

Social Responsibility and Its Impact on Mental Images of Companies

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Abstract: This study aimed to identify the impact of social responsibility on improving the mental image of the companies, the descriptive analytical method was used and the sample of soft size 125 respondents were distributed to Sudanese telecommunications companies. The study found a positive relationship between the social responsibility and mental image. The study recommends that the decision-makers should apply the social responsibility inside and outside the organization to improve the mental image of the company.

Key words: Economic dimension, the legal dimension.

Date of Submission: 20-09-2017

Date of acceptance: 07-11-2017

I. INTRODUCTION

The studies examined the social responsibilities in the last decades indicated that two different points of views on social responsibility, the first pointed out that business organizations are considered economic units aimed to realize profit maximization whereas the second believed that the organizations are social units which play an increasing social role in their environments (Musa Qasim2014). Many institutions take initiative to improve life quality of their employees, working conditions, justice in position and other social internal initiatives to increase their profits and competitive position. In other words, it is significant to shed light on the economic and marketing concerns in the institutions and more consideration shall be on the social responsibility elements such as clients, competitors, suppliers, society and environment (Al-Amery & Al-Ghalbi 2010).

II. PROBLEM

The study of social responsibility relations with mental images is the most significant and administratively complicated so that attracted the attention of researchers and learners. In spite of the diversification of studies in this concern, yet the opportunity for further studies should take into account comprehensive strategic type, social responsibility, elements, and natural conditions in which business organizations operating. Moreover, the expected impact level of correlation between the social and economic activities are considered (Sana Abdelrahim 2010). The review of former studies indicated that most of them focused on studying social responsibility comprehensively without examining their dimensions. However, some studies (Sana Abdelrahim and Abdel ridah Naser 2010) focused on two dimensions of social responsibility while others focused on three dimensions (Wasfi Nazal and others 2011). Some studies also shed light on correlation between the social responsibility and mental images. Today, organizations, under sharp competitiveness, are more interested in maintaining good mental images than ever before to all their transacted parties. Thus, each organization has its own mental images considering all concerned parties whither it is accepted or denied and planned or unplanned. A good mental image can contribute greatly in the success and survival of organization (Gregory 1999). The mental image is established on the stakeholders' understanding for specific business to the extent that the image has impact on organization reactions towards specific business, products and services. Therefore, organizations should manage their images in order to establish positive images or ideal images to achieve competitive advantage against competitors. Firms and administrative leaders realized the significant study of the existing mental images in public and they should set out policies and plans to ensure establishing image that is desired by the firms or leaders. The establishment of positive mental image has become an essential objective that all firms or organizations pursue to realize it by good performance to meet public needs. (Qutub and Attriss 2007).

The Questions

The study is carried out to answer the following question: What is the role of social responsibility in improving the mental image of Sudanese communication sector?

The Objective

The study aimed to identify the impact of social responsibility on improving the mental images.

Scientific Significance

The significance of study stemmed from its unique title and examined the social responsibility in terms of four dimensions (economic, legal, ethical and humanitarian dimension) and correlation with mental images.

Practical Significance

To assist the directors of Sudanese telecommunications companies in applying the philosophy of social responsibility in their firms by identifying the real results after analysis and it is an outcome of the fieldwork study.

III. METHODOLOGY

To study the subject and achieve its objective, the descriptive analytical method was used.

Former Studies

1. **Bu baker Mohammed Elhasan Study (2014):** The study aimed to explain the role of social responsibility in improving the performance of organization. The descriptive analytical approach was used and deducted the following results: For firms, the adoption of social responsibility concept leads to improve their performance and mental images in society. The Algerian company focused on the social responsibility concept at low-level rate and it is interested in the dimensions of social responsibility at different percentages.

2. **Qutub and Attriss Study (2007):** The study is about the mental images of trademark between the globalization and challenges of era. The study aimed to shed light on the most important challenges that facing the trademark at the present time and exposed mental images distortions. The findings showed that the trademark is exposed to facing economic, social and political challenges that affect its mental images and long history.

