Leading international experiences to establish social responsibility for multinational companies under the Covid-19 pandemic

تجارب دولية رائدة لإرساء المسؤولية الإجتماعية للشركات متعددة الجنسيات في ظل جائحة كوفيد-19

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Abstract:

This study aims to present the most important international pioneering models for establishing social responsibility for industrial companies under the current Covid-19 epidemic crisis, such as Microsoft, Bosch and others, highlights the great role that companies can play through social responsibility programs and activities, that have been doubled during This pandemic is a cornerstone and an important means to alleviate the severity of the crisis, thus it will be an incentive for other companies to set up similar or more distinct programs, and the possibility of accomplishing maximum benefit from them, however the main reason is to serve the public good.

Keywords: Social Responsibility, Corona Pandemic (Covid-19), Experiences of International Companies.

Jel Classification Codes: A13, B55, I15

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى عرض أهم النماذج الدولية الرائدة لإرساء المسؤولية الإجتماعية للشركات متعددة الجنسيات في ظل جائحة كوفيد-19 الراهنة، مثل شركة مايكروسوفت وشركة بوش وغيرها، وهنا يبرز الدور الكبير الذي يمكن أن تقوم به الشركات من خلال برامج وأنشطة المسؤولية الإجتماعية، التي تضاعفت خلال هذه الجائحة وهي بمثابة حجر الزاوية وأداة مهمة للتخفيف من حدة الأزمة، وبذلك تكون حافزا للشركات الأخرى على وضع برامج مماثلة أو أكثر تميزا، وإمكانية تحقيق الاستفادة القصوى منها، هذا كله من أجل خدمة الصالح العام.

كلمات مفتاحية: مسؤولية إجتماعية، جائحة كورونا (كوفيد-19)، تجارب دولية، شركات متعددة الجنسيات.

تصنيفات JEL تصنيفات A13, B55, I15

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I. Introduction

Social responsibility is deemed one of the most important duties of national companies and institutions in countries, at a time when their social performance is no less important than their economic performance, and through social responsibility programs economic institutions use their many resources for the benefit of society, however through this way prove to the society in which they are active in that they build Socially responsible behaviors in the interest of society.

The Covid-19 pandemic represents a tremendous opportunity for industrial companies to shift towards more realistic social responsibility and contribute to address the current challenges urgently, so it is expected that corporate social responsibility will once again become a fundamental issue for managers and researchers in light of the repercussions of the global pandemic, and put governments, institutions and individuals in one boat. They work as a harmonious team for the common good.

So, we can abstract the research problematic in the following question:

✤ What is the level of adoption of social responsibility for multinational companies under the repercussions of the global Covid-19 pandemic?

Through the previous problem, the following sub-questions can be asked:

- What are the factors that drive attention to social responsibility?
- What is the long-term impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on multinational corporate social responsibility initiatives?
- What are the most important opportunities and challenges facing multinational companies to take an interest in social responsibility?
- What are the most important shared experiences in the field of social responsibility for multinational companies?

I. 1 Objectives of the study

- Highlighting the various concepts related to corporate social responsibility and the global pandemic, COVID-19;
- Demonstrating the role achieved by multinational companies in establishing the concept of social responsibility and identify the reality of the most important opportunities and challenges they faced;
- Benefiting from the experiences of some multinational companies in their response to social responsibility programs, which have doubled in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

I. 2 research importance

The importance of the research lies in the increasing global, regional and local interest in corporate social responsibility at all levels and forms, as its importance and sensitivity doubled in the time of the pandemic, by highlighting the most important experiences of some multinational companies in practicing social responsibility in its various fields in light of the Corona pandemic, and to serve as a test To the extent to which these companies are able to protect their employees, society and stakeholders in order to overcome unprecedented global challenges.

I. 3 Study Approach

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach in a template through which we seek to answer the most important problematic questions and come up with results that can be used to achieve the required effectiveness, and this is done by using various scientific sources and websites related to the study variables.

II. The theoretical framework for corporate social responsibility

Social responsibility constitutes a continuous commitment by the institutions to develop and improve the educational, cultural, economic and social security level for community members through the provision of various services.

II.1 Definition of corporate social responsibility

There are different perceptions of the concept of corporate social responsibility between the private sector, governments and civil society organizations, each according to his point of view, as it still derives its power and spread from its voluntary nature, and the following are examples of some definitions.

