

Title page

Title:

Exploring Twitter as a pedagogical tool in Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability Education

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Abstract:

In recent years, considerable discussion has taken place regarding how to ensure business students are acquiring effectively the appropriate competencies related to Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability (ECSRS). Instructors in business education are encouraged to explore new methods for teaching ECSRS to strengthen this vital part of the curriculum and technology could play an important role. In this paper, we discuss why Twitter could be an effective teaching method in ECSRS education. The study provides a conceptual framework for the use of Twitter taking into account its major characteristics, main benefits, drawbacks, and key factors designing strategies. Some practical activities are also provided to encourage instructors to take more initiatives using Twitter and contribute to improving ECSRS education.

Key words: Business Ethics, Corporate social responsibility, Sustainability, Social Media, Twitter, Effective learning.

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1. Introduction

During the last decade, many studies have been conducted on Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability (ECSRS) in business education, demonstrating the growing interest and importance of this topic (Carroll, 2015; Matten & Moon, 2004; Plumlee, Barrett & Pearson, 2014; Setó-Pamies & Papaikonomou, 2016;). There is continuing concern that university graduates are acquiring the appropriate competencies, skills and knowledge related to ECSRS and know how to ensure their effective acquisition (Carson, 2012; Chavan & Carter, 2018; Dzurainin, Shortridge & Smith, 2015; Hunt & Radford, 2018; Marquardt, 2016; Swanson, 2014; Waller, Freeman, Hambusch, Waite, Neil & Wray-Bliss, 2014). As Godemann, Herzig, Moon and Powell (2014) point out the expectation that management educational institutions should be leading the thought and action on issues related to ethics, social responsibility and sustainability has been reinforced in light of the institution's association with business leaders' failings.

Concretely, the corporate scandals of the early 2000s (Melé, 2008) have generated more discussion about the change towards more ethical business cultures and how this could directly involve educational institutions. As Melé (2008) suggests, the crisis in business ethics should be seen as a challenge for companies but also an opportunity to strengthen management education. Along these lines, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, 2004, p.7) points out, "management education needs to ponder more deeply and creatively on how to advance the awareness, reasoning skills, and core principles of ethical behavior that will help to guide business leaders as they deal with a changing legal and compliance environment as well as complex, conflicting, and sometimes highly problematic

interests and opportunities. While many schools have initiated new ethics instruction, we must not fall into the trap of assuming the majority of students are adequately prepared to meet the ethical challenges of the modern workplace." So, administrators and faculty in business education are encouraged to contemplate their current approaches to ECSRS education and to explore new methods to strengthen this vital part of the curriculum (AACSB, 2004) —either in stand-alone ECSRS subjects or embedded ECSRS subjects— in order to provide the skills and knowledge necessary to analyze the social, ethical and environmental effects of business activities.

Although, over time, a wide set of teaching methods have been used in business ethics education —such as formal lectures, philosophical discussions about ethics using the principles approach (Hasnas, 2013), the Socratic dialogue approach and research papers on ethics (Morrell, 2004; McWilliams & Nahavandi, 2006); telling stories and moral anecdotes (Watson, 2003); newspaper articles and guest lectures (McWilliams & Nahavandi, 2006); full length films (Biktimirov & Cyr, 2012; Goebel & Athavale, 2016; Skorin-Kapov & Benson, 2018); videos, music (McAdams & Duclos, 1999); analyzing case studies, and giving group and individual presentations (Carroll, 2005)— a recent survey carried out by Aragon-Correa, Marcus, Rivera and Kenworthy (2017) shows instructors are only moderately satisfied with most of them; suggesting that innovative teaching methods are necessary.

In this regard, as Salemi (2002) points out, students have a better understanding of business concepts when innovative teaching methods are used and technology plays an important role. Technology contributes to making it easier for instructors to introduce new ways to engage students (Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011) using resources such as popular media, blogs (Cameron, 2012; Hazari, Brown, & Rutledge, 2013), podcasts (Moryl, 2016), and most recently, social media. Current students are very different from students of 20 or even 10 years ago. We are facing a new generation of millennials and Generation Z students who

interact with screens more frequently than with people (Hill 2016). Nowadays, students socialize, access information, and perform their daily activities using social media and they are more likely to also search for educational content on their electronic devices. So, according to Montiel, Delgado-Ceballos, Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Antolin-Lopez (2020) we need to adapt our teaching methods to new generations of students to effectively engage them in the educational experience. In this regard, social media is becoming one of the most current, popular, and dynamic developments in education (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015).

In the particular case of Twitter, academics and instructors are already highlighting the value, impact and acceptance that this social media can have in an educational context (Malik, Heyman-Schrum, & Johri, 2019). According to Malik et al. (2019), implementing Twitter improves not only students' learning, motivation, engagement, and communication but teaching as well, all of which leads towards creating a more resourceful classroom environment.

