Social responsibility of corporate managers towards the quality of products-services

Fereidun Azma¹, Reza Norouzi¹, Fereshte Soltani², *

¹Department of Management, Islamic Azad University, Aliabad-e Katul Branch, Iran
²Department of Sociology, Babol University, Mazandaran, Iran

Email address:
Fereshte.Soltani@Gmail.com (F. Soltani)

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Abstract: The environment of corporate is rapidly changing and the presence of international trade and multinational corporate with global supply chains intensify such changes. Many corporate have increasingly become aware of the direct economic value of corporate social responsibility and can have a positive impact on the society and their environment by integrating it as a strategic investment with the main business strategy and their management activities, and not only produce profits for today, but also establish their future position. In the current study, different definitions of corporate social responsibility are first addressed then, various perspectives in the field of social responsibility are investigated and the importance of social responsibility is explained. In addition to the enumeration of its benefits in trade and business, its role in improving the quality of products/services is discussed.

Keywords: Social Responsibility, Quality, Corporate Managers, Corporate, Customers

1. Introduction

Today, due to ever increasing interactions of corporate with their environments and the society in which they are working and living, they have to interact with the society to continue their activities and businesses so that not only they inflict harm to the society but also their results are useful for the society. One of the most important issues through which many corporate currently try to gain acceptance is legitimacy and competence. Nowadays, corporate which have legitimacy can have an active presence in the market. Such legitimacy is not an issue that can be bought or imported from elsewhere but a credential issue that corporate should achieve in society through their behaviors. In this context, many models have been introduced in recent years that corporate try to gain legitimacy and acceptance in the community by observing their regulations. However, in Islam, these are frequently and repeatedly mentioned as the basic guidelines in the Quran and in words of the Imams (AS) that can be an appropriate model for Islamic organizations. Nickomaram, H and Feizabadi, B argue that corporate social responsibility abbreviated as CSR is indeed methods based on ethical values and respect for employees, society and environment (Nicomaram and Faizabadi, 2010).

Attitudes and opinions on corporate social responsibility do not date back late. Before 1800, social norms and attitudes had very little effect on management activities. In the last decade of the 19th century when huge corporations were forming and large industry became stronger day to day, the attention of society focused on the necessity of corporate social responsibility more. At the onset of the 20th century, many experts emphasized on the need for corporate social responsibility. In 1919, researchers in commerce first warned that if the commercial enterprises neglect their social responsibilities, society should reject their authorities and take them under control. Since the early 1920s, other management researchers have emphasized on the social responsibility of economic enterprises in their writings (Ghaheri, 2010).

Religious investors have presented ethical frameworks for investment and activity in the field of business since 1926 in the United States and 1948 in Britain.

In short, from 1950s onward, various aspects of CSR are as follows: (Taghavi and Haghighi Kaffash, 2007)
1950s: Commitment to society
1960s: Relationship between corporate and society
1970s: Improvement of participation of beneficiaries,
being a good citizen, the philosophy that seeks social benefits and contribution to solving neighbors’ problems, quality of life, economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibility.

1980s: Voluntary profitable measures from an economic, rule-oriented, ethical and social support point of view

1990s: Participation of beneficiaries, commitment to society, expressing friendliness to the environment, people and land and profit

21st century: Integration of environmental and social concerns, voluntary actions, ethical behavior, economic development, improving the quality of citizens’ life, human rights, labor rights, environmental protection, combating corruption, encouraging transparency and accountability

In general, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provides ways by which corporate act in their business spaces and respond to society expectations and their commercial, legal and ethical-social expectations (Kavossi and Chavoshbashi, 2010) because corporate take large responsibilities in the social, economic and environmental areas for employees, shareholders, customers, government, suppliers and other beneficiaries. Corporate have a huge impact on the social system; therefore, their activities should be such that they do not damage the society; otherwise, the related corporate are required to compensate for it. In other words, corporate should consider themselves as not only independent from their external environment but also part of a whole that is external environment and community and that their objectives and activities should be in line with social ideals and welfare. Nowadays, all managers should take actions accepted by society and consistent with their values. Corporate which cannot adapt themselves to this will not become successful in the future (Nicomaram and Saravi, 2010).