Social Responsibility Concept:

The social responsibility concept emerged as an interaction between various factors such as the increasing and development of social pressures, expansion of business organizations size and their complicated relationship. As well, the contribution of business organization is to improve and develop specific social life. In addition, the business organizations share in enhancing humanitarian and social values and the significant satisfaction of society is to accept their objectives, business methods of work and the development of awareness and self-realization of humanity and society. Large international universities and research centers have shown great interest in the social responsibility and teaching business subjects related associated with society and the accumulation of scientific researches including theoretical and empirical studies in this domain. The emergence of stakeholders' group theory led to the development of contemporary social responsibility theory, and its spread has opened avenues for individuals and public organizations to realize that there are new groups and categories in the society that their issues and needs should be satisfied and addressed by organizations. The primary groups include customers, suppliers, shareholders, proprietors, employees and local community. Accordingly, the application of social responsibility theory is measured by the type of relationship between the groups and organizations and how far they respond to satisfy the needs of the groups and how to deal with them (Salih Alhamory 2015, p.15).

Definition of Social Responsibility

By examining theories, studies and actual situation of social responsibility, it is not possible for the social responsibility to spread and develop in scientific reality without adopting by family and particularly mother so that children would grow up with social responsibility spirit after they realized and understood its mechanisms and recognized its significance in the society. They also realized its role in the economic development in the country and performance development in different organizations. It is assumed that they will be leaders of organizations in the future (Mohammed Alhusaini, Saudi Social Responsibility Network, 2015). Significance and Objectives of Social Responsibility In recent years, the social responsibility has become an ambitious to all private and the government organizations that pursue to provide their employees theoretical and practical training on social responsibility. The government officials showed a great interest in the social responsibility programs and they considered them as the key for national solidarity and all work for the sake of it (Amani Lugman, Saudi Social Responsibility Network, 2015).

Significance of Social Responsibility

The social responsibility established an improvement in the current working conditions in business organizations and led to wide spread of cooperation and cohesion between the different parties (Eltahir Khamra, 2007, p 82).

Social Responsibility Dimensions

Some researchers discussed the social responsibility elements in general framework in organizations including some dimensions. These elements can be modified by different measures as per organization activity and type of

work and the influence of different stakeholders' categories. Carroll assumed that social responsibility includes four major elements such as economic, ethical, legal and philanthropic. Carroll, in his framework, introduced a matrix, explained these four elements, and how can affect each beneficiary in the environment. To understand Carroll four elements of social responsibility needs to establish a close link between success requirements and satisfaction of society needs requirements particularly in the framework of legal and economic elements. The society' basic demands are these elements which supposed to be satisfied by the business organizations and at the same time, the society expects that business organizations to play a great role in the legal and philanthropic element and take into account that the later represents the real right society wants and therefore, business organizations should adopt them. Carroll has designed a hierarchical figure to explain the correlation between these elements and dependency of any element on the other is regarded as reasonable situation as illustrated in the figure below (Ibn Masoud, 2012, p4).

