorize stakeholder theory from descriptive/empirical, instrumental and normative points of view. A descriptive theory illustrates that organizations have stakeholders and describes how organizations interact with stakeholders. An instrumental theory describes stakeholder management as means to organization's ends and shows that organizations who consider their stakeholders create successful strategies. A normative theory is concerned with the moral standards of the behaviour of organizations and explains how organizations should deal with their stakeholders.

According to Harrison and St. John [28] and Freeman [24], stakeholder management is built on a partnering mentality that involves communicating, negotiating, contracting, motivating and managing relationships.

Goodpaster [25] argues that management appears to have a contractual duty to manage organization in the interests of the stockholders; at the same time management seems to have a moral duty to take other stakeholders into account. Freeman [24] notes that if a group of individual could affect the organization (or be affected by it, and reciprocate) then managers should worry about that group in the sense that it needed an explicit strategy for dealing with the stakeholder. The essence of the organizations is to coordinate changing stakeholder interests [50]. Phillips [39] has developed a stakeholder approach in the principle of fairness. He argues that when subjects enter voluntarily into cooperative agreements they create an obligation to act fairly.

Williamson [51] argues that a stakeholder's stake is uniquely tied to the success of the firm and that management should make decisions for the benefit of all stakeholders. An organization's survival and continuing success depends upon the ability of management to create sufficient wealth, value, or satisfaction for stakeholders [13]. Organizations that contract on the basis of trust and cooperation with their stakeholders will have a competitive advantage over organizations

that do not [31]. Organizations cannot work in isolation, but must cooperate with others to achieve their wider objectives. This effective form of competition is called “competition of network organizations” [47].

4 Categorization of Stakeholders and Specifics of University Stakeholders

The question is whether all the stakeholders are of the same importance. Freeman [23] argues that if organization wants to be effective, it will pay attention to all stakeholders. Donaldson and Preston [19] posit that “all persons or groups with legitimate interests participating in an enterprise do so to obtain benefits and that there is no prima facie priority of one set of interests and benefits over another”. Jones and Wicks [32] argue that “the interests of all (legitimate) stakeholders have intrinsic value, and no set of interests is assumed to dominate the others”. However, we agree with the opposite opinion. Wartick [50] notes that all stakeholders are not equal. According to the resource dependence theory, an organization will pay more attention to and be more concerned with the issues of stakeholders groups who control resources critical to its survival [3], [30], [33]. It is necessary to prioritize stakeholders into groups and develop different strategies for dealing with the various groups [10].

Freeman [23] distinguishes “generic” and “specific” groupings according to the criteria of cooperativeness and competitiveness. Carroll [11] distinguishes “primary” and “secondary” stakeholders, respectively “market” and “non-market” stakeholders according to the criteria of power and legitimacy. Additional criteria which might distinguish stakeholder status include geographic or temporal proximity, strategic utility, management preferences, probability, and impact [42].

It is necessary to pay special attention to the primary stakeholders. Primary stakeholders are those without which the organization cannot survive as a going concern [14]. According to Clarkson [13], primary stakeholders of firms are shareholders, investors, employees, customers, suppliers, and public stakeholder groups (the government and communities that provide infrastructures and markets, whose laws and regulations must be obeyed, and to whom taxes and other obligations may be due). According to Cohen [16], primary stakeholders are also trade associations and environmental groups.

In our opinion, the primary university stakeholders may refer to the entities who can significantly affect the prosperity and future existence of the given university. In the case of a public university, they are the students, the course applicants, the employees, the Ministry of Education, grant agencies, businesses (as the sources of

both monetary and non-monetary benefits resulting from the university-industry partnerships), other educational institutions (as both partners and competitors), and public stakeholder groups. In the case of private universities, they are also the owners and other investors.

5 Stakeholder Management Strategies from the Point of View of Universities

Jawahar and McLaughlin [30] argue that “the strategy an organization uses to deal with each stakeholder will depend on the importance of that stakeholder to the organization relative to other stakeholders”.

In accordance with the Clarkson’s RDAP scale, an organization will use reaction, defense, accommodation, and proaction strategies to deal with the stakeholders [13]. The strategy of proaction “involves doing a great deal to address a stakeholder’s issues, including anticipating and actively addressing specific concerns”; “the strategy of accommodation is a less active approach of dealing with a stakeholder’s issues”; the strategy of defense “involves doing only the minimum legally required to address a stakeholder’s issues”; “the strategy of reaction involves either fighting against addressing a stakeholder’s issues or completely withdrawing and ignoring the stakeholder” [30].

