

The Demographic Factors Affecting the Social Responsibility (SR)

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the social responsibility (SR) and its relationship with some Demographic variables in a sample of students from the University of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). The study sample consisted of (300) male and female Departments of Social Work and Business at (SQU). To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher developed a measure of social responsibility. The researcher used means, standard deviation, and f-test in order to answer the question of this study. The results indicated that the level of social responsibility was moderate on the scale as a whole. The results showed statistically significant differences in the degree of social responsibility due to the variable of specialization, gender and educational attainment. The results showed there were some significant differences due to the variables: sex, and specialization in some SR domains. In overall scale, there is significant difference in the total scale due to GPA. The study has come out with some recommendations based on the results and discussion

Keywords: Social responsibility, university students and socio-demographic factors.

Introduction

Concern about societal values, altruism, attention to others, maintaining national achievements, and public property as main targets require remarkable belief in social responsibility (SR). If there is a decreasing SR among Omani students, the social development processes in such fields as education and economy will be in serious problem. So, the university through its curriculum and activities is responsible for the realization of these targets.

There are several definitions of SR, with each definition rooted in a specific theoretical framework associated with certain academic disciplines, i.e. Psychology, Sociology or Business sciences. Psychologically, Zahran 1984 defined SR as a personal commitment toward self and social group and feeling of obligation in duty. Smadi and Athamneh 2008 described SR as needs achievement in all aspects of life. Osman 2010 has focused on the individual adoption of social values through the internalization process to become a part of his personality. Sociologically, SR has been considered as a source of social relationships. Basar 1974 defined the SR as forced individual obligation with social rules, customs and public systems. Hellar et al 1984 characterized SR as a process of decision making, which helps the people to be active contributors in the process of social development. Finally, Ghaith 1976 has considered SR as the ability of individual to adapt to social expectations. In business sciences, it is known as corporate SR (CSR), which means a processes of problem solving for social problems (Cramer 2006). In short, SR has different definitions in terms of theory and differs from society to another in terms of culture and social values. For example, SR toward family in traditional societies is more important than in Western ones. But in all societies SR has similar characteristics such as: freedom of work and choice and control of acts whether by legal or moral systems.

Adler explored that SR has an important role in the relief of anxiety by strengthening of relationships with self and others (Momani & Zghoul 2009). Glasser 1986 mentioned SR as a one of mental health indicators, (more SR leads to more adjustment, thus better mental health).

Many studies have appeared in the area of SR and its relationships with several variables among university students and other people. Dlaimi 1989, tested SR among 600 male and female students in Iraq after Irani – Iraqi war. The results indicated that females had higher SR than males in basic sciences, while males displayed more SR than females in humanities.

Mousa 1990 tested the difference between males and females in 60 students in educational centre for rehabilitation in Egypt. The results showed that males were more responsible toward the world and country, while females were more responsible toward self, family and neighborhood.

Alshaybe 2003 studied the relationship between SR and time management among 502 students of different age groups from Damascus in Syria. The results showed no significant relationship between their SR and the variables of age and specialty.

Alteck 2004 assessed the relationship between SR and mature personality, as well as, some socio-demographic factors among Jordanian university students. Results of 467 subjects indicated that males were more responsible than females, and students in humanities were more responsible than students in basic sciences.

Meshrif 2009 assessed the relationship between SR and several socio-demographic factors among 600 students in Gaza strip. Results reported that females were higher in their responsibility than males, and the students from low level of SES were stronger in social responsibility than students from high level SES.

Nicholson and Demoss 2009 evaluated university courses, their evaluation has focused on SR topics in some UAS universities. Results of this study clearly indicated a lot of weakness in these courses, especially in business schools. For example, about 84% of MBA courses plans need to be more focused on SR topics

The importance of the present study stems from a desperate need to explore the impact of some socio-demographic factors on shaping the social responsibility among Oman university students. Moreover, there are no studies and researches in Oman on this subject, so this study will be the first in this field.

The guiding assumption of this study is that socio-demographic factors may have some influence on the level of social responsibility among Omani students. Theoretically, Sociology and Social work students should have more attention in responsibility in their study than other disciplines, because their job requirements. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the order of social responsibility dimensions in terms of their references?
2. Is there any difference between Sociology and Social work on one hand and business students on the other, in terms of social responsibility?
3. Is there any difference between males and females in terms of social responsibility?
4. What is the effect of educational attainment on the level of social responsibility among Omani university students?

Method

The population for this study consisted of all the students in Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), a number that was estimated to be about 14,372 in March 2012, as stated by the Registration Department Statistics Report of SQU (2012). The general population of the university was distributed 2 groups, which are: Sociology & Social work students and all other students

For the study sample, data were obtained from 300 students, 100 males and 200 females. The males and females were selected randomly. 70% of them were in Sociology & Social work Department, while 30% were in Business School. The number of females in the sample is double the number of males which corresponds to their distribution at SQU at large.