Mental Images Concept and Significance

Most organizations realized the extent of good mental images and attempted to consolidate it in the stakeholders' mental. Gregory (1999) said that each organization has its own mental images and has great impact on organizations success. On the other hand, Ferrand and Pages (1999) thought that the mental image is capable to create value and it has influence on the consumer behavior because they have specific realization about it. This cannot reflect the real objective of realization. Boyle (2001) saw that the mental image of business organization contributes to improve behavior and individual situation of employees while Boyle (2002) found that the mental image is a treasure, which is difficult to get it as well as it is not easy to lose it. Gregory (1999) added that this realization has great impact on the capacity of organizations to survive in the complicated existence situation and sharp competition. Smith (2001) emphasized that it is very essential for organizations to be distinguished from others in order to compete under the globalization conditions. It is worth mentioning that organizations that provide the same service as banks and airlines companies are marked by high pattern of services provision. For organizations to be distinguished than others and achieve competitive advantage, Greener (1991) argued that it is necessary to plan for their mental images based on particulars differences such as service, dependency, quick delivery and safety. Patrick and others (1999) pointed out that the mental images of organization is one of the most important intangible resource that supports the survival of competitive advantage whereas Šmaižien and Oržekauskas (2006) identified the mental images as one of strategic assets that leads to establish competitive advantage and favorable conditions for organizations to survive and develop. Goldsmith et al study (2000) discussed the consumer's point of view about organization and provision of products and services would be influenced by organization reliability that is defined as "believe in reliability and faithfulness of company and experience level and capacity for providing product/service which is demanded by the consumer". The reliability would affect the consumer purchasing intention in the end.

Correlation between three dimensions of mental images

Cassidy (1999) thinks that the image of organization is one of the assets and attracts the attention of consumers, employees and investors. It is comprised of six elements including emotional attraction, social responsibility, goods and services, work environment, vision and leadership and financial performance. These six elements are associated with three dimensions of complete mental images namely self-images, expected images and realization images. In other words, business environment and vision and leadership represent the self-images and emotional attraction (i.e. the company is desirable, esteemed and admirable) represents the realization images. The social responsibility represents both the expected and realization mental images (i.e. provision of benefits to the society under company' auspices such as financial assistance and different activities) The financial performance reflects the success of organization and consumers always want to be associated with successful organizations, therefore, this image represents all the three mental images together.

Methodology

This chapter is concerned with the methodology and population study sample, measure variables and statistical processing used for results analysis and the theory applied.

George Homenz Social Correlation Theory

For Homenz, the social correlation begins as face-to-face interaction of individuals reflecting social, economic and psychiatry aspects and they form a basis for correlation activities between interactive parties. The interaction is based on social objectives and ends such as reputation, consideration, appreciation and esteem and social influence and it is not only material benefit is considered because it is not always a social correlation objective. An individual, inside the group, participates in various continuous correlations activities targeting social acceptance and respect of the members of his group. This social correlation would enhance the social consideration and status and intensify the rules of social homogenous group. Homenz considered acceptance,

esteem and social homogenous as social rewards to the individual inside the group. The social group is consisted of three primary types of social status as higher, middle and lower. The individuals at higher gradual position receive many social rewards because of homogenous with their group objectives and values and once they realize the significant receivable social rewards, they increase their activities inside the group. Thus, the higher position, the higher receivable social rewards. Then Homenz extended his theory to apply in society after applied in small category group. He said that” as the individual social activities increased in the community, the social rewards will be increased and so the percentage of successful activities deserved rewards will also be increased”. It is noted that the individual social activities in industrial society is greater than agricultural society. Therefore, Homenz said that the social reputation and status of industrial man will increase by his wealth and office assistants and he attributed the social rewards to the activities of industrial man and the social status and reputation will increase in the society too.

The model below based on Homenz theory:

Independent variables	Dependent variables
Economic dimension	
Legal dimension	Mental images
Ethical dimension	
Humanitarian Legal	

Hypotheses

1. There is a positive correlation between using economic dimension in social responsibility and mental images.
2. There is a positive correlation between using legal dimension in social responsibility and mental images.
3. There is a positive correlation between using ethical dimension in social responsibility and mental images.
4. There is a positive correlation between using humanitarian dimension in social responsibility and mental images.

Method

The descriptive analytical method was used because it is relevant to the study.

Research population and Sample

The soft sample (non-probability) is adopted because it helps to collect information from individuals of sample who are in comfortable conditions for study and data gathering (Sykaran 2006). The sample is comprised of employees from Zain, Sudani and MTN companies. The distributed questionnaires were 150 and received 125.

Information Sources

To achieve the objectives of study, the researchers used various sources to collect information such as textbooks, references, periodicals, international magazines and former researches and studies associated with the subject understudy.

