

Chapter 21

Entrepreneurial ICT–Based Skills and Leadership for Business Ethics in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Ethics in Business, defined as the sum of those entrepreneurial good practices carried out in modern organizations, plays a key role in a globalized planet. Universities are also affected by ethical governance and ethics. The objective of this work is to analyze which entrepreneurial skills are necessary to have for achieving sustainable growth in higher education. To do this, the chapter begins with the study of how technology in education can serve as a practical instrument for internalizing these organizational skills into learners. Then, the author continues describing ethics-related topics, such as how transformational leadership can guide organizations, the importance of resilience and its relation with social capital, and the importance of emotions and empathy in organizations. After this, a theoretical ethical model based on entrepreneurial skills and higher education is proposed that is sustained on openness to change, self-transcendence, self-enhancement, and conservation. The chapter ends with some conclusions and with several future research directions.

INTRODUCTION

Ethics in business, and especially on private universities, plays a key role in an economically globalized planet. Business ethics, defined as the sum of those entrepreneurial good practices rooted on ethical governance, permits corporations to apply business policies based on corporate social responsibility (hereinafter, CSR) and social justice. In order to achieve the goal of being more ethical in business, corporate policies based on transparency and social justice are needed. Business policies, mainly affecting Small and Medium Enterprises (hereinafter, SMEs) and private universities, must be applied, close with entrepreneurial skills, the use of Information and Communication Technologies (hereinafter, ICT), and ethical governance.

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Regarding ethical governance in corporations, West (2016) affirms that it is morally wrong to impose a model of corporate governance where differences in moral judgments are relevant to corporate governance. In other words, stakeholders when applying corporate strategies, and especially those who are responsible of implementing these policies, must agree to avoid an incorrect execution of the managerial strategies that determine the future of these organizations. If this team alignment towards a common goal is achieved, private universities will be able to fulfill their business goals as sustainable growth is attained. Ethical governance in management and corporate policies must be complemented with entrepreneurial skills, if both business growth and corporate efficiency want to be accomplished.

Universities are also affected by ethical governance. Complementary to ICT-based strategies focused on learning, the search and recruitment of specialized human capital endowed with long teaching and research experience is vital for universities, and especially for private ones, as they are highly dependent on the students' enrolment. Internationally-known human capital attracts prospective students and funds for research. Academic competition increases both research and teaching, provided that this type of competition is fair and guided by academic justice, and not by unfair privileges.

Indeed, the adoption of entrepreneurial skills allows organizations related to higher education to strengthen their leadership in the sector. A good capacity for being resilient in adverse situations is one of the keys for corporations and universities to survive. Resilience complemented with control of emotions and empathy that jointly permit organizations to be constantly adapted to challenging situations. This made possible to reinforce the existing social capital working in the organization, so stakeholders are benefited.

The objective of this chapter is to analyze which entrepreneurial skills are necessary for achieving sustainable growth in higher education. To do this, the chapter begins with focusing on the entrepreneurial skills needed to lay the foundations for the introduction of business ethics in corporations focused on higher education. Then, the role of technology in education is studied. The chapter continues with ethics, as the ethical values of sincerity, empathy, and sacrifice play a dynamic multilevel role to explain the transformative dimensions of the organization's moral transformation (Roach, 2016), as the introduction of ethical values based on morality are vital in globalized companies and universities for allowing them to achieve higher degrees of social justice, and for reducing poverty gaps in regions and countries. Poverty reduction benefits societies, stakeholders, especially students in the case of universities, so a virtuous circle is created. As a result, there is a direct link between the entrepreneurial skills used in the organization and higher education.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Intellectual capital, formed by the sum of human capital, structural capital, and relational capital (Saiz-Alvarez, 2008), is desired in organizations, especially when intellectual capital possesses entrepreneurial skills. Good entrepreneurial skills make institutions to be more competitive, as they are more market aware, and human capital is more creative in their jobs and market search. This is most evident when human capital tends to foresee which market-oriented jobs match better into their entrepreneurial skills (Kucel, Robert, Buil, & Masferrer, 2016). As a result, new market niches can be discovered, and the existing ones can be enlarged, also increasing both EBITDA (Earnings before Interests, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization) and cash flow.

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