

Inconsistencies in Sustainability Reports – The Case Suzano

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Abstract

This paper aims to highlight the inconsistencies of the Sustainability Report Suzano in 2009 and 2010. From an analysis of documents about the 30 environmental indicators contained in the report, a comparison is made of this information to model the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), showing the degree of commitment and truthfulness in regard to environmental indicators adopted by the company. We have detected that there are differences in level of service indicators reported by the company, and are noticeable errors involving the values that quantified the materials used in production without any notification that it was evident to clarify the reason for the differences observed, implying that their reports do not have a degree of reliability desired. Similar studies are needed to ascertain whether the fact discovered through this research is a common practice involving the Sustainability Reports point or situation.

Keywords: Environmental Accounting, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), Sustainable Development, Corporate Social Responsibility, Industry.

1. Introduction

For a long time companies were concerned only with profit-making, disregarding the impacts of their activities on the environment. With the awareness of society this context began to change and companies have been forced to adjust their ideas to the new trend.

Due to the need to inform their stakeholders the actions regarding recovery and investments related with the environment, Accounting had to adapt itself to the new economic situation being a very important tool for measurement and disclosure, assisting managers in the decision-making process.

Companies like 3M, Air France-KLM, Allianz, AmBev, Vodafone Group, among others, have already adopted the GRI indicators to develop their sustainability reports. Milne and Gray (2008) reported in their study that more than 883 organizations claim to model of the GRI guidelines in their reports.

Thus, the question arises: in spite of non-compulsory disclosure of sustainability reports, companies are using this fact or to gain media attention and self-described sustainable, leveraging its image, or are in fact interested in promoting social development? For Gray (2006) that is not responsibility and it is not a question of sustainability.

In this sense, starting from the concepts of Environmental Accounting and the GRI model, this research aims to assess the voluntary environmental information disclosed by Suzano Papel e Celulose company making a comparison between the data presented in the reports of 2009 and 2010 (Suzano, 2009 and 2010), observing whether they are in accordance with the definitions submitted by the GRI model. It is worth mentioning that the research that follows is based on the study developed by Gray (2010), which describes the evolution of companies' accountability involving environmental issues towards their stakeholders, highlighting the problems that revolve around such disclosures.

2. Objectives and Scope of the Study

The aim of this study is to analyze the level of disclosure of environmental aspects that make up the Suzano Papel e Celulose Sustainability Report in the years 2009 and 2010 in relation to those determined by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) model.

Through an analysis of the environmental guidelines of the GRI model we seek to identify the indicators to be included in this research and the level of disclosure of the company environmental aspects, plus compare its disclosure with the GRI model.

This research is intended to highlight the importance of Environmental Accounting as well as emphasizing the need for an economic growth coupled with sustainable development, where the main concern of companies is no longer the maximization of profits but the respect for the environment.

The research defines the comparison of sustainability reports of the years of 2009 and 2010 (Suzano, 2009 and 2010), for being the most current, of Suzano Papel e Celulose company and the proper critical analysis of the results, comparing to the report issued by it to the GRI model.

3. Methodology

The present research is focused on a qualitative analysis of environmental disclosures revealed by Suzano Papel e Celulose company on their 2009 and 2010 reports (Suzano, 2009 and 2010) verifying its accuracy having in consideration the GRI model.

The main point is the critical analysis of the information, through a documentary research, highlighting the efforts given off by the company in the recovery of areas affected by their activities as well as the lack of these, where it becomes possible to investigate the veracity of the information.

It is worth mentioning that are not all aspects of the report that will be evaluated, fitting research the disclosure and analysis only of environmental aspects aimed at compliance information, or not, of the standards required by the GRI model related to the environment.

There are 30 environmental indicators that will be compared from one year to another, analyzing if the company discloses clearly not only the positive aspects but also the negative ones caused by its activity both in the process of removal the feedstock and in the production process.

