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# Corporate social responsibility in the oil and gas industry in Qatar perceptions and practices

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### ABSTRACT

In the last few years, the state of Qatar paid a great attention to corporate social responsibility (CSR) to face a score of challenges namely sustainable development, globalization, governance, corporate sector impact, communications, finance, ethics among others. Through in depth interviews and the analysis of companies' websites and annual CSR reports, this study looked at the perceptions and practices of CSR in Qatar. Findings of the study suggest that Qatar oil and gas companies engage in corporate social responsibility activities focusing on health, sports, education and environment, while neglecting other important areas such as human rights, labor rights, work conditions, anti-bribery and anti-corruption measures. They perform no research and assessments before or after they engage in CSR activities. CSR should be enforced by law, and implemented according to international standards in order to improve its performance and to meet local and international challenges. With barely a decade of practice and experience, CSR in Qatar oil and gas industry is developing fast and has to move to the next step where the focus should be given to developing policies and strategies, and through institutionalizing it.

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"We believe that the leading global companies of 2020 will be those that provide goods and services and reach new customers in ways that address the world's major challenges—including poverty, climate change, resource depletion, globalization, and demographic shifts."

Niall Fitzgerald, former CEO & Chairman, Unilever.

## 1. Introduction

As Qatar moves forward in meeting the ambitious goals of Qatar's national vision 2030, the role of companies and firms in community development becomes more and more crucial. Qatar vision 2030 is based on four major pillars: Human development, social development, economic development and environmental development (CSR Report Qatar, 2012: 17). This vision of course believes in the role of social responsibility in implementing its goals and objectives. Being the continuing commitment by companies to behave ethically and contribute to sustainable development while improving the quality of life of the employees, the local community and the welfare of society, as well as meeting the expectations of the stakeholders, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become nowadays increasingly important and indispensable for any organization's success, corporate image and reputation. Successful companies are those that value CSR and integrate it in their programs and activities. In fact, there is a high affinity between the principles of quality management and CSR.

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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a subject of increasing interest in business practice and business research (Lee, 2008; Taneja, Taneja, & Gupta, 2011). Despite the growing interest in this topic, there is still no general agreement on the precise meaning of CSR. Instead of being a consistent concept, CSR is an umbrella term that encompasses various overlapping areas, such as corporate citizenship, stakeholder theory, business ethics, and corporate sustainability (Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011).

The current discussion of CSR is predominantly concerned with the additional contributions that corporations make to the wellbeing of society. In particular, this is reflected in the strong focus on the idea of caring about the welfare of society as a whole. Accordingly, contributing to “doing well by doing good” is a frequently encountered credo for corporations in business practice and business research. Indeed, CSR can contribute to a fruitful interplay between business and society. In addition, CSR offers corporations a variety of opportunities to benefit from, ranging from enhanced customer loyalty to favorable media coverage, penetration of new markets and improving the well being of the community.

Corporate social responsibility has been the focus of companies for the past five decades. In the last few years societal expectations about the responsible role of business are on the increase which has led companies to introduce new strategies, techniques and tactics to get the best out of CSR practices and activities. This paper looks at how oil and gas companies in Qatar define CSR, what are the CSR activities they engage in, do they conduct CSR assessment, how do they develop CSR strategies, how do they select their stakeholders, how do they publicize their CSR activities, what resources do they allocate to CSR, to what extent they contribute to sustainable development, and how do they evaluate their CSR activities, and what benefits do they get from them.

## 2. The problem

Corporate social responsibility is expanding very fast in Qatar as a result of the rapid growth of the country in all aspects of life. Decisions makers in this small country in area and population, are putting a lot of emphasis on CSR. In the last six years, the country organized four international conferences on corporate social responsibility. The government is in the process of setting regulations, criteria and professional international standards to maximize the benefits of CSR. Is CSR well perceived and defined and is it practiced and implemented in a systematic and professional manner in Qatar? What problems and challenges are there? And what next for maximizing the results of CSR in the country.