Despite a growing interest in Twitter's use in education (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2009), to date no research exists on Twitter's use in ECSRS courses, while some research exists on the use of Twitter in marketing classrooms (Lowe & Laffey, 2011; Rinaldo, Tapp, & Laverie, 2011), economic classrooms (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015; Kassens, 2014) or in management classrooms (Menkhoff, Chay, Bengtsson, Woodard, & Gan, 2015; Wankel, 2009). In this paper, we discuss how Twitter could be an effective teaching method in ECSRS education.

Using Twitter in ESCSR courses not only allow instructors to adapt teaching methods to new generations of students but also can help students to understand the magnitude and scope of the world's most pressing challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, poverty, social inequality, etc. All these challenges —listed in the 2020 Agenda for Sustainable Development— are massive global, ethical, social and environmental issues that transcend national borders and have negative effects on large number of people, communities,

and the planet as a whole (Aragon-Correa et al, 2017; George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi & Tihanyi, 2016; Whiteman, Walker & Perego, 2013). Thus, as Montiel et al. (2020) suggest, the intrinsic characteristics of these societal grand challenges, which are complex, uncertain, and evaluative, could benefit from technology as an effective translator of multi-layered concepts into more digestible action items. That is, new technologies can help students to learn about the complexity of sustainability issues, their roots in multiple and different fields, their inter-temporal characteristics, and the difficulties of finding a balance between the triple bottom line (Gallo, Antolin-Lopez & Montiel, 2019). New technologies might also foster shared learning experiences that bring students together to reach solutions.

So, in this search for more effective ways of teaching ECSRS, we propose Twitter as an innovative teaching method which can be easily integrated in ECSRS courses and, if done appropriately, offers new ways of seeing to our students and pushes students to be active participants in the learning process. But the successful use of Twitter in ECSRS educational context requires a deep comprehension about: what Twitter is, how it works, what are its major characteristics, what are its benefits and drawbacks, and what issues should be considered in teaching strategies. Thus, this paper highlights the necessity to develop a conceptual framework to guide the incorporation of Twitter in ECSRS courses in order that effective learning takes place (Sims, 2002).

Therefore, following this Introduction, the paper is structured as follows. First, a conceptual framework for the integration of Twitter in ECSRS education is presented. Second, we focus on the key potential benefits of the use of Twitter in the classroom and also some adverse aspects. And then we identify the main issues that should be considered in designing strategies for incorporating Twitter in ECSRS courses. Within the text, some practical activities using Twitter in the context of ECSRS courses are also offered in order to make instructors more comfortable with this new tool and encourage them to use it to enhance student learning.

2. Proposal of a conceptual framework for the integration of Twitter in ECSRS education

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework that guides the integration of Twitter in ECSRS education, including three blocks of analysis: characteristics and functions of Twitter, key benefits of using Twitter and some drawbacks that we need to consider when designing learning strategies.

(Figure 1 near here)

The conceptual framework is also completed with some practical activities that can be used in ECSRS classes. The proposed activities will be commented on within the text in order to facilitate the comprehension of the use of Twitter in an ECSRS education. Figure 2 shows the activities in a detailed form.

(Figure 2 near here)

2.1. Twitter: conceptualization and characteristics

Twitter is one of the world's fastest growing social media. Twitter has grown exponentially recently, with an increase of 1000% in monthly active users (30 million Q1-10 versus 330 million Q1-19) (Statista, 2019). Twitter is a microblogging technology that is used for information and opinion sharing across a social network.

Twitter involves the sharing of digital content among people all over the world and permits users to influence and co-create rather than just passively observe. According to Ballew, Omoto and Winter (2015), Twitter, like other social media, have three important functions: informational, relational, and experiential. *Informational functions* refer to the capacity to

produce, distribute, and collect knowledge and media content. In this case, Twitter can be used to search for, read, and (re)post information and other material about ECSRS topics. *Relational functions* focus on people's social goals. That is, Twitter facilitates social network development, construction of social identities, or engagement in dialogue with others (for example, with referents in the ECSRS field). Finally, *experiential functions* emphasize novel online experiences that are achieved through interactive and self-directed means. Thus, these functions can have a great potential in an educational context.

But in addition, Twitter also offers a number of unique characteristics, which could add more value to the student learning. Following the work of Lowe and Laffey (2011) these characteristics are: conciseness, robustness, convenience and nonintrusiveness. *Conciseness* refers to the fact that the brevity of the tweets (limited to 280 characters) forces students to express their thoughts concisely and is believed to develop reflection and writing skills (Kassens, 2014). Twitter remains the primary social media that demands more conciseness. Despite the limit of 280 characters, the tweets can be augmented by the use of URL shorteners—such as <http://bit.ly/>—and this enables the user to link out to other material online. This significantly increases the *robustness* of Twitter for educational purposes and allows the user to direct followers to other relevant resources in ECSRS field: websites, journal articles, news, videos and so on. *Convenience* implies that Twitter can be used on an individual's mobile phone (via a Twitter app) just like a text message and the users can tweet wherever and whenever they want. This considerably enhances the flexibility, convenience and immediacy of Twitter. Finally, Twitter removes the potential intrusion because followers may simply follow the tweets of the course through the use of a hashtag (e.g., a course number, such as #ECSRS19).