The obtained results will serve as basis to determine the extent to which the company is committed to environmental issues and to verify if what is disclosed in their reports really tries to fulfill the expectations of its stakeholders, making public any action aimed at the preservation and repair of damages caused by its activity or if the report is just a convenient way of ensuring the company position on the market.

4. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) indicators

The need to highlight the environmental information led to the need of the implementation of standards and guidelines that helped the preparation of reports. The model of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) has been widely used in several countries, where both private sector companies, as evidenced by the study of Vergragt and Brown (2008), and public companies Guthrie and Farneti (2008), use various guidelines and orientations for the preparation of their reports.

The model proposed by the GRI seeks to serve as a basis for Sustainable reporting and may be used by small, medium and large companies anywhere. The same is disclosed voluntarily and now the GRI is "working on sectorial versions with more specific relevance to companies in particular sectors (e.g. mining, automotive, chemical and financial services)" (Willis, 2003, p. 235).

According to Burning, Beccali and Cellura (2003) the GRI G3 model serves as an enabler in the standardization process, being precise and having integrity, reliability, balance and justice.

The orientations given by the GRI guidelines, that are relevant and essential to the Organization and the interests of most stakeholders, show the information to be announced into three categories. According to GRI (2006, p. 20) are:

- Profile – Information that help understand the organizational performance, including its strategy, profile and governance;
- Form of management – presents the way as the Organization deals with certain set of themes to provide the context for understanding the Organization's performance in a specific area;
- Performance indicators- show information about the economic, environmental and social performance of the organization.

According to Azapagic (2004, p. 656) "the sustainable development is a holistic concept and, ideally, we should strive to consider all three pillars of sustainability simultaneously ". The same author also reports that in theory it is possible to achieve, but in practice it is more complicated.

As stated by Krajnc and Glavic (2005) in the context of obtaining sustainable development, businesses should be aware that there is much to be improved. The future of the Organization depends on its technological, social and economic performance.

The GRI still offers a level of classification (A, B and C) in which enterprises who choose their model can demonstrate their progress in the accomplish of the criteria established by their guidelines. When a company submits its reports to the GRI auditing, it can insert into their level the "+" symbol, proving thus its suitability and verification by the GRI. Until 2010 the companies that submitted their reports to third-party examinations obtained such a symbol. From 2011 the company can only fit in the classification "+" if it submits their reports to the examination of the GRI (Sustain Consulting, 2011).

5. Sustainability Reports

Sustainability reports have become very important tools for those who wish to assess the company sustainable health and influence decision-making (Krajnc and Glavic, 2005).

The vast majority of the companies sustainability reports are good regarding information about their activities, however there are few that explain the reason of what is being done and their choices (Tsang, Welford and Brown, 2009).

Nowadays, a company that doesn't care about the social and environmental loses place in the market,

because consumers are increasingly demanding and charge actively companies to perform actions regarding environmental preservation, having an increasing need of social accounting applicability (Gray, 2010).

In a study by Dingwerth and Eichinger (2010), in which they sought to assess the connection between transparency and responsibility of 10 automotive industries sustainability reports based on the GRI model, they report in their conclusions that "the reports provide a series of information on aspects related to the sustainability of business activities, but the information remains unparalleled, and so, largely incomprehensible and of limited value to the different audiences"(Dingwerth and Eichinger, 2010, p. 91).

For Schadewitz and Niskala (2010) the disclosures of sustainability reports based on the GRI model, support a more accurate assessment of an organization in the market, mainly due to the fact that the contributions of the reports go beyond what the books may provide.

In studies conducted by Milne and Gray (2008), in which sought to assess international trends in business to disclosure of sustainability reports, they are emphatic in their conclusions, stating that despite the significant increase of companies that voluntarily disclose their sustainability reports, these ones remain with questionable content quality.

6. Suzano Papel e Celulose

Next it can be made the verification and analysis of the GRI environmental indicators model adopted by the company Suzano Papel e Celulose, being a total of 30 indicators. The research is aimed at verifying the adequacy of the reports from the years of 2009 and 2010 disclosed by the company to the GRI model.

6.1 Aspect: Materials

➤ EN1: Materials used by weight or volume.