## 3. Review of the literature

Al Saady (2011) conducted a study on CSR in Qatar aiming at developing a CSR national policy. The research investigated social responsibility (SR) awareness and practices in Qatari public sharing and state-owned companies, the importance of SR policy and its role in organizing, enhancing, and institutionalizing SR initiatives in Qatar, and showed the advantages and benefits of having a national SR policy in Qatar and how it can enhance SR initiatives and practices. Al Saady (2011) used two research tools namely a questionnaire and in depth interview. The questionnaire was distributed to all public sharing companies listed in the Doha Stock Market, and all state-owned companies, a total of 50 companies. The interviews were conducted with top management officials engaged in CSR policy in Qatar. Findings of the study suggest:

there is a gap between awareness and practice of SR. On the one hand, although there is high recognition for its importance and role for organizations in Qatar, SR practices are still limited. Results also showed that SR activities in organizations in Qatar are not systematically organized, and are carried out in most cases by individuals rather than an SR unit... Results also revealed that a national SR policy is needed because this policy will greatly and positively affect SR practice. Findings showed that the suggested national SR policy is expected to greatly enhance the SR initiatives and practices of public companies and public sharing companies in Qatar. Based on these results it is recommended that the government play a wider and greater role in SR (Al Saady, 2011, pp. 2–3).

In 2010, the Ministry of Work and Trade (MWT) in Qatar conducted a study on the state of CSR in the country. A questionnaire was distributed to 102 companies to investigate CSR in the country and to address the following issues: companies' perception of CSR, what role should the government take in CSR programs practices and implementation and what is the position of corporations in regard to the creation of a body to organize CSR activities. Seventy seven percent of the companies covered by the study were from the private sector, 14% from the government and 9% mixed. Findings of the study showed that 98% of the companies see CSR as very important and important and that CSR can play a positive role in society, environment and economy. Ninety eight percent of the companies had CSR activities and 79% of them were dedicated to sporting activities. CSR activities covered other areas such as donations to charity organizations, education, health, voluntary work, environment and investment. Concerning the role of government in CSR activities, 49% of the companies see it as very important and 49% as important. Companies suggest that the government should have a CSR policy and should create a body to regulate and control CSR activities in the country. The author concluded that most of CSR activities in Qatar revolve around charitable and humanitarian issues (Babikr, 2013, pp. 21–23).

Nataly Aya and Krishnamurthy (2014) did a study on the perception and practices of CSR among Colombian Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). Online questionnaires and in depth interviews were used to assess CSR perception and practices. The majority of the respondents agreed that CSR must be included in the company's strategy setting. Nonetheless, there were mixed views about regulating CSR to be compulsory or mandatory. Some CSR activities scored high such as employee

welfare (79.6%) others scored low such as art and culture (16.7%). Findings of the study show that 75.5% of the respondents agreed that the company's CEO should make the decisions about CSR. CSR activities were handled by the public relations department; nonetheless, 16% of the surveyed companies have a department of social responsibility and 84% intend to have a CSR department in the near future. Participants in the study believe CSR improved the organizations' culture and attracted and preserved best employees. Findings show that the government in Colombia comes first as a catalyst of CSR followed by international organizations, then business associations (Nataly Aya & Krishnamurthy, 2014).

Kim and Reber (2008), (pp. 337–442) conducted a study on "Public Relations' place in Corporate Social Responsibility: practitioners define their role". The study looked at the PR's role in CSR by focusing on the practitioners and their ability to be strategic and influential on a managerial role level. The study used 48 item questionnaire to measure public relations professionalism and attitudes toward CSR: what role do you believe public relations plays in your organization's social responsibility? 313 members of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) were selected to participate in the study. Findings indicated that PR practitioners defined their roles in CSR as follows: significant management role (32.9%), Philanthropic role (19.7%), value-driven role (19.1%), communication role (11.0%), no role (10.4%). Open ended questions showed:

In open-ended answers, respondents reflected more generally on public relations' contribution to CSR in answering the second research question. The responses to this query suggested that many practitioners are well-informed and passionate about CSR, but feel their contribution is sometimes limited by their influence and authority within the organization (Kim & Reber, 2008, p. 340).

The review of the literature shows that CSR in Qatar is still in its formation stage and it is not systematically organized and practiced. It concentrates on sports, health, education and environment. Internationally, PR practitioners in Colombia for instance believe that CSR should be included in the company's strategy. In the US, on the other hand PR practitioners believe that their influence on CSR is limited.