Furthermore, as Junco et al. (2011) point out, Twitter is one of the social networking platforms most amenable to ongoing public dialogue. Twitter has a boundless potential for

interaction, that is, Twitter promotes interactivity between participants all over the world. Interactivity refers to “the degree to which a communication technology can create a mediated environment in which participants can communicate (one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many), both synchronously and asynchronously, and participate in reciprocal message exchange” (Kioussis, 2002, p.372). And, this characteristic offers a great opportunity to enable and encourage discussions both inside and outside of classroom.

The fact that Twitter has all these characteristics – conciseness, robustness, convenience, nonintrusiveness and interaction – at once, have made it a natural fit for educational purposes. For all this, more and more scholars from numerous academic fields and also professionals from different sectors have started to use this specific network (instead of other social media more focused on a personal setting) to connect and engage with peers and the public to share relevant information and discuss some important issues (Holmberg & Thelwall, 2014; Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2016). For example, in the CSR academic field, the University of Bath in 2018 launched a quarterly list of the most influential faculty thinkers on issues of responsible business in Twitter. The aim of this #thinklist is to spark conversation and inspiration around how Twitter influences and supports research activity in the world of responsible business.

Accordingly, we propose to explore and examine how Twitter can be used in an educational setting in order to benefit student learning even more so if we take into account the rapid and widespread diffusion of Twitter within the demographic of the student population.

2.2. Benefits of the use of Twitter in ECSRS education

According to Malik et al. (2019), who analyzed 103 peer-reviewed scientific studies published over the last decade (2007-2017), Twitter is considered to be a useful tool for communication due to high accessibility, novelty, and real-time format. Students, teachers, and other

stakeholders use it as a pedagogical tool to gain information, interact and engage with each other, participate in their respective communities of interests, and share their insights about specific topics. Twitter has the potential to enhance students' learning capabilities as well as improve their motivation and engagement due to its unique features and non-traditional teaching approach.

In general terms, a literature review (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015; Kassens, 2014; Malik et al., 2019, Lowe & Laffey, 2011; Rinaldo et al., 2011; etc.) highlights the following potential benefits of the use of Twitter in an educational context: connecting to the real world, enriching the material of the course, contributing to the generation of new knowledge, encouraging discussion, continuing engagement of students beyond class time or course time, making learning an enjoyable experience, improving writing skills and facilitating communication and feedback. In this paper we focus on ECSRS education and discuss why Twitter is particularly important in this field. To do this, it is helpful to start reviewing some of the major goals of ECSRS education.

Williams & Dewett (2005) identified three important goals from the literature related to teaching ethics that are particularly relevant for business schools: increasing students' awareness of the ethical implications of their actions, promoting students' moral development, and promoting students' ability to handle the complexity of ethical situations. As Sims (2002) points out, the preponderance of theory and research suggest that teaching ethics in business schools can be effective in developing students' moral reasoning skills, ethical sensitivity and ethical behaviors, but the question is how ECSRS can be taught to business students so that effective learning takes place. In this paper, we propose that using Twitter as a pedagogical tool could contribute in an important way to reach the goals of ECSRS education, especially, enhancing students' ECSRS awareness and sensitivity.

Concretely, one of the most important benefits of Twitter is its use in enhancing students' learning experience by relating ECSRS concepts and theories to the real world (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015; Kassens-Noor, 2012; Lowe & Laffey, 2011). Twitter provides educators with the ability to bring real-world concepts to the classroom in a timely fashion. Instructors and students can search and share ECSRS information and other relevant material (academic papers, current news, videos, images, etc.) so that students can see the relevance of ECSRS concepts beyond the classroom. We can appreciate this in the Activity 2 and 3 (see Figure 2).

Twitter provides an online forum that makes sharing current resources and information far easier and is considered a useful tool in obtaining supplemental material (Desselle, 2017; Juhary, 2016; Lin et al., 2013; Stephens & Gunther, 2016). Twitter can help the instructor to use and share more recent and current ECSRS examples that are applicable to the student's in-group. And this is especially important since Williams and Dewet (2005) suggest that the identity-relevance of ethical examples used in an educational context is positively associated with students' moral awareness and sensitivity. The more immediate, local, and personal the examples are—the more identity relevant—the more the students would engage in critical thinking about the issue. In short, students should become more sensitive to the ethical implications of a decision when it is perceived as personally relevant (Williams and Dewet, 2005). For example, while it might be useful to explain to a class how General Electric polluted the Hudson River, a teacher is more likely to stimulate ethical sensitivity and awareness by using a recent example of a local firm polluting the environment. Or, students could be asked to share situations from their own experiences wherein they were posed an ethical challenge in their work and how they handled it.