Suzano announces through the variation tables of the last three years the values related to the consumption of raw materials and materials for industrial and forestry unit. It is necessary to point out that the 2010 report contains differences in relation to the values presented in 2009. The company didn't declare in any of the two reports the reason why such differences and also shows no evidence of adjustment that confirm such a mistake.

Despite the reports disclosed by Suzano being subjected to third-party tests the quality level of information still stays beyond the desirable. Milne and Gray (2008) state in their studies that the quality of the information passed on to society is directly linked to the severity with which such reports are submitted to the auditing. Despite the errors of information related to the values of consumption, Suzano complies the EN1 indicator according to the demands of the model adopted.

➤ EN2: Percentage of materials used that are recycled.

The company discloses material consumption used from recycling of three of its four Industrial Units. However, the company doesn't clarify in its reports why the Industrial Unit Mucuri wasn't included in the presented values. Even disseminating only the values for three units the indicator in question is accepted in 2009 and 2010.

6.2 Aspect: Energy

➤ EN3: Direct energy consumption broken down by primary energy source.

Upon verification of the reports and on the basis of the adequacy criteria provided by GRI we may conclude that the company meets the EN3 indicator in the two years analyzed.

➤ EN4: Indirect energy consumption broken down by primary source.

Suzano isn't answering the EN4 indicator in the years 2009 and 2010, as well as it doesn't clarify the reason it wasn't answered, making it impossible for those concerned with the information of having a prospect of future fitness of the company to the analyzed indicator. For Dingwerth and Eichinger (2010) the content of the information disclosed directly affects the decisions taken by *stakeholders*: the smaller the degree of information passed on, the greater the differences in decisions.

➤ EN5: Energy saved due to conservation and efficiency improvements.

Suzano declares the indicator, but it refers to the same table used for the bookmark EN3 to repost the information pertaining to the indicator EN5. In comparison to the GRI model it is possible to perceive the lack of information pertaining to the total value of energy saved in *joules* or its multiples, the variation in consumption can only be known when the user evaluates judiciously the intakes presented in tables published for 2009 and 2010.

➤ EN6: Initiatives to provide products and services with low power consumption, or that use energy generated by renewable resources, and the reduction in power requirements resulting from these initiatives.

Upon the information contained in the reports of 2009 and 2010 it is possible to conclude that the company

meets the analyzed indicator in the two years.

➤ EN7: Initiatives to reduce indirect energy consumption and achieved reductions.

Suzano isn't answering to the EN7 indicator as well as it makes no mention about it. We can only find it in the indicators index marked as not answered in both years analyzed.

6.3 Aspect: Water

EN8: Total water withdrawal by source.

Suzano answered the indicator EN8 in 2009 and 2010.

➤ EN9: Water sources significantly affected by withdrawal of water.

In 2009 the EN9 indicator appears on the GRI index as answered, but at the indicator table disclosure is listed as partly serviced. Under the analysis of the information contained in the reports and the comparison to the GRI model, it is possible to notice that Suzano meets partially in 2009 and 2010 to EN9 indicator, but declares it as being served in its fullness, and the degree of information provided is unsatisfactory to its proper adequacy to the bookmark.

Despite the evolution in the level of information disseminated through reports, it is obvious that the quality of these still leaves something to be desired. Gray (2010) mentions in his research that the most part of reports tend to offer no evidence or reasoning that connects the functioning of organizations with the dire situation of the planet, i.e. companies prioritize the dissemination of good actions towards the environment, but they forget the most important thing which is the presentation of impacts resulting from its activities.

➤ EN10: Percentage and total volume of water recycled and reused.

Suzano doesn't meet the EN10 indicator in 2009 and 2010.

6.4 Aspect: Biodiversity

➤ EN11: Location and size of land owned, leased, or managed in or adjacent to protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value outside protected areas.

Suzano meets the indicator in the two years analyzed, informing all the areas that are considered legally protected as the areas for permanent preservation.

