

An analysis of the practices of social responsibility and sustainability as strategies for industrial companies in the furniture sector: a case study

Uma análise das práticas de Responsabilidade Social e Sustentabilidade como estratégias de empresas industriais do setor moveleiro: um estudo de caso

Mario Fernando de Mello¹
Arthur Zago de Mello¹

Abstract: Changes in worldwide reality indicate the need of a responsible entrepreneurial awareness in the development process, and require socially responsible and sustainable attitudes and practices from businessmen. The current research aimed to analyze these practices and the correlation between social responsibility management, sustainability and the strategies of furniture industries. This paper is a qualitative and descriptive research of a case study with semi-structured interviews. The empiric concretization of this qualitative research happened in two furniture factories located in Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil. The results highlighted the importance of social responsibility and sustainability once these themes are part of these company values. As internal challenges, they pointed out internal barriers for the implementation of sustainability; and also showed that sustainability and social responsibility are not part of the essential aspects of the business but are complementary ones. As external challenges, in a broader way, we verified that companies involve their suppliers, customers and their communities in some kinds of actions aiming to understand the questions about social responsibility and sustainability. The data collected and analyzed allowed us to realize that these enterprises give importance to the sustainability and to social responsibility and that their practices contribute positively for the economic and social performance of the organizations.

Keywords: Furniture industries; Strategies; Social Responsibility; Sustainability.

Resumo: Transformações na realidade mundial indicam a necessidade de uma consciência empresarial responsável no processo de desenvolvimento e passam a exigir, dos gestores, atitudes e práticas que contemplem a responsabilidade social e a sustentabilidade. A presente pesquisa teve como objetivo analisar as práticas e a relação entre a gestão da responsabilidade social, a sustentabilidade e as estratégias de empresas industriais do setor moveleiro. A característica do estudo realizado é uma pesquisa qualitativa do tipo estudo de caso e de natureza descritiva, com entrevistas semiestruturadas. A concretização empírica da pesquisa qualitativa deu-se em duas empresas industriais do setor moveleiro localizadas no Estado do Rio Grande do Sul. Os resultados da pesquisa evidenciaram a importância da responsabilidade social e da sustentabilidade, uma vez que os temas fazem parte dos valores das empresas. Como desafios internos, ficaram evidenciadas barreiras internas para a implantação da sustentabilidade; evidenciou-se, ainda, que a sustentabilidade e a responsabilidade social não fazem parte das estratégias essenciais do negócio, mas constituem, sim, estratégias complementares. Como desafios externos, de modo geral, foi possível verificar que as empresas envolvem fornecedores, consumidores e comunidade com algum tipo de ação, visando ao entendimento das questões de responsabilidade social e sustentabilidade. Os dados coletados e analisados permitiram identificar que as empresas dão importância a sustentabilidade e responsabilidade social, e que suas práticas contribuem positivamente para o desempenho econômico e social das organizações.

Palavras-chave: Indústrias do setor moveleiro; Estratégias; Responsabilidade Social; Sustentabilidade.

1 Introduction

In a world characterized by strong transformations, the existence of a responsible business conscience is fundamental so that everyone can be engaged in the development process, aiming at the preservation of the environment, the promotion of human rights and the

construction of an economically prosperous and socially fair society.

The constant changes imposed by the market and by the activities of companies with their universe of relations and practices are causing concern and

¹ Departamento de Engenharia de Produção e Sistemas, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria – UFSM, Av. Roraima, 1000, CEP 97105-900, Santa Maria, RS, Brazil, e-mail: mariofernandomello@yahoo.com.br; arthurzmello@yahoo.com.br

demanding attitudes from organizations and their managers, in a new order: sustainability and social responsibility.

The public or private companies are now charged in relation to the aggressions they cause to the environment. Thus, entrepreneurs and managers began a process of changes in order to mitigate the negative impacts caused to the environment.

It is observed the need for organizations to keep up with the constant technological advances, to incorporate innovations, to exceed expectations of stakeholders and to maximize market actions with these new components, adding practices of traditional management, the social-environmental management.

The social responsibility of organizations can not be reduced to another innovative marketing tool, but being broadened to a new model of business management behavior, which in essence, rescues universal human values, presupposes ethical decision-making, preserving the interests of all parties directly or indirectly involved in the business as well as the interests of the whole society, in a relationship in which everyone can win: the society and organizations.

The most important change that can be achieved internally in the organization in relation to the environmental issue is managerial commitment. Donaire (2009) points out that this commitment disseminates, within the organization, the formation of a climate conducive to the emergence of knowledge about environmental quality that translates into continuous search for improvements. The performance of an organization is strongly linked to the quality of its human resources. Thus, if a company intends to implement environmental management in its organizational structure, it must know that its personnel can become a great threat or great potential for results to be achieved.

According to Melo & Froes (2004), social responsibility and sustainability together represent a new way of managing social policies and actions, while at the same time one of the greatest challenges in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility management is to make it part of the entrepreneurial culture and of the strategic management model of the company, being part of the management process, its beliefs, values and principles enshrined in the belief of the company.

The choice of companies in the furniture industry was because it is known as a traditional industry characterized by the meeting of several production processes, using different raw materials and consequent generation of various products. It is also known as an industry that generates a series of wastes that can impact the environment. According to the Association of Furniture Industries of Rio Grande do Sul (MOVERGS, 2012) there are 16,500 industries in Brazil generating a turnover of R\$ 35.1 billion year.