In this regard, it is important to note that this capacity of Twitter to bring real-world concepts to the class in a timely fashion provides more relevancy and credibility to the ECSRS courses. And this is very important if we take into account that, according to Sims (2012), one of the

major criticisms of efforts to teach business ethics over the years has been the lack of relevancy for students. Twitter allows students to share regularly with other students and instructors a lot of pertinent, interesting and current content related to ECSRS course. As an assignment, for example, students could be asked to identify a relevant and interesting ECSRS-related article in the daily media, e.g., *Wall Street Journal*, and post it on Twitter along with why he or she thinks it is useful to their current study. Exercises such as this leads students to realize that ECSRS is an important, timely, topic, keeping up with current issues, professional information, news and exposure to new ideas (Camiel, Goldman-Levine, Kostka-Rokosz, & McCloskey, 2014; Greenhalgh, Rosenberg & Wolf, 2016; Nicholson & Galguera, 2013; Rehm & Notten, 2016).

In addition, as Twitter enables interactivity (Kasses-Noor, 2012) and fosters greater student participation, it can contribute a spontaneous pool of ideas, links, and other ECSRS resources collaborating on the development of a larger support base (Wankel, 2009). In a large class section, tweeting enables an immense amount of engagement and interactivity, ideally enriching the sessions in which it occurs (Ebner, 2009). In our case, both in Activity 2 and 3 (see Figure 2), the students chose the specific ECSRS topic they wanted to focus on, sharing this topic with their colleagues and then creating conversations about it. Twitter is the social media most amenable to ongoing dialogue (Junco et al., 2011). And this is a valuable characteristic in an academic and educational setting since students can apply, create and retain knowledge when using Twitter compared with more traditional approaches to learning (Kassens-Noor, 2012). So, Twitter pushes students to be active participants in the learning process, and we can appreciate this in the Activities 1 and 2 (see Figure 2).

As Williams and Dewet (2005) suggest, student involvement in selecting and researching current ECSRS issues that they consider as personally relevant is positively associated with

students' moral awareness. Students may become more ethically sensitive since they are more personally involved and responsible for the task (Williams & Dewet, 2005).

Furthermore, Twitter encourages discussions both in and out of the classroom between students, teaching faculty and others interested in the ECSRS topic, increasing communication (Hedge, 2012). Twitter enables and inspires frequent discussions in the classroom (Croxall, 2010), and is particularly helpful in promoting discussion among students reluctant to speak in class (Kassens, 2014). But one of the key advantages of Twitter is that instructors can move discussions beyond the classroom, for example, by asking students to respond to other students' posts (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015), by continuing conversations begun in class (Junco et al., 2011), by asking students to convince someone about an ECSRS topic based on tweets for evidence, or combine multiple tweets on a single company/particular ECSRS topic to a single story. In addition, students can be encouraged to use some analytical tools, such as "Trendmap", which could be interesting to discuss geographical trends in tweets. In our case, we can promote all this in the Activities 2 and 3 (see Figure 2).

Twitter also allows instructors to forge a close-knit learning community among students and continue engaging them beyond class time (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015); increasing students' interest in the discipline of ECSRS for longer periods of time. Twitter expands the classroom and becomes part of a larger, 24/7, community (Kassens, 2014). In our case, one of the purposes of the Activity 1 (see Figure 2) is to create a Twitter international ECSRS community to listen, build relationships and take advantage of Twitter content. Following important referents in the field of ECSRS will allow students to continue to engage ECSRS issues and learn about this subject beyond course time. Literature (Carpenter, Tur, & Marín, 2016; Jacquemin et al., 2014; Tur, Marín-Juarros, & Carpenter, 2017; Waldrop & Wink, 2016) suggests that after getting familiar with Twitter in the classroom, students can continue further by using it as a career-building tool. Twitter allows students to connect and relate with each other as well as interact

with instructors and professionals, which leads to the creation of social and professional support networks (Anthony & Jewell, 2017; Camiel et al., 2014; Cho & Rangel, 2017; Visser, Evering & Barrett, 2014). Related to this, students could be assigned to respond to a tweet posted by a well-known authority on ECSRS and then to interact with this professional via an exchange of ideas. Thus, integrating Twitter into the learning environment can contribute to generating a sense of ECSRS community (Becker & Bishop, 2016; Booth, 2015; Bull & Adams, 2012; Carpenter & Krutka, 2014; Lomicka & Lord, 2012) that continues engaging students beyond class time and course time, increasing students' long-range interest in ECSRS topics. In this regard, some authors (Carpenter et al., 2016; Hamid et al., 2017) suggest that using Twitter strategically as a pedagogical tool could encourage the adoption of socially responsible and sustainable behaviors among business students. And this is certainly important since these behaviors will continue in students' work and personal lives after the completion of their university education. Twitter can help to provide an effective learning in the ECSRS field, shaping ethical, social and environmental awareness among students (Hamid et al., 2017) and contributing then to a more profound and lasting change in the students' attitudes, knowledge and behavior (Carpenter et al., 2016).

For all these reasons, Twitter promotes students' engagement—that is, the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience (Astin, 1984)—and increases students' interest in the discipline and success in its pursuit (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015; Elavsky, Mislán, & Elavsky, 2011; Junco, Elavsky, & Heiberger, 2013; Junco et al., 2011; Soluk & Buddle, 2015). Twitter permits instructors to excite learners, foster greater student participation (Kassens-Noor, 2012), and, in general terms, make learning a more enjoyable and dynamic experience (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015; Lin, Hoffman, & Borengasser, 2013; Lowe & Laffey, 2011; Menckhoff et al., 2015).

