

Enhancement of the Social Policy Management System in the Information Society (on the Example of University Environment)

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Abstract: *The peculiarity of the information society is not only its attitude towards the availability of information facilities, but also new approaches and assessments to the functioning of society. Digitalization leads to the possibility of greater access to other's experiences, which enables comparisons to be made and the best behavioral strategies to be formed. This affects perceptions of social policy management both within the system and among stakeholders, changing them in many ways, including neuropsychological and neuroeconomic. Social responsibility has taken on a special value in the realities of the information society and has become particularly important part of social policy. The issues of corporate social responsibility are given quite a lot of attention from the point of view of business aspects, while in the sphere of education the issues of social responsibility are considered to a much lesser extent. The aim of this article is to explore dimensions of enhancing the management of social responsibility policy in the information society on the example of university environment and to identify the attitude of university applicants to the presence of social responsibility policy in the university.*

Keywords: *social responsibility; information society; policy-making; responsibility policy; university environment; stakeholder analysis; equality.*

How to cite: Riabtsev, G., Maltseva, O., Herasymchuk, H., Nykolaieva, V., Hrynyk, I., & Kiliievych, O. (2025). Enhancement of the social policy management system in the information society (on the example of university environment). *Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională*, 17(3), 626-642. <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/17.3/1036>

Introduction

The evolution of society leads to new forms, concepts and standards. The penetration of information technologies into production, educational and everyday processes has become a new norm and reality. The modern generation that is witnessing not only the gradual emergence, but even the accelerated introduction of ubiquitous digital services and conveniences is the generation of the information age, which has formed the information society.

The peculiarity of the information society is not only its attitude towards the availability of information facilities, but also new approaches and assessments to the functioning of society. The new quality of life leads to a special attitude to social aspects of interaction and activities in business, study and other spheres. Social responsibility has taken on a special value in the realities of the information society and has become particularly important part of social policy.

In addition, a distinctive feature of the new reality is its online mode and all-accessibility to sources of information, where everyone can learn about the social actions of an organization, business, educational and other institutions. This leads to the possibility of greater access to other's experiences, which enables comparisons to be made and the best behavioral strategies to be formed. This affects perceptions of social policy management both within the system and among stakeholders, changing them in many ways, including neuropsychological and neuroeconomic. Transformations occur at different levels, globally and locally, influencing and complementing each other (Jeannerat & Lavanchy, 2024; Kharchenko et al., 2024; Koropetska et al., 2024; Berbets et al., 2021; Ghenta et al., 2019). Neuroeconomics emphasizes that when making a choice, economic agents are guided by their subjective utility assessment among many alternatives, but it is the socially responsible policies of companies, organizations and institutions that are the most attractive alternative. Therefore, expectations regarding the social responsibility of companies, organizations and institutions are also changing, which makes the problem of its management specifically demanded. The issues of corporate social responsibility are given quite a lot of attention from the point of view of business aspects, while in the sphere of education the issues of social responsibility are considered to a much lesser extent (Piantoni et al., 2025; Radoi et al., 2024; Romanovska et al., 2024; García-Rivas et al., 2023; Mushafiq et al., 2023; Deshmukh, 2017; Dahlsrud, 2008).

Thus, the aim of this article is to explore dimensions of enhancing the management of social responsibility policy in the information society on the

example of university environment and to identify the attitude of university applicants to the presence of social responsibility policy in the university.

The study uses a mixed-method approach with both theoretical and empirical components. The theoretical research explores the concept of social responsibility, its extent, and relevance to the information society based on available models such as Carroll's CSR pyramid and the ISO 26000 standards. This provides a theoretical framework for understanding the shift in social responsibility in higher education.

At the same time, the study possesses an empirical component drawn from a quantitative survey conducted among 500 Ukrainian university applicants. The primary data collection here was designed to investigate the attitude towards the management of social policy and perceived importance of university social responsibility in decision-making by applicants.