Thus, this study proposes to analyze and to demonstrate, through the results obtained in the interviews with the managers of the companies surveyed, how social responsibility and sustainability are inserted among the strategies in companies of the furniture sector, contributing with new discussions on the subject. The results and conclusions of this study will be offered as information and subsidies, which may be useful to organizations in order to show the importance of sustainability and social responsibility as tools in the formulation of strategies of companies to face the competitive market, as well as academics who seek in this theme some references to new studies.

This article is structured as follows: Section 2 consists of a bibliographic review that contemplates social responsibility, sustainability and strategies; Section 3 describes the methodology used in the research; Section 4 describes the results obtained in this study; and finally, in Section 5, is the conclusion and discussion of the results obtained with the authors researched.

2 Literature review

In this item, a bibliographical revision is made where the following subjects are approached: general aspects of the furniture industry; business strategy; social responsibility and sustainability as organizations' goals.

2.1 General aspects of furniture industry

The furniture industry is a traditional industry characterized by the meeting of several production processes. Several raw materials are used and several final products are generated, so it is a very diversified industry. Although there are furniture of metals, plastics, upholstery, among others, we will deal here specifically with the furniture industry which raw material is wood.

Consumers are motivated to purchase furniture primarily in two circumstances: for a specific need or for a functional need whether in residential settings or in organizational settings. Transforming environments for the well-being of the people implies to realize a joint work of excellence, integrating project development, production with quality and a precise assembly. The Brazilian furniture industry has been standing out in the recent decades for the quality of its products and the competitiveness achieved.

According to the Furniture Industries Association of Rio Grande do Sul, MOVERGS, in 2011, Rio Grande do Sul closed the year with 2,370 companies, which generated 40,855 jobs, which in turn produced 86 million pieces generating a value of R\$ 5.6 billion (MOVERGS, 2012).

The production of Rio Grande do Sul state represents 14.4% of the companies in activity in the country, 18.6% of national production, 13.3% in volume of

employed personnel, 16% of sales and 27.4% of Brazilian exports, Occupying the first position among the states which export furniture. Graph 1 shows the turnover of the furniture industries in Brazil and in Rio Grande do Sul state.

The furniture industry has developed a lot of production capacity in the recent years, once the demand for furniture products has also grown due to population growth and per capita income growth experienced by the country.

Currently, the technological dynamism and the improvement of the design, are determining factors so that the furniture industry becomes increasingly competitive not only in Brazil, but also abroad. In relation to the machines and equipment used in the furniture industry, the great change of the last two decades was the introduction of robotic machines, electronically replacing the electromechanical machines of the 1980s and 1990s. These new machines, besides allowing a greater use of materials, have greater flexibility in production and better quality in products, having significantly improved working conditions with regard to ergonomics and productivity (UNICAMP, 2008).

Along with the growing and accelerated process of industrialization in the furniture sector, it is expected that the environmental problems for the generation of waste also grow. The main raw materials in the manufacture of furniture industry products is still wood, either from native forests or from reforestation.

Considering that the waste generated by furniture industry is not the same as those volumes of other industrial sectors, they should be duly analyzed and treated, thus valuing sustainable practices.

According to the State Foundation for Environmental Protection FEPAM (2012), there are several kinds of solid waste generated by the industrial sector, among them, waste wood and furniture industry derivatives.

According to FEPAM (2012), an environmental degradation caused by pressures from the productive processes or lack of alternatives for some communities has incited to the search for new development concepts.

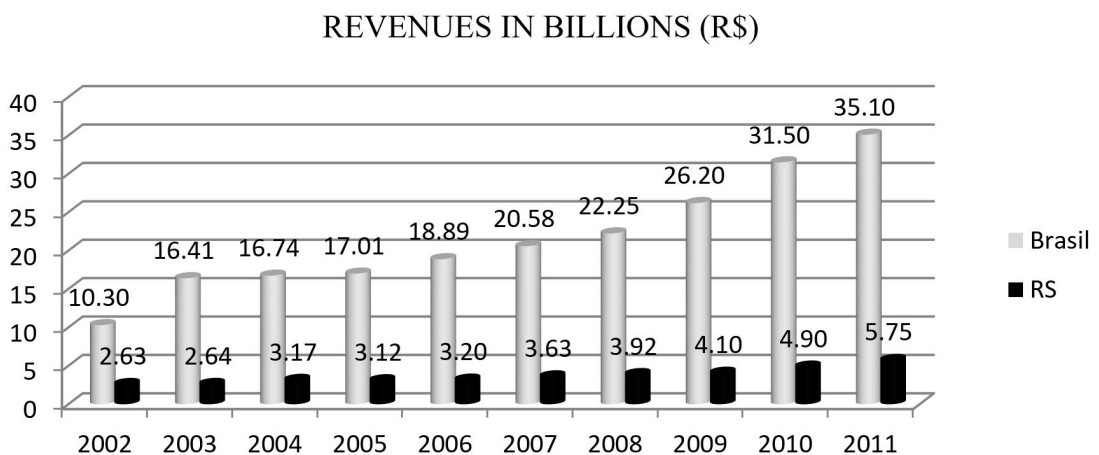
2.2 Entrepreneurial strategy

The word strategy, known and used for hundreds of years, today is considered the high point of executive activity. According to Mintzberg et al. (2000) we can define strategy as a top management plan to achieve results consistent with the organization's mission and objectives. No doubt this classic definition has been used over the years by both business and students.

