

HUMAN RESOURCE DISCLOSURE: PRACTICE AND INFLUENCES BY QATAR LISTED COMPANIES

Fathi F. Zubek

Ahmed Bin Mohamed Military College, Qatar

Faculty of Economics, Elmergib University, Libya

fzubak@hotmail.com

Abstract

The aims of this paper was to examine the extent of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on human resources (HR) in the annual reports of Qatar listed companies. And to investigate the effect of company's activity type of HR disclosure. For this purpose, by using the (content analysis) method, the 155 annual reports of 31 Qatar listed companies were observed, to explore the extent and content of HR information disclosure. Statistical tests have been performed to analyze the difference between the HR disclosure score across various industrial sectors. The results indicated that, for the companies sampled, all disclosed information relating to the HR. Variations existed, although in the main, HR disclosure whilst the most frequently reported area was "training information". Throughout the reports, the analysis found no evidence relating to the disclosure of "consultation with employees" "employment of disabled people" and "Value added by employees". In term of disclosure methods, the results showed that the companies used all the methods (financial, quantitative and descriptive) to disclose HR, although the most of HR information in the annual reports was descriptive. Statistically, the results found a significant difference between the mean HR disclosure from one industry sector to another. This is a first longitudinal study of HR disclosure practices by the Qatar corporate sector in the CSR domain with a disclosure analysis for a period of five years. This research provides new directions for the literature in this area and may encourage comparative studies on HR-based studies from different perspectives.

Keywords: Disclosures, Human resources, CSR, HR information, Qatar

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become more and more of a concern for researchers and academics. With increasing attention to this issue, companies are under increased pressure to meet their social responsibilities to the society and environment in which they operate. These companies are no longer controlled solely by the goal of maximizing profit. To ensure their sustainability and development, they now operate to achieve other goals as well, including the welfare of the society and preservation of the environment in which it operates. This new orientation is reflected in accounting thought. Accounting associations and professional accounting bodies have organised seminars and funded studies to shed light on this subject. In 1973, the American Accounting Association presented a theoretical model based on the descriptive disclosure of the efforts of companies in solving environmental problems. It also stressed that information about the environmental impacts of a project should be disclosed. Another study on the objectives of the financial statements emphasised the importance of disclosing the extent an organization fulfils its social responsibilities given that it clearly has an impact on society. The importance of such disclosure in the financial reports is akin to the importance of disclosing economic issues as it measures how the organisation contributes to achieving social well-being. These studies have shown that improving the areas of accounting disclosure and expanding its content requires that it expands its focus on financial operations only to include new areas, the most important of which is the disclosure of the social contributions of the organization and the fulfilment of its social responsibilities towards the society in which it operates and the natural resources from which it consumes.

Most of the studies interested in this area have concentrated in developed countries (e.g., Adams et al., 1998; Zeghal and Ahmed, 1990; Gray, 2001; Hackston and Milne, 1996; Adams and Kuasirikun, 2000; Freedman and Patten, 2004; Smith et al., 2005), few studies have been conducted in developing countries and the Gulf states, particularly Qatar. We find that at the level of the Arab Gulf, Aribi & Gao (2012) focused on the banking sector, examining and determining the impact of Islam on the disclosure of social responsibility in financial institutions. The study used content analysis to analyze the impact of Islam on social responsibility disclosure. By analyzing the annual reports of 42 financial institutions operating in the Arabian Gulf, including 21 Islamic institutions, the results showed that there are significant differences in the level of disclosure of social responsibility between Islamic financial institutions and their non-Islamic counterparts. This is because Islamic financial institutions must report on Shari'ah compliance, zakat, charity, donations and interest-free loans. The majority of studies on the disclosure of environmental and social responsibility in the Gulf countries, particularly Qatar

have focused on the views of users of such reports and stakeholders. For example, Al-Khater & Naser (2003), whose study focused on Qatar's stakeholders' view of CSR disclosure in annual reports, concluded that there was agreement among the participants on the right of all parties to obtain information on the social responsibility of the company. The participants stressed the need for laws that regulate and encourage companies to disclose more information on social responsibility.