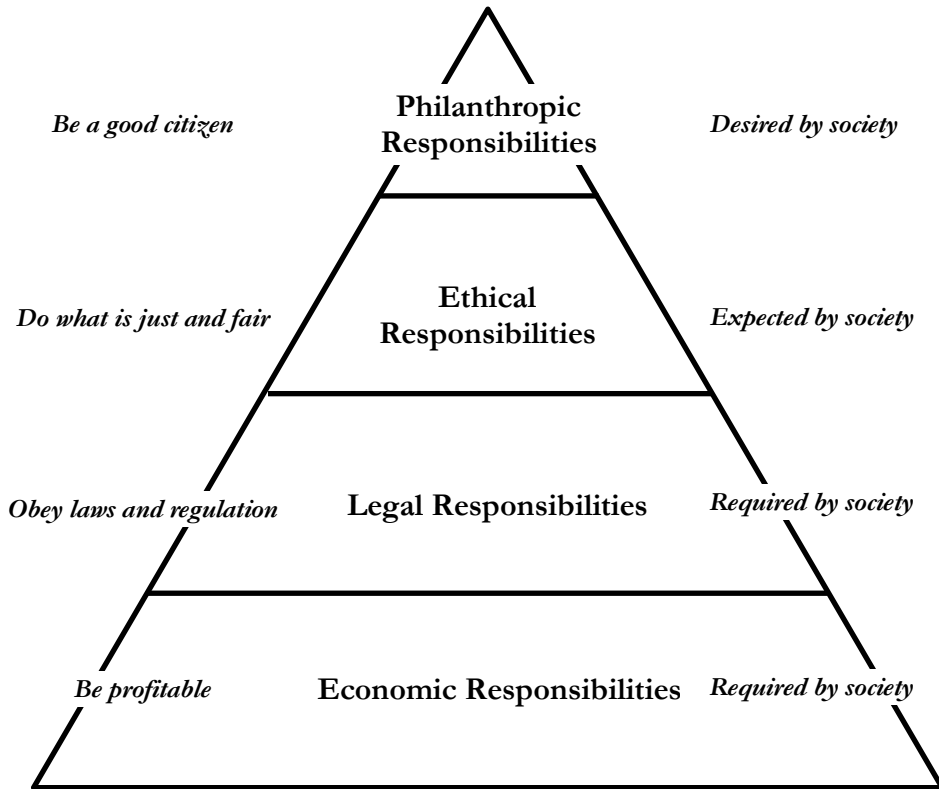
Thus, the analysis presented in the article is empirical and theoretical, complemented by secondary data, which enables multi-dimensional research on the consolidation of social policy management in the conditions of the information society.

Literature review

Although the idea of social responsibility and ethical business appeared in the 50s of the twentieth century, it is very young and fresh against the background of many other economic concepts. The value of the social role, socially orientated decisions and actions of the businessperson was recognized as early as 1953 by Bowen (1953), which created the momentum for the emergence of understanding and expansion of the idea. As the idea developed into a whole concept, it became more multifaceted and increasingly practical and widespread, especially in the corporate environment.

Carroll (1991) emphasized such dimensions of corporate social responsibility as economic, legal, ethical, philanthropic. According to the author's vision, the role of each component has a different proportion of importance, which allowed him to visualize each dimension in the form of a pyramid (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The pyramid of corporate social responsibility



Source: Carroll (1991)