Additionally, Twitter allows students to actively learn through the composition of relevant tweets (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015). The brevity of tweets can also be a powerful tool for teaching and practicing writing and other communication skills (Kassens, 2014). A Twitter assignment pushes students to develop concise arguments about ECSRS issues. Restricting posted content to 280 characters requires student to clarify thoughts into concise, clear, information bullets (Soluk & Buddle, 2015) and it operates as an intellectual challenge for the students. Therefore, students should be trained in the use of Twitter and receive feedback from the instructor on how they are progressing in writing their posts. We can also appreciate this both in the Activity 2 and Activity 3 (see Figure 2). In the Activity 2 students not only must share a link with the piece of news that has been chosen but also compose a tweet restricted to 280 characters highlighting the most important ethical or social aspects. In Activity 3 students also have to tweet about the lessons learned about the company's ECSRS.

Moreover, Twitter has the capacity to archive digitally all course content using a course hashtag. The hashtag allows students to have on-demand access to relevant course material simply by entering the hashtag and course identifier (e.g., #ECSRS19) into the Twitter search function (Hedge, 2012).

Finally, Twitter facilitates communication in making announcements, providing students direct communication with instructors, allowing shy students to communicate, and enabling connections among students (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015). According to Rinaldo et al. (2011), Twitter is a fast, easy method for addressing student issues and performing course-related administrative duties. Twitter's spontaneity allows the instructor to post reminders or encouragement at any time, day or night. Furthermore, Twitter facilitates the feedback through dialogues between teachers and students or among peers. And feedback is a powerful instrument to improve learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), increasing the chance for deep learning.

2.3. Drawbacks of the use of Twitter in ECSRS education

Although the literature review suggests a positive impact of using Twitter for teaching and learning purposes (Malik et al., 2019), a few studies have also highlighted some adverse aspects. These studies have emphasized the inappropriate usage, distraction, overexposure, information overload, addiction, as well as other issues associated with the content and personal privacy (Cho & Rangel, 2017; Kinnison, Whiting, Magnier, & Mossop, 2017; Rinaldo, Tapp, & Laverie, 2011) and logistical issues as, for example, the learning curve that requires effort and time to gain command over various syntactical features and communication styles native to Twitter (Bull & Adams, 2012; Marr & DeWaele, 2015; Stephens & Gunther, 2016).

Some authors (Bull & Adams, 2012; Cho & Rangel, 2017; Davis, 2015; Fox & Varadarajan, 2011; Gonzalez & Gadbury-Amyot, 2016; Lin et al., 2013) suggest that with the overwhelming quantity of tweets, it could be difficult for the users to keep up with the relevant content. Other authors (Jacquemin, Smelser & Bernot, 2014; Lackovic, Kerry, Lowe & Love, 2017) point out that students might be unable to participate in discussions on Twitter due to the presence of more knowledgeable and dominant experts in the field. Finally, student resistance is also one of the recurring drawbacks to Twitter usage within the educational context. Some of the first-time users may not foresee the benefits of using Twitter for educational purposes, although this undesirable perception could be mostly related to the higher learning curve for using Twitter and the fact that students are more familiarized with other social media.

In addition to all these issues, it's also important to address some specific concerns about using Twitter in the business ethics education context. Social networks like Twitter can be a stimulus for troubled communication, especially when faced with evidence of microblogging practices based on fake news, shocking but unfounded rumours in unverified tweets, statements

that are grandiose but doubtful if not clearly untrue, but which take shape as reality as they appear and circulate widely online (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018; Lazer et al., 2018).

In this regard, it is worth considering the approach of Kahneman (2015) concerning the ease with which a judgement is created regarding a given piece of “information”: context and truthfulness are of little or no importance so long as the information makes it possible to reach an immediate conclusion, without more in depth analysis. According to Gozávez, Romero-Rodríguez and Larrea-Oña (2019), this trend corresponds to the WYSIATI formula (What You See Is All There Is), a cognitive barrier that, in this case, smooths the path for the social media user to emit a personal opinion or to receive another from someone else with further reflection. The 280 characters require a very useful practise of summarising for interactions to be effective and dynamic. But this aspect does not undermine suspicions regarding the communicative quality of messages on Twitter. To put it another way, there could be good reasons for asking ourselves whether the intense publication and exchange of tweets is a reaction to a debate or argument for quality public discussion, or if instead it feeds on superficial statements of a few characters containing simplistic opinions and feelings that are liable to circulate energetically online. Therefore, one of major concern using Twitter in an educational context is that discussions about business ethical issues could be vulnerable to declaring one’s opinions rather than giving a truthful, fact- based, and logical, consistent argument.

But as Gozávez et al (2019) suggest, Twitter, like any other medium for social communication, does not inherently have a positive or negative moral burden; it is their users and content creators that, depending on their intentions and values, shape the type of online participation. Twitter can provide a forum for debate and exchange of ideas, or, in contrast, it can be a convenient place for spreading untruths, agendas, rumours, and opinions extracted from systems for detecting what it is socially profitable to say.