- Corporate Social Responsibility "is a self-organizing business model that helps the company to be socially responsible towards itself and its stakeholders, Examples of CSR activities include the improvement of staff benefit; reduction of energy use; protection of the natural environment; providing charitable activities, such as donation and voluntary services; producing products that integrates social attributes; and support local communities (Qiu, Jiang, Liu, Hsiang Chen, & Yuan, 2021).
- ✤ As for the more comprehensive definition, it came from Carroll, who believes that social responsibility includes the economic, legal, ethical and voluntary expectations that society expects from all business organizations in a certain period of time (Carrol, 1991, p.40).
- ✤ As for (Berkowitz), he defined it in three basic levels: the responsibility towards the owners and the shareholders represented in achieving profits and the responsibility towards the stakeholders that focus on the need to pay attention to meeting the goals of the stakeholders consumers, workers, distributors ... and others, in addition to responsibility towards society, which indicates to the necessity of caring for the environment and society as a whole, and has identified it in the following form:



Figure (01): Levels of corporate social responsibility

Based on the foregoing, we can say that corporate social responsibility is a notion whereby institutions incorporate social, environmental and ethical considerations into the policies and activities of their business, by paying attention to the internal parties of the organization such as employees and external parties such as members of society and the environment together in bringing out the goals of all-inclusive and sustainable development.

Source: (MCHUGH, MCHUGH, & NICKELS, 2012)

II.2 Dimensions of corporate social responsibility

There is a great convergence between writers and researchers in their identification of the most important dimensions of corporate social responsibility, which are interconnected and complementary with each other to form in the end the philosophy of social responsibility.

(Carroll) presented one of the most famous models, which is based on four basic dimensions: the economic, ethical, legal and charitable dimension, as shown in the figure below.

According to Carroll, CSR is a multi-layer concept consisting of four inter-related aspects of responsibilities, namely, economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic. He presents these different responsibilities as consecutive layers within a pyramid. These four dimensions are not stand-alone, but are integrated.





Source: (CARROLL, 2016, p. 05)

- The economic dimension: It means the organization's commitment to providing goods and services at reasonable cost and of good quality, and trying to provide safety for others by respecting the rules of competition (2019 (الحديد و الصريرة)).
- The legal dimension: It means the organization's commitment when practicing its activities with the system of laws and legislations in force, and gaining the trust of others through the principles of environmental protection, justice, occupational safety and consumer protection.
- The ethical dimension: It means the commitment to present initiatives and programs to serve the community and its various segments and accommodate the ethical, behavioral and belief aspects in the societies in which it operates. (2019)
- The philanthropic Dimension: It means the commitment to provide initiatives and programs to serve the community and its various segments, such as people with disabilities, support for literacy, health initiatives and others.

We note that these four levels of social responsibility, although they start from the bottom up, are interconnected and integrated with each other so that no dimension can be dispensed with, because they constitute the pillars of social responsibility.

II.3 Corporate Social Responsibility Assessment Indicators

Social responsibility is one of the channels that support the public concern, and one of the most important social responsibility activities taken from 120 leading companies in Britain are the following (Armstrong, 2019, p. 107):

- Community: Education, skills, employability, key risks and opportunities, and other activities in support of community initiatives.
- Environment: Most companies reported climate change and resource use as key issues, with 85 percent of them managing impacts through an Environmental Management System.
- ✤ Market: The issues most frequently mentioned by companies were research and development, procurement and supply chain, responsible selling, responsible marketing and product safety, and there was an increased focus on fair treatment of customers and appropriate product information, and the impact of products on customers' health.
- ✤ Workplace: It is considered the strongest administrative performance area as companies have recognized the critical role of employees to achieve responsible business practices, emphasis has been placed on internal communications and training, and more attention is paid to health and well-being in addition to the traditional safety agenda.

III. The repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic on the industrial sector

After the widespread spread of this epidemic at the level of a large number of countries, its repercussions had a profound impact on the economies and policies of countries at home and abroad.

III.1 About the global pandemic COVID-19

Since the World Health Organization declared the emerging coronavirus disease a global pandemic, governments in all countries have rushed to take preventive measures.

