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Article

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Corporate social responsibility in ports of Latin America

Corporate
social
responsibility
in ports

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Abstract

Purpose – The activities carried out in ports are disruptive to the environment where they are located. Therefore, the objective of this work is to analyze the presence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the missions and visions of the main ports of Latin America.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative technique of content analysis was applied to the missions and visions of 72 ports in Latin America. First, the missions and visions of the ports were collected (72). Second, it was assigned a value 1 if the mission had any evidence of CSR, 0 if it had no evidence and “.” if the mission was not found. The same procedure was performed with the visions.

Findings – Results indicate that 20.83% of the ports allude to CSR in their missions, 34.72% of the ports allude to it in their missions and visions and 13.88% only allude to it in their visions (22 ports did not mention it in their missions or their visions). So, the main findings indicate that in Latin America the majority of ports do not consider elements of CSR in their missions and visions.

Originality/value – This paper is mainly focused on covering two gaps in the literature: first, to increase knowledge about the strategic bases of ports in Latin America through their missions and visions; and second, to visualize the coherence of the missions and visions with the activities of CSR.

Keywords Corporate social responsibility, Ports, Latin America, Mission, Vision

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The objective of this work is to analyze the presence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the missions and visions of the main ports of Latin America. For several years, the appearance of CSR in companies has been studied by academics (Barnett *et al.*, 2020; Lizcano, 2018). Therefore, it is understood that all companies have a commitment to the community and the surrounding environment, given the impact generated by their activities on the environment where they operate.

In this context, the port sector is considered one of the most disruptive, so it has an even greater commitment to its environment (Jansen *et al.*, 2018). Some of the negative consequences of ports are the deterioration of water and air quality, as well as air pollution, given that port activities emit carbon dioxide (Chen and Lam, 2018; Cui, 2017). In addition, in several countries, companies in this sector have faced important questions and suffered penalties for the damage they have caused to the ecosystem. Therefore, it is vital that ports can reduce the negative perception the community has of them, and including CSR in their strategies is a way to achieve this.

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Given the aforementioned, CSR has a very important role in the activities related to seaports, due to their contact with the environment and the effects of port operations on the environment. The main contribution of this work is mainly focused on covering two gaps in the literature: first, to increase knowledge about the strategic bases of ports in Latin America through their missions and visions; and second, to visualize the coherence of the missions and visions with the activities of CSR.

Also, according to the literature, the incorporation of CSR in business and operational strategies plays a role, as it serves as a marketing element, provides legitimacy and positive impressions, improves business reputation and generates a competitive advantage (Wendlandt *et al.*, 2015). From this, the importance of CSR in the various tactics and strategies of companies is clear.

CSR is a term that refers to the contributions and consequences of business activities (Carroll, 1979, 1999; Sarmiento, 2008). It is closely related to business practice and its impact on the environment. In addition, the role that companies play in the development of their environment means their CSR practices contribute significantly to the community in which they operate.

The present work is structured as follows. First, an overview of the situation of ports in Latin America is presented. Second, the theoretical framework that supports this work is developed. Third, the methodology used to gather information is explained. Subsequently, the results of the analysis performed are analyzed. Finally, the conclusions and implications for business practice are presented.

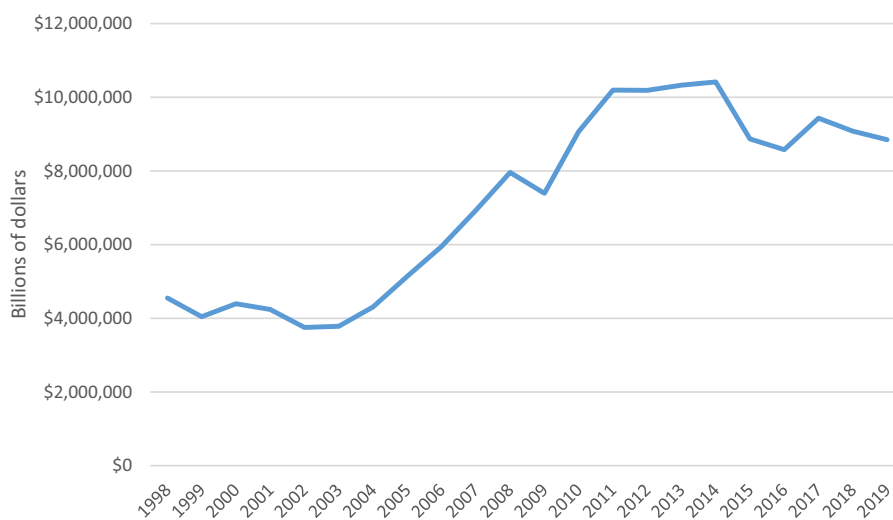
The ports in Latin America

This section presents some peculiarities of the ports of Latin America and their importance to the economy.