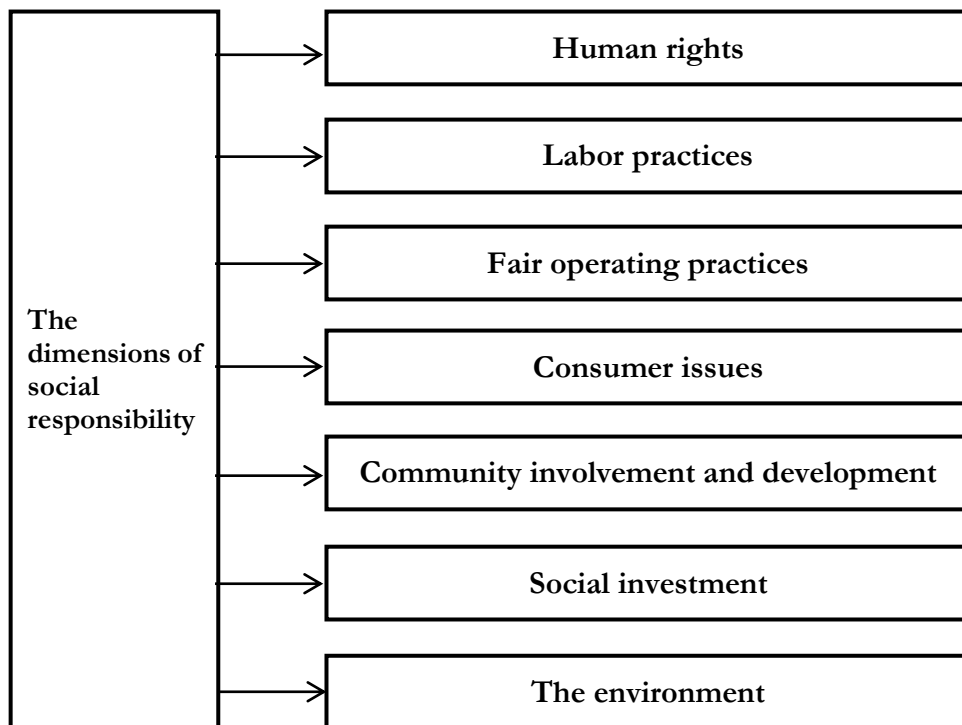
This four-component pyramid turned out to be such a filigree representation of the concept's development vectors that both theorists and practitioners of social policy management adopted it. Carroll (2016) notes that in his opinion his idea was so popular due to the fact that it corresponded to the state of mind and level of development in the society in which it appeared, namely in the capitalist American society. In addition, some authors argued that it was necessary to modify the pyramid for the conditions of development of other types of society, which emphasizes the importance of considering the issues of social responsibility in the conditions of the information society (Crane & Matten, 2007; Visser, 2006).

An important milestone in the advancement of the social responsibility concept was the emergence of the International ISO 26000 standard in 2010, which had a strong and global impact on social policies management (International Organization for Standardization, 2025). ISO

26000 is a guideline that is not legally binding, but which is a valuable and versatile tool when designing a social policy management strategy.

ISO Online Browsing Platform (2025) highlighted the dimensions of corporate social responsibility as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The dimensions of social responsibility according to ISO 26000



Source: Created by the authors based on ISO. Online Browsing Platform (2025)

As can be seen from the comparison of Figure 1 and Figure 2, the range of issues in the area of social responsibility has expanded significantly, which also indicates an increase in public expectation of social policy and its management. In contemporary realities, not only the leadership style and tone of management have changed under the influence of the advancement of the concept of corporate social responsibility, but also corporate social responsibility has transformed into human social responsibility.

The information society is not only characterized by the amount of information, digital products and services in everyday life and work processes. Informatization has also influenced culture, our perception of public services and social proactivity (Levin et al., 2025). The perception of the environment

and the importance of green behavior has changed in many ways, which has also led to an awareness of the need to strive for sustainable development (Lucendo-Monedero et al., 2023; Erdiaw-Kwasie et al., 2023; Smith et al., 2025). In the information society, the role of work-life balance is evolving, and it is considered effective to increase productivity through creativity and knowledge (Bai et al., 2025; Stepanok, 2024).

In the world of massive information, education is of special importance, which will help to separate the main from the secondary, to understand the truthfulness and logic of information, to teach critical thinking, not mechanically and mindlessly follow the mainstream. Berbets et al. (2021) emphasize the critical role of independent creativity. Heyets et al. (2019) note the special role of suprasystem independent bodies in the formation of optimal states that promote and assist in making the best decisions. In the context of the educational process, the potential of such a body is largely within universities.

Amani (2024, 522) recommends that the management of higher education institutions in developing countries should include CSR practices in the strategic plans of universities. The study by Landa et al. (2021) emphasizes the importance of developing social responsibility in universities especially in difficult and critical situations for both students and faculty, the potential of which has been particularly revealed in the context of the coronavirus pandemic in developing countries. Tan et al. (2022) demonstrate the strong impact of corporate social responsibility in Malaysian universities on institutional reputation, brand value, and stakeholder loyalty across both public and private higher education institutions. In our study, we explored how Ukrainian university applicants perceive the issue of social responsibility within universities.