- Corona virus disease is defined as "an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARSCoV2) virus, which was actively detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019 and the following sequence in January 2020" (Rahman & Bahar, 2020).
- It was initially reported to the World Health Organization on December 31, 2019, and on January 30, 2020 a global health emergency was declared, and then on March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic (Velavan & Meyer, 2020, p. 278).
- Symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath, in more severe cases the infection can cause pneumonia or breathing difficulties, these symptoms are similar to the flu or the common cold, and this is the reason for requesting a test to confirm infection with the Corona virus (World Health Organization, 2020).

Accordingly, the name Covid-19 is the name given by the World Health Organization to the virus that causes acute pneumonia, known as Corona, since its appearance mid December 2019, and its outbreak in China and then the rest of the world caused several negative effects and repercussions in various fields, which it classified The World Health Organization declared in March 2020 a global pandemic, and has developed several measures and tips to prevent it.

III.2 The impact of the global pandemic, COVID-19, on the industrial sector

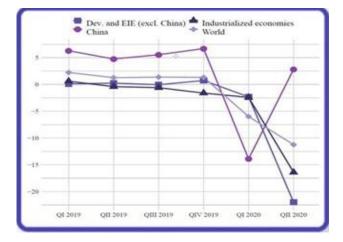
The global Covid-19 pandemic is putting tremendous pressure on societies and economies around the world, and the industrial sector has faced several difficulties like other

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sectors, which has resulted in unprecedented large imbalances in light of the current developments.

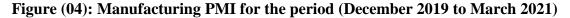
During the second quarter of 2020, global manufacturing output downturned by 11.2% compared to the same quarter of the previous year. The significant decrease reflects the economic impact of the measures imposed to stop the spread of the pandemic, which overshadowed all other negative effects on the sector, including the rise in trade barriers, possibly That some countries will be more affected than others, with China expected to record a more modest decrease of 1.6% compared to the United States and industrial economies in Europe where value added 2020 is expected to decline by 15% and 14.3%, respectively (Unido, 2020).

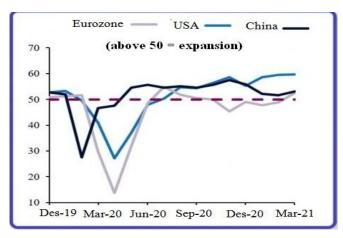
Figure (03): Comparison of the change in the rate of global industrial production growth from 2019-2020





The industrial sector constitutes a large share in the global economy, and because of its unusual characteristics, this sector is extremely vulnerable to cyclical changes, so it is affected by three main factors, the first factor which is the halting of production as the virus hit the global industrial production center, and the second factor is the disruption of global supply chains , as the cessation of production in the supplying country mainly and directly affects industries dependent on these inputs in other countries, while the third factor is the decline in the volume of global demand as well as global trade.





Source: (Morgan, 2021)

The above figure shows the global manufacturing PMI that monitors the information related to production and employment, which recorded a significant increase, reaching 55 points in March 2021, and thus exceeding the area of contraction (less than 50 points), this demonstrates the beginning of the economic recovery from the sharp declines in industrial activity related to the impact of the emerging corona virus, especially in the three major economies driving the growth of the global economy, which relied mainly on financial and monetary support measures in light of the crisis.

III.3 Precautionary measures to stop the spread of Coronavirus in the industrial sector

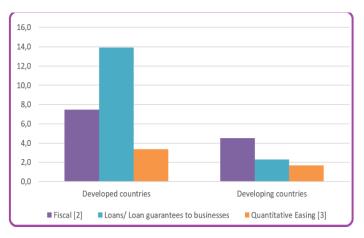
Countries were quick in their responses to the crisis, and several measures were taken to contain the spread of the virus and support severely affected sectors, in order to meet the greatly increasing challenges.

According to the report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, given the constraints on spending in many developing countries, compelling international support will be needed to ensure the required fiscal space, and the Covid-19 pandemic has turned balance sheets upside down when the global economy was smooth Already on a path piled with debt, according to the Institute of International Finance, global debt stocks in the first quarter of 2020 reached record levels of 258 trillion dollars, and as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, the global debt ratio jumped by at least 10%, reaching 331% of output GDP in the first few months of the pandemic (UNCTAD, 2020).