Figure 1 shows that Latin America in the last 20 years has presented an important economic dynamism (López-Morales, 2018). The region has registered an upward trend in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the 1998–2018 period. This was largely due to trade between countries in the region and trade between countries in the region with countries in other latitudes (Zurita, 2017). This emphasizes the importance of having an efficient port system to adequately meet the needs of international trade. Maritime transport is the main means of moving goods from one country to another (De Langen and Haezendonck, 2012). In addition, the growth of trade has meant that ports have to adapt to this new environment; this results in their having to expand and improve their operating conditions. As a result of this, port activity has increased its importance worldwide.

The economic importance of ports has been widely addressed in the literature (Chen and Lam, 2018). According to Park and Seo (2016), the activity of the ports that most affects economic development is container handling. In the case of Latin America, it has not been the exception. In the ports of the Latin American region, around 7% of the container load moves worldwide (Suárez *et al.*, 2017). The seaports of the region have been important for economic development since colonial times (Serebrisky *et al.*, 2015). At present, the ports of the region function as a service provider, offering port operations and infrastructure that meet logistical needs (CEPAL, 2017). In addition, ports are vital to export and import costs; this, therefore, affects the final price of goods.

Table 1 shows the main ports in the region, regarding the movement of twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs). It is important to highlight Panama as the country that handles more TEUs in the ports of Colón and Balboa than the rest of the ports in Latin America. The importance of Panama in international merchandise traffic is not recent; it dates back almost 100 years, thanks to its geographical location and, mainly, to the Panama Canal that joins the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. It is not surprising that the most important economies in the



Source(s): World Bank (2020)

Figure 1.
Gross domestic
product (GDP) in Latin
America 1998–2019

Port	Country	TEUs
1. Colón	Panama	3,891,209
2. Santos	Brazil	3,579,192
3. Balboa	Panama	2,986,617
4. Manzanillo	Mexico	2,830,370
5. Cartagena	Colombia	2,678,050
6. Callao	Peru	2,250,224
7. Guayaquil	Ecuador	1,871,591
8. Kingston	Jamaica	1,560,000
9. Buenos Aires	Argentina	1,468,900
10. San Antonio	Chile	1,290,890

Source(s): CEPAL, 2017

Table 1.
Top ten ports in Latin
America by amount of
twenty-foot equivalent
units (TEUs)

region, such as Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, are present, given their size and economic weight in the region.

In addition, some ports are important distribution centers to others regions of Latin America and the world. The ports of Kingston in Jamaica and Colón and Balboa in Panama are examples of this, given that they are countries with small populations, but with a high number of TEUs managed per year. It is also important to mention that six of the ten ports in the list are on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, which is one of the regions in the world where commercial flows have increased the most in recent history (Licona-Michel *et al.*, 2020).

Theoretical framework

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

CSR is a topical issue that has become important for business practice. In the current era, the presence of CSR in companies of various sectors, net worth and sizes is increasing

(López-Morales *et al.*, 2017). However, pointing out a universal concept of CSR is still complicated, given that it frames various elements such as social action, sustainability, environment, internal relations with its employees and customers (Gaytán and Flores-Villanueva, 2018). The first research publications on the topic of CSR date back to the 1930s, and the topic continues to be studied (Latapí *et al.*, 2019). Likewise, the history of the social component of organizations dates from ancient Rome (Chaffe, 2017). This indicates that since ancient times organizations were somehow aware of their role in society.