Methodology

This study applied the quantitative survey method to investigate the opinions of Ukrainian university applicants toward the presence and roles played by social responsibility policies in universities. The aim was to assess the effects of the availability of social policy management systems in universities on decision-making for applicants within the information society framework.

To determine the representativeness and statistical validity of the study results, the sample size was adequately established. According to official data, approximately 267,000 applicants were enrolled in Ukrainian universities for bachelor's and medical master's programmes in 2023. With this figure, the minimum sample size was determined using a normal formula for proportions with a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), margin of error as $\pm 5\%$ ($e = 0.05$), and an estimated response proportion of 0.5 to ensure maximum variability. With the use of the finite applicants' number correction for 267,000

individuals, the lowest estimate of sample size was 383 respondents. However, to provide a cushion against possible non-respondents and to ensure robustness, the ultimate sample comprised 500 applicants. The survey was conducted in the non-occupied territories of Ukraine, with an equal gender distribution (250 female and 250 male respondents), and the age of participants ranged from 17 to 26 years. To ensure the reliability of the sociological research, a stratified random sampling method was employed, with strata based on applicant gender, region of residence, intended study region, university type, tuition type, and study mode. The survey was conducted during the 2024 university admission campaign.

The method of sampling used was stratified random sampling, which allowed for the incorporation of various demographic and institutional variables. The strata were designated according to six general parameters: applicant gender, where they reside, intended region of study, university type (public or private), funding type (state-funded or contract-based), and mode of study (full-time or part-time). This allowed for comprehensive coverage and representation of the applicant pool.

Data were collected using an anonymous questionnaire. The survey instrument included closed and Likert-scale items aimed at assessing the awareness of the information society among applicants, their social responsibility stance, and the extent to which such consideration influenced their choice of university. Additional questions were included to measure exposure to key areas of university social responsibility, including human rights, environmental sustainability, social investment, and ethical training activities.

Survey responses were analyzed with descriptive statistics to detect overall trends in attitudes and awareness. Distribution of responses across strata was tested for patterns and differences between various groups of applicants. Results were interpreted in the general context of neuroeconomic theory and informational society dynamics to shed light on the roles of social value orientations and digital environments in decision-making among university applicants.

Results and discussion

University is a place where knowledge is imparted, a place that in many ways determines a person's future career, but that is not the only contribution of a university. University is a place where new generations are formed with their own philosophy, worldview, perception of the universe and values, which not only affects their cognitive abilities, but also predetermines the decisions that these new generations will make in life. In this regard, the development of social policy management and the introduction of social responsibility ideas in the

university space organically fits into the idea of forming a more conscious generation. Therefore, it would be logical to spread university social responsibility and deepen social policy, which, however, is associated with additional costs that may hinder the development of these processes. Therefore, it is also important to emphasize the benefits of improved social policy in universities not only for stakeholders but also for university governing and funding bodies.

Msambali & Mwonge (2024) show that enhancing social policies in universities is favorable to their reputation. Winarno et al. (2024) indicate how the concentration of social responsibility in the university environment influences the change of employees' behavior, and in the conditions of information society is identical to the social norms typical for it. According to the neuroeconomic approach, the usefulness of a certain decision depends on the coding of neurons as well as on evolutionary experience. The formation of dopamine response from the implementation of social policy improvements in the university ultimately contributes to the sustainable acceptance of the concept of social responsibility.

In the realities of the information society, the fashion for ethics and actions aimed at a positive impact on society has spread, which encourages the younger generation to make a choice in favor of organizations with proactive social policies. At the same time, in many countries of the world, and especially in the EU countries, the implementation of social responsibility is mandatory at the level of legal regulation. Thus, for these countries it is a norm to have a developed system of social policy management, while in Ukraine many of the universities still do not integrate social responsibility into their development strategy, Maters & Lutik (2023). Gallardo-Vázquez et al. (2020) suggests that universities should enhance their social responsibility practices to improve student engagement and satisfaction. Vutsova et al. (2023) studied the problem of corporate social responsibility from a student's perspective.