2. The Interaction of Corporate with the Society

Corporations are generally established based on needs whether to gain profit or provide public service. They are created in societies and constitute part of each society. So, it can be said that any corporate established based on any intention is related to and interact with the society and its surrounding environment. Thus, a society independent of corporate or corporate independent of the society and their surrounded environment cannot be assumed (Nicomaram and Faizabadi, 2010). This interaction causes human societies to be sensitive to corporate whose activities have an impact on their lives and typically survey the behavior of these corporate (Nicomaram and Faizabadi, 2010). Lee Preston and James Pat presented a model of excellence in business and society in which two types of interaction between corporate and society can be observed (Nicomaram and Faizabadi, 2010).

As it can be seen in Figure 1, the initial interactions of corporate include all direct communications of the corporate with the society to achieve the primary objectives of gaining revenue and profit through providing services and products (Nicomaram and Faizabadi, 2010).

While in Figure 2, it can be observed that relationships between corporate and society are beyond working and commercial relations and some groups and individuals who can be considered as beneficiaries are affected by actions and operations of the corporate (Nicomaram and Faizabadi, 2010). In addition to the primary interaction, for survival and stability, corporate require another interaction that guarantees and maintains their stability. This model emphasizes that decision-makers of the corporate should act so that they improve the general welfare of the society along with the preservation of the interests of the corporate. One of the features of social responsibility is that all beneficiaries should be considered and beneficiaries are those who have relation with various corporate as well as with each other.
or qualification. So, they should consider inviolability of obtained legitimacy and acceptability in their decision-making that has an effect on the society.

2.1. Definition of Social Responsibility from the Perspective of Experts

In his book, "Management", Richard Robinson writes: “Social responsibility is one of the duties and obligations of corporate for the benefit of society so that the primary objective of corporate i.e. maximization of profit becomes excellent (Khalili Iraqi and Yaghinlo, 2004).

Keith Davis believes that “social responsibility means a sort of sense of commitment for managers of commercial corporate in private sector in the way that they make decision so that in addition to gaining profit for institution; the welfare of the entire society is improved too” (Khalili Iraqi and Yaghinlo, 2004).

W. Griffin and Jay B. Barney (1992) defines CSR as follows: “A set of duties and obligations that the corporate should do to preserve, protect and assist the society in which the corporate operates” (Bozorgi, 2009).

Certo and Graff consider social responsibility as “the commitment of management to doing what protect and promote the welfare of society and interests of agencies” (Alvani and Ghasemi, 2008).

In the book entitled Ethical and Social Responsibilities of Management, Irannejad Parizi Mehdi says: “Social responsibility is the commitment of decision-makers for actions that in addition to supplying their own resources, they generally provide means of improving the welfare of society.

One of the experts in the field of management called “Peter Drucker” states: in order to preserve complete legitimacy and remain as a private institution, private corporate should accept that they have public and social roles and duty (Khalili Iraqi and Yaghinlo, 2004).

2.2. Definition and Importance of Social Responsibility from the Perspective of Corporate

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) (2005) has defined CSR as “Sustentation of commitment by economic activities to present the ethic behavior and contribute to the economic development coincidence with improving the quality of life of labors and their families in local and global scales”.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 26000 assumes social responsibility as a corporate responsibility for the effectiveness of its decisions and activities on society and environment through transparency and ethic including: considering expectations of shareholders, the consistence and accordance with applicable law and norms of international behavior and its extension across the corporate and applying it in all relationships (Bratlou, 2007).

American Society for Quality (ASQ) has defined “social responsibility” as commercial behavior and participation of people and corporate in terms of ethics with regard to society, culture and economy and as an effort through which individuals, corporate and governments can have a positive effect on the development, commerce and society.

In Excellence Model for corporate, European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) has introduced CSR as one of its eight values and devoted one of its nine criteria for assessment of corporate and 8% of the total scale of evaluating a corporate for this criterion (Soheil, 2012).