It is true that individual stakeholders have different importance for the organization. They are able to influence its prosperity and future existence to different extents. We also have to take into account that application of individual strategies of the approach to the stakeholders is variably resource-consuming (both as for the financial means and as for the management effort). On the one hand, the strategy of proaction needs the most resources; on the other hand, the least resource-consuming application is the application of the strategy of reaction. The above mentioned implies that it is necessary to use different strategies to deal with different stakeholders.

To identify the approach of universities to individual stakeholders, we can apply the Clarkson’s RDAP scale. If we pay attention to the behavior of the management of public and private universities in the Czech Republic, we can state the following:

1. The universities’ approach to their students and the course applicants is affected by the situation on the university education market. As for the public universities, which traditionally provide free education, the demand prevails over the supply; the strategy applied in the approach to the students is the defense strategy. As for the private universities, regarding the necessity of paying the tuition fee, the supply prevails over the demand; the strategy chosen in the approach to the students is the accommodation strategy. At the same

time, we can see, both in the case of public and in the case of private universities, a more active approach to the course applicants than to the students (the strategy of accommodation in the case of public universities, the strategy of proaction in the case of private universities). Into the future, regarding the demographic development and more and more severe competition on the university education market, we can recommend the strategy of proaction to be applied in the approach to both the students and the course applicants.

2. We can see a significant difference in the approach to the employees (academicians) of the public and private universities. Thanks to the quality background built on a long-term basis, the public universities can afford to apply the strategy of defense. To ensure high quality academicians, the private universities, which have only been originating recently, opt for a more active approach, i.e. the strategy of accommodation. In connection with the globalizing education market and the improving course applicants' language skills, we can recommend a change in the approach to academicians in accordance with application of the strategy of proaction.

3. As for the Ministry of Education, which is the dominant provider of financial means for the public universities and, at the same time, the regulator granting licenses to provide university education to both the public and the private universities; it applies the strategy of proaction. The strategy of proaction is also applied by the public universities during negotiations with the grant agencies as the key providers of funding in the area of scientific research. However, we can recommend the private universities changing their approach to grant

agencies, as these universities apply, for the time being, the strategy of accommodation in this area.

4. Enterprises and other universities can be the benefit-creating subjects of cooperation within the framework of the triple helix model. In spite of this fact, the public universities basically ignore these stakeholders and apply the strategy of reaction. The partnership potential, particularly in the case of enterprises, is better realized by the private universities, which apply the accommodation strategy. In view of the expected reform of the university financing, whose substance will rest in multi-source financing based on partnerships, it is necessary to consider application of the proaction strategies.

5. The defense strategy is both applied and recommended in the case of the public stakeholder groups, i.e. the governments on the central, regional and local levels and the public offices (tax, health and social insurance administrators).

6. The specific stakeholders of the private universities are their owners and investors. With respect to the fact that a private university represents a common entrepreneurial entity, special attention has to be paid to satisfying the interests of the owners and other investors, which means that it is necessary to apply the proaction strategies to deal with owners and investors.

You can see an overview of the strategies to deal with stakeholders in Table 1. It shows both the strategies being now used by the public and private universities in the Czech Republic and the strategies recommended for individual stakeholders.

Table 1 – Strategies to Deal with Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Public universities	Private universities	Recommended strategy
Students	D	A	P
Course applicants	A	P	P
Employees	D	A	P
Ministry of Education	P	P	P
Grant agencies	P	A	P
Businesses	R	A	P
Other universities	R	A	P/A
Public stakeholder groups	D	D	D
Owners	x	P	P
Investors	x	P	P

Legend: R ... the strategy of reaction; D ... the strategy of defense; A ... the strategy of accommodation; P ... the strategy of proaction.

6 Stakeholders and Social Responsibility Concept

Stakeholders play the principal role within the framework of the social responsibility concept.

According to European Commission the corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a process by which firms manage their relationships with a variety of stakeholders; the CSR represents concept whereby firms integrate social

and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis [21].

Adrian, Nicoleta, Susanu, and Capatina posit that “the corporate social responsibility can be considered a world profitable business strategy that brings benefits both to society and the initiating organizations. Success consists in finding a balance point between the awareness of the society’s problems, the needs of the different target groups and the management, financial and material capacity of the organizations. Thus, the companies must consider the interests of all the stakeholders.” [2].