#### 4. Defining corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is also known by a number of other names. These include corporate responsibility, corporate accountability, corporate ethics, corporate citizenship or stewardship, responsible entrepreneurship, and sustainable development and environment to name just a few. As CSR issues become increasingly integrated into modern business practices, there is a trend toward referring to it as "responsible competitiveness" or "corporate sustainability." A key point to note is that CSR is an evolving concept that currently does not have a universally accepted definition. Generally, CSR is understood to be the way firms integrate social, environmental and economic concerns into their values, culture, decision making, strategy and operations in a transparent and accountable manner and thereby establish better practices within the firm, create wealth and improve society. The International Organization for Standardization provides the following definition along the lines of ISO 26000:

The need for organizations in both public and private sectors to behave in a socially responsible way is becoming a generalized requirement of society. It is shared by the stakeholder groups that are participating (. . .): industry, government, labor, consumers, nongovernmental organizations and others, in addition to geographical and gender-based balance (International Organization for Standardization, 2008: 4).

This is another working definition adopted by the International Institute of Sustainable Development in 2007:

Social responsibility (is the) responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment through transparent and ethical behavior that is consistent with sustainable development and the welfare of society; takes into account the expectations of stakeholders; is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior; and is integrated throughout the organization. (Working definition, ISO 26000 Working Group on Social Responsibility) (Hohnen, 2007).

As issues of sustainable development become more important, the question of how the business sector addresses them is also becoming an element of CSR. The term corporate social responsibility or corporate citizenship is re-defined and implied differently in each corporation. Yet, the basic understanding of CSR maximizing profit by giving back to the community. While, the main focus of a CSR program is dedicated to the greater good, a secondary motivation is increase of profits The United Nations defines CSR as the following:

CSR is generally understood as being the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives, while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders (Hohnen, 2007).

The true nature of the CSR remains uncertain, but looking back at history, one can observe the nature of CSR and how it developed throughout the years and became a vital aspect of almost every national, international and global organization. The beginnings were in the 1950's when it was referred to as Social Responsibility. In the 1950, corporations and organizations were not yet familiar with the idea of giving back or losing profit for a substantial matter (Carroll, 1999a,b). However, Howard R. Bowen revolutionized this idea by his publication Social Responsibilities of a Businessman which rewarded him with the

title of the father of Social Responsibility, in his book he gave a clear understanding of why the modern – at the time – the businessman owed back to the community. And because of this definition of SR did the modern understanding of CSR come to be (Bowen, 1953).

In the 1960's, the literature of SR came to expand, and with that a more cemented understanding of SR. The prominent figure of the era is Keith Davis, who wrote articles and textbooks in regards to SR. Davis's most important contribution is his argument of social responsibility and business power (Carroll, 1999a,b)

The 1970's witnessed the era of CSR proliferation. Heald (1970) made an important contribution to the understanding of CSR with his textbook, *The social responsibility of business: company and community*. Although, Heald did not define the meaning of CSR in his book he however, used arguments and discussions that followed the past definitions and understanding of CSR.

The 1980's were characterized with lesser definitions and more research and cementation of the idea of CSR and what it really meant for a company to create a CSR program for the community at large. Thomas M. Jones entered this field with a redefinition of CSR and argued that finding a true agreement as to what represents social responsibility. He further helped define how a firm can approach the methodology of doing CSR. But the debate did not end there, Tuzzolino and Armandi (1981) looked for a mechanical method to approach CSR. They approached this by re-adapting Maslow's theory of hierarchy. Tuzzolino and Armandi's need of hierarchy did not redefine CSR, it did however help organizations see what criteria needed to be fulfilled or met, humanizing the elements, as in Maslow's hierarchy. Edward M. Epstein however provided a definition of CSR in his search for social responsibility, responsiveness and business ethics. With his definition of CSR he also defined social corporate responsiveness and business ethics, Epstein brought those two terms under the term 'corporate social policy process'.

The 1990's provided different themes within the umbrella of CSR. The themes of stakeholder theory, business ethics theory, and corporate citizenship were developed in this era. While the CSR concept is serving as a base point for many themes, it will remain an essential part of business language and practice, because it holds the basic foundation for many theories as well as holding up what the public expects from a company. (Carroll, 1999a,b).