3. A Psychological View on CSR

Corporate social responsibilities is a vide subject that the causes of its observation and non-observation root in a variety of issues such as economy, law, management trainings, communication etc. From the perspectives of psychology of productivity, the issue is continuously raised that why some corporate try to pay attention to their customers’ rights in terms of observing the quality of products, services and “environmental” issues and do their social responsibility towards the society well while many other corporate are not familiar with consumers’ rights and their responsibilities. What is the root of such negligence? Does it relate to the person or environmental condition or social, economic and cultural structure of the society? (Khalili Iraqi and Yaghinlo, 2004)

Before addressing this question, we should draw an overall image of corporate and talk about its roles and responsibilities. With regard to the definition of corporate, it has been said that corporate means the reasonable coordination of activities to a number of individuals to achieve a common objective or purpose through the division of labor and responsibilities and the hierarchy of authority and legal responsibilities. Based on this definition, it can be added that the effective utilization of human work should be organized so that it will lead to the production of quality goods and services (Khalili Iraqi and Yaghinlo, 2004).

Every corporate has many groups and each group creates norms on its correct and appropriate behaviors that they develop based on the type of work to be done. Since an individual cannot satisfy all his needs and wishes by himself and has inadequate capability, power, time and strength to achieve this objective, he necessarily satisfies his needs with the help of others and relying on them. We know when some people coordinate their efforts with each other, they realize that they can do things they would not be able to afford alone. The largest corporate or communities achieve their objectives through coordination between the activities of many individuals. The coordinate effort of individuals causes the objectives of each member to be realized because the main and fundamental objective, purpose and intention of corporate’s concept is the coordination among individuals’ efforts to satisfy the needs of the community. Today, the structure of corporate has changed and that corporate are within other corporate (Khalili Iraqi and Yaghinlo, 2004).

In other words, every corporate is part of another corporate. Society which is the largest unit of human life has
various economic, social, cultural, productive, political and state corporate and institutions. Therefore, it can be concluded that corporate are formed to satisfy needs of people. Such needs can be categorized according to a hierarchy. In one classification, it has been said that they are physiologic needs, security needs, self-esteem and love, dependence and need to self-actualization. One of the factors leading to the survival of corporate is their responsibility to other humans and individuals and groups inside and outside the corporate (Khalili Iraqi and Yaghinlo, 2004).

3.1. Social Responsibility of Managers in Theories of Ethics

Corporate ethics and social responsibility is the issue which seeks to ensure corporate in order to maintain stability and resistance of their interests in the community. Indeed, ethics and social responsibility are the conscious conscience of the corporate which deviation from it will highly harm the body of the corporate as well as the society in which it operates (Ghorbani et al., 2005).

Today, all managers should take the actions which are accepted by the community and are consistent with its values. Corporate failing to adapt to these important issue will not be successful in practice; otherwise, government will force them to act with regard to this issue (Riahi, 2004).

The concept of social responsibility can be extracted and implicated from most theories of ethics. Hessmer's Classification (1995) offers one of the most complete classifications on theories of ethics: (Rhmanseresh et al., 2004)

1. Eternal Law: The approach known as the golden rule is summarized into the following words: “treat others in a way that you like others to behave with you”.
2. Utilitarianism: The approach is consistent with the definition of Jeremy Bentham on ethics and focuses on the individual results and assumptions. Accordingly, being a behavior ethical is expressed based on the rate of its utility i.e. when a function profits are more than its losses for society, it is a moral act.
3. Deontological: Deontological is contrary to Utilitarianism. Since it is proposed by Immanuel Kant, every action doesn’t depend on its consequence but depends on the intention of the decision-maker.
4. Distributive justice: In this theory, if an action leads to increase the cooperation among members of the society, it is correct, fair and appropriate (and therefore ethical) and an action in the opposite direction of the objective is inaccurate, unfair and inappropriate (and therefore immoral). In this perspective, social cooperation is the basis of social and economic benefits and the individual efforts has been low important and in some cases, ignored
5. Individual freedom: According to this approach proposed by Robert Nozick, freedom is the first need of any society. So, any action that violate the individual freedom is immoral, even if it creates more interests and welfare for others.

3.2. Approaches to Social Responsibility

On the social responsibility of managers and corporate, three approaches that all are influenced by values, attitudes and perceptions dominating societies and their managers can be generally raised: (Nicomaram and Mohammedan Saravi, 2010)

1. Classic approach
2. General approach
3. Islamic- Divine approach

3.2.1. Classic Approach (Opposite to Social Responsibility)

In this approach, the primary responsibility of any economical enterprise is to gain profit. This means that not you, employees, nor other persons should think about the society. Let it be appeared selfish. Do not forget that profit is like oxygen. If it does not be provided to you on time, you will die and cannot do anything else (Boome and Kurtz, 1992).