➤ EN12: Describing significant impacts in biodiversity of activities, products and services in protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value outside protected areas.

Suzano declares the indicator in question, but there is no clarification in its 2009 and 2010 reports regarding the items requested by the GRI. From the analysis of this indicator it is evident that the results found here are according to the studies of Tsang et al. (2009) in which they claim that companies tend to disseminate information about what would be easier to disclose, and not necessarily important information.

Analyzing the content of the provided information by Suzano in relation to the EN12 indicator, it is obvious that the company doesn't fit, in fact, the indicator in question.

➤ EN13: Protected or restored habitats.

Suzano meets the EN13 indicator in 2009 and 2010.

➤ EN14: Strategies, measures and future plans for managing impacts on biodiversity.

Suzano announces in its reports the commitments made to the recovery and preservation of the areas where it has investments. From the analysis of the reports of the two years it is noticeable the demand for improvements in relation to biodiversity conservation by Suzano, thus the company fits the GRI model in relation to EN14 indicator.

➤ EN15: Number of species on the Red List of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and natural resources (IUCN) and on conservation national lists with habitats in areas affected by operations, broken down by level of extinction risk.

Suzano doesn't meet the EN15 indicator.

6.5 Aspect: Emissions, Effluents and Waste

➤ EN16: Total of direct and indirect emissions of greenhouse gases, by weight.

In its 2009 report Suzano discloses only the emissions related to 2006, 2007 and 2008, providing no information about the year in question. In 2010 the company mentions in the text that the calculation for 2009 totaled 981,646t of CO₂, but discloses in the table representing the EN16bookmark the value of 743,140t of CO₂,

omitting the reason of the difference in values. Despite the error it is possible to affirm the appropriateness of Suzano to EN16 indicator. It is notable that the credibility of the information was affected due to the friction of the values passed, highlighting once again the fragility of the content of the reports disclosed by the company. For this reason it is of fundamental importance the submission of the sustainability reports to the GRI audit, giving, this way, a greater credibility to the information.

➤ EN17: Other relevant indirect greenhouse gases emissions, by weight.

According to the information disclosed, Suzano meets the EN17 indicator in 2009 and 2010, according to the GRI guidelines.

➤ EN18: Initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases emissions and reductions achieved.

With respect to the EN18 indicator, it appears in the index of 2009 report that Suzano meets it, but while checking the information throughout the report content, the company declares meeting partially the indicator, being observed some friction on the information declared. Despite the mistake mentioned, Suzano meets the EN18 indicator.

➤ EN19: Emissions of ozone depleting substances, by weight.

Suzano doesn't answer EN19 indicator in both years analyzed, despite mentioning that the Emissions Management table refers to EN20 indicator and also to the EN19.

➤ EN20: NO_x, SO_x and other significant air emissions, by type and weight.

Suzano assumes that answers to the EN20 indicator both in 2009 and in 2010, highlighting that adopts the raising of carbon footprint through the PAS 2050 methodology to identify the gases resulting from the entire production process since the withdrawal of the raw material until the sale of the product.

➤ EN21: Total water disposal, by quality and destination.

Suzano meets the EN21 indicator in 2009 and 2010, stating in its reports the mechanisms for the effluents recovery, as well as the material reusing, as a result of its production process.

➤ EN22: Total waste weight, by type and disposal method.

Suzano meets the EN22 indicator in the two years analyzed. The company refers to a table with the latest three years to introduce the values related to the total weight of dangerous and non-dangerous waste, according to the GRI requirement.

➤ EN23: Total number and volume of significant spills.

In 2009 Suzano declares meeting EN23 indicator and mentions that it occurred no significant spill in its factories. However, in 2010 the company reports in its index entry that doesn't meet the indicator but it doesn't clarify the reasons why such indicator was not met. The absence of information regarding this indicator in 2010 leads us to question whether or not there were spills that affected the environment. For Azapagic (2004, p. 651) the clarity and thoroughness of the information are indispensable, because "environmental indicators reflect not only the main environmental issues, but also the scale of impacts magnitude".