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the global debt-to-GDP ratio jumped by no less than 10 percentage points to 331% of GDP in the first few months of the pandemic alone.

It therefore should come as little surprise that developing countries have been more limited in mobilizing domestic fiscal resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic than developed economies

Figure (05): Magnitude of policy stimulus measures in response to Coronavirus outbreak (GDP%)



Source: (UNCTAD, 2020)

Many countries disclosed financial support packages, and the package of stimulus measures varied between developed and developing countries, which mainly target to revitalize the economy, stimulate investment and improve the quality of services. On this basis, the direct challenge of economic policy is to support efforts to reduce the health crisis and control the spread of the virus. The virus, which requires improving the work and financing of health control systems as soon as possible, providing the necessary response and the critical role of corporate social responsibility programs, the greater the efforts made to address the virus, the more limited its impact and the few economic effects associated with it.

IV. Pioneering experiences on social responsibility applications for global industrial companies in light of the pandemic

The experiences of international companies differed in terms of the level and degree of practicing responsibility programs, and the International Reputation Institute has issued an index that ranks the 100 best companies in terms of the company's reputation in applying the standards of social responsibility for the year 2020, based on 07 criteria to measure the companies' reputation represented in products and services, innovation, and location Labor, governance, citizenship, leadership, and financial performance.

Table (01): The top 20 companies conducting social responsibility activities worldwide for the year 2020

rank	company	rank	company
01	Lego	11	Sony
02	The Walt Disney	12	rolls-royce
03	Rolex	13	Google
04	Ferrari	14	Canon
05	Microsoft	15	3M
06	Levi's	16	Pirelli
07	Netflix	17	Nintendo
08	Adidas Group	18	Barilla
09	Bosch	19	Caterpillar
10	Intel	20	Motor harley-davidson

Source: (The RepTrak Company, 2020)

The following is a review of the most successful experiences of international companies that have won several awards in the field of social responsibility by addressing their social activities and activities in light of the global pandemic, which have had great opportunities and challenges to test their effectiveness in adopting their social responsibility to overcome this pandemic.

IV.1 Microsoft Corporation of America

It is one of the largest software companies in the world, and it was ranked fifth in the list of the top 100 companies practicing social responsibility activities in the world, through many initiatives in coordination with various partners, and the most prominent of these activities are the following:

IV.1.1 In the field of health care

it launched a new power platform model to help clients share information, and it has already been installed by more than 2000 customers around the world, as well as expanding the current partnership with adaptive biotechnologies to map the immune system's response to covid-19 to accelerate the development of treatments, and in year 2020, it donated Microsoft has 1.9 million dollars in products and services to help 243,000 nonprofits worldwide to serve their communities (Microsoft, 2020).

IV.1.2 In the area of concern for employees

Covid-19 has rapidly changed the way all companies operate, so the company is working to share guidelines and empower employees to work remotely, and to launch a global initiative aimed at bringing digital skills to 25 million people around the world by the end of 2020, and in fiscal year 2020 it empowered its employees for a donation of 220.6 million dollars to nonprofit organizations in the world that has been estimated at more than 86,000 organizations through technology discounts and donations, volunteering for more than 754,900 hours in the United States, as well as maintaining the safety and security of employees, and the opportunity to pursue needed jobs remotely (Microsoft, 2020).

IV.1.3 In the field of the environment

At the beginning of 2020, the company presented an environmental strategy to invest in new technologies to reduce and remove carbon, by allocating one billion dollars of its own capital in the New Climate Innovation Fund to accelerate the development of carbon reduction and removal technologies, and to build a new planetary computing platform to help manage Earth's natural systems and address the climate crisis, By 2025, it will switch to supplying 100% renewable energy through green energy purchase agreements, and by 2050 it will remove from the environment all the carbon that the company emits (Microsoft, 2020).

IV.1.4 In technology

Launched a broadband initiative to bridge the digital divide and spread low-cost technology at scale, the Microsoft Airband initiative helped provide broadband access to 2.1 million people in the United States who live in rural areas, and the initiative aims to reach 40 million underserved people And offline around the world by 2022, provide access to nearly 17 million people, and design mobile applications supported by artificial intelligence algorithms in support of national policies that aim to contain the virus and support digital transformation (McKinley, 2020).