Hence, the need for an ethics education which, along with scientific and technological rigor, is vital for training in these criteria, from a broad view of social reality. Participation in the absence of quality information or good interpretative frameworks, is sterile educationally-speaking. Knowledge does not derive from the accumulation of information but from how it is selected and interpreted, in accordance with thoughtful and valid criteria.

At this point, it is important to note that the majority of drawbacks of using Twitter could be plainly addressed with a careful consideration of all these issues in the course design. In all cases, Twitter should be used with the same academic rigor that other traditional tools employ to support education and always under the supervision of the instructor. For this reason, it will be very important that the instructor communicates to students what are the objectives for using Twitter for the ECSR course and what are its benefits. Furthermore, all students can benefit from an introduction on how to use Twitter for class purposes and the rules they should follow using this social media during the course.

In this regard, some factors that should be considered in designing strategies for the use of Twitter in the ECSRS classroom include developing a clear purpose, providing initial training, guaranteeing personal privacy, making it clear that Twitter can be used in or out of class and providing feedback. Students should be educated not only in the capacity to be open to diversity—seeking and testing evidence when faced with the emergence of fake news— but also in the capacity to produce messages and interact with a sense of responsibility, gauging the consequences for oneself and for others of what is published on social media. In the new digital environment, it is necessary to train students in seeking and producing appropriate interpretations of social and economic phenomena. In other words, proven, prudent, and well-considered interpretations, that accept alternative nuances and perspectives and contribute to sharpen the critical sense of students.

Thus, the effective incorporation of Twitter in ECSRS courses will require careful consideration of all these issues in the course design.

3. Conclusions

Academic institutions are asked to assume their responsibilities and offer the necessary competences to future business leaders so that they can contribute to a sustainable development that does not jeopardise the physical environment and society as a whole (Hailey, 1998; Ethical Corporation, 2006). Thus, in recent years, much discussion has taken place regarding how to ensure that students are acquiring effectively the appropriate competencies, skills and knowledge related to ECSRS. According to Sims (2002), teaching ECSRS can be effective in developing students' moral reasoning skills, ethical sensitivity and ethical behaviors, but the question remains as to how ECSRS can be taught to business students so that effective learning takes place.

The digital times in which we live have changed the way we communicate and interact with others. Social media has changed the way we share information, thoughts, ideas and knowledge, and has expanded physical boundaries to include people all over the world. Students are now digital natives (Tapscott, 2009) —with considerable experience using new technologies and social media— and they can have a better understanding of ECSRS issues when innovative teaching methods, such as Twitter, are used. Though Twitter was not designed with the explicit purpose of supporting educational and learning-related activities, many of its characteristics —conciseness, robustness, convenience, non-intrusiveness, and its interactive nature— have made it a natural fit for those purposes (Tess, 2013). In addition, in learning environments that are increasingly sensitive to the use of technology and cost containment for instructional methodologies, these features are ideal.

In the search for more effective ways of teaching, new technologies such as Twitter create novel educational opportunities for improving ECSRS education since they offer new ways of perceiving and understanding to our students and this is especially relevant if we take into account the complexity of societal grand challenges (climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty, increasing inequality, etc.) we are living in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this paper we discuss how Twitter could be an effective teaching method in ECSRS education and also provide a conceptual framework to guide the integration of Twitter in the course design. This should help to make instructors more comfortable with this new tool, providing some practical examples. Only when educators get a profound comprehension of the characteristics of Twitter, its benefits in an educational context and the key factors, they will be prepared to design successful practical applications to create effective ECSRS learning.

Major benefits to using Twitter in the ECSRS pedagogical setting include facilitating communications and feedback, providing timely connections to the real world of business and organizations, enriching course materials, generating new knowledge, encouraging discussions in and out of class settings, promoting engagement, and improving writing and communication skills. Consequently, the adequate integration of Twitter in ECSRS courses could contribute to an effective learning environment (Sims 2002), that is: a) to ensure the teaching of ECSRS is relevant to students, b) to use active rather than passive learning strategies, c) to create a classroom climate for learning, d) to incorporate a debriefing phase, and e) improve feedback (see Table 1).

(Table 1 near here)

The lack of relevancy of ECSRS courses for students has been one of the most important problems that academics have highlighted over time (Sims, 2002). Using Twitter in ECSRS education can help to mitigate this problem and to ensure that the teaching of ECSRS is relevant to students since Twitter allows instructor and students to bring actual concepts and examples to class in a timely fashion. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic that is wreaking havoc on business and personal lives around the world can be explored, though the topic has not yet appeared in Ethics, Sustainability and CSR textbooks (Iacurci, 2020).

Thus, Twitter contributes to enhancing students' learning experience by relating ECSRS concepts and theories to the real world on a timely basis and to increasing students' awareness of the ECSRS issues dominating the news. In this regard, Twitter can contribute to engaging students in critical thinking about ECSRS issues, since they have the opportunity to participate actively and search, share, and discuss more immediate, local and personal examples (Williams and Dewet, 2005).