Another study, AlNaimi et al. (2012) examined the content of the annual report for CSR disclosure in Qatar in order to measure the extent of CSR disclosure in companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange. They examined the annual reports of 25 companies listed on the Qatari stock exchange for the 2007 fiscal year. The most important findings were that most companies disclosed information related to HR, product development, followed by community service. No company disclosed information about the environment. The study recommended that a long-term study be conducted covering multiple years in order to clarify the size and direction of the disclosure of social responsibility and HR in Qatar.

The majority of studies that address social disclosure in developing countries, particularly Qatar have focused on the views of stakeholders concerning the disclosure of social responsibility. They have had little regard for the reality of actual disclosure. Such disclosure is not practised across all sectors. Furthermore, they have overwhelmingly been based on a single financial year. They have also focused on a single category or item and have failed to capture a more holistic image of social and environmental disclosure.

This study attempts to contribute to bridging the gap in accounting literature due to the limited number of specialized studies in this field. It is one of the first studies that will deal with the current state of social responsibility disclosure about HR in Qatar. By using content analysis, the annual reports of listed companies for five years were analyzed. Since most of the studies dealt with the subject from the point of view of stakeholders through the use of questionnaires paper, this will be a qualitative study that adds to literature and assists further studies on this topic.

To address this lacuna in the accounting literature, extend previous studies, and capture a more complete picture of accounting disclosure in Qatar and to understand the directions of this disclosure, this research engages in a longitudinal study of the reality of HR disclosure using content analysis method to analyse a time series of annual reports of companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange using the annual reports spanning five years (2011-2015).

From the above, the study problem can be framed in the following question:

To what extent are companies registered on the Qatar Exchange committed to disclosing HR in their annual reports?

To answer the above question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. *What are the developments in HR disclosure during the study period?*
2. *What is the extent of disclosing HR information in the annual reports?*
3. *What kind of information on HR is disclosed in the annual reports?*
4. *What areas of information on HR are disclosed in the annual reports?*
5. *How effective is the type of activity on the volume of disclosure of HR information in annual reports?*

To answer these questions, the content analysis method was used to analyze and compile the study data from 155 annual reports of 31 companies listed on the Qatar Exchange for the period of five years from 2011 to 2015.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims at identifying the extent of companies' commitment to disclosing HR information in their annual reports for companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange. To achieve this objective, the following sub-objectives were formulated:

- Measure the size of HR disclosure in the published annual reports and its direction from 2011-2015.
- Identify the quality of the HR information that is disclosed in the annual reports.
- Identify the areas of HR disclosure in the annual reports.
- Test the impact of the type of activity on the volume of HR disclosure.

RESEARCH METHOD

In order to achieve the objectives of the study and develop the theoretical framework, the researcher conducted an inductive study of the most important previous studies on this subject. This helps develop a model that can be used to analyze the content of the annual reports of companies.

Content analysis was used to collect data on the subject from the annual reports of the listed companies. It is an appropriate research method used for such studies (See for example: Singh and Ahuja, 1983; Gul et al., 1989; Gray et al., 1995; Subbarao and Zeghal, 1997; Bontis and Richardson, 2000; Gray et al., 2001; Goh and Lim, 2004; Gao et al., 2005; Zubek and Lovegrove, 2009, AlNaimi et al., 2012).

Using this method, we can analyze data and information in an organised and predefined manner to measure the size, type, and areas of HR disclosure in annual corporate reports. This

method is concerned with the type, quality and size of the information contained in the annual reports.

In line with the majority of studies, the published annual reports have been used as an essential source of disclosure of HR information.

Steps and stages of implementing content analysis

There are many basic stages in which the content analysis process must undergo. This study has relied heavily on the mechanism developed by Hackston & Milne (1996) which is based on the mechanism proposed by Gray et al. (1995). These stages are:

Phase I: Categories of disclosure and determinants of HR:

At this stage, the definition of HR is defined and the categories to which the data contained in the source (annual report) will be supported by the existence of comprehensive decision rules for each category (i.e., what belongs to a particular category should be limited, and cannot subordinate to another category). This means that what falls within these categories and rules will be social disclosure. In this regard, the mechanism developed by Hackston & Milne (1996) is used to measure the volume of disclosure of social responsibility. It is a list of specific categories of disclosure as well as the rules of decision for disclosure of HR as well as a data collection model. Zubek and Lovegrove's (2009) model is also used.