➤ EN24: Weight of waste transported, imported, exported, or treated considered dangerous under the Basel Convention – annexes I, II, III and VIII, and percentage of waste shipments transported internationally.

EN24 indicator is attended both in 2009 and in 2010, Suzano shows the weight of the waste through the Waste and Effluent management table just like it did with the EN22 indicator.

➤ EN25: Identity, size, protection status, and biodiversity value of water bodies and related habitats significantly affected by water discharges and runoff by the reporting organization.

Suzano transfers little information about EN25 indicator in its reports. No one knows for sure the environmental influence generated by the water disposal used in their production process. For Gasparino and Ribeiro (2007, p. 113) "becomes stronger the premise that just do isn't enough, but should disclose what is done, how it is done and with what resources, as well as the amount involved and what the benefits generated."

6.6 Aspect: Products and Services

➤ EN26: Initiatives to mitigate the environmental impacts of products and services, and the reduction extent of those impacts.

In its 2009 and 2010 reports, Suzano informs the practice of some actions aimed at reducing the impacts of its products on the environment. By comparison of the reports presented by Suzano to GRI model it is noticeable

the lack of some information requested by the template, for example, there is a quantitative statement about the actions directed to the reduction of impacts, the company only reports superficially their actions. Bufoni and Ferreira (2006) highlighted in its conclusions that companies tend to use the statements as marketing pieces, where are disclosed only the actions directed to the preservation of the environment, leaving aside necessarily relevant information such as, the impacts arising from their activities on the environment.

➤ EN27: Percentage of products and their packaging materials that are reclaimed in relation to the total products sold, by product category.

In 2009 the Suzano does not meet the EN27 indicator, only mentioning in the index as not answered. However, in 2010 the company declares fit to bookmark and use the same information regarding the EN26 indicator referring to EN27.

6.7 Aspect: Compliance

➤ EN28: Monetary value of significant fines and total number of non-monetary sanctions for non-compliance the environmental laws and regulations.

With respect to indicator EN28 Suzano declares in its 2009 report having received two violation notices resulting on odor emissions in 2008. In 2010, reports not having received any kind of penalty or sanction for non-compliance the environmental laws and explains that this is due to the fact that the company invested in the reduction and repair of impacts resulting from its activities. Through such information is noticeable the adequacy to the EN28 indicator in both years.

6.8 Aspect: Transport

➤ EN29: Significant environmental impacts related with transport of products and other goods and materials used in the organization operations, as well as in the workers transportation.

The EN29 indicator is mentioned in the 2009 index report as answered, but their presentation in the text informs that was attended partially, having once more friction on the information passed on. In 2010 Suzano informs that uses the emissions inventory to guide their actions under ecological. Comparing the reports disclosed to the GRI model it is possible to perceive that Suzano little discloses about the impacts from transport, both with its products as with its employees.

6.9 Aspect: General

➤ EN30: Total investments and spending on environmental protection, by type.

Suzano declares the EN30 indicator partially answered in the year 2009 and complete in the year 2010, but the quality of the information from one year to the next didn't change. This indicator shows all actions carried out by the company in the environment repair and preservation. The low information degree passed on in their reports shows that the company still doesn't care enough with the environmental issues. Gray (2010) is emphatic by mentioning in his studies that companies are willing to move the resources needed in order to convince the society, the Government and even themselves that they are not contributing to the unsustainability of the planet and that at least are on a path towards sustainability.