IV.1.5 In the field of education

Microsoft launched the Global Skills Program initiative by providing assistance to more than 25 million people around the world facing unemployment to gain more digital skills, Plus an investment of 20 million dollar to make data and analysis available to governments around the world (Lang, 2020).

Microsoft depends on the intensity of technology and the adoption of best-in-class digital tools and systems by promoting a culture of hybrid work and engaging learners with virtual intelligence, to meet the most difficult challenges in a changing economy.

IV.2 German company Bosch

One of the leading multinationals in engineering, technology and services, the core areas of Bosch are spread across four major business sectors: mobility (hardware and software), consumer goods (including household appliances and electrical tools), industrial technology (including command and control), and technology. Energy and construction (Anand, 2020), It was ranked ninth in the world in the list of the top 100 companies practicing social responsibility activities in the world for the year 2020, issued by the International Reputation Institute, and the company is interested in performing its societal role as follows:

IV.2.1 In the field of environmental protection

Bosch is a pioneer in climate action and contributes its knowledge and technologies multiplying its impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, since 2020, Bosch and its 400+ companies worldwide have become climate neutral, working to reduce CO2 emissions by 15% in The cent by 2030, to make the largest possible contribution to climate action and energy transition, and also focused on the shift from air freight to sea freight that reduced carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 10% per year, and the company is constantly striving to

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achieve energy efficiency. More than 1000 energy efficiency projects around the world, saving 0.38 TWh megawatt hours, saving 1.7 TWh by increasing energy efficiency by 2030, as well as increasing renewable energy generation on its sites to 400 GWh hour and expanding dramatically in purchasing green electricity from new stations by 2030 (bosch, 2020).

IV.2.2 In the field of occupational health and safety

Bosch contributes to human health through innovative products and services and by ensuring that people and the environment are not harmed in its production processes. In 2020 the company's accident rate has been reduced to 1.5 accidents per million working hours, and it seeks to reduce the accidents rate to 1.45 an accident for every million working hours or less by 2025, and the company has also developed the fastest corona detection test in the world in just 30 minutes that provides a reliable result, and contributes to developing workable solutions to social challenges (kubina & dziedzic, 2020, p. 434).

IV.2.3 In the field of personnel and social protection

Through vocational training via (BRIDGE), a special program to make young school dropouts employable through short-term job-oriented training courses, where more than 4,500 students have been trained and recruited, 100% of Bridge students receive job offers, most of whom are employees of The first generation to enter the formal work sector, where wages and working conditions are more organized and reasonable, along with taking steps to ensure the health and well-being of all colleagues working in its factories, warehouses and stores (bosch, 2020).

IV.2.4 In the field of product safety and security

Bosch already generates about 40% of its sales revenue through products that contribute to sustainable development and help conserve natural resources, within the principle of designing increasingly environmentally friendly and sustainable products, and in 2020 it developed a circular economy strategy that shifts focus from product to material Used, in addition to also taking into account social norms along the value chain, in this way it contributes to the sustainable development of its products (bosch, 2020).

IV.3 Japanese company Sony

It is a leading company specializing in the electronics industry, and it was ranked 11th in the list of the top 100 companies practicing social responsibility activities in the world for the year 2020 issued by the International Reputation Institute, and the most important of these activities are the following:

IV.3.1 In the field of the environment

The company relies on four environmental axes represented in reducing climate change, preserving resources, controlling chemicals and enhancing biodiversity, and its goal is to achieve a zero environmental footprint by 2050, and work to raise awareness by reaching an audience of more than 2.3 billion through events. Social and media, during the year 2020, CO2 emissions were reduced by using renewable energy by 327 thousand tons of carbon dioxide compared to the cumulative total since 2016, in addition to reducing the annual energy consumption of products by 52% compared to the fiscal year 2013 as well as reducing the waste generated at their sites by 20% compared to the year 2015 (SONY, 2020).

IV.3.2 In the field of education

Sony provides various educational opportunities through CurioStep, as a result of school closures and children's loss of educational opportunities, through activities such as workshops in the field of STEAM, spanning from science to entertainment, in addition to

practical experiences full of excitement, and the utilization of various technologies to support the future development of the children who represent next generation.