Some argue that care should be taken to enrich content analysis data by attempting to demonstrate the quality and quality of disclosure of social responsibility in general and HR in particular (see for example, Guthrie & Mathews, 1985). For this purpose, this study identified specific categories of HR disclosure as follows:

- HR dimensions and employee information: information on retirement - employee consultations - recruitment of special needs - added values by employees - health and safety information for employees - training information - equal opportunity between workers - others
- Methods of disclosure of HR: financial disclosure, quantitative disclosure, descriptive disclosure.
- The volume of disclosure of HR: percentage of the page.

Phase 2: Identification of Content Analysis Units:

This phase requires decisions on content analysis units. These decisions:

- A) Specify the data source or the sampling unit.
- B) Determine the unit of measurement.

These decisions are important issues in the analysis of content because of the significant impact on the size of disclosure (Gray et al., 1995)

Specifying the source of data

The study relied on the published annual reports as the most widely used means by which organizations disclose human resource information. It is the most widely used source of information and the most reliable on the organization's activities (Gray et al., 1995).

Determining the unit of measurement

The use of content analysis in measuring the size of disclosure of social responsibility is based on the idea that the item allocated a greater area of disclosure indicates the attention of the organization to this item. It can be used to measure the size of disclosure of social responsibility based on the number of words, sentences, paragraphs, lines, or the proportion of the page. In this study, the researchers relied on the proportion of the page to measure the volume of disclosure according to the mechanism developed by Hackston & Milne (1996). This involved using an A4 plastic sheet divided into twenty-five rows (the same length) and four columns (the same width) to form a grid with 100 rectangles of the same size representing 1% of the total size of the page. We then begin to count the number of rectangles that covered social disclosure, depending on the nature or type of disclosure (financial disclosure, quantitative disclosure, descriptive disclosure) and items of disclosure used by Gray et al. (1995) with some modifications (information about the employees - information on the retirement - information on the advice of the workers - information on the recruitment of people with special needs - information about the values added by the workers - information about the health and safety of the employees - information about the training - information on the equal opportunity between workers). Once we obtained the percentage of the total page, we calculate the total social disclosure. This method can be used to measure all methods of disclosure such as drawings, tables, graphs and so on. However, this method does not take into account the difference in print size, column size, and page size from one report to another.

Population and Study Sample

The study population consists of all 43 companies listed in the stock market. Some of the listed companies were excluded after 2011, and some companies do not have annual reports. This study was limited to companies that publish their annual reports regularly. It has a database that is easily accessible. The study sample is composed of 31 companies divided into different sectors and activities in Qatar as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Companies listed on the Qatar Exchange by sector

	Company's sector	NO.	%
1	Banks and Financial Services	12	39
2	Consumer Goods and Services	5	16
3	Industrials	4	13
4	Insurance	3	10
5	Real Estate	3	10
6	Telecoms	2	6
7	Transportation	2	6
	Total	31	100

Source: www.qe.com.qa (September 2017)

The study is limited to the years 2011 to 2015, due to the lack of more recent reports of some of the sampled companies.

Previous Studies

There have been many research and scientific studies in developed countries on the disclosure of social responsibility. Researchers have begun to study the motives for the disclosure of such information. Several theories have been formulated to provide a logical explanation of the factors that may affect the level of disclosure. For example, Patten (1992) focused on analyzing and testing legitimacy theory by measuring the impact of oil contamination from Exxon Valdez on the level of environmental disclosure in the annual reports of other oil companies. The results supported this theory and explained that companies operating in sensitive industries provide more information on their environmental activities in their annual reports. Several studies have produced similar results to support the theory of legitimacy in their interpretation of social disclosure (Wilmshurst & Frost, 2000; Deegan et al., 2002). On the other hand, the results of some studies were not fully supportive of this theory (See, for example, Wilmshurst & Frost, 2000; O'Dwyer, 2002; Campbell et al., 2003). Smith et al. (2005) used the theory of interests (stakeholder theory) to interpret social disclosure in the annual reports of a sample of 22 Danish-Norwegian companies and 26 American companies in the power generation sector. The study found support for the theory of interests, where countries with stronger pressure groups were found to be more active than companies operating in countries with weaker lobbying

groups. Accordingly, it is possible to use more than one theory to interpret and analyze the disclosure of social responsibility.