With every era a new definition of SR or now known as CSR had been evolved or re-written from Bowen in 1953 definition to Hopkins in 1998 and to finally the UN's definition of CSR. The basic concept of CSR has always remained the same. The act of CSR is to provide a benefit that extends beyond the firm's interest, i.e., profit and benefits the society at large. As Bowen (1953) used the terms objectives and values of our society, similarly to Davis's (1960) definition which extend beyond the firm's interest. In the 1980's, the definition has evolved to include the obligations to the firm's stakeholders and shareholders. However, we see the primary obligation is the society, as Jones (1980) has defined. In 1998, the definition by Hopkins (1998) has transformed slightly to correlate the meaning of Stakeholder being both internal and external; actual stakeholders, and the companies image within the community, while the prior definition by Jones made a clear distinction that stakeholders are not the public. This definition is somewhat mirrored in the UN's definition of CSR. A clear statement addresses the all three aspects of a company's success in CSR and respecting both shareholders and stakeholders.

Corporate social responsibility is usually based on four pillars: environment, sustainable development, workers' rights, human rights, and anti-bribery and anti-corruption. It is widely defined as the way corporations integrate social, environmental and economic issues and concerns in their values, culture and practices. CSR activities cover usually the following: corporate governance and ethics, health and safety, environmental stewardship, human rights, labor rights, sustainable development, conditions of work: safety, health, hours of work, wages. It also deals with industrial relations, community involvement, development and investment. (sports, healthcare, educational projects, arts and cultural activities), involvement of and respect for diverse cultures and disadvantaged peoples, corporate philanthropy and employee volunteering. CSR is concerned as well by customer satisfaction and adherence to principles of fair competition, anti-bribery and anti-corruption measures, accountability, transparency and performance reporting, and supplier relations for both domestic and international supply chains.

## 5. Social responsibility in Qatar: a brief overview

By establishing the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority as a national framework of social responsibility, the state of Qatar confirmed its commitment to treaties and international conventions, bodies and instruments related to social responsibility such as the Global Compact of the United Nations which is inspired from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. (ArabCSR, 2012:25). Like other countries in the region and the World, the state of Qatar has paid a tremendous attention to CSR through the organization of several international conferences and gatherings and hosting a score of international experts in the subject. As a result, a working government experts group was formed to put together a proposal for CSR criteria and standards in Qatar to serve as a guide for the practice of CSR by companies. Practicing CSR does not mean necessarily that the company is doing it well and is achieving the benefits it planned to get out of it. The CSR process requires assessment, research, commitments, strategies, tactics, communication and evaluation. Increased interest in corporate social responsibility started in the first decade of the twenty first century in the country. The business community in Qatar as is the case in the region and other countries in the world paid a great deal of attention to issues pertaining to work ethics, safety, environment, citizenship, law and human rights. In the beginning of the century corporations concentrated in their CSR activities on charity work and donations; however,

companies thanks to the experience they gained in the field adopted new concepts and approaches to CSR. They started looking at new avenues in the practice of CSR such as workers rights, environment, job security and safety (Al Saady, 2011; Babikr, 2013).

Corporate Social Responsibility in the GCC is developing to meet the requirements of its changing socio-economic landscape. Qatar plays a leading role in promoting social responsibility and has taken the lead in many areas of relevance. Qatar has shown growing interest on a global scale. Since 2009, the state of Qatar has organized four international conferences on CSR. Qatari companies have long understood their responsibilities to the local community and have consistently shown their support to activities that improve the lives and environment of the people of Qatar. Qatar's approach to sustainability is linked to the four pillars that underpin the Qatar National Vision 2030 and it is important to create a forum and a platform where more businesses can understand the benefits of CSR and foster partnerships with each other to drive results. Although CSR is advanced in some organizations, in many others it needs systematic assessment and improvement.

The vision and philosophy of corporate social responsibility in Qatar is based on fostering partnerships, creating networks, embedding sustainability, making a positive impact, achieving tangible goals, building practical skills and Knowledge, and inspiring development. (ArabCSR, 2012) The fourth international conference on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was held in Doha in October 2013 by the Ministry of Business and Trade (MBT) with the participation of international institutions such as the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and the International Finance Corporation, a subsidiary of the World Bank. Since the first conference in 2009, huge efforts were made by MBT to raise awareness of CSR in the country and to try to strengthen its efforts in this regard.