Measure of Variables

Measurement Quality

a) Internal comprehensive structure: To achieve the objective of the concept, the researchers considered the measure stated informer studies and some questions were translated from English into Arabic language for understanding and answering them.

Reliability

The responses should be integrated and homogeneous to achieve custom and reliability in the sense that the questionnaire measures areas of research and leads to the same results if it is used again under the same conditions of study.

Statistical methods

The data were entered by computer and statistically processed by Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program.

Factor Analysis

Schedule (1) factor analysis for the statements of social responsibility subjects (sample size 150)

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Economic Dimension				
Organization achieves economic profits without affecting wages	625	0.183	0.152	0.174-
Organization pursues to increase its economic benefits for competitive products	685	0.030	0.070-	0.174-
Validity is existed in all economic transactions in terms of purchasing and selling by clear-cut means and without cheating	0.019	0.038 -	0.248	.841
To work for achieving maximum profits by transparency methods	0.119	0.089 -	0.157	.740

Legal Dimension				
To abide by laws to provide medical and health care for employees	0.040 -	0.230	.792	0.045
Your organization respects regulations for protection against occupational risks, diseases and work accidents.	0.013 -	0.082 -	.784	0.314
Organization is committed to provide employee's rights regarding social services such as transport to work and provide facilities to obtain accommodation.	0.162	0.262	.789	0.176
Your organization has a permission from social security organization to provide aids at death or disability.	0.000	0.117 -	.847	0.341
Ethical Dimension				
The mission of organization agrees with the organization' objectives and society' values and objectives.	0.183 -	.981	0.308	0.074
Organization has a firm system for combating administrative system by all means.	0.283	.688	0.249 -	0.041
Your organization pursues to consider human rights and respects traditions and customs of societies.	0.282	.637	0.207	0.193 -
Organization has a clear ethical manual and well known to all employees.	0.183 -	.745	0.308	0.074
Humanitarian Dimension				
Organization contributes to implement basic projects for all schools, hospitals, housing programs and others.	.781	0.074	0.308	0.074
Organization provides assistance and donations to philanthropic projects (childhood centers and handicapped centers care).	.988	0.041	0.249 -	0.041
Organization agrees to participate in developing protection programs for society and environment against local organizations and societies.	.537	0.193 -	0.207	0.249
Organization participates in providing job opportunities to women because of their role in increasing income levels and improving standard of living.	.785	0.074	0.308	0.074

Total percentage of interpreted differentiation %	76.3
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.703
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	2501.744

Factor Analysis of Mental Images

Schedule (2) explains the factor analysis for mental images, schedule (3) shows the matrix is consisted of three columns (dependent variable) and the response values exceed (0.50), and saturation is greater than (0.50) and KMO value exceed variable by (0.60). The hidden root is greater than one. Therefore, the statements of questionnaire about social responsibility did not change.

Schedule (2) shows the factor analysis for mental images variables statements

Mental images	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3
Customer care creates good mental images about company.	0.063	.749	0.162
To organize exhibitions and symposiums on company's products assist to create positive mental images about the company.	0.057	.645	0.016
Support sports, social and cultural activities would enhance good images of company.	0.203	.889	0.170
In events products prices are reduced to enhance the image of company.	0.099 -	.777	0.185
Total percentage of interpreted differentiation %	76.8		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.608		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	200.572		

Schedule (3) Correlation Analysis between Study Variables

Person's Correlation Coefficient for All Variables

		Economic	Legal	Ethical	Humanitarian	Image
Economic	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	125				
Legal	Pearson Correlation	.951**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	125	125			
Ethical	Pearson Correlation	.333**	.285**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001			
	N	125	125	125		
Humanitarian	Pearson Correlation	.482**	.424**	.775**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	125	125	125	125	
Image	Pearson Correlation	.471**	.388**	.439**	.512**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The data obtained from the field study prepared by researchers.