From the prospective of classic approach, reasons for opposing to doing corporate social responsibilities are as follows: (Khalili Iraqi and Yaghinlo, 2005).

1- Need to the maximize profit
2- Plurality of corporate objectives
3- Cost of social participation
4- Undermining the balance of international payments
5- Lack of social skills
6- Lack of accountability
7- Inability of corporate in selecting ethical choices

In addition to declaring the commitments of enterprises, Milton Friedman believes in legal responsibility too: “Social responsibility is a quite destructive doctrine. It is a business and part of increasing the profit”. He indeed recognizes the main responsibility of enterprise economical and does not consider other responsibilities among the responsibilities of the enterprise. According to his belief, other responsibilities cause deviation from duty and wasting the money and capital of stockholders. From the perspective of Friedman and his followers, a corporate has neither a capacity to adopt decisions related to the social issues nor enough skill and proficiency to deal with them (Azizi and Bagheri, 2010).

3.2.2. General Approach (Agreement with Social Responsibility)

This approach has wider range in comparison with the classic approach and defines the business corporate as the partners of the society and public institutions. The approach believes that even non-governmental corporate are also required to solve the problems of the society and improve the quality of general life of individuals along with other governmental agencies. In this approach, the corporate and its managers are committed to follow their personal objectives to the extent that they pursue humanitarian purposes. Accordingly, corporate are actively trying to eradicate general problems such as product control, poverty, unemployment, pollution and illiteracy (Nicomaram and Mohammedan Saravi, 2010).

The most important reasons for agreement with social
participation and responsibility in this approach include (Khalili Iraqi and Yaghinlo, 2005):
1. Ethical obligation
2. Better social environment
3. Avoiding the deployment of laws and governmental regulations
4. Systematic interdependencies
5. Contribution to solving social problems
6. Improvement of the public face of corporate
7. Attracting valuable resources of corporate

People like Frederick believed that available resources should be used for broad social objectives not just for benefits of individuals and special cooperates. Other celebrity who was in favor of social responsibility is Archie Carooll. In the study entitled “Pyramid of social responsibility of enterprise”, for each enterprise, Carooll made four categories of social responsibility: (Kavossi and Chavoshbashi, 2010)

1. Economic responsibility: corporate are responsible for meeting the economic needs of society, supplying their required goods and services and make various groups of people beneficial from the process of work (Ghaheri, 2010).
2. Observation of laws and regulations: according to this responsibility, corporate are responsible for taking care of health and safety of their employees and consumers, stopping environmental pollution, avoiding inter-organizational transactions and carrying away the monopoly and (racial and sex) discrimination (Ghaheri, 2010).
3. Observation of business ethics: in this area, principles such as honesty, fairness and respect are considered (Ghaheri, 2010).
4. Humanitarian responsibilities: Carooll interprets this component as “being good citizen” that is the involvement of the corporate in a variety of activities reducing the society’s problems and improving people's quality of life (Ghaheri, 2010).

3.2.3. Islamic Approach to Social Responsibility

Religious and divine judgments on the social responsibility observe and investigate (governmental and non-governmental) corporate and their managers from another angle and by broader and deeper perspective for society. However, based on divine principles and life of the Messenger of God (pbuh) and The Fourteen Infallibles (AS), attention to affairs of society and people is prior to all other things, they have considered such activities not only as an aim but also a means of pleasing God and human closeness to God. In other words, this approach insists on values such as freedom, justice, social equality and human dignity as they have been stated in Sharia law (Nicomaram and Mohammedan Saravi, 2010).

In surveying Islamic books and ideas of Muslim scholars, there are interesting points considered very modern and developed in the philosophical study of approaches. Here, some verses and sayings which indicate the modern and progressive look of Islam to the social responsibility are stated (Nicomaram and Faizabadi, 2010).

1. To be good
   “Be good to your parents and your kin, and to orphans and the needy, and speak of goodness to men…” (Al-Baqara-83).
   “Piety does not lie in turning your face to East or West.
Piety lies in believing in God, the Last Day and the angels, the Scriptures and the prophets, and disbursing your wealth out of love for God among your kin and the orphans, the wayfarers and mendicants, freeing the slaves,” (Al-Baqara-177).