Throughout all these years, the definition of CSR has evolved and included a large number of topics (Cuervo, 2018; Lizcano, 2018). The first one to define CSR was Bowen (1953); however, Carroll (1979) was the first to offer a model where it integrates various elements into the concept of CSR, and hence different definitions have emerged to date. In this order of ideas, Fransén *et al.* (2019) define standard CSR as the rules that determine what is considered responsible conduct by businesses, specifically as it relates to society, the environment and ethics. CSR is also defined as the obligations and responsibilities that a company should have for its stakeholders (Brew *et al.*, 2015). Another definition states that CSR is the policies and practices of corporations that reflect business responsibility for the broader social good (Matten and Moon, 2008). One of the most accepted definitions is that CSR is a continuous commitment of business to be ethical and influence the economic development of the community and society as a whole (World Business Council of Sustainable Development, 1999).

Also the relationship between CSR and ports is close. Ports generate important impacts on marine ecosystems through gas emissions, and water pollution, as well as on the health of the inhabitants of the region where they are located, among others (Lam and Notteboom, 2014; Stein and Acciaro, 2020). Likewise, it is important to explain how the behavior of CSR in a port, in a specific way the ports, improves their image through CSR practices, to appear socially responsible with the environment in response to the community and government pressures and requirements (Di Vaio and Varriale, 2018). The foregoing exemplifies the importance of understanding from the bases of the strategy (mission and vision) the activities of the ports related to CSR.

Table 2 presents some studies on CSR in ports in recent years. As can be seen, its objectives are focused on studying CSR mainly from an environmental perspective and from issues related to its operation. In addition, these works are mainly focused on the regions where the main economic powers are located: Asia, Europe and North America. A general pattern observed is that CSR analysis is not identified from a planning and strategy perspective.

The implications of this work for literature are twofold. First, it consists of identifying the presence of CSR in the basic elements of the ports' strategy (mission and vision), to serve as a starting point in the analysis and understanding of the CSR and seaports relationship. Second, it is important to find elements that allow measuring CSR initiatives and activities in ports, so the contribution of this work is to be able to achieve this through a methodological approach that allows achieving a simple and adequate measurement. Third, this work is a contribution to the body of knowledge given that the relationship between ports and CSR has not been studied in the Latin American context (Stein and Acciaro, 2020).

Mission and vision

Strategic planning is one of the most important management activities (Guerras *et al.*, 2014). This arises as a discipline with the publication of Ansoff's (1965) book *Corporate Strategy*, which presents the strategy as the administration's own activity. This book is the watershed in the strategic activities of organizations, since although the strategy as a discipline existed in the armed forces, it is from the publication of this work that it is beginning to be considered as an activity of commercial companies.

Author	Region/Country	Aim	Results
Klimek <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Europe/Poland	To define the CSR areas of the Port of Gdańsk Authority S.A., and the socially responsible tasks undertaken by port operators and the whole port service center	Air pollution—board of directors declared CSR as part of Port of Gdansk strategy
Ashrafi <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Canada and USA	(1) To investigate how port executives perceive sustainability and what CS strategies and practices ports have adopted in their business plans; and (2) to identify influencing factors (motivations/driving factors and key challenges/barriers) that might affect adoption and implementation of CS strategies and practices in ports in the future	Many of the identified influencing factors for adoption and implementation of corporate sustainability in ports are similar to those identified in other studies; some are more sector-specific, which has allowed this study to contribute to advancing knowledge of corporate sustainability in the context of ports with novel insights
Yuen and Thai (2017)	Singapore	To examine whether the implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and provision of service quality (SQ) to satisfy shippers result in financial synergies	CSR complements SQ and provides modest financial contribution to shipping firms via customer satisfaction
Vanelslander (2016)	—	To focus on the way corporate social responsibility emerges among company goals in seaports and the extent to which innovation initiatives respond to the goals raised	Derives how relevant a specific innovation action is to a specific company goal and to which extent it actually contributes to achieving the goal
Lam and Notteboom (2014)	Singapore, Shanghai, Antwerp and Rotterdam	To investigate the port management tools that port/public authorities have at their disposal	The ports are particularly mature in exercising environmental standard regulations, which reveals that the enforcement approach is more prevalent
Dinwoodie <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Europe	To present a framework to identify the business processes required to manage the potential environmental impact of maritime operations, particularly in smaller ports	Present a framework to identify the process to measure the impact in the environment

Table 2.
Literature review

One of the main proposals of [Ansoff's \(1965\)](#) book is that, in addition to considering the goals of companies in the long term, it is important to consider the courses of action and distribution of resources the company has. From this point, the need arises to direct the strategic activities; this resulted in the emergence of two elements that are key at present ([Hax and Majluf, 1984](#)), which are the mission and vision.