The researchers used the two methods to measure the level of disclosure of CSR. Naser & Baker (1999) explored the views of the different stakeholders and prepares of accounting information in Jordan towards CSR and accountability. The majority of respondents believe that the organization will be seen as being "committed to its social responsibility" if it discloses socially relevant information. This is supported by Al-Khater & Naser (2003) who used interest theory to interpret the view of accounting information users for Qatari company, and to identify their views on expanding disclosure. The participants stressed that any increase in social disclosure would achieve greater accountability, although they believe that there is a need for legislation to encourage wider disclosure. In addition, the participants believe that different parties within a society should have the right to have all the information they need from a company. Ahmad & Sulaiman (2004) found a close relationship between the level of disclosure of CSR and its organizational commitment. The comparative study conducted by Jahamani (2003) to ascertain the extent of the commitment and awareness of decision makers in Jordan and the UAE to social responsibility found that there are no statistically significant differences between the two countries regarding their views on social responsibility concepts and disclosure.

In North Africa, Qardak (2010) measured the position of the management in Libyan industrial companies on environmental responsibility and determining the reasons for the low level of environmental disclosure. A questionnaire was used to investigate the opinions of the management on their position on environmental responsibility, as well as identifying the explanatory factors for the reluctance of the Libyan industrial companies for environmental disclosure.

The managers in Libyan industrial companies are well aware of their environmental responsibilities, which explains their ability to interpret and analyze the reasons that led to the low level of environmental disclosure in their companies. There are a number of reasons that led to the low level of environmental disclosure the most important of which is the lack of academic research and the absence of standards required by the accounting and control bodies, as well as the absence of the role of the beneficiaries and pressure groups, and the cost of collecting data and information on environmental performance, disclosure and confidentiality among other reasons.

Some studies have shown that there are many factors influencing the quality and size of social disclosure. For example, Newson & Deegan (2002) found that both the culture and size of the organisation, and the type of industry in which it operates have a significant impact on the

size and quality of social disclosure. Hawani Wan Abd Rahman et al. (2011) achieved identical results when they measured the level of disclosure of the social responsibility of 44 public companies registered in Bursa Malaysia to determine the relationship between the size of the company, its age and profitability with the volume of social responsibility disclosure for the years 2005 and 2006. Content analysis was used to divide a 16-item disclosure index based on four general axes (HR, market, community and environment) to assess the level of disclosure. The study found that attention to disclosure focused on the market, followed by HR, society, and finally the environment. The results also showed that companies disclosed not only good information but also reported bad or negative information. The study also provided evidence that government companies influenced other companies to reveal their social responsibility.

Farook et al. (2011) tested and developed a theoretical model of the determinants of social disclosure in Islamic banks. They then compared and analyzed the annual reports of 47 Islamic banks operating in 14 countries. This study found that the volume of disclosure of social responsibility (CSR) varies widely among the Islamic banks surveyed. According to the results of the regression test, one of the most important determinants of social disclosure in Islamic banks is the influence of public opinion, Shari'ah Supervisory Board (SSB) and corporate governance. Also, the level of political freedom in a country, as well as the ratio of deposits to total assets in banks, may be determinants that affect the level of social disclosure in Islamic banks. Some of these results were confirmed Aribi & Gao (2012), who examined the impact of Islam on the disclosure of social responsibility in financial institutions. The study analyzed the annual reports of 42 financial institutions operating in the Arabian Gulf, including 21 Islamic and non-Islamic firms. The results showed that there are significant differences in the level of disclosure of social responsibility between Islamic financial institutions non-Islamic financial institutions. The reports of Islamic financial institutions operating in accordance with the rules of the Islamic Shariah included information such as reports of the Shari'ah Supervisory Board, zakat, charity, donations, and interest-free loans.