Each economic entity is active in a real environment, surrounded by living and non-living elements of its surroundings, by so-called stakeholders. While on the one hand it is significantly influenced by its surroundings, on the other hand it also influences it. That is why development of each economic entity is

dependent on the possibilities of the growth and development of the given country, society and the world. Therefore, all the organizations of both the private and the public sectors should try to contribute to the positive development of their surroundings, i.e. their stakeholders. It means that they should be socially responsible as it is the only way to fulfilment of their own objectives.

7 Corporate Social Responsibility

Concept of social responsibility has been evolving for decades and has been conceptualized and defined in a number of different ways. Table 2 shows alternative opinions on the social responsibility concept from the period of development of this concept.

Table 2 – Alternative Opinions on the Social Responsibility Concept – Historical View

Study	Conceptions of Social Responsibility
Bowen, H. R. (1953)	Businessmen have an obligation to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society.
Davis, K. (1960)	Social Responsibility: businessmen’s decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm’s direct economic or technical interest.
Friedman, M. (1962)	The only responsibility of business is to increase profits for its owners.
McGuire, J. W. (1963)	The firm has not only economic and legal obligations, but also certain responsibilities to society which extend beyond these obligations.
Manne, H. G. & Wallich, H. C. (1972)	Main aspect of corporate social responsibility is that the behaviour of the firms must be voluntary.
Backman, J. (1975)	Social Responsibility: the objectives or motives that should be given weight by business in addition to those dealing with economic performance (e.g. profits).
Sethi, S. P. (1975)	Social Responsibility: implies bringing corporate behaviour up to a level where it is congruent with the prevailing social norms, values, and expectations.
Steiner, G. A. (1975)	Social Responsibility: a continuum of responsibilities ranging from “traditional economic production” to “government dictated” to a “voluntary area” and lastly to “expectations beyond reality”.
Carroll, A. B. (1979)	Social Responsibility of business: encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time.
Wartick, S. L. & Cochran, P. L. (1985)	Business exists at the pleasure of society; its behaviour and methods of operation must fall within the guidelines set by society. Like government, business has a social contract – an implied set of rights and obligations.

Source: Modified according to [9], [40], [49].

Carroll distinguishes four main components of the CSR – economic, legal, ethical and discretionary (or philanthropic) responsibilities [9], [12]. The economic

component of CSR represents the obligation to produce goods and services, that society wants and to sell them at a profit. The legal responsibility is determined by the

laws and regulations under which firm is expected to operate. The ethical component of CSR includes additional activities and behaviours that are not codified into law but nevertheless are expected of business by society. The discretionary responsibility represents volitional or philanthropic activities. According to Carroll the postulated weightings of the four CSR components – economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic – are 4:3:2:1 respectively [40].

However, adherence to the legal standards is only a basic condition for fulfilment of the social responsibility. In our opinion, the social responsibility of any economic entity (businesses, universities, etc.) then includes dimensions of the following responsibilities – economic, ethic, sub-social, philanthropic and environmental. The principle of the economic, ethic and philanthropic responsibility components is consistent with the Carroll's definition. The principle of the sub-social component of the CSR rests in responsible behaviour, helpful activities and an active and positive approach to the human resources. The environmental component of the CSR represents the company's commitment to environment-friendly activities and to developing activities protecting the environment.

8 University Social Responsibility

In the case of universities, the importance of the social responsibility concept is, in view of their specific institutional character and mission, fundamental in comparison with the other types of economic entities. Therefore, it is necessary to consider a concept of the so-called university social responsibility (USR). It can be based on the CSR concept.

The key importance of the social responsibility in the case of universities stems from the fact that universities represent the centres of intelligence, knowledge and creative activity, and plays the key role in the scientific, cultural, social and economic development of the society. Above all, universities preserve and extend the achieved knowledge, carry out scientific, research, innovatory and artistic activities, and play an important role in the public discussion on the social or ethic problems, in the formation of mutual understanding, the civil society, or the cultural diversity [1]. According to Gourova, Todorova and Gourov "Educational institutions have a special place in the society and provide services related to the transfer of knowledge to their customers – individuals, public and private organizations and the society in general. Their development is influenced by various factors linked to political, technological, economic, environmental, as well as social trends and changes." [26].

The university social responsibility represents a superstructure of the university statutory responsibility, where the university management and staff behave the way they not only fulfil the university economic and social mission itself, but they also facilitate meeting the intentions and objectives of all stakeholders. At the same time, the university social responsibility can also be seen as a purposeful and rewarding communication between the university and its stakeholders.

The university social responsibility aims to support development of the university environment, which will subsequently bring an increase in the interest in its services, and at the same time it will reflect well on its economy. Table 3 shows individual levels of the university social responsibility.