7. Data Analysis

From the analysis of the 2009 sustainability report issued by Suzano, we have the Table 1 indicating the fitness degree by the company to the environmental indicators proposed by the GRI model:

Table 1: Adequacy level to the GRI model in 2009

Level of Fitness	Indicators 2009	Total	%
Meets	EN1, EN2, EN3, EN6, EN8, EN11, EN13, EN14, EN16, EN17, EN18, EN20, EN21, EN22, EN23, EN24, EN28	17	56.7%
Partially Meets	EN5, EN9, EN25, EN26, EN30	5	16.6%
Doesn't Meet	EN4, EN7, EN10, EN12, EN19, EN15, EN27, EN29	8	26.7%

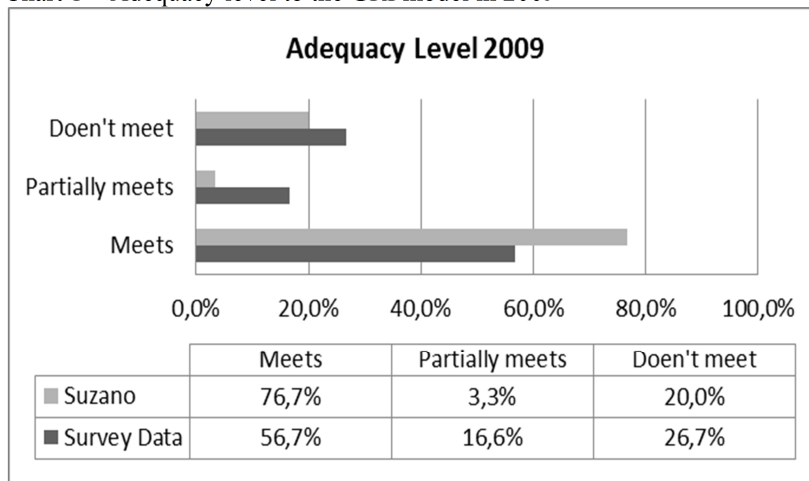
Source: Survey Data

On the basis of the information contained in Chart 1 it is possible to notice that the company meets nearly 57% of environmental performance indicators proposed by the GRI. According to the index released by the company concerning to the indicators adequacy this percentage reaches almost 77%. The difference is noticeable between the company's disclosure and the analysis proposed by the study. This difference can be explained on the basis of the criteria degree adopted to which the search was performed because it is not enough to inform that answers to the indicator analyzed, the company needs to prove his fitness through consistent information with your reality

following the requirement found in the GRI model.

Despite the growing need for disclosure of environmental information we agree that the reports do not meet completely the aspirations of its users. Milanez, Gasparino and Ribeiro (2007, p.113) evidence in its conclusions that "the reports published so far are still quite subjective, with many qualitative information, but without standardization, which difficult the information comparability and, partly, undermines its credibility."

Chart 1 – Adequacy level to the GRI model in 2009



Source: Survey Data

Partial suitability of indicators research shows that 16.6% of the indicators were met partly, that's because the information level contained in reports doesn't meet the adequacy requirements contained in the adopted model. Suzano declares that meets partially only an indicator, which corresponds to 3.3% of the total. However, according to the survey results show that partial compliance is much larger than discloses Suzano. The no suitability according to research corresponds to 26.7% against 20% disclosed by the company, this difference corresponds to two indicators that Suzano declares meet, but according to the review it is visible the lack of information needed to meet the indicators analyzed.

The data regarding the adequacy of environmental indicators 2010, obtained through the analysis of the Sustainability Report issued by Suzano are listed in Table 2 below:

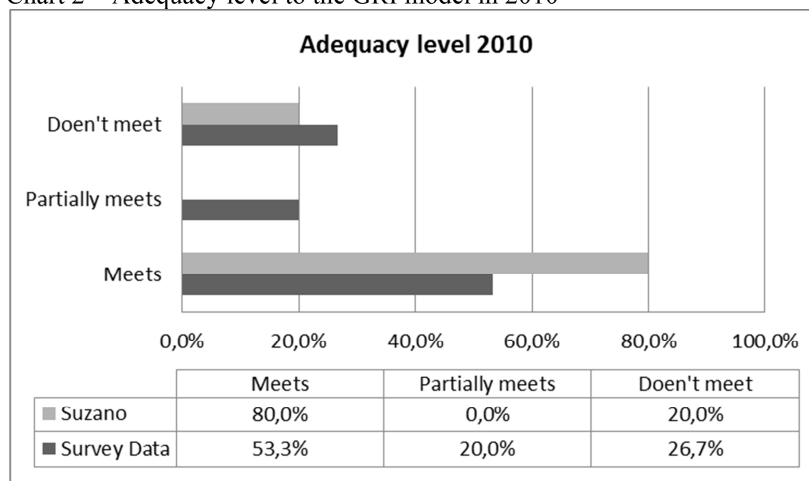
Table 2: Adequacy level to the GRI model in 2010