Invariably, people of organizations, when asked to describe the strategy that their organization has actually pursued over the past few years, will see that what they actually did is different from what they intended to do. For Mintzberg et al. (2000), strategy is one of those words that we inevitably define one way, but we often use it another. Strategy, as a standard, means looking at the past behavior, and strategy as a plan means looking ahead, looking to the future.

Mintzberg et al. (2000) classify the definitions of strategy as being standard and strategy as a plan, valid as organizations develop plans for their future, but also draw patterns from their past and thus can be called an intended strategy and another one the performed strategy.

Although the concept of strategy is based on stability, much of the study of strategy is focused on change. Managing strategic change formulas is difficult to enforce, especially when it involves a change of perspective, such as the employees' mental state, because the strategy will try to protect people from the organization of deviations, and at the same time will be damaging their ability to react towards changes in the environment. Thus, strategies keep the



Graph 1. Revenues in furniture industry. Source: Association of Furniture Industries of Rio Grande do Sul state (MOVERGS, 2012), adapted by the authors.

organization in a straight line, but hardly encourage peripheral vision.

Corroborating with Mintzberg et al. (2000), Porter (2004) understands that each industry or organization has a competitive strategy, either explicit or implicit, and that this strategy can be developed explicitly through a planning process as well as having evolved implicitly from the activities of the various functional departments of the company.

Strategies are linked to scenarios and to Wright (2005), scenario building is a strategic thinking approach that recognizes the uncertainty and unpredictability of the future. Thus, the possible paths of the evolution of the present must be used to construct scenarios.

According to Maroto (2007), there are factors that influence a strategic process. Maroto (2007) corroborates with Mintzberg et al. (2000) and Porter (2004) regarding the vision of strategy as an integrated process in organizations. There are three major strategic processes: strategic analysis, strategy formulation and strategy implementation. Maroto (2007) assumes that in any logical process analysis, formulation and implementation are present, but reality leads us to a constant interaction between the different phases of the strategy

2.3 Social responsibility

The behavior of companies accustomed to the pure and exclusive maximization of profits has been changing over the last few years due to the incorporation of the idea of social responsibility in business. Because of the emergence of greater pressure for transparency in business, social responsibility emerges as a more responsible posture of companies in their actions.

According to the National Institute of Metrology, Quality and Technology - INMETRO (2012), Brazil has been the protagonist of this movement, having elaborated a National Standard of Social Responsibility: ABNT NBR 16001: 2004 Social Responsibility - Management System - Requirements, for which 'Inmetro' developed the Brazilian Certification Program in Social Responsibility. Brazil also led, in partnership with Sweden, ISO Working Group (International Organization for Standardization), responsible developing ISO 26000: 2010 - Guidelines on social responsibility, published on November 1st, 2010. As a result of these actions, it was created the Government Social Responsibility Forum and 'Inmetro' is one of its coordinators.

Melo & Brenand (2004), emphasizes that a socially responsible company is one that respects its commitments to its employees, shareholders and partners, exercises an ethical, transparent and responsible management of their business. A socially responsible company is also one that fulfills its obligations to the government and acts as an agent of sustainable development, of

promoting citizenship and promoting the quality of life and of the individual and collective development of the various communities with which it will maintain links and with society as a whole.

According to Albuquerque (2009), the ethical dimension of social responsibility is certainly the main one and companies define paths in two ways: the establishment of "Social Responsibility Policies" and the definition of "Social Actions" to be developed by the company. For Melo & Brenand (2004), the following are examples of social responsibility policies: giving a public sense to their business activities; Take responsibility for public interests; Pay taxes; Create jobs; Comply with the laws; Establish higher ethical standards; Hiring, retaining and promoting talent; To foster greater employee engagement with company goals; Adopt socially responsible business and management practices; Promote and ensure a good institutional image as an ethical and socially responsible company; To adopt socially responsible management in a serious and consistent way; Act as a partner in building a society.

According to Melo & Froes (2004), the company exercises its full corporate citizenship, when it becomes an agent of social transformation of its community and its sector of activities. The combination and sum of these factors make a company an "innovator of social value" in its sector of activities and an agent of social transformation in the environment where it operates.

According to Dias (2011), one of the most visible aspects of the environmental movement in recent years is the social responsibility of both individuals and organizations, whether from the private sector, the public sector or the third sector. Social responsibility in environmental matters has resulted in the adoption of practices that go beyond the basic duties of both citizens and organizations. It is mostly voluntary actions that imply a greater commitment than the mere formal adherence to obligations arising from legislation.

Still for Melo & Froes (2004), in the early 2000s a company is considered socially responsible when it reaches its profit and liquidity results without losing sight of its role of job creation, tax payment and ethical management. Today, it is not enough to generate jobs, pay taxes, pay your employees and partners well, fulfill and honor commitments, manufacture correct products, use clean technology, provide convenience services, maintain a good institutional image and avoid manipulation. It is necessary to adopt ethical management practices and contribute to the construction of a better society, adopting the corporate social responsibility management model and, through social investment projects, act as managers of social transformation.

According to Nunes et al. (2014), Social Responsibility has affirmed itself as a systemic management principle which presupposes the creation of value in a triple dimension: social, environmental and economic ones. It is increasingly assumed as a management practice that must be incorporated into organizational strategies with clearly established programs, lines of action and concrete objectives which are constantly measured and evaluated. This fosters a new, more balanced management model in the organizational context.

The same authors suggest that Social Responsibility is associated with a voluntary act, optional and dependent on the absolute discretion of the economic agents and not as an imperative of ethical, moral or regulatory action.