Now it is important to define the mission and vision. First, the mission is defined in its simplest form as the formal declaration that contains the organizational goals and the lines of action to achieve those goals ([Sattari *et al.*, 2011](#)). The mission can also reveal operational performance and financial results ([Law and Breznik, 2018](#)). For all of the aforementioned, the

mission is considered an element that facilitates the formulation and implementation of the organization's strategy (Ahmed *et al.*, 2016). All this implies that a mission formulated correctly generates benefits for organizations.

Therefore, it can be inferred that the mission is created before the vision, since the mission is what will allow the development of a vision that is consistent and appropriate to the company's strategy (López-Morales and Ortega-Ridaura, 2016). According to DuFour and Eaker (1998), the vision statement must answer the question, "What do we hope to become?" In this order of ideas, the vision is defined as a future portrait that organizations outline; this allows us to visualize where we want to go, and it is mainly focused on the aspirations, intentions and perspectives of where you want to reach (Özdem, 2011).

While the mission and vision are concepts that seem similar in shape, they have many substantive differences. The main difference lies in its temporality: while the mission is an image of the future in the medium term that can be achieved by organizations, the vision is an idealistic and, in some cases, utopian image of where you want to reach. This means that some elements that integrate them do not coincide directly, but they are in some way related.

Methodology

One of the main issues of conducting qualitative research is that, opposite of quantitative research, the rules and norms are not homogeneous (Langley and Abdallah, 2011). On the contrary, qualitative research allows us to analyze and deeply understand the phenomena (Arino *et al.*, 2016). This allows us to understand its essence, which is methodologically sound. In this order of ideas, for the realization of this work, a review of the web pages of the main ports in Latin America was carried out. These ports were identified from different global and specific rankings for each country in the region (CEPAL, 2017; CEPAL, 2018; Searates, 2020). It is important to mention that the missions and visions correspond to the organizations' organisms that administer the ports.

Within the group of 100 ports, 72 were identified that had information available; that is, they had their missions and visions online. The next stage corresponded to the analysis of the information obtained; for this, a qualitative content analysis technique was carried out. This technique rests on the qualitative paradigm and consists of interpreting reality through categories that are extracted from the written text (Moraima- Campos and Auxiliadora-Mújica, 2008). It is important to note that this technique analyzes the ideas expressed in it, so the meaning of the words, themes or phrases is the main element of analysis (Zamith, 2018).

Content analysis is a very useful technique in research where it is necessary to analyze texts since it allows us to extract and examine nuances of behavior and social trends in organizations (Hall and Steiner, 2020). Carrying out the aforementioned in an investigation in the port sector is an important methodological innovation for three reasons. First, given that content analysis has been used mainly in the field of journalism and politics (Karlsson and Sjøvaag's, 2016; Zamith, 2018). Second, the use of content analysis was outside of the traditional physical ways of communication, in this regard content analysis is focused in symbolic ways in order to analyze the particular context (Krippendorff, 1989). Hence, content analysis is useful in order to go beyond the obvious related to CSR strategies and actions. Third, content analysis gives the possibility to research about the frequency and quantity of certain patterns in the information of written texts. The obtained results will be important to be able to analyze, from another perspective, the missions, visions and strategies of organizations such as ports that belong to an area other than those most studied by this technique.

Figure 2 shows the research process of this research. First, the missions and visions of the ports were collected (72). Second, according to the literature review, different words related to

CSR were identified (Table 3) (Brew *et al.*, 2015; Cuervo, 2018; Dahlsrud, 2008; Gerner, 2019; Latapí *et al.*, 2019; Madorran and García, 2016). It is important to mention that not only did we seek to identify those words in the missions and visions, but we also analyzed the ideas of the text. That is, if a set of phrases expressed an idea about CSR (Hall and Steiner, 2020; Zamith, 2018), although the words had not been specifically included, it was considered as the information referred to CSR. Third, according to the coding of the words, a “1” was assigned if the message contained something related to CSR, a “0” if they did not contain anything about CSR and “-” if they did not contain the information (Table 4). The same process was carried out for the visions, and all this information was emptied into an Excel file, and with it the database could be structured to achieve the objective of this research. It is important to mention that 100 ports were identified in Latin America, but 28 that did not have mission and vision information were eliminated, leaving a total of 72 ports as the sample for this study.