The relationship between the type of activity practised by the establishment and the level of social disclosure has been confirmed by many studies. Kansal & Joshi (2015) used content analysis to examine the annual reports of Indian companies to check the level of HR disclosure in listed companies. The study found that the information related to training is among the most published information by these companies, while the sample companies ignored important information related to HR such as employee care fund information, holidays allowance, loans and advances. The study also found that there are no differences in statistical evidence between the different sectors in which the sample companies work. These results were in line with Das (2013) who examined the extent to which Indian insurers are committed to disclosing

corporate social responsibility, particularly HR disclosure. The theory of legitimacy has been tested to explain social disclosure. Of the 26 insurance companies in India during the financial years from 2002 to 2010, comprising five government companies and the remaining 21 private companies were divided into 14 companies working in life insurance and the remaining 12 companies do not work in life insurance. The results showed that government life insurance companies disclosed more than private companies. On the other hand, the statistical test (t-test) showed that there are significant differences between the size of disclosure of social responsibility in government insurance and other (private) companies.

As for the Qatari market, which is witnessing a remarkable development, one of the most prominent studies on CSR disclosure in Qatar is AlNaimi et al. (2012). They analyzed the status of disclosure of social responsibility for companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange. The content analysis method was used to analyze the annual reports of 25 companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange for the 2007 fiscal year only. The most important findings of the study were that most companies disclosed in their annual report on information related to HR and product development followed by community service. No information related to the environment was disclosed. Zubek & Mashat (2015) studied the disclosure of social responsibility on the websites of companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange. The study concluded that the disclosure of social responsibility through websites is basic, although most companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange had links to access their annual report. Thus, a review of the previous studies in the local environment leads to the following conclusions:

1. Some previous studies relied on the questionnaire as a tool for collecting data and information, and therefore the results reflect the participants' views, opinions and experiences.
2. Most previous studies relied on the opinions of employees at different levels of employment as a source of information, while ignoring other categories of users of financial reports such as investors, consumers and society. They also ignored the annual reports published on the subject of social disclosure.
3. Previous studies focused on socio-environmental impacts without considering that the relative importance of environmental impacts far outweighs the relative importance of other social areas, especially in some industries.

Based on the above, this study will attempt to avoid the aforementioned shortcomings by measuring the actual disclosure volume and highlighting the HR information published in the annual reports of listed companies in the Qatari financial market.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the study analyses the contents of the annual reports of companies listed on the Qatari Stock Exchange regarding the HR disclosure of these companies. In order to achieve this objective, 155 reports were obtained annually over five years (2011-2015) for 31 companies out of 42 companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange (73%). The following are the most important results:

The volume of disclosure of HR information

Table (2) shows the number of companies that have disclosed HR information regardless of their size during the years of study. All the companies surveyed disclosed some HR information in their annual reports. Concerning the difference in the size of this disclosure between the items of disclosure, we note that the average size of disclosure increased slightly from (0.86 of the page) in 2011 to 1.10 in 2015, while the level of disclosure reached a high of (2.10 of the page) and the lowest point was (0.08 of a page). This shows that there is a large discrepancy between the performance of the sampled companies in the HR disclosure. This is explained in the following sections.

Table 2. The average of HR disclosure

Years	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
HR disclosure	n=31	n=31	n=31	n=31	n=31
Companies disclosed HR information	31	31	31	31	31
Average size of HR disclosure	0.86	0.89	0.96	0.98	1.11
The highest level of disclosure	1.83	1.93	1.88	1.98	2.10
Minimum level of disclosure	0.10	0.08	0.10	0.09	0.11
Term	1.73	1.83	1.78	1.89	1.99