“Be good to your parents and relatives, the orphans and the needy and the neighbors who are your relatives, and the neighbors who are strangers, and the friend by your side, the traveler and your servants and subordinates.” (An-Nisa-36).

Imam Ali (AS) says: “The best and most expressive means for attracting the divine mercy is that man is well-wishing in his mind for all the people of the world” (Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim, 37-212-271).

2. Rights of people

“O my people, weigh and measure with justness, and do not withhold things due to men, and do not spread corruption in the land, despoiling it” (Hud-85).

3. Charity

“But the semblance of those who expend their wealth to please God with firm and resolute hearts, is like a garden on a height on which the rain falls and it yields its fruits twice as much; and even if the rain does not fall the dew will suffice. For God sees all that you do” (Al-Baqara-265).

4. Responsibility towards each other

“So give to your relatives what is their due, and to those who are needy, and the wayfarers; and do not dissipate (your wealth) extravagantly” (Al-Isra-26).

The most basic approach to the development of social responsibility is the promotion and sublimity of faith and value in all social groups along with context for implementation of correct economic and social verdicts of Islam. Accordingly, in line with their long-term trends and strong faith connections, policy-makers, managers, investors, brokers of economic system and commercial and manufacturing enterprises have taken the requested management and planning and the consent of God and will avoid to do pharisaic and profit-oriented economic and social responsibilities and programs without considering the consent of God and social interests, minimally fulfill social responsibility etc. (Salehi Amiri and Motahari Nejad, 2010).

3.3. Classification of Managers’ Strategy towards Social Responsibility

For social responsibilities Rahman and obligations, corporate and managers are divided into four categories including: (Sheikhian and Bagheri, 2010)

First category: They have a defensive strategy. These managers have no moral obligations, damage the environment and employees and try to despoil them.

Second category: They have a reactive strategy. These managers have no moral obligations but are devoted to their obligations as a result of pressure from external factors.

Third category: They have an adaptive strategy. These managers have accepted the moral obligations and act to do it without obligation and pressure.

Fourth category: They have an effective strategy. These managers have accepted the moral obligations and willingly act to do for serving the community.

3.4. Basic Strategies for Doing Social Responsibility

The basic strategies for carrying out social responsibility and increasing managers’ performance on social responsibilities can be proposed as follows: (Sheikhian Azizi, and Bagheri, 2010)

1. Training the managers: Training brokers to recognize social responsibilities is one of the fundamental and effective steps on doing social responsibilities that is conducted through educational workshops, conferences, seminars, short training courses and various lectures.

2. Organization: Governments can conduct activities of the corporate towards desired social objectives by adopting regulations. These regulations are on the protection of environment, customers, employees and shareholders. On the other hand, they supervise how to perform regulations through the creation of institutions.

3. Mass media: mass media can aware people on their social responsibility through cultural activities, make public values toward more convergence and altruism and make various managers of society encourage doing more social responsibility.

4. Selecting the management: in the Era of Management, each decision of a manager can change the fate of all social institutions in a successive process. Therefore, it should be tried to appoint and employ managers who have the necessary qualifications at the supreme levels of economic corporate and institutions. In this case, the system of the selection of senior managers should consider features of knowledge, skill, attitude and vision.

5. Comprehensive evaluation of performance: evaluation of performance is the systematic part of individuals’ work on how to perform duties in the assigned jobs. For example, in the evaluation of decision-making by managers, we should consider social criteria to the extent that we consider economic criteria.

6. Social auditing: Social auditing which assesses the decision-making and performances of management based on ethical principles and social demands increases the likelihood of detecting cases contrary to overall expectations.

3.5. Key Steps in Implementing CSR in Corporate

Key steps in all practical aspects of corporate include the followings: (Tohidi Ardahani, 2010)

- Ensuring that obligations of senior managers, especially managing director are pontificated in the whole corporate.
- Determining the status of CSR in levels of strategic decisions for managing success in developing corporate’s policies and applying them
- Developing relationships with all stakeholder groups and promoting their interests (Special dependent NGOs)
- Inclusion of a social review or in relation to CSR in the corporate’s annual report
• Ensuring the reward system in the corporate enhances the established policies related to CSR.
• If any feedback or process preventing illegal activities is done by external observers, it causes the presenters of CSR to act more effectively.