2.4 Sustainability as an objective of organizations

Although in the recent decades, the growth of the world economy may have generated a lack of care for the environment today, organizations and people are increasingly concerned with sustainable development and with sustainable practices.

Madruca (2009) points out that the movement for Sustainable Development has mobilized the society in discussions in search of solutions to the serious environmental problems that devastate the planet. According to Madruca (2009), the purely economic approach to the exploitation of natural resources is challenged by different orders and even by its own structural bases. New currents of thought, such as ecological economics or environmental economics, insert the ecosystem and its limitations into the discussions and decisions of how to conduct the global economy. So, we are facing a movement that seeks to break with an only economic vision of the world, to incorporate socio-environmental concerns in this new economic and social order.

Pusavec et al. (2010) point out that the industry has been dedicating efforts in favor of sustainability through changes in the design of its products, development of new materials, reuse and recycling of new materials and reduction of waste and, this way, investors show greater interest in these companies. The same authors highlight some ways to improve sustainability from the point of view of production, such as: reducing energy consumption; reducing waste; generating less waste; using recyclable or reusable materials.

For Melo (2005), sustainability currently implies the integration of the financial, social and environmental aspects of the business. Also, the concept of sustainability has come to be seen by companies as a business and no longer as an attribute of the company's actions, projects, products and services, but mainly as an

essential prerequisite for the survival and success of the business.

For Dias (2011), sustainability is defined as: It seeks to establish a harmonious relationship between man and nature as the center of a development process that must satisfy human needs and aspirations. Emphasizes that poverty is incompatible with sustainable development and indicates the need for environmental policy to be an integral part of the development process and not a fragmented sectoral responsibility. According to Dias (2011), the most important approach to the three dimensions of business sustainability is the necessary and permanent dynamic balance between the performance of business (economic), union (social) and environmental (environmental) organizations.

According to Green et al. (2012), in response to the customer's demand, companies have implemented management practices in the green supply chain, as these customers demand products and services that are environmentally sustainable. Manufacturers are working together with suppliers and customers are making the practices increase the environmental sustainability.

Sustainability, as the goal of organizations, depends very much on the importance that the company, through its entrepreneur, gives to this theme. ASHOKA (2013), a non-profit, pioneering global organization in the field of social innovation, work and support for social entrepreneurs, defines social entrepreneurs as individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing problems. They are strongly engaged and very persistent, facing key social issues and offering new ideas for large-scale change. Instead of leaving the needs of society only to the government or private initiative, social entrepreneurs identify what is not working and seek to put into action, solutions to the structural and systemic problems of society. In addition, they are committed to disseminate these new solutions and persuade the whole society to take these new leaps as well.

For Razzolini (2009), the ecological issue should be treated more comprehensively, as well as the environment, as the importance of these issues is increasing in the society. Sustainable development is possible and business organizations can contribute to the environment being better treated. Still to Razzolini (2009), the question of the treatment of the residues generated in the productive processes and the way in which they impact on the economic development, must take special care on the part of the organizations, being part of the organizational objectives, thus contributing to the preservation of the environment.

For Silva (2013), the company's objective is the result of the summation and composition of the objectives of its leaders. To achieve its objectives, a company needs the cooperation of individuals; And these, in

turn, when they are admitted to the company, bring with them needs, aspirations and expectations that they expect to be satisfied in exchange for their work. It can be concluded that proper management begins with establishment or at least with a clear understanding of the objectives and challenges to be achieved. A company can have several goals and one of the tasks of the executive is to determine the degree of importance of each one of them.

For Santa-Eulalia et al. (2010), organizations must develop a collaborative and harmonious relationship between the components of the supply chain in order to improve their economic, social and environmental performance. Finding suppliers with sustainable practices who have similar behavior in relation to sustainability are the recommendable relationships among companies.

3 Research methodology

The unit of analysis of the present study are two companies of the furniture sector for presenting productive processes that generate environmental impacts. The choice of companies was at random. After contact with several companies of the sector, the companies researched here were willing to collaborate with the research. The selected companies are the ones which work with planned furniture. This study is characterized as a qualitative research of the case study type, of an exploratory nature, in the theoretical and practical field of strategy, social responsibility and sustainability.

3.1 Approach

Regarding the approach, the study is characterized as a qualitative research, which is one that considers the existence of a dynamic relationship between real world, organization and subject, where the process is the main focus.

The approach was made directly by the researcher to the company's management and the respondent managers. The interviews were conducted through semi-structured questionnaires with respondents who perform management functions in organizations. The management functions included all the processes of the organization, that is, from the productive processes to the administrative and support processes. Five (5) managers were interviewed in the company named A and three (3) managers in company B. From the managers of company A, three of them have a full course and two are in the course. In company B, one manager has a full course and two ones have a full second degree.

The procedures for collecting data from the target audience occurred through contact with the individual, explanation of the research objectives and application of the questionnaire/interview. In order to collect the data concerning the organization, the contact was made with

the area responsible with the proper explanation of the research objectives to obtain the information. Company documents were also verified, such as reports of actions undertaken, employee attendance lists in training, photos of community actions and visits to companies, among others. Yin (2010) states that one of the basic principles in data collection should be to use multiple sources of evidence to make more consistent results.

3.2 Techniques

For the data treatment, the Content Analysis technique was used to deepen the understanding of the data collected through the interviews, as proposed by Bardin (2009), which consists of a set of communication analysis techniques such as: database, analysis conversation, documentation, among others.

As a technique of data analysis, the thematic analysis technique was used, which consists of discovering the nuclei of meaning that make up a communication. In this way, the method of content analysis was used, more specifically with regard to the thematic analysis of a text proposed by Bardin (2009).