Level of Fitness	Indicators 2010	Total	%
Meets	EN1, EN2, EN3, EN6, EN8, EN11, EN13, EN14, EN16, EN17, EN18, EN20, EN21, EN22, EN24, EN28	16	53.3%
Partially Meets	EN5, EN9, EN25, EN26, EN27, EN30	6	20%
Doesn't Meet	EN4, EN7, EN10, EN12, EN19, EN15, EN19, EN23, EN29	8	26.7%

Source: Survey Data

Through the confrontation of the information disclosed by Suzano with the realized analysis it is possible to reach a considerable difference regarding the level of adequacy. Suzano declares through its index that meets 80% of the indicators while in the research figures the company adapted only in 53.3%. In relation to partial service of the indicators index of 2010 shows that there was no partial suitability, but the analysis shows that 20% of the indicators were met partially. From the values found we have the Graph 2 which represents more clearly the adequacy level to the indicators in the year 2010:

Chart 2 – Adequacy level to the GRI model in 2010



Source: Survey Data

As for the not meeting of the indicators, on the basis of the information issued by Suzano, only 20% of the environmental indicators were not met, while the research shows that non-adequacy corresponds to 26.7%. All the differences presented in relation to the level of adequacy refers to the confrontation of sustainability reports issued by Suzano to GRI model, the criteria presented by the model were not met in its fullness by Suzano causing the difference published by research. The level of information provided and the differences found affect substantially the quality of the reports issued by the company. Gray (2010, p. 18) in examining the role of social accounting and reports released by companies points out that "if these reports are the best social accounting can offer, skepticism about the importance of social accounting would probably be justified."

8. Conclusion

The main objective of this work was the verification of the service degree to environmental indicators by the company Suzano Papel e Celulose. To this end, we used the Sustainability Reports issued by the company for the years 2009 and 2010, comparing them to the model proposed by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

In addition, it was possible to identify the degree of evidencing of the Suzano company, comparing its reports to the adopted model by evaluating the information level passed on to its users and highlighting the company undertakes to provide data that report both their actions aimed at preserving the environment as the impacts arising from their activity. Gray (2010) declares in his research that the big companies are among the main influencers of the planet unsustainability and that the level of information provided isn't yet the desirable; because the advance involving the accountability of environmental issues isn't fast enough to handle with the planet critical reality.

It was detected that the sustainability reports point ways merely and superficially positive and not aiming objectively all the complexity that the matter involves. This belief, combined with the information also placed at this work show us that the vision of *stakeholders* turns to this positivism sold as environmental marketing, raising a green image and placing it in evidence in inconclusive reports, promoting the image of the Suzano company with a corporative profile passed on and reinforced as a conscious company and linked to environmental impacts that this causes. From the results we can say that we are invited to believe that there is an overwhelming commercial motivation for sustainability (Oberndorfer, 2004).

The data collected show us a great inconsistency in relation to numbers released. We also saw that the non-obligation of environmental information along with the accounting reports, as a matter of legislative purposes, tells us that the apparent vision of this company will always be linked to a company positively interested in all these sustainability issues. Milne and Gray (2008) associate this low reports quality to the fact that among all reports published in 2008, less than 200 reached A level determined by the adequacy level of GRI, being subjected to external verification. In addition, verified that the existence of the B and C levels end up allowing the disclosure of reports usually with a lower level of quality.

From the theme addressed, becomes clear the necessity of more researches focused on the analysis of the reports voluntarily disclosed, in order to ascertain the extent to which companies are truly committed to environmental preservation or if the errors found at this work make up a framework of total neglect involving the dissemination of environmental information.

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