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<th>Interests of corporate</th>
<th>Interests of society and people</th>
<th>Environmental considerations</th>
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<td>Improving the financial performance</td>
<td>Participating in charitable affairs</td>
<td>Greater use of renewable sources</td>
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<td>Reducing the operating costs</td>
<td>Volunteering schemes of employees</td>
<td>More functionality and durability of product</td>
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<td>Promoting corporate’s name and logo</td>
<td>Public participation in public education and employment and programs to help the homeless</td>
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<td>Increasing sales and consumer confidence</td>
<td>Quality and safety of product</td>
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<td>Higher productivity and higher quality</td>
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3.6. Attractions of Social Responsibility for Beneficiaries

Corporate Social Responsibility has a special attraction for all beneficiaries including: (Golchobian, 2007)
1- It is attractive for government because it reduces the traditional tasks of governments in policymaking and social protections. On the other hand, by increasing the popularity of social corporate, the local social importance will also be increased and as a result, result in more wealth and tax.
2- It is appealing to citizens because beside the environmental pollutions and the social and cultural changes from the presence of corporate, they can receive the welfare more than what the previous governments and generations wanted for them in the form of types of social services and considerations of corporate.
3- It is more appealing to employees because in terms of both internal-organizational citizenship and social citizenship, it will result in significant material and even spiritual results.
4- It is more appealing to shareholders than others because they find their role to be changed from foreign party to responsible and respectable citizenship; however, they do not make a safer embrace of commercial rules for themselves that is the embrace in the bosom of a society that by losing, government becomes instable let alone the cooperates.
5- For environment worshiped by good and bad individuals like a respected saint, it has some benefit because it is increasingly concerned by citizens and governments.
6- It is more appealing to transnational and international communities. If it was not, we would not observe the UN GLOBAL COMPACT as an educational network with the participation of the main agencies of UN along with corporate, commercial institutions, non-governmental/ government organizations and trade unions.

3.7. The Relationship between Management of Quality and Corporate Social Responsibility

In all of the following cases, in order to ensure corporate social responsibility, the role of management of quality can be accurately observed (Abzary and Yazdanshenas, 2007):
- Customers: Quality guarantees the trust of customers.
- Capability: Quality increases the capability of corporate for the creation of value.
- Consumption: Quality guarantees the management of the corporate’s consumption.
- Future generations: Quality guarantees the credibility and reputation of corporate for future generations.
- Citizenship: Quality guarantees the status of corporate in the society.
- Fundamental values: Quality guarantees your values.
- Culture: Quality guarantees the correct management of differences (to behave without discrimination towards employees, customers, minority groups, women and the physically disabled).
- Relationship with suppliers: Quality guarantees the management of suppliers.
- Observing the rules: Quality guarantees the consistence of activities of corporate with regulations and social norms.
- Continuity: Quality guarantees profit flow and the survival of corporate.

In addition to promote the quality in corporate, the consideration of the above-mentioned ten factors will lead to the fulfillment of corporate social responsibility. In other words, the mentioned cases should be considered in both quality management and corporate social responsibility (Abzary and Yazdanshenas, 2007).

4. Conclusion

As an important factor in the advancement of organizational objectives, this can create more success for corporate in the society in which they operate. Corporate move toward their aims, specially achieving profit and ethics and social responsibility ensure achieving these objectives and will guarantee them for many years providing that managers are completely aware of their ethics and social responsibility in the society and managers are even responsible and responder to the society. If they want to preserve their corporate, they should seek to achieve the consent of the public, supply their needs and respond to responsibilities assigned to them because accepting assigned
responsibilities and responding for responsibilities let to create public confidence that is one of the best social capital and promote effectiveness of corporate, otherwise they will eventually face with problems which they have created for society.

Considering what was presented on the status of social responsibility from the perspective of scholars and experts in ethics and Islam and related with that quality, it can be noted that there will be a relationship between social responsibility and the quality of services or products; in other word, the quality will also be one of the outcomes expected to observe the social responsibility in corporate.

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