IV.3.3 In the field of health care

Allocating 10 million dollars from the Global Relief Fund set up by Sony in response to the Coronavirus, and this is to help medical workers and others on the front lines of antivirus efforts, as well as working with partners and stakeholders to explore ways to expand these initiatives further, and to contribute to Treating the virus and preventing its spread, in order to overcome unprecedented global challenges (Brzeski, 2020).

IV.3.4 In the field of personnel and occupational safety

The company seeks to implement a wide range of activities, based on the commitment to provide working conditions that contribute to the health of employees, and to conduct surveys about employee participation, while continuing to conduct audits and assess risks related to occupational health and safety, and in this context, a contract was held Sony Diversity Week around the world for the fourth year in a row to raise awareness and promote action for change, in addition to joining The Valuable 500, an international initiative to promote the participation of individuals with disabilities so they can realize their potential (SONY, 2020).

V. Conclusion

Through our study of some of the experiences of leading international companies in the field of social responsibility, we see the important role played by social responsibility practices in overcoming the challenges of this pandemic, by investing available opportunities and transforming challenges into gains, as these practices mixed innovative measures to maximize profits and maintain the safety of employees and customers And society at the same time, and on this basis, it can be said that these pioneering experiences represented a test field for a package of practices and strategies, and that the resulting results could contribute to rationalizing the options and practices of embodying social responsibility programs in industrial companies in Algeria, but it It does not mean in any way that these experiences can be reproduced or re-embodied by Algerian companies, due to the disparity between the size of the economies of these countries and the Algerian economy, and the different structure of their structures, the disparity in the weight of the economic sectors in each of them, and the different circumstances and capabilities within which the mentioned experiments took place. The possible is learning and being guided by the pillars upon which these companies relied in activating the role of social responsibility practices.

Based on the above, we reached a set of conclusions and recommendations, the most important of which are the following:

V.1 results of the study

- The level of corporate social responsibility programs practice differs from one country to another, and is spread more widely in developed countries, as they contain global o rganizations supported by huge capital, in addition to legislative systems, experience a nd skill in various administrative and development fields.
- One of the important axes that the social responsibility program addresses is the health axis, as industrial companies must contribute to spreading health awareness and provide the necessary financial support for that.
- Social responsibility has witnessed a wide spread among industrial companies and its importance has doubled in light of the exceptional circumstances to confront the emerging corona virus, through its contribution seriously and responsibly to confront the negative effects of the crisis within the framework of adopting what is known as the participatory approach as a way to reduce burdens and consolidate solidarity, in order to protect society and achieve stability for it.

- The contribution of the private sector in this regard is of great importance, given the financial, technical, and trained human capabilities that it abounds, in addition to its advanced experience in the field of strategic management.
- Social responsibility has become rooted in developed countries, and this is evident through laws and directives, and this is evident through the issuance of bulletins, reports, and criteria for evaluating social performance, and many research institutes have been established to deal with social responsibility programs.

V.2 Recommendations

- The importance of reviewing the experiences of leading companies in the field of adhering to, and benefiting from, targeted social responsibility programs, as they become an integral part of the company's culture and activity, as it is planned just as it is planned for commercial activities or a branch or official may be assigned to it concerned with the social aspect of the company;
- Algerian industrial companies must realize the importance of differentiating between charitable work and social responsibility programs. The first is programs that have nothing to do with the organization's mission and strategic goals. Rather, they are intermittent social programs, while the second is part of the organization's general policy and does not depend on aid, but rather includes projects that contribute to Social development and sustainable development plans;
- Activating the importance and role of the media and modern means of communication in spreading the culture of social responsibility, raising awareness in the community, and organizing campaigns to promote this concept to achieve the greatest possible benefit to the community;
- Defining a clear vision towards the social role that the company wants to adopt and the initiative that it will present, by raising the awareness of industrial institutions about the role of social responsibility in achieving social justice and social stability, especially in light of crises and changes taking place in society;
- The need to publish corporate social responsibility reports to become a role model that encourages other companies to exercise their responsibility, and to prepare periodic reports on the positive impact of social responsibility on development;
- Interest in developing aspects of management and digital transformation in Algerian industrial companies, and finding models that fit the specificity of the Algerian business environment.
- That industrial companies consider the practice of social responsibility not just voluntary initiatives that they undertake by their own will, but rather a form of social appropriateness that they must do;

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