The analysis of the thematic was as follows: reading the answers of the questionnaires with annotations of words and significant stretches for the research, for later accomplishment of the work.

The empirical research was carried out in two industrial companies located in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the cities of Sarandi and Santa Maria. The companies are privately owned, of national origin and of the industrial furniture sector.

The interviews were conducted in the companies themselves during the month of June 2013. The researcher delivered the questionnaires directly to the respondents. After completing the questionnaires, they were sent to the researcher for the compilation and analysis phases.

4 Results

In this part of the study, the data collected by the surveys carried out in the selected companies were analyzed. Two companies were analyzed, here denominated company A and company B. The results of the qualitative phase of the research contain the description and interpretation of the data collected in the companies surveyed. The data presentation is organized into four categories of analysis: company characterization; profile of respondents; internal and external challenges.

4.1 Characterization of companies

Company A is located in the northern region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul and was founded thirty-four (34) years ago. It is a company of private capital, the industry now has about 220 direct employees and about

50 outsourced employees totaling approximately two hundred and seventy (270) employees.

The company’s activity is in the field of furniture designed for residential and professional environments. It has sixty-three (63) points of sale distributed in twenty-one (21) Brazilian states. It does not yet have representations abroad. The information was obtained in the interview, with the general director of the company. Gross sales are shown in Table 1.

Company B is located in the central region of Rio Grande do Sul state and is eighteen (18) years old. The industry has evolved, from its inception, from

a small joinery to a small business. The company is privately held and today has twenty one (21) direct employees. Its gross sales are shown in Table 2. The performance of company B is identical to the one of company A, that is, it is in the branch of furniture designed for residential and professional environments. The information was obtained in the interview, with its General Director, who is also its majority partner and founder.

4.2 Internal challenges

Because of the difficulties faced by companies, it is natural that there are internal challenges to the incorporation of social responsibility and sustainability into corporate strategies. Variables such as the importance of sustainability, the importance of social responsibility for employees, internal barriers to sustainability implementation, and employees’ awareness are issues addressed here.

Chart 1 shows the importance of sustainability to employees.

Practices were evidenced both in company A and in company B, that contribute to the pursuit of sustainability.

Chart 2 shows the main barriers evidenced by the research with companies.

Table 1. Billing of company A in millions of reais.

| Year | Billing | Growth compared to the previous year |
|------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| 2010 | 40.8 | Not available |
| 2011 | 50.8 | 24.5% |
| 2012 | 55.7 | 9.7% |

Table 2. Billing of company B in thousands of Reais.

| Year | Billing | Growth compared to the previous year |
|------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| 2010 | 450 | Not available |
| 2011 | 550 | 22.2% |
| 2012 | 650 | 18.2% |

Chart 1. Actions of managers with employees.

| Importance of sustainability | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Internal challenges with the employees | | |
| Company | Challenges | Research information |
| A | Internal awareness | “[...] we have sustainability as one of the values of the company.” “[...] planning highlights of the positive aspects of doing things conscientiously without compromising the development of future generations.” “[...] issues on the sustainability tripod are highlighted, especially in the actions of the PGQP (Quality and Productivity Program of Rio Grande do Sul state) that the company participates in.” “Much is worked on the concepts of PGQP, which is the management tool used by the company.” |
| A | Dynamics in favor of sustainability | “Courses that involve sustainability, workshop and evaluation program of the PGQP (Gaúcho Quality and Productivity Program).” “Through training, information passed through internal communication channels [...]” “Through meetings the importance of avoiding waste is passed on to everyone.” |
| B | Internal awareness | “Through private consultancies and explanatory and expository meetings within the company.” “[...] we instruct our employees on the need not to waste the raw material ... and how to discard the unusable.” |
| B | Dynamics in favor of sustainability | “Through talks and meetings with the team, explaining the needs and forms of application and the return that is gained from sustainability.” “[...] we instruct our employees not to waste the raw material, but to reuse and reinvent [...]” |

According to research evidence, there are cultural barriers. Resistance to changing habits, difficulty in accepting and having a new posture are the main points highlighted by the respondents. The lack of planning and the support of competente bodies were cited by company B as important barriers to implementation. It is evidenced that there are, for sure, difficulties for the companies in the implantation of the sustainability as a routine process.

The integration of sustainability and social responsibility in business strategies is shown in Chart 3.

Company A stresses that sustainability is embedded in strategies once it is part of the organization’s values and is present through well-founded action plans. For company B, sustainability is inserted for short and long-term benefits. In relation to social responsibility there are differences of approach between companies A and B. While company A states that there are specific strategic objectives in the area

of human resources, company B says it is inserted, but separate from business actions and that there is no specific planning and the action is reactive, that is, when some entity seeks the company to develop some type of work.

Chart 4 shows the evidence collected in the research, relating internal education focused on social responsibility and sustainability. There are concrete training actions for managers and employees in both companies A and company B.

It was evidenced that both companies are concerned with the learning of managers and employees and, because of this, it does training, material dissemination, partnerships with companies, among other actions. Internal education plays an important role in the implementation of sustainable practices, since it adequately prepares the functional framework not only to implement as practices, but mainly to give meaning to what is built.