Description and analysis of results

This section provides the main results of this research. Through the systematization of the data obtained from the content analysis in the missions and visions of the ports, it is possible to fulfill the main objective of this research. The presentation of the results is given in three parts. The first part displays the countries in which the ports studied are located and the countries to which the ports studied belong (Table 5). Second, the results of the content analysis of the missions and visions of the ports are shown (Figure 1). Finally, in Figure 2, the results are presented, divided by the regions that form Latin America (North America, Central America, South America and the Caribbean).

Table 5 shows the breakdown of the ports studied by country. As can be seen, the countries with the most ports are Mexico (17, 23.61%) and Chile (8, 11.1%). In the case of

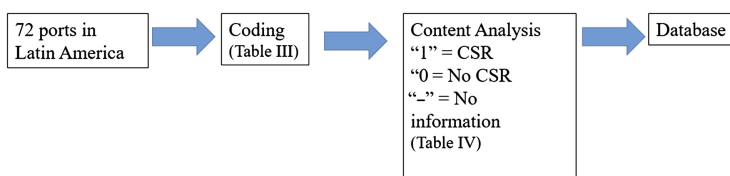


Figure 2.
Research process

Environment	Corporate citizenship	Stakeholders
Health	Sustainability	Wellness
Security	Society	Community
Education	Social responsibility	Human rights

Source(s): Brew *et al.* (2015), Cuervo (2018), Dahlsrud (2008), Gerner (2019), Latapí *et al.* (2019), Madorran and García (2016)

Table 3.
Words used for content
analysis

Port	Mission	Vision
San Antonio, Chile	1	1
Coatzacoalcos, México	0	0
Buenos Aires, Argentina	-	-

Source(s): Adapted from database

Table 4.
Example of coding

Table 5.
Port numbers by
country

Countries	Ports	%
Mexico	17	23.61
Chile	8	11.1
Honduras	6	8.33
Bolivia	5	6.94
Perú	5	6.94
República Dominicana	5	6.94
Colombia	4	5.55
Brasil	3	4.16
Cuba	3	4.16
Ecuador	3	4.16
Guatemala	3	4.16
Argentina	2	2.77
Costa Rica	2	2.77
Panamá	2	2.77
Uruguay	2	2.77
El Salvador	1	1.38
Nicaragua	1	1.38
Total	72	100

Source(s): CEPAL (2017), CEPAL (2018), Searates (2020)

Mexico, this may be due to its geographical location in two aspects. The first aspect has to do with its proximity to the United States, the most important market in the world; and the second is related to the fact that it has access to the two main oceans of the world, where the main sea routes operate. Also, in the case of Chile, it is the Latin American country that has most liberalized its economy (Amorós *et al.*, 2016).

It is interesting to note that the geographical extension, at least in this study, does not play an important role in the number of ports. For example, Brazil, which is the largest country in the region, only provides three ports, while Chile, which is territorially less extensive, provides eight ports. Panama, with only two ports (Colón and Balboa), handles the largest amount of TEUs. Bolivia presents a special case. Bolivia, due to its geography, does not have direct departures to the sea; however, in the study, it provides five ports (Sucre, Tarija, Cochabamba, Oruro and Potosí). These five ports are where the goods enter the country from Bolivian seaports enabled in Peru, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay. These ports are managed by the Port Services Administration, which belongs to the government of the country (Administración de Servicios Portuarios, 2019).

Figure 2 shows the analysis of the missions and visions of the 72 ports of Latin America included in the study. According to this, it is possible to affirm that the main trend of the ports is not to consider CSR in their missions and visions, since the averages obtained (20.83, 34.72 and 13.88%) are not majority averages. From the results obtained, it can be inferred that these activities are not considered as a major part of strategic and tactical plans of ports.