Table 3 – USR Levels

ECONOMIC LEVEL
Corporate governance principles <i>(mainly the structure of bodies, the way of achieving targets, control mechanisms and enforceability of the implemented rules, making the managers' remuneration rules more transparent)</i>
Relationships with stakeholders <i>(students, course applicants, staff, the Ministry of Education and other government bodies, local government bodies, regulators, grant agencies, suppliers, businesses, the public, other educational institutions – as both partners and competitors)</i>
Transparency
Quality and safety of the provided products and services
ETHIC LEVEL
Code of ethics
Corruption disclaimer
Intellectual property protection, particularly copyright protection

SUB-SOCIAL LEVEL
Employment policy
Staff training and qualifications growth
Employees' health and security
Work-life balance
Equal opportunities in the workplace (for men and women, young employees, etc.)
Recruitment of minority and threatened groups of citizens
Human rights
PHILANTHROPIC LEVEL
University volunteering and charity
ENVIRONMENTAL LEVEL
Environmental organizational structure (<i>recycling, energy saving, etc.</i>)
Natural sources protection
Investments into environmental technologies
Environmental products and services

Source: Modified according to [36], [45], [46].

9 Selected Problems of Application of the USR Concept in the Czech Republic

Application of the USR concept brings a number of problems. They are particularly on the economic, ethic and sub-social levels. This situation can be documented on the example of the faculties of economics of the regional public universities in the Czech Republic [44]. In this context, it is necessary to point out that these drawbacks and problems are significantly determined by the system of tertiary education and corruption in the Czech Republic.

Economic level:

- organizational structures artificially overdesigned from the point of view of the number of managerial posts;
- non-transparent remuneration rules, where the actual load of the academic workers in the pedagogical and research areas is not respected;
- non-uniform rules of the faculty's participation in the grants (particularly in the wage funds) obtained by individual research teams;
- misuse of the public funds for business trips to exotic countries, pretending they are scientific conferences or cooperation with partner workplaces;
- adapting curricula to the needs and interests of selected academic workers, but not to the needs of the labour market and the interests of the students;
- absence of specialization of the academic workers, where the permanent transfers of the academicians from

one subject to another lead to a decrease in the quality of education;

- keeping academic workers that are too old and without the latest knowledge in the given subject;
- insufficient implementation of the modern teaching methods like, for example, controlled individual studies, problem or project studies;
- missing interconnection between the theory and practice, both in the area of entrepreneurial entities and in the area of the state administration and local authorities or in the third sector.

Ethic level:

- activity of academic workers with a positive screening certificate (i.e. the former co-operators of the State Security);
- activity of non-habilitated lecturers, who got the title of associate professor before 1990 for their membership in the Communist Party, in the positions of associate professors;
- fictitious activity of guarantors – associate professors and professors at the faculties, where these associate professors and professors work full-time, for example, at three or four universities;
- overrating of the actual work load of the associate professors and professors to meet the criteria of the accrediting committee (at least 70 % work load for inclusion);
- infringement of the copyright by the academic workers, particularly during creation of the textbooks;
- insufficient punishment of plagiarism committed by the students writing their seminar or final papers.

Sub-social level:

- protectionism in the selection procedures for the positions of academic workers;
- variable character of employment contracts, where young academicians have contracts for a definite period of time only;
- termination of employment contracts with competent, young academicians threatening the managers through their abilities;
- employment of associate professors and professors out of their professional specialization (e.g. machinery or agriculture college lecturers guarantee and teach the key economic subjects);
- protectionism in making preconditions for the access to the habilitating and professor appointing procedures.

10 Conclusion

Stakeholder theory and stakeholder management for the needs of businesses have been elaborated both from the point of view of the theory and from the point of view of the practical application. However, the stakeholder concept has, in our opinion, a broader usage from the institutional point of view. Among others, it represents an important opportunity for both the public and private universities. In the present hard conditions, particularly in the former transformation economies, whose university education market is experiencing fundamental changes (genesis of private universities, strengthening foreign competition, dramatically growing supply of educational institutions, decreasing income from the public budgets, negative demographic development, etc.), universities have to understand the role of their stakeholders, identify their primary stakeholders and apply corresponding strategies to deal with them. One of the possible ways of a positive change is also application of the social responsibility concept. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the social responsibility concept for the needs of universities and create a so-called university social responsibility concept, where the economic, ethic, sub-social, philanthropic and environmental responsibilities can be considered as the key components of the university social responsibility.

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