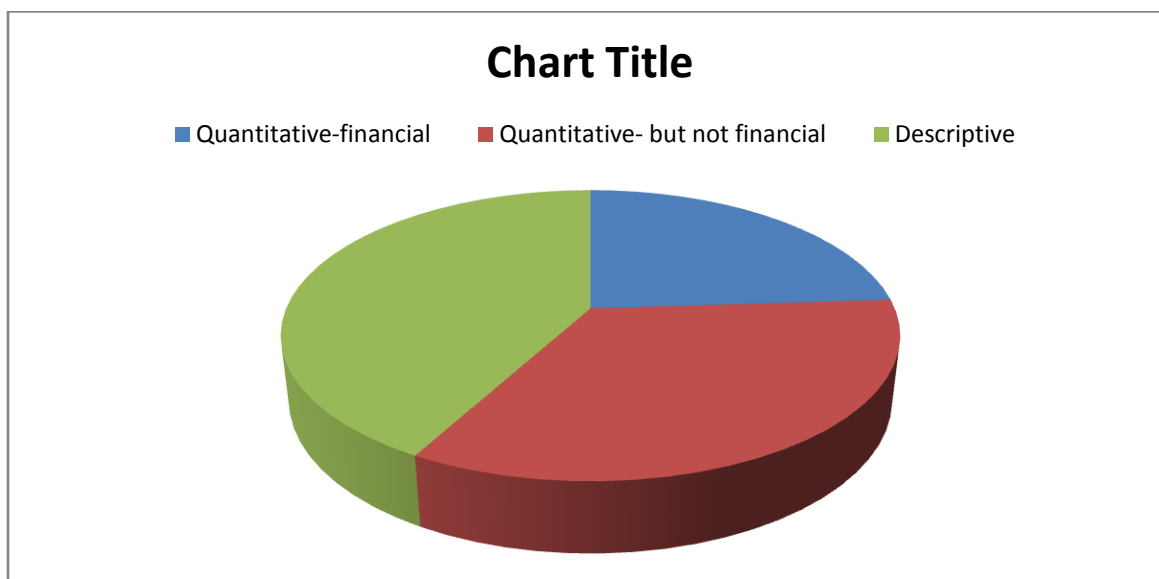
An analysis of the annual reports revealed that some companies included a separate paragraph entitled "Social Responsibility" or (Human Resources). However, this information was scattered for most of the sampled companies.

HR Disclosure Evidence

The sampled companies disclosed HR information in their annual reports using all the methods of disclosure (financial, quantitative and descriptive), despite the different levels of use of each method. Descriptive disclosure consisted of 42% of disclosure followed by the quantitative

method (34%) and financial disclosure with 24% of the average HR disclosure volume. An analysis of Figure 1 and Table 3 reveals the following:

Figure 1. HR Disclosure Meth0ds



Financial disclosure: Except for information on employees, retirement and training, most companies did not use this method to express their role in carrying out their social responsibility towards the HR in their annual reports. This is also reflected in the average disclosure size where the average financial disclosure was 0.23 per page. It is the least method used to disclosure human resources information perhaps due to the difficulty of measuring the social costs and benefits financially.

We also note that the average volume of information disclosure of HR in financial terms is converging from year to year, reaching 0.07 per page in 2011 and continued to rise slightly until 0.11 per page in 2015. The traditional financial statements share similar financial disclosure processes as most of the disclosed information relates to termination indemnity and compensation to employees.

Quantitative but nun Financial disclosure: An analysis of the content of the annual reports of the companies found that about half of the companies used this method for only five items related to HR. The average quantitative but not financial disclosure volume is 0.33 of the page. Charts, statistics and figures were presented in the annual reports to reflect the social responsibility of these companies towards workers in a quantitative form not financial.

Descriptive disclosure: Most companies used this method to disclose information related to HR (93%). The average size of descriptive disclosure was 0.40 pages. It is the largest among other disclosure methods, indicating that the sampled companies rely heavily on descriptive disclosure in most of their reports because these reports often include descriptive expression of social and HR information.

HR Themes and Average Level of Disclosure

Table (3) shows the average size of disclosure by areas of HR disclosed by the target companies in their annual reports. There is a difference in the average size of the disclosure between the HR information items. The highest average disclosure size was in training (35% of the total average disclosure size). The employee's data information was 0.18 per page, followed by information on pension data and retirement, health and safety and other information (0.13, 0.12 and 0.11 per page, respectively). Equal opportunity was 0.08 per page.