In turn, we were interested in the question of how the level of development of the social policy management system in the university affects the choice of the university among applicants. To identify the attitude of university applicants to social responsibility in the university, we conducted an anonymous survey among 500 applicants.

The calculation of the necessary sample size for a reliable social survey was because in Ukraine in 2023, according to statistical data, 267 thousand applicants were enrolled in universities for bachelor's and medical master's degrees (EDEBO, 2024). The first step in our reasoning was to assume that in 2024 this trend will continue and to calculate the primary sample size (for an infinite number of applicants) the number of 267 thousand applicants was chosen.

To ensure that the results of the survey would be statistically significant and representative, we calculated the required minimum sample size using a standard formula for surveys based on proportions:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p(1-p)}{e^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5(1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{3.8416 \cdot 0.25}{0.0025} = 384.16 \quad (1)$$

where

n_0 is the initial required sample size assuming an infinite number of applicants;

Z is the Z-score corresponding to the desired confidence level (1.96 for 95%);

p is the estimated proportion of the number of applicants (0.5 is used when unknown, for maximum variability);

e is the margin of error (commonly 0.05 for $\pm 5\%$).

Since the actual number of applicants N is 267 000, we apply the finite number of applicants correction:

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{n_0 - 1}{N}} = \frac{384}{1 + \frac{383}{267000}} = \frac{384}{1.001} \approx 383 \quad (2)$$

Thus, to conduct a statistically reliable survey among 267,000 applicants in Ukraine in 2024, with a 95 % confidence level and a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$, a minimum of about 383 respondents had to be interviewed.

The next step in our justification of the necessary sample was the assumption that despite the catastrophically difficult military situation in the country, the number of applicants in 2024 may increase compared to 2023, and therefore it was decided to expand the survey base to 500 applicants.

To ensure the reliability of the conducted sociological research, the survey was conducted using stratified random sampling method, which included strata by such key features as

- ✓ Gender of the applicant,
- ✓ Region of residence of the applicant,
- ✓ Region of the desired place of study in the university,
- ✓ Type of university (public or private),
- ✓ Type of the desired tuition fee (state-funded or contract-based),
- ✓ Form of study (full-time or part-time).

When questioned whether the respondents know what the information society is and whether they consider themselves to be part of it, 87 % answered positively, while the rest found it difficult to answer. All interviewed applicants used digital tools when looking for a university to study at. Many of them noted that they also felt part of the information society due to the online learning process. Honcharuk et al. (2023), Kharchenko et al. (2024) emphasize the role of the digital environment in shaping the educational experience of the modern generation.

Among the respondents, 68 per cent said they would prefer to study at a university with a developed system of social responsibility, 23 per cent of students were indifferent, while 9 per cent had no idea what social responsibility was. Individual attitudes towards the role of social policy management system in higher education institutions among applicants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Individual attitudes towards the role of the social policy management system in the universities among applicants

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	I have no opinion (%)
Were you interested in social policy at the university while searching for information about it?	43	47	10
Was information on social policy at the university available at the public domain?	26	59	15
Have you taken into account the availability of information on the protection of human rights and equality at the university when choosing a potential place of study?	37	63	0
Have you taken into account the availability of information on the environment activities and green policy at the university when choosing a potential place of study?	32	68	0
Have you taken into account the availability of information on the social investment activities at the university when choosing a potential place of study?	10	90	0

Do you know of events at the university where students could receive training in ethics and social responsibility values?	58	9	33
Would you like to have the opportunity to participate in university activities and initiatives that improve sustainability?	100	0	0
Is it important to you that the university has initiatives that benefit the environment?	81	0	19
Were you interested in the university's facilities for people with disabilities?	15	28	57
Would you like to be part of volunteering and social participation programmes because of your studies at university?	100	0	0
Do you think it is important for universities to develop ethical and philanthropic qualities in students?	78	22	0
Is it important to you that university employees have gender and financial equality?	57	31	12
Do you agree with the statement that some university can be considered more prestigious due to a developed system of social policy and active social responsibility programmes?	84	16	0

This survey showed an interesting result that although applicants do not attach much importance to the presence of a social responsibility policy at the stage of choosing a university, but once they enter the university, they see themselves as an active part of it. According to the applicants, the prestige of the university also depends on its social policy. This highlights the importance of socially responsible behavior for the education sector in order to enhance their reputation.