Furthermore, Twitter makes learning a more enjoyable and lively experience (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015; Lin, Hoffman, & Borengasser, 2013; Lowe & Laffey, 2011; Menckhoff et al., 2015) that facilitates the creation of a classroom climate that encourages student's sharing of recent experiences, allowing even shy students to communicate and enabling connections among students and instructors. And this is especially important both for developing trust but also for setting the groundwork for debriefing the ethics education experiences (Sims, 2002). In addition, Twitter facilitates social network development and engagement in dialogue with other people interested in ECSRS topics and this contributes to generate a sense of community that can continue beyond class time or course time. That is, Twitter makes it easier for instructors to introduce new ways to engage students in the ECSRS issues and encourage the adoption of socially responsible, ethical, and sustainable behaviors, which extend beyond the course's boundaries. And this is especially important if ECSRS instructors sincerely hope and

expect that the current students will become change makers and contribute to a more ethical and sustainable world.

But using Twitter also could have some drawbacks —such as, inappropriate usage, distraction, overexposure, risk of fake news or superficial opinions, etc.— that should be taken into account in designing educational strategies. Thus, it will be very important that the instructor not only communicates what is the purpose of using Twitter in the ECSRS course from the first day but also educates students in the capacity to seek and produce quality interpretations and frameworks of ethical, social and economic phenomena with the same academic rigor as in other face-to-face activities. Face-to-face and virtual spaces should be a single learning space (Lozano, Folguera & Arenas, 2003). Accordingly, we suggest that during the face-to-face sessions instructors reference constantly to what has been done in Twitter to strengthen the connection between the two aspects of the course and increase the relevance of the activities. In this regard Twitter could also contribute to sharpening the critical intellect of students.

In looking ahead, it is proposed that Twitter represents a technological innovation that is optimally suited for teaching and learning in a dynamic field such as ECSRS that is characterized by many and changing stakeholders and issues that are arising daily due to global, competitive, technological, and value-laden influences. Ethics, with deep roots in the field of philosophy, is perhaps one of the oldest fields of study (Christensen, Peirce, Hartman, Hoffman & Carrier, 2007), but in addition, ethics education in business schools has changed over the years to be more managerially-oriented and include new topics and domains —such as CSR, purpose-driven business, and Sustainability (Christensen et al., 2007; Setó-Pamies & Papaioikonomou, 2016). And, as some recent studies (Christensen et al. 2007; Matten & Moon 2004; Moon & Orlitzky, 2011; Setó-Pamies, Domingo-Vernis, & Rabassa-Figueras, 2011)

suggest, there is a trend towards escalating interest in these topics in business schools. Thus, the ECSRS field has a robust past and an optimistic future.

The linkage between the field and the employment of technology, particularly, Twitter, is on a briskly rising trajectory and it is expected that its global support in educational venues will expand daily both in developed and developing economies and societies. In fact, using Twitter in education could also help in the democratization of education. As Montiel et al. (2019) suggest, new technologies help to make education more inclusive and strives to reach the broadest audience possible. This is especially evident in the case of countries where access to information and the internet is mainly done through mobile phones. In addition, the use of Twitter might be more relevant given the current switch to massive online teaching that most universities are adopting as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic we are experiencing all over the world. And in this new context, Twitter has a tremendous potential to generate more quality student engagement. The combination of traditional methods with social media can help students to have a more active role in ECSRS courses and enhance their learning outputs.

Finally, we hope that the proposed conceptual framework—and also the practical examples that we provide in this paper— may guide the integration of Twitter in future courses in the context of the ECSRS education and be the starting point towards carrying on empirical studies to evaluate the outcomes of this new technique.

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Figure 1. Conceptual framework for incorporating Twitter into ECSRS courses