Chart 2. Observations of managers regarding the main barriers to the implementation of sustainability.

| Barriers in the implementation of sustainability | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Main barriers | | |
| Company | Barriers | Research information |
| A | Internal awareness | “[...] cultural barriers such as lack of knowledge of people, resistance to change and adoption of new habits and posture.” “[...] difficult to change and accept [...]” “[...] lack of a sustainable stance.” “[...] we all want to be part of a sustainable company.” |
| B | Internal awareness | “Yes, there is no planning and proper guidelines for such an implementation [...]” “[...] there is no support from the competent municipal bodies [...]” |

Chart 3. Management information on the integration of Social Responsibility and Sustainability into corporate strategies.

| Sustainability and social responsibility in the company’s business strategies | | |
|--|--|--|
| Integration of sustainability and of social responsibility | | |
| Company | Sustainability and social responsibility – actions | Research information |
| A | Sustainability in strategies | “Integrates through the search for new technological equipment that aim at sustainability.” “Yes, sustainability is in the company’s values.” “[...] strategic planning that contemplates actions in all areas, actions aimed at the development and well-being of all stakeholders in the business.” “Yes, through well-founded action plans.” |
| A | Social responsibility in strategies | “[...] strategic objectives in the area of human resources that meet social responsibility.” “Through strategic planning that contains actions that work the welfare of employees and the community where the company is inserted.” “It is embedded in organizational strategies.” “[...] work environment where employees feel good.” |
| A | Sustainability has been an important factor in improving the company’s image | “[...] linking sustainability to a brand is always positive ... the company has not used sustainability in a major way in campaigns [...]” “The company has not worked sustainability with the focus of improving the company’s image [...]” “[...] there is sustainability in our process, but it is not being disclosed to the market.” |

Chart 3. Continued...

| Sustainability and social responsibility in the company's business strategies | | |
|---|--|--|
| Integration of sustainability and of social responsibility | | |
| Company | Sustainability and social responsibility – actions | Research information |
| A | Sustainability has been an important factor in improving the company's image | <p>"[...] we do not work on this theme with a focus on improving the image."</p> <p>"Yes, because it demonstrates that it is an innovative and up-to-date company in social management [...]"</p> <p>"[...] actions are taken that affect local society more [...]"</p> <p>"Yes, because we want to consume products of companies that are not interested only in profit, but rather that use their strength for the common good."</p> |
| A | Sustainability and Social Responsibility in Profit Sharing (PLR) | <p>"The company has PLR, but sustainability is not tied to PLR."</p> <p>"The company has PLR, but it has no connection [...]"</p> |
| A | Sustainability as part of the company's performance appraisal | <p>"I do not know how to say ... but it should be part of having a real performance coefficient."</p> <p>"Not part of it."</p> |
| A | Role of employees in relation to sustainability and social responsibility | <p>"Must have a receptive attitude to new habits, more interest in learning, develop the spirit of teamwork [...]"</p> <p>"[...] participate in the actions that the company promotes."</p> <p>"Should disseminate knowledge to its colleagues, especially to the next generation."</p> |
| B | Sustainability in strategies | "It is in the organizational strategy, aiming short and long term benefits to our employees, the company and society in general." |
| B | Social Responsibility in strategies | <p>"It is inserted separately from the corporate actions, because there is no specific planning [...]"</p> <p>"We act alongside those who seek the company [...]"</p> |
| B | Sustainability has been an important factor in improving the company's image. | <p>"Certainly, the investment in lectures and equipment to reduce the amount of pollutants, brought good benefits to the company."</p> <p>"We have a machine that processes the waste of paints and solvents, which, once processed, returns to us in more clean and occupational solvents [...]"</p> <p>"Yes, we tried to build and maintain a company profile focused on these issues."</p> |
| B | Social responsibility has been an important factor in improving the company's image. | <p>"We are certainly recognized by the local community in providing help [...]"</p> <p>"We donate MDF leftovers to schools and entities for handicrafts."</p> |
| B | Sustainability and Social Responsibility in Profit Sharing (PLR) | "It does not have "PLR." |
| B | Sustainability as part of the company's performance appraisal | "Yes, through the reduction of costs to the company, or even generation of income on reused materials, part of the income destined to employees." |
| B | Role of employees in relation to sustainability and social responsibility | <p>"Participatory, committed and entrepreneurial."</p> <p>"[...] we are careful not to damage the life and daily life of our neighbors and to not harm the environment [...]"</p> |

It is evidenced by company A that the managers have internal training through courses, lectures and with the participation of the company in the 'Gaúcho Program of Quality and Productivity' (PGQP). For employees, there is no training that reaches everyone, but whenever possible lectures are given on the topics. Company A formed quality control groups (CCQ), where sustainability and social responsibility were addressed.

In company B, the managers have trainings carried out by SENAI and SEBRAE and the employees are educated through meetings and lectures.

4.3 External challenges

Chart 5 shows the main external challenges related to Sustainability and Social Responsibility, pointed out by the research with the managers of the surveyed

Chart 4. Internal training actions in companies.

| Internal education focused on social responsibility and sustainability | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Internal formation | | |
| Company | Training actions | Research information |
| A | Managers | “Yes, through courses, lectures, workshops [...]” “[...] yes, as the company participates in the PGQP, it provides several training opportunities [...]” |
| A | Employees | “Yes, but not in a way that reaches everyone.” “Not directly, but there are lectures whenever possible [...]” “Yes, in the formation of CCQ groups (circle of quality control) we talked a little about the subject [...]” “Yes, through meetings [...]” |
| B | Managers | “Yes, by means of programs and lectures carried out, for example, by SENAI and SEBRAE.” |
| B | Employees | “Yes, through meetings and lectures.” “We instruct our employees ... on how best to use it and how to discard the non-usable items.” |