These findings from a neuroeconomic perspective support the hypothesis that decision-making, including educational institution choices, is more and more driven by subjective utility judgments incorporated into social and moral values. Neuroeconomic theory posits that such judgments are intermediate to brain reward systems, in this case to dopaminergic circuits, that are activated not only by material incentives but also by conformity with prosocial norms and delayed social utility. By this perspective, socially

responsible university practice availability may enhance perceived utility among applicants, leading to greater institutional attractiveness and prestige.

Secondly, neuropsychological theories emphasize the processes of empathy, social cognition, and value internalization in preference and motivational processes. The high levels of interest in volunteering and ecologically oriented projects by the respondents can reflect broader neuropsychological processes such as moral identity formation and emotional identification with social causes. These affect-cognition mechanisms are particularly amplified in younger generations raised in the information age, with ongoing exposure to social stories and cyberactivism bound to make them sensitive to issues of equity, inclusion, and sustainability.

Thus, in our opinion, universities in Ukraine should not only develop the social policy management system more deeply, but also do more proactive work towards social responsibility among students, create an atmosphere of volunteerism and sustainability, and put more emphasis on it in their admission campaigns.

Conclusions

Neuroeconomics emphasizes that when making a choice, economic agents are guided by their subjective utility assessment among many alternatives, but it is the socially responsible policies of companies, organizations and institutions that are the most attractive alternative. Informatization has influenced culture, our perception of public services and social proactivity. The acumen of the environment and the importance of green behavior has changed in many ways, which has also led to an awareness of the need to strive for sustainable development.

In the world of massive information, education is of special importance, which will help to separate the main from the secondary, to understand the truthfulness and logic of information, to teach critical thinking, not mechanically and mindlessly follow the mainstream. University is a place where new generations are formed with their own philosophy, worldview, perception of the universe and values, which not only affects their cognitive abilities, but also predetermines the decisions that these new generations will make in life.

To identify the attitude of university applicants in Ukraine to social responsibility in the university, an anonymous survey among 500 applicants was conducted. When questioned whether the respondents know what the information society is and whether they consider themselves to be part of it, 87 % answered positively, while the rest found it difficult to answer. All interviewed applicants used digital tools when looking for a university to study

at. Many of them noted that they also felt part of the information society due to the online learning process.

The survey showed an unforeseen result that although applicants do not attach much importance to the presence of a social responsibility policy at the stage of choosing a university, but once they enter the university, they see themselves as an active part of it. According to the applicants, the prestige of the university also depends on its social policy. This highlights the importance of socially responsible behavior for the education sector to enhance their reputation.

Thus, in our opinion, universities in Ukraine should not only develop the social policy management system more deeply, but also do more proactive work towards social responsibility among students, create an atmosphere of volunteerism and sustainability, and put more emphasis on it in their admission campaigns.

In their subsequent research, the authors intend to broaden the scope of the study to capture a more comprehensive understanding of university-level social responsibility practices. A key component of future work will involve the inclusion of qualitative interviews with university administrators to gain deeper institutional insights into how social responsibility policies are perceived, designed, and implemented. Furthermore, the authors recognize the necessity of dealing with counterarguments, namely discussing why particular future students may neglect or underestimate CSR activities. The second significant step ahead will involve comparison of findings from Ukraine with global trends, especially the mandatory CSR models employed by universities in the European Union. Finally, future research will combine thematic case studies to highlight specific examples of successful CSR practices embraced by the universities and thereby illustrate pragmatic models that would inform policy development and institutional best practices in the Ukrainian higher education sector.

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