Table 3. HR Themes and Average Level of Disclosure

HR Themes	HR evidence			Total
	Quantitative financial	Quantitative but non- financial	Descriptive	
Employees Data	0.09	0.08	0.01	0.18
Pension Data Retirement	0.05	0.07	0.01	0.13
Consultation with employees	0	0	0	0
Employment of disabled	0	0	0	0
Value added statement	0	0	0	0
Health and safety	0	0	0.12	0.12
Equal opportunities	0	0.03	0.05	0.08
Training programs	0.09	0.12	0.13	0.34
Other	0	0.03	0.08	0.11
Total	0.23	0.33	0.40	0.96

* The average based on the total of annual reports analysed (155 reports)

Employee training was all the sampled companies disclosed this item and gave more space in the annual report of the information related to this item compared to the other items. The average size of the disclosure is 0.34 of the page. Two-thirds of the information disclosed by companies was related to training, which indicates the high interest of these companies to build the capacity of employees and their development. The following is an example of disclosure related to training:

"The company is keen on the interests of employees and ensures their personal and professional development in order to be a leader in the sector. This section assesses the performance of employees and studies the best methods to raise their productivity".

Employee data information: This item comes in second place after training. The average size of the disclosure is 0.18 of the page, which indicates their awareness of the importance of this item. This information includes the number of employees, their development, their nationality and other relevant information.

The following example may explain the disclosure related to this *"...The total number of employees increased in 2012 to reach 1334 employees, an increase of 18% over 2011..."*

Pension data retirement: The table below shows that the interest in disclosing this item is generally low, with the average disclosure volume being approximately 0.13. However, compared with the rest of the items, we find this item comes in third place in terms of disclosure volume of approximately 13%. The following is a sample of such information. *"During the year 2015, Human Resources Management continued its tradition of recognizing the long service of employees through its annual honorary ceremony, which honored 32 employees".*

Health and safety: Table (3) shows that the average size of disclosure of this item is 0.12 of the page. We also note that the volume of disclosure of health and safety information did not change significantly during the sample years. The following example is of the health and safety disclosure in an annual report:

"...we are also developing cables with the advanced technology necessary to resist fire and observe security and safety".

Other information: This item reflects the information related to the employees that fall outside the scope of the other items. Despite the small volume of disclosure of this item, it is ranked fifth. The average size of disclosure of this item is 0.11 per page indicating that most of the information contained in the reports could be classified according to the rules and items related to human resources. The following is an example of this information from an annual report: *"Human Resources Management in 2015 is a project for building good faith with the values advocated by the bank in terms of implementing programs, including the blood donation campaign ... which became an annual tradition of employees".*

In general, we note that all the surveyed companies have disclosed in their annual reports most items of information related to HR. However, there is a group of items for which no company disclosed information related to these items. This includes the employment of people with special needs and information about the values added by employees. This indicates that the sampled companies are not interested in such information.

HR Disclosure with Regard to Company Activity

The average disclosure of the sampled 31 companies for five consecutive years was entered into the SPSS program to determine the differences between the level of disclosure of these companies in order to determine the effect of the type of activity practised by these companies on the level of disclosure. These were divided into seven groups according to their activity. One-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between the average disclosure volume of different sectors.

To use this analysis, this question was put in the form of statistical imposition for statistical testing as follows:

Null Hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences between the average disclosure of different sectors.

$$7\mu = 6\mu = 5\mu = 4\mu = 3\mu = 2\mu = 1\mu \quad H_0 =$$

Alternative Hypothesis: There are at least two of these groups that differ in the level of disclosure.

$$7\mu \neq 6\mu \neq 5\mu \neq 4\mu \neq 3\mu \neq 2\mu \neq 1\mu \quad H_1 =$$

Table 4. On way ANOVA test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	43.07598	10	4.308	3.330	0.002
Within Groups	171.38876	144	1.190		
Total	214.46474	154			

Using the analysis of the mono-variance, the results shown in Table 5 which shows that $F = 3.330$, $df = 6$, $P = 0.002$. This leads us to reject the null hypothesis. There are no statistically significant differences between the groups. The value of ($P = 0.002$) is less than the value of ($\alpha = 0.05$).

The alternative hypothesis accepted that there are at least two different sectors in the level of disclosure. The descriptive statistics were used by means of averages to explain these differences as shown in Table (5).

The table shows that there are significant differences in the level of disclosure between sectors, where the average size of disclosure in the Telecoms and Industrials sector was lower in terms of disclosure volume (0.08 per page), while the Banking sector recorded the highest level of disclosed HR information (0.35). Other sectors are close in volume with minor differences (Transportations, Consumer Goods and Services, Insurance and Real Estate) which recorded, 0.13, 0.12, 0.11 and 0.09, respectively.