Specifically, these averages help to understand the proportion in which ports consider CSR in their mission and vision. Regarding the mission, 20.83% of ports refer only to the mission; this may be due to inconsistency and lack of certainty in their present and future strategies and reveals some flaw in the strategic planning processes of the ports. An even lower percentage of ports consider CSR in their vision (13.88%), and since the vision is the future aspiration to where the organizations want to go, it may indicate that the ports do not consider the future; this may be related to the social situation and changing politics of Latin America. Likewise, 34.72% of ports consider CSR in their mission and vision; this result indicates that, at least in their strategic approaches, ports are congruent in this aspect, since

CSR is considered in the medium term (mission) and long term (vision). Finally, 30.55% of the ports do not consider CSR either in the mission or in the vision; this can have two interpretations: that there are errors in the development of the missions and visions, or they are not considered, since they are activities that are carried out even if they are not declared.

These results indicate there are ports (30.55%) that do not even consider CSR in their missions and/or visions. This may indicate a lack of knowledge about the impact of port activities in the region. It is important to consider that, although the general results do not give rise to considering that CSR is important for ports in their strategic bases, there is a possibility that CSR activities may be developed in some way by ports without their being expressed. The aforementioned indicates a lack of congruence between what is expressed and what is actually done.

It is important to consider the future deadlines of the organizations that manage the ports. The results show that a higher percentage of ports consider CSR in their missions (20.83%) than in their visions (13.88%). This may mean that the CSR activities can be considered more in the medium and short term than in the long term or in the future of the organizations that manage the ports. On the contrary, mostly ports consider CSR in both their missions and visions (34.72%); this result means that most of the ports in this analysis have congruent lines in strategic approaches such as their visions and missions.

Figure 3 segments the ports by region of the continent. The results indicate that the ports of the Caribbean countries consider CSR in both their missions and their visions (62.5%). It is important to consider that in this study only three ports of Caribbean countries were included, so this result is not a generality. Among the ports that allude to CSR only in their missions, those in the Caribbean and South America show a greater presence of CSR in their missions (25%). This may indicate that, at least in their missions, they consider the activities of CSR.

In the case of the ports that allude to CSR only in their visions, the results are different. The ports of North America (only ports of Mexico) consider CSR in their visions. It is possible that the influence the United States has in foreign trade activities in Mexico may also influence this outcome, given the importance that companies of that country give to this type of activity. In general terms, these results show the lack of the presence of CSR in the strategic approaches of the ports. It is also not clear why there are differences among the regions of Latin America. The mission and vision must also be current and multifactorial; that is, they must consider different elements that affect the environment in which the ports of the sample operate. These results are consistent with other similar studies identified in the literature (Cortes, 2018; Kemp and Dwyer, 2003; López-Morales and Ortega-Ridaura, 2016), where there is no congruence

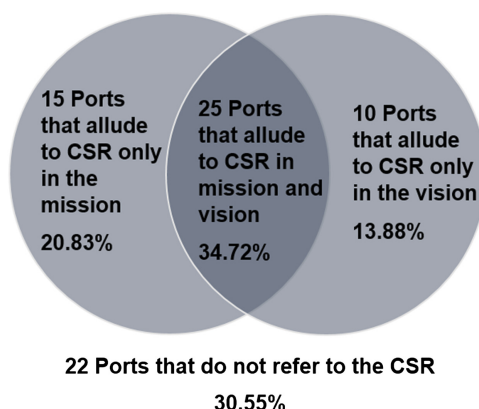


Figure 3.
Results of the content
analysis

between the mission and vision, as well as there is no pattern related to what elements to consider in them.

The main findings indicate that, in Latin America, for the most part, ports do not consider elements of CSR in their missions and visions. This results in a lack of strategic foundations that will implement CSR practices and policies in a planned manner. It seems that the ports that apply these practices and policies do so in an isolated and/or spontaneous way, without having the support of strategic planning. This causes the foundations of a strategy (in this case the mission and vision) to be seen more as to meet a business reputation requirement than as a true strategic planning tool.

The analysis of the ports of Latin America reflects another finding: that the ports of the region do not stress the importance of CSR in their own activities. This can cause a lack of attention or activities that help improve the environment where the ports operate. For example, there may be a lack of environmental protocols, a lack of activities to improve the lives of the people in the cities or regions of the cities or regions where they operate and constant health risks for the citizens of the communities.