The geography and demographics of states such as Qatar, which have small native populations, abundant oil and gas resources and very limited natural water and productive land means that businesses which operate there need external resources and expertise, training and education to achieve the sustainable development objectives of the country. With economic activity expanding exponentially it is vital that CSR and sustainability become embedded in strategic plans and visions. As his excellency Mohammed Ahmed Al-Kawari, the Qatar Business Council Vice President, stated in his keynote opening address at the 2013 fourth Qatar International CSR Conference, "CSR must be made a strategic concept in Qatar" (Babikr, 2013). Qatar ranks among the highest in the world with a per capita income of well over \$130,000 and an unemployment rate hovering at 0.5%. But with oil and natural gas derived from finite sources, the country's leaders and people have to plan for the long term. Qatar's people, however, will need skills and a highly educated population and, of course, jobs in the long run. Skills training and Qatarization (the movement of Qataris into jobs usually held by expatriate workers) hence offer companies a chance to practice CSR to serve the country and its local an opportunity to work with locals and demonstrate they are engaged stakeholders.

Nowadays customers judge companies by their demonstration of compassion and integrity. This has become such a fundamental aspect of the business landscape that there is even a name for such initiatives: corporate social responsibility (CSR). Today the websites' content of most major companies highlight the work they are doing to protect the planet or support their local communities through sponsoring sporting events, health fundraising campaigns, educational and cultural activities, symposiums and conferences, . . . etc. That is because smart businesses embed their charitable projects in their marketing plans, using their community relations or sustainability efforts to engage customers and boost site traffic through clever promotion. Most corporate social responsibility projects would not deliver an immediate boost in the company's financial performance. But implemented professionally and leveraged cleverly, they can bring positive publicity, enhance the corporate reputation, and deepen customer engagement and corporate satisfaction for having assisted those in need.

CSR in emerging markets such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region is still a relatively new concept. In Qatar, overall awareness of sustainability and corporate responsibility is in its formation stage. CSR challenges in Qatar include an expatriate population from all over the World, about 160 nationalities, a local population still enjoying the economic boom and an economy centered on limitless resources of oil and gas. As the country moves forward in meeting the ambitious aims of Qatar's National 2030 Vision, the role of corporations in community development becomes more and more crucial. Qatari company's CSR programs have been at the forefront in bringing positive change to the country (ArabCSR, 2012). The latest developments in CSR from both government and private institutions are very promising. They include Qatar 2030 vision, 2011–2016 Development Strategy, Qatar 2022, National Day, Sports Day, the UN Global Compact's ten principles in Qatar, and other strategies carried out by relevant public and private sector entities. The State of Qatar has been attaching great importance to the development of concepts of corporate social responsibility and making it an important driver of business in the state. The country has achieved tremendous results through CSR programs so far, but still the business community has to deal with many challenges in the years to come due the very fast pace of development the country is experiencing as well as the impact of globalization and international debates and controversies about environment, human rights, labor rights, work safety, anti-bribery, anti-corruption measures, accountability, transparency and performance reporting, among others. It is to be noted that to promote CSR in Qatar, QatarCSR network was established to accomplish the following:

QatarCSR was established in 2007 as a pioneer network dedicated to raise CSR awareness, conduct research and generate data and information about CSR and sustainable development in the country. . . QatarCSR is an independent initiative working for creating a sustainable platform and networks for exchanging views, experiences and contributions of the corporate sector and all other stakeholders of the development process. . . QatarCSR is engaged in reporting and research, produce and publish the CSR Qatar Year Report, provide CSR Advisory/Consulting, Executive Education, and Auditing Services, develop CSR projects for corporations, as well as initiate CSR ventures for participation by local,

regional, and international donor/development agencies who understand the value of business for development and wish to work with the multinational and national corporations actively pursuing and implementing CSR projects in Qatar, and organize CSR forums. (ArabCSR, 2012:82).