Chart 5. Actions reported by managers on external business challenges.

| External challenges in relation to social responsibility and sustainability | | |
|--|--|--|
| External challenges involving stakeholders | | |
| Company | Challenges - Actions | Research information |
| A | Involvement of suppliers | “Sensitizing the actions that the company proposes to do.” “Through an evaluation that is carried out before choosing the supplier.” “Through purchasing criteria where the question of sustainability has weight in the decision.” “[...] requiring raw materials from reforestation.” |
| A | Involvement of consumers | “Through the dissemination of materials on the subject in its magazine made exclusively for consumers [...]” “Announcing that the raw material comes from reforestation.” “I have no knowledge.” |
| A | Involvement of the community | “Through partnerships with charities and openness to schools and universities for visitation.” “Opening to visitation of institutions and disseminating the techniques applied in the company.” “We are always open to guests [...]” |
| A | Hiring consultancies to develop sustainable strategies | “For this specific purpose not, but several papers proposed by external partners address this issue.” “It was recently concluded a consultancy of a Lean Production course, where he had themes involving sustainability.” |
| B | Involvement of suppliers | “Buying veneers from reforestation forests and paints with a lower degree of pollutants [...]” |
| B | Involvement of consumers | “We instruct for the correct disposal of furniture which is not being used anymore.” |
| B | Involvement of the community | “Lectures, informational flyers distributed in the community.” “We donate the leftovers from MDF to entities for handicraft purposes.” |
| B | Hiring consultancies to develop sustainable strategies | “Yes, through the furniture network we have partnerships with SEBRAE to get consulting services.” |

companies. The external challenges were analyzed in relation to aspects of stakeholders' involvement. Suppliers, consumers, community, schools and internal consultancies were the questions put to the companies to the understanding of the involvement of these agents in the company actions.

Both for Porter (2004) and for Mintzberg et al. (2000), external challenges can not and should not be minimized by organizations when designing their business strategies.

The practices used by company A collected by the research demonstrate that suppliers are sensitized to the actions that the company proposes to carry out. There are criteria for evaluating suppliers, such as the origin of the raw material. The involvement of consumers is through the dissemination of materials on the subject in company's A own magazine. The community has involvement through partnerships with care entities, visitation allowed to schools and universities when the practices in the company's production processes are shown. Therefore, it can be concluded that company A has practices that involve the various interest groups and meeting these external challenges is important in the competitive business scenario.

In company B, the practices used to engage the various interest groups differ somewhat from company A's practices, probably because of the different sizes of the two organizations. Company B does not have a judicious system of choosing suppliers, but it seeks to buy raw material that comes from reforestation. Consumers are involved with guidelines on how to dispose properly those materials that are no longer useable. This is a good practice, since adequate disposal has been a subject of great importance for the reverse logistics process that is much discussed today.

5 Conclusion

The main objective of the research was to analyze and demonstrate the practices and the relationship between the management of social responsibility and sustainability with the strategies adopted by the companies surveyed. In this sense, it was important to identify the practices, the internal challenges, the main barriers to the integration of sustainability and social responsibility as strategies in companies.

Although there is a difference in the size of the companies surveyed, which obviously provokes a difference in the organizational structure, it was evidenced that there is care with social responsibility and sustainability, even if timid, in the respective structures.

In the analysis of the internal challenges, the results allowed to conclude that the researched companies practice actions to raise awareness of their employees regarding the importance of social responsibility and sustainability. Caring for the safety and the well-being of their employees and helping to the needy entities are examples of actions that concern social responsibility. Regarding to sustainability, it was also possible to conclude from the results analysis that both companies have evidenced practices such as: having sustainability in company values; promoting trainings, lectures and meetings with the teams explaining the needs and ways of applying sustainable practices. One of the main issues of the work was to relate the sustainable practices of the surveyed companies with their strategies. The results showed that these are the strategies of companies: the search of new technological equipments that contemplate the sustainability; there are well-founded action plans for the elimination of waste of both raw material and energy used; strategic planning contains actions that address the well-being of employees and the community where the company is located; there are investment strategies in lectures to reduce polluting waste. These are important strategies, but none of the companies surveyed have the sustainability and social responsibility included in the Profit Sharing Program.

The analysis of the results allowed to conclude that there are strategies that aim to contemplate sustainability and social responsibility, and that generate sustainable actions and practices.

By making a discussion of the results obtained, with the concepts and definitions of the authors presented here, it is possible to identify the coincident aspects between the literature and the results. Melo (2005), Dias (2011) and Madruga (2009) emphasize the importance of sustainability as a business, not just in the economic sense. In the collected evidence, managers point out that sustainability is part of the company's values as well as being encouraged by its employees through meetings, training and lectures aimed at raising awareness among all. Razzolini (2009), Silva (2013) and Santa Eulalia et al. (2010), emphasize that the integration between individuals and the collaborative and harmonious relationship between the various agents is important to promote sustainability and social responsibility among stakeholders. In the results obtained and demonstrated in Charts 1 and 2, this evidence from the literature was also evidence of the research, which strongly validates the concepts and definitions referenced herein. Yet, for Mintzberg et al. (2000), Maroto (2007) and Porter

(2004), organizations must have competitive strategies. Wright (2005) points out that the construction of scenarios is important for future actions. In Charts 3, 4 and 5, the strategic issues of partnerships and future actions were evidenced and corroborated with the precepts of the literature reviewed here. Thus, it is believed that the results obtained with the companies surveyed have a strong relation with the concepts and definitions of the literature.