Hypotheses Test In this section,

We discuss the study hypotheses after factor analysis for data as per the objective of the research, which is associated with the impact of social responsibility on improving the mental images. The hypotheses are as follows: there is a positive correlation between the social responsibility dimensions (Economic dimension, legal dimension, ethical dimension and humanitarian dimension) and mental images. The Multi Regression Analysis Test was used to identify the impact of social responsibility and mental images variables as shown in schedule (3). The Beta coefficient was adopted to know the expected change in the dependent variable due to change in one unit of independent variable. It was also depended on (R2) to know the ability of the model to explain the relation between the dependent and independent variables. In addition, the Test F was used to identify the significance of regression model, the significant level (0.05) was applied to judge the significant impact level, and so the counted significant level was compared with approved significant level value. The impacts have statistical significance if the value of counted significant level is less than the approved significant level (0.05) and vice versa. Based on the analysis of regression, the results are as follows:

Schedule (4) Regression of components for social responsibility and competitive advantage (Beta coefficient)

Variables	Beta Coefficient	Significant level
Economic	.793	.002
Legal	-.507	.036
Ethical	.130	.263
Humanitarian	.243	.054
Statistical Percentage		
R ²	.193	
Adjusted R ²	.185	
Δ R ²	.493	
F change	22.810	

Note: Level of significant: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<.01

Schedule (5) Hypotheses Test Summary

Hypothesis	Evidence Case
There is a positive correlation between social responsibility and mental images	
There is a positive correlation between the economic dimension in social responsibility and mental images	Confirmed
There is a positive correlation between the legal dimension in social	Confirmed

responsibility and mental images	
There is a positive correlation between the ethical dimension in social responsibility and mental images	Unconfirmed
There is a positive correlation between the humanitarian dimension in social responsibility and mental images	Unconfirmed
Hypothesis Confirmed Level	Confirmed Partially

IV.DISCUSSION:

The data of questionnaire were exposed to factor analysis for understanding the differences between large response of variables because the factor analysis uses standard variables whereas variables items are distributed into standard variables as per deviations from the arithmetic mean and the correlation between variables in one factor is stronger than with variables in other factors.

There is a positive correlation between social responsibility and mental images:

This finding agreed with study (Bu baker 2014) titled (Role of Social Responsibility in Improving Performance of Organization, Case study of Naftal Corporation) and indicated the existence of social responsibility impact elements on improving the mental images. It is also agreed with study (Sana & Naser, 2010) titled (Role of Comprehensive Strategic Social Responsibility in Achieving Sustainable Competitive Advantage, Case study of Public Company for Fertilizer Industry). The findings of studies showed the impact of dimensions components (economic, legal, ethical and humanitarian) was clear on the mental images. However, they agreed with negative impact of ethical and humanitarian dimension because companies have limited benevolent works dimension in such social fields compared to other fields.

Impact:

1. Theory:

The former studies tested correlation between the dimensions of social responsibility and mental images and the theoretical significance of this study is to identify the role of social responsibility share in improving mental images in firms and identify the variables of study and impact on them. The findings revealed that the economic, legal, ethical and humanitarian dimensions have great impact on mental images.

Application: Contents of Applied Study:

For decision-makers, this study examined the significance of adopting directions concerning the social responsibility to help organization to improve its overall performance and images to acquire distinguished merit. This adoption would assist organization to determine what is relevant to its competitive ability in business field. The directors of Sudanese companies in communication sector should pursue to apply social responsibility for creating great impact on satisfaction for both employees and customers in order to improve their mental images.

Recommendations:

1. The Sudanese companies should ensure the adoption of social responsibility because of its clear impact on organizations.
2. It is necessary to ensure providing more consideration for the humanitarian aspect in social responsibility because of its role in spreading organization's reputation.

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Dr.Eltahir Ahmed Mohammed Ali Social Responsibility and Its Impact on Mental Images of Companies.” IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), vol. 22, no. 11, 2017, pp. 41-48