## 6. Corporate social responsibility in the oil and gas sector

The oil and gas industry is a leading sector of business that has to continuously engage in corporate social responsibility practices such as social, economic, political, legal, technological and environmental areas (Frynas, 2005). There is an increasing importance being attached to CSR within the oil and gas corporates because of the nature of activities they practice and the potential threats they have especially on the environment. These practices include potential environmental damages during the processes of oil exploration, production, transportation, and refining. Perhaps the most significant ones are pipelines leakages, wastewater pollution and carbon dioxide emissions. The peculiarity of CSR in relation to the oil and gas companies is the fact that they undergo the greatest pressure from societies and face people's constant demands for corporate social responsibility from the industry because they serve strong and continuous global demands for their products. Such firms are usually expected to self-regulate, which obliges them to do more to protect the society against potential risks than merely abide by the laws. Yet, it is known that such a challenging technicality in the industry cannot always prevent accidents. From this perspective, CSR in the oil and gas industry must take the extra mile to give back to society and make sure of its goodwill. Some of the initiatives that must be taken are investing in biodiversity and going green, using long lasting materials for pipelines, proposing alternatives to the consumed and produced energy and give back to society in all aspects.

The oil and gas companies all around the world are driven to engage in social investments. They are taking initiatives to satisfy both stakeholders, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which promote social welfare rather than economic power, and the host countries and direct consumers, who pay more attention to the operational performance of the oil and gas corporates (Lantos, 2001). This means that they practice CSR genuinely for the goodwill of the society as a whole, just "doing the right thing", as well as performing CSR practices to obtain competitive advantages and manage a positive reputation and external perception. However, some social initiatives these corporations perform are not always successful, especially those that aim to accomplish corporate and business objectives rather than social welfare ones. Some of them even use public relations instead as a cover to play the part of being a socially responsible oil firm and hence achieving what PR could achieve and attributing the successfully gained effects to CSR activities. In doing so CSR in the oil and gas industry can be seen as merely an elaboration of PR work. The usual philanthropic gestures of merely donating to the local communities like what happened with Shell in Nigeria are clear examples of such practices (Frynas, 2005). In other words, business oriented CSR initiatives usually end with a failure because their prime motive is not delivering development but rather maintaining a positive reputation about the company.

Moreover, corporate social responsibility in the oil and gas industry seems to shed the light on some aspects in a micro-level environment and neglect others that are in a macro-level from the contents of CSR principles. For example, some oil and gas corporates exclude the political and economic impacts of their practices. Frynas argues that the resource curse is one of the most negative effects of the oil industry. Research found that many oil-producing developing countries consider this natural resource as a curse because they continuously face economic underdevelopment and political mismanagement (Stevens, 2003). Accordingly, many oil companies do not take the drawbacks of developmental CSR activities related to the resource curse into their consideration. Nevertheless, the remarkable growth in corporate ethics and social responsibility obligations illustrates the significant shift in how oil companies now invest and engage more in social developments and with their local communities than they used to. In addition to the fact that the industry is emphasizing and embracing the importance of CSR in regards with the environment by developing alternate and renewable clean energy consumption and limit the impacts of air and water pollution in the world.

## 7. Research questions

RQ1: how do oil and gas companies in Qatar perceive CSR?

RQ2: what are the CSR activities oil and gas companies in Qatar engage in?

RQ3: to what extent do CSR activities address issues of labor rights, anti-bribery, anti-corruption, ethics and working conditions?

RQ4: do oil and gas companies conduct CSR assessment? How do they develop CSR strategies?

RQ5: how do they select their stakeholders? How do they publicize their CSR activities?

RQ6: what resources do they allocate to CSR? To what extent they contribute to sustainable development through CSR?

RQ7: how do they evaluate their CSR activities? What benefits do they get from them?

## 8. Methodology

In-depth interviews with four CSR and public relations managers and twenty practitioners in oil and gas Qatari companies: (Qatar Petroleum (QP), Qatar Petrochemical Company (QAPCO), Qatar gas, and Rasgas) were conducted addressing the following issues: concepts and definitions, practices, assessment, strategies and tactics, CSR publicity and media coverage,

CSR budget and resources, benefits implementation and evaluation. The study also looked at the companies' CSR activities in terms of stakeholders, impacts on environment, sustainable development and society. Websites of the four companies of the study as well as their CSR annual reports were analyzed as well.

Since the aim of the study is to look at CSR practices in Qatar by local companies, foreign oil and gas companies such as Shell, Exxon Mobil, and Total among many others were excluded from the study.