Table 5. Average disclosure cross company's sector

	Company's sector	NO.	%
1	Consumer Goods and Services	0.12	0.13
2	Banks and Financial Services	0.35	0.36
3	Industrials	0.08	0.08
4	Insurance	0.11	0.11
5	Real Estate	0.09	0.09
6	Telecoms	0.08	0.08
7	Transportation	0.13	0.14
	Total	0.96	100

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study examined and analyzed the HR disclosure practices by Qatar listed companies in their annual reports. Through the previous analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

First, the results of this study are consistent with most previous studies. All the companies examined have modestly disclosed at less one item of HR information in their annual report at varying levels gradually increasing over the years. AlNaimi et al. (2012) confirmed that the disclosure of social responsibility in Qatar is still in its infancy and that most of the information published was related to employees.

Second, the analysis of the annual reports indicates that there is no fixed place or method for all companies in disclosing information related to their social and HR responsibilities. This can

be attributed to the absence of accounting laws and standards that oblige these companies to disclose their social activities. Khater & Naser (2003) concluded that legislation is urgently needed to regulate and encourage the process of social disclosure in Qatar.

Thirdly, the results showed that the sampled companies used the methods of disclosing HR in different forms in their annual reports (financial, quantitative and descriptive), although their focus was on using the descriptive method. Most of the information contained in the annual reports was descriptive. The financial method was mostly avoided when presenting information related to HR. This is consistent with most of the previous findings that confirmed the tendency of companies to use the descriptive method of disclosing their social responsibility in their reports (See, for example, Zubek & Lovegrove, 2009 and Pratten & Mashat, 2009).

Fourth, the results of the study showed that there is a difference in the average size of the disclosure of HR in the sampled companies. Training was the focus of most annual reports and allocated the largest area in their reports compared to the remaining items. Kansal & Joshi (2015) concluded that the most information disclosed by Indian companies was information related to training. A number of other items, such as information on employee consultation, information about the employment of people with special needs, information on added value by employees were absent from the disclosure of the sampled companies. This confirms the findings of most previous studies that firms pay most attention to HR in their annual reports compared to other areas (See, for example, Andrew et al., 1989; Abu-Baker & Naser, 2003; Zubek & Lovegrove, 2009). Information on the interaction with the community and customer service came in second place. This contradicts the findings of Aribi & Gao (2012) in their study of banks operating in the Arabian Gulf and the level of disclosure of social responsibility, where the average size of disclosure for customer service was disclosed more than HR. This concern is attributed to the desire of companies to comply with the provisions of the corporate governance system listed in markets regulated by the Qatar Market Authority. Article 29, paragraphs two and three stipulates the need to ensure the protection of the rights of employees of these companies.

Fifth, the previous analysis shows that there are significant statistical differences in the average size of HR disclosure between different sectors. This indicates that there is a clear effect on the type of activity on the size of disclosure in the sample companies. This is consistent with the results of previous studies (Newson & Deegan, 2002; Kansal & Joshi, 2015; Zubek & Mashat, 2015), where the banking sector disclosed HR most. The transport and insurance sectors were the least interested in disclosing information related to their HR in their annual reports. Zubek & Mashat (2015) concluded that the number of companies operating in this sector that disclosed some social responsibility items on their websites does not exceed 67%, with a complete

absence of companies in other categories (employee and customer service). This can be attributed to the fact that these companies do not pay attention to their websites and focus all their attention on the annual reports and the obligation to publish them periodically.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. The results of the study indicate a discrepancy in the size and quality of disclosure. We recommend that the accounting and supervisory bodies issue laws, regulations and accounting standards that oblige companies to disclose the information of social responsibility and human resources.
2. In view of the absence of a unified corporate model to guide disclosure of social responsibility, we recommend research be conducted to develop an accounting model for the disclosure of social responsibility that applies to all companies, particularly listed companies so that it is easy to understand and apply.
3. Conducting a longitudinal study to link the size of the disclosure of human resources and its impact on the satisfaction and work of the staff in order to identify the impact of disclosure of social responsibility and human resources.

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