At the end, even considering that this study offers contributions, it is important to mention that there were limitations in the research carried out, since they are still subjects that need to be deepened. The shortcomings may be filled by new studies that contemplate research directed to Sustainable Development, or Socio-environmental Development, with other companies and regions of the industrial furniture sector. Because it is a multidisciplinary subject that is much debated, but still with timid results, it is hoped that this study may motivate further incursions to broaden the field of observation and knowledge. Therefore, even considering that it is an applied and directed research there are two companies, the results can not be generalized for every furniture sector. However, this study can be interpreted with its multidisciplinary character and offer a contribution to the field of Production Engineering in the search for the necessary interaction of productive processes with social and environmental issues.

References

- Albuquerque, J. L. (Org.). (2009). *Gestão ambiental e responsabilidade social: conceitos, ferramentas e aplicações*. São Paulo: Atlas.
- ASHOKA. (2013). *Empreendedores sociais*. Recuperado em 25 de agosto de 2013, de <http://www.ashoka.org.br/empreendedor-social/quem-e/>
- Associação das Indústrias de Móveis do Rio Grande do Sul – MOVERGS. (2012). *Dados do Setor Moveleiro*. Recuperado em 26 de novembro de 2012, de <http://www.movergs.com.br/numeros-setor>
- Bardin, L. (2009). *Análise de conteúdo*. Lisboa: Edições 70.
- Dias, R. (2011). *Gestão ambiental: responsabilidade social e sustentabilidade* (2a ed.). São Paulo: Atlas.
- Donaire, D. (2009). *Gestão ambiental na empresa* (2a ed.). São Paulo: Atlas.
- Fundação Estadual de Proteção, Ambiental – FEPAM. (2012). *Henrique Luiz Roessler*. Recuperado em 20 de novembro de 2012, de <http://www.fepam.rs.gov.br/programas/perfis.asp>
- Green, K. W., Jr., Zelbst, P. J., Meacham, J., & Bhadauria, V. S. (2012). Green supply chain management practices: impact on performance. *Supply Chain Management: International Journal*, 17(3), 290-305.
- Instituto Nacional de Metrologia Qualidade e Tecnologia – INMETRO. (2012). *Contextualização*. Recuperado em 26 de novembro de 2012, de http://www.inmetro.gov.br/qualidade/responsabilidade_social/contextualizacao.asp
- Madruga, L. R. R. G. (2009). *Comportamento coletivo e interações sociais no comitê de gerenciamento da bacia hidrográfica do rio Santa Maria: aprendizagem social e emergência do empreendedorismo socioambiental* (Tese de doutorado). Programa de Pós-graduação em Agronegócios, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre.
- Maroto, J. C. (2007). *Estratégia: De la visión a la acción*; Madrid: Esic Editorial.
- Melo, F. P., No. (2005). *Socioeconomia solidária para o desenvolvimento integral, democrático e sustentável*. São Paulo: Cedac.
- Melo, F. P., No., & Brenand, J. M. (2004). *Empresas socialmente sustentáveis: o novo desafio da gestão moderna*. Rio de Janeiro: Qualitymark.
- Melo, F. P., No., & Froes, C. (2004). *Gestão da responsabilidade social corporativa: o caso brasileiro* (2a ed.). Rio de Janeiro: Qualitymark.
- Mintzberg, H., Ahlstrand, B., & Lampel, J. (2000). *Safári de Estratégia*. São Paulo: Bookman.
- Nunes, M. A., Santos, M. J., Seabra, F. M., & Jorge, M. (2014). A Responsabilidade Social em contexto Ibero-Americano: novas perspectivas da governança organizacional. *Confluências: Revista Interdisciplinar de Sociologia e Direito*, 16(1), 9-17. Recuperado em 24 de maio de 2015, de <http://dspace.uevora.pt/rdpc/bitstream/10174/13788/1/A%20Responsabilidade%20Social%20em%20Contexto%20Ibero-Americano.pdf>
- Porter, M. E. (2004). *Estratégia Competitiva: técnicas para análise da indústria e da concorrência* (7a ed.). Rio de Janeiro: Campus.
- Pusavec, F., Krajnik, P., & Kopac, J. (2010). Transitioning to sustainable production - Part I: application on machining technologies. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(2), 174-184. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2009.08.010>.
- Razzolini, E., Fo. (2009). *O reverso da logística e as questões ambientais no Brasil*. Curitiba: Ibepex.
- Santa-Eulalia, L. A., Araújo, J. B., Kettani, O., Franciosi, L. A., Azevedo, R. C., & Bremer, C. F. (2010). An essay on green supply chain design and dynamic alignment. In *International Conference on Information Systems, Logistics and Supply Chain* (pp. 1-11). Québec: CIRRELT.
- Silva, R. C. F. (2013). *Objetivos e desafios empresariais*. Recuperado em 25 de agosto de 2013, de <http://>

professorrobertocesar.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/12-objetivos-de-desafios-empresariais.pdf

Universidade Estadual de Campinas – UNICAMP, & Agência Brasileira de Desenvolvimento Industrial – ABDI. (2008). *Relatório de acompanhamento setorial: indústria moveleira* (Vol. 1). Campinas: UNICAMP; Brasília: ABDI.

Wright, A. (2005). The role of scenarios as prospective sensemaking devices. *Management Decision*, 43(1), 86-101. Recuperado em 24 de maio de 2015, de <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/00251740510572506>

Yin, R. K. (2010). *Estudo de caso: planejamento e métodos* (4a ed.). Porto Alegre: Bookman.