## 9. Findings and discussion

CSR perceptions: Qatar Petroleum recognizes their corporate social responsibility as a priority in their activities. They define CSR as applying sustainable development principles to maintain economic development while protecting the environment and providing a better quality of life by minimizing the effects of their activities and seek better ways to manage the natural resources, using less energy and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. QP also makes sure to comply with national and international environmental legislation and implement high standards and procedure regarding management, technology and the environment ([www.qp.com.qa](http://www.qp.com.qa)). On the other hand, QAPCO focuses on investing in humans, the basis for any economic or industrial flourishing in any country. Whereas RASGAS views CSR in the areas of community, education, environment and health. QATARGAS conceives of CSR as activities to promote and protect the environmental, social and economic interests of the communities they deal with, whether directly or indirectly, and the future generations their activities may impact.

CSR activities: CSR activities in all four companies of this study revolved around health, education, environment, community services and sports. Areas such as workers rights, human rights, anti-bribery and anti-corruption measures, corporate governance, ethics, accountability, transparency and performance reporting are missing from the CSR activities agenda of the four companies of the study. CSR is usually based on four pillars namely environment, human rights, sustainable development and anti-corruption measures. In this regard, Hohnen (2007) argues:

Generally, CSR is understood to be the way firms integrate social, environmental and economic concerns into their values, culture, decision making, strategy and operations in a transparent and accountable manner, and thereby establish better practices within the firm, create wealth and improve society (Hohnen, 2007:5).

CSR goes beyond the actual social action implemented by companies or the philanthropy of its managers to silence those who accuse them of not respecting human rights and contributing to the deterioration of the environment. The other issue to address here is what are the motives and the real objectives of companies behind their social responsibility activities.

CSR assessment: research is one of the weakest points in the practice of CSR in Qatar oil and gas companies. From the literature of the four companies in various reports and from the interviews very little is said about the engagement of the four companies in assessing the needs of stakeholders and society in terms of CSR activities. Very little importance is dedicated to assess CSR activities after implementation.

CSR strategies: with no assessment and research, strategies cannot be developed. All four companies argue that they have strategies; however, what they presented are not real strategies. This means that the focus here is the media attention and the participation in official activities of the state of Qatar such as national day, sports day, environmental day and health day as well as educational engagements such as providing scholarships for students, and sponsoring graduation ceremonies of various schools.

Stakeholders selection: findings show that most of CSR activities in all four companies do not pay attention to the issue of researching and working closely with stakeholders when it comes to CSR activities. The same areas of CSR activities are covered again and again and year after year (sports, education, health and environment) while other areas are totally neglected, such as human rights, work safety, anti bribery and anti corruption.

CSR publicity: findings of the study showed that the four companies paid a great attention to the coverage of their CSR activities through their own media (websites, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr. . . etc.) and through conventional media. Qatar Gas for instance is maintaining excellent relationships with the media and its stakeholders. All news released and events got covered in the news whether they were interviews or news releases or press conferences. Likewise QP, Qapco and Rasgas maintain excellent relations with the media and gain tremendously in publicity and media presence.

CSR budget and resources: this is one of the issues that pose a big problem since all the literature and people we talked refused to talk openly and provide figures concerning the resources and budget allocated to CSR. Oil and gas companies have large budgets and make lot of profits. Some CSR critics argue that the CSR budget is still not as it should be (Al Saady, 2011; Babikr, 2013).

CSR and sustainable development: Qatar Petroleum is committed to help meet the global demand for energy through environmentally and socially responsible actions. QP subscribes to the principles of sustainable development to meet present needs, as well as, those of future generations. QP continually works to increase environmental awareness at all levels within the company and its contractors in an effort to minimize the impacts of its activities and improve environmental performance. "Sustainable development is good business, now and for future generations", QP States.

QAPCO has reiterated its commitment to the development of young Qataris to be qualified to take positions and responsibilities in the business world. QAPCO's CSR & Citizenship Sustainability Program includes a wide range of educational initiatives that help the students develop their technical, professional and language skills (<http://www.qapco.com.qa/corporate-social-responsibility>).



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## Further reading

- [csr.qatar.com/EN/Speaker/c/](http://csr.qatar.com/EN/Speaker/c/)  
<http://www.rasgas.com/Sustainability/index.html>  
<http://www.youtube.com/user/QATARGASPR>  
<http://www.qatarisbooming.com/?s=qapco>  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/qatargas/>  
[qatarcsr.net](http://qatarcsr.net)  
[www.csrhub.com/CSR\\_and\\_sustainability/Qatar-Petroleum](http://www.csrhub.com/CSR_and_sustainability/Qatar-Petroleum)  
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