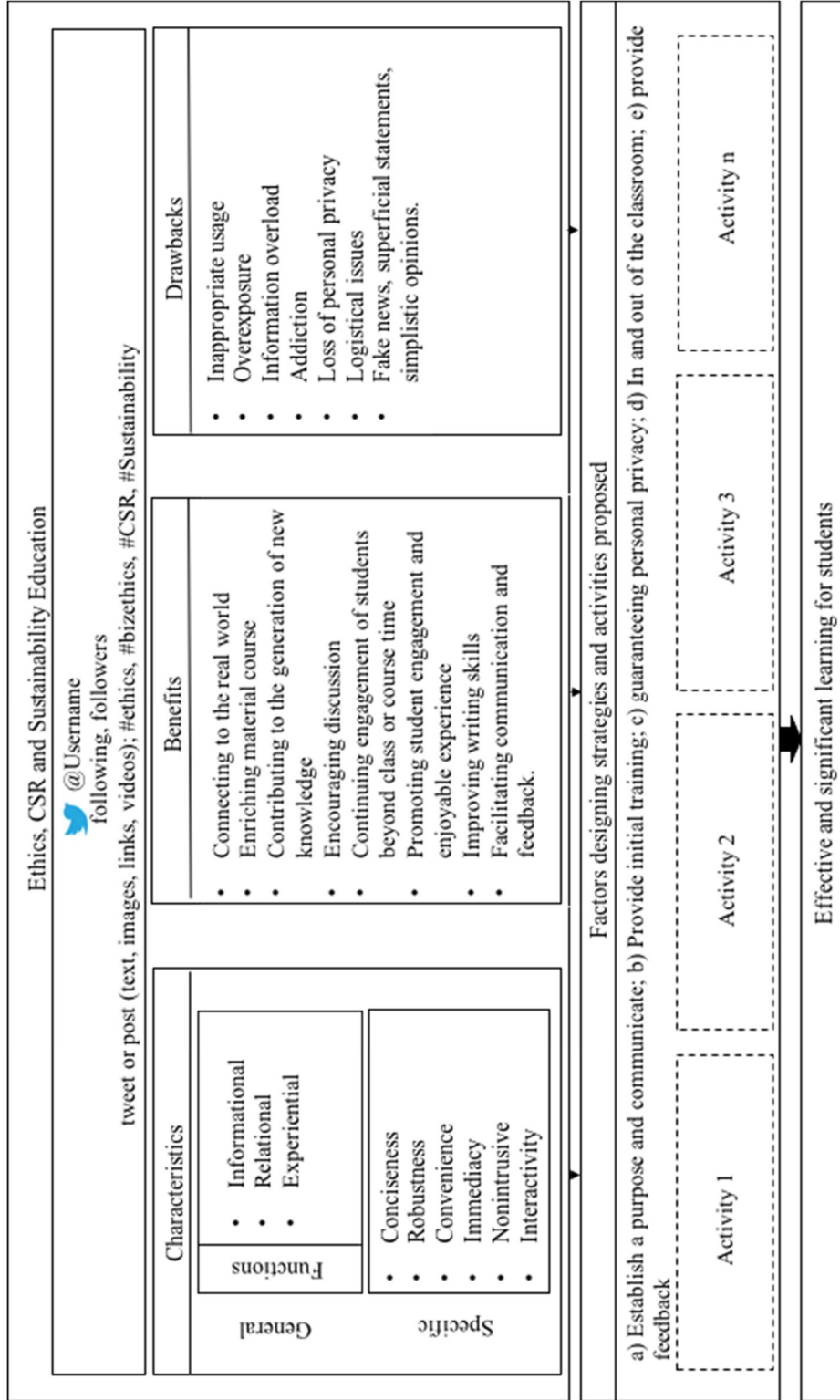


Figure 2. Activities using Twitter in an ECSRS course

<p>Activity 1: “Who to follow in Twitter?”</p>	<p>As Twitter evolves, having a plan on who to follow on Twitter, is very important because there are so many commentators with different points of view. It is a way to monitor and listen to your Twitter international ECSRS community, build relationships and take advantage of Twitter content.</p> <p>In this activity, developed in class, the students had to identify five key influencers (academics, journals, companies, organizations, CEOs, etc.) in the field of ECSRS on Twitter and then argue why they had been chosen.</p> <p>Following important referents in the field of ECSRS allows the students to continue to engage ECSRS topics and learn about the subject beyond course time.</p>
<p>Activity 2: “The most interesting ECSRS news of the week”</p>	<p>Weekly, students have to search in some media for a piece of news focused on ECSRS issues and share the link and some related comments through Twitter, using the course hashtag (#MDERSC18) and other hashtags that allow students to identify the related topics. Then, in each session, students also have the opportunity to explain in class their piece of news and discuss with the other students the ECSRS topics related to this.</p> <p>In this weekly activity, the students are stimulated to read peers’ posts, reply, retweet or comment and search for hashtags. This activity allows students to be contributors and can create conversations with a community of engaged students.</p>
<p>Activity 3: “What are doing companies in ECSRS?”</p>	<p>During the course, students – working in groups – had to choose an actual company in an international context and analyze how this company dealt with ECSRS.</p> <p>The purpose of this activity is to explore how ECSRS was integrated in the strategy of the company. In this activity, each group had to prepare a presentation and present it in a class session for about 10-15 minutes.</p> <p>After each presentation, the instructor encouraged students to tweet about the lessons learned about the company’s ECSRS, and this also was discussed in class.</p>

Table 1. Benefits using Twitter and ECSRS Effective learning.

	<i>ECSRS Effective learning (Sims, 2002)</i>				
<i>Benefits using Twitter</i>	To ensure the teaching of ECSRS is relevant to students	To use active learning strategies	To create a classroom climate for learning	To incorporate a debriefing phase	To provide for feedback
Connecting to the real world	x				
Enriching the material of the course	x	x			
Contributing to the generation of new knowledge				x	x
Encouraging discussions both in and out of classroom			x	x	x
Continuing engagement of students beyond class time or course time	x	x	x		
Promoting student engagement and making learning an enjoyable experience		x	x		
Improving writing skills			x	x	
Facilitating communication and feedback			x	x	x