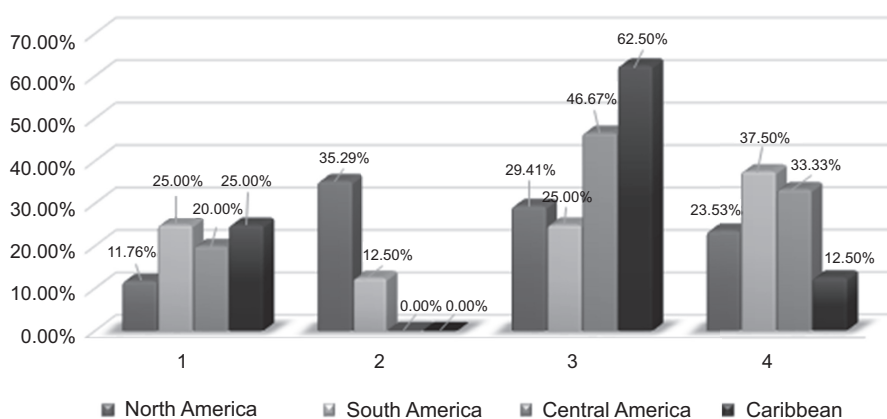
Conclusions and implications for business practice

The objective of this work was to focus on the analysis of the presence of CSR in the mission and vision of the main ports of Latin America. According to the results, two general conclusions are obtained. The first conclusion is that most of the ports studied do not consider CSR in their mission and vision (Figure 2). The second conclusion is that although CSR is not considered in the missions and visions, during the realization of this work, several CSR activities of the ports in their regions of influence could be identified; this is an indication of the lack of congruence and planning between what is said and what is actually done. For example, the port of Santo Tomas de Castilla in Guatemala does not consider CSR in its mission and vision; however, several activities related to the care of the environment were specifically identified, such as "Cleaning Days" (Day L) (Santomasport, 2019).

Given the general conclusions and the results obtained, considering CSR in the mission and vision has important implications for business practice in Latin American ports. The first is to be able to improve transaction costs since it is currently common for governments to request elements related to CSR in order to carry out operations. The second has to do with the fact that it is documented in the literature that CSR is an important factor to consider in the reputation of companies (Cowan and Guzman, 2020); this facilitates the performance of commercial activities and improves efficiency. The third implication has to do with the elaboration of the mission and vision, since those who elaborate them must make an in-depth analysis of the priorities and needs of the organization in order to strengthen the strategic planning process.

An important conclusion is that the regional differences in some ways affect the presence of CSR in the mission and vision. For example, Latin American countries have similar historical roots but also are diverse regions. As we can see in Figure 4, this diversity is also reflected in the mission and vision of ports. For example, the poorest countries in the region are located in Central America and the Caribbean (Gent and Tomei, 2017). However, CSR is more present in mission and vision of ports in this region. Perhaps the ports in this region are more pressured to consider CSR strategies and practices for the authorities and the community.

The results of this work make three relevant contributions to the study of CSR in port strategies. The first is to be able to visualize the CSR activities in ports, which are organizations that are highly disruptive to their environment, from the bases of the strategy (mission and vision) (Vanelander, 2016). The second has to do with the fact that this study can be a spearhead to be able to carry out investigations that allow for the improvement of the planning of CSR in the port sector. The third is centered on the fact that specific studies of



1	Ports that allude to CSR only in the mission
2	Ports that allude to CSR only in the vision
3	Ports that allude to CSR in the mission and vision
4	Ports that do not refer to CSR

Figure 4.
Presence of CSR by
regions of the continent

CSR in ports in the Latin American region were not identified in the literature, a region that, given its social conditions, needs the support of the various regional economic actors, specifically the ports, which are regional engines of economic activity.

Several future research areas were identified. The first is to find a way to make organizations' missions, visions and what they really do congruent; that is, make these three elements align to obtain better results. Another pending topic of research is to analyze the degree to which people who work within the port organizations know their missions and visions. It is also important to understand the context in which the ports operate. For example, socioeconomic and political conditions are different in Mexico, Cuba or Chile.

It is important to mention that the main limitation of this work is that the information obtained came from secondary sources, which caused there to be a lack of data that could have culminated in a better analysis. Such data could be the creation date, if these missions and visions had been updated, and those who intervened in their elaboration.

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