The Instrument :The scale consisted of two parts: the first part included the following socio-demographic factors: gender (1 for males and 2 for females), specialty (1 for sociology and 2 for business) and educational attainment (1 for low GPA and 2 for mid and high GPA); in the second part of the instrument, the researcher has used Smadi's scale for social responsibility (2008). It included 43 items measuring social responsibility (SR), the items were ranged (1-5) on the Likert scale; a score of (1) represented the weakest responsibility; while a (4) score represented the strongest responsibility.

To validate the scale, a factor analysis has been used as availability procedure; these factors accounted for 68% of the total variance of the items. The factors are: responsibility of individual toward himself (7 items), responsibility of individual toward the family (7 items), responsibility of individual toward the friends (6 items), responsibility of individual toward the country (8 items), responsibility of individual toward the world (6 items) and responsibility of individual toward the neighborhood (7 items). So the highest score on the SR scale is 172, while the lowest score is 43. To achieve the reliability of the scale, Cronbach alpha has been calculated for these mentioned factors as follows: responsibility of self was .76, responsibility of family was .72, responsibility of friends was .73, responsibility of country was .77, responsibility of world was .76 and finally the responsibility of neighborhood was .71 and the total reliability was .83

Instructions: After the researchers had prepared the names and locations of subjects, he categorized the subjects to sections, thus, the researcher visited each section (10 persons) individually to inform the subjects about the purpose of this study and ask for their participation in filling out the scale. Instructions for answering the scale items were delivered to the subjects and they were asked to not write their names to ensure that their responses were confidential. Scale were completed during a sixty-minute period and collected by the researcher. Afterwards, the subjects were debriefed.

Results

TABLE 1
MEAN (M) AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS (SD) OF THE SAMPLE (n=300) ON
SR. DOMAINS FOR ALL SAMPLE

SR domain	M	SD
SR of self	3.33	.49
SR of family	3.22	.41
SR of friends	2.91	.55
SR of country	2.66	.61
SR of world	1.91	.57
SR of neighborhood	2.71	.48
Total	2.79	.53

To test the first question about how the above-mentioned domains of the SQU community are distributed within the SR scale, means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of the sample were calculated and ordered as shown in Table 1.

Data in Table 1 showed that SR toward self came first among SQU students, SR toward family came the second followed by SR toward the friends and SR toward country and SR toward neighborhood as a mid category, while the SR toward the world was in the lowest scoring position. These results imply that SR toward self and SR toward family are the basic source of students' attitudes in several social life issues, while SRs toward the friends, country and neighborhood were common as a second source of attitudes, SR toward the world common as a third source and lowest important source of attitudes.

TABLE 2
The Sr Domains Mean, Standard Deviations, and F Test Results among Squ
STUDENTS DIVIDED BY GENDER

SR domain	Female		Males		F	Sig. of F
	M	SD	M	SD		
SR of self	3.23	.50	3.01	.51	.061	.81
SR of family	2.95	.43	3.17	.40	.735	.010**
SR of friends	2.81	.42	2.82	.53	3.435	.065
SR of country	2.91	.45	3.00	.43	4.327	.001**

SR of world	2.76	.42	3.00	.53	8.135	.005**
SR of neighborhood	2.96	.46	3.11	.50	6.735	.002**
Total	2.79	.50	2.96	.50	3.017	.041**

* p £ .05

** p £ .01

Data in Table 2 reveal that among females, the SR toward self was the highest domain (M=3.23), followed by SR toward neighborhood (M=2.96), followed by SR toward family (M=2.95), then SR toward country (M=2.91), SR toward friends (M=2.81), and SR toward world was the lowest (M=2.76). Among males, the results were little different, as the SR toward family was highest (M=3.17), followed by SR toward self (M=3.01), followed by SR toward neighborhood (M=3.11), then SR toward country and world (Ms=3.00), and the SR toward friends was lowest (M=2.82). For the test of differences between males and females on SR domains, results of the F test revealed that there are significant differences between means of females and males in most SR domains. The post hoc test results between means revealed that mean differences in SR toward family, country, world, neighborhood, self and friends, showed that all these domains were held in higher esteem by males than by females.

To test if there was a difference between females and males in SR toward all domains, F test was conducted to clarify the difference. F test results indicated significant differences in most SR domains except SR toward self and friends as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 3

The Sr Domains Mean, Standard Deviations, and F Test Results among Squ Students Divided By Speciality

SR domain	Sociology		Business		F	Sig. of F
	M	SD	M	SD		
SR of self	3.24	.50	2.99	.48	8.23	.000**
SR of family	3.11	.43	2.79	.45	7.01	.000**
SR of friends	2.79	.42	2.76	.51	1.09	.083
SR of country	2.54	.45	2.55	.49	1.12	.082
SR of world	2.12	.61	2.22	.50	2.79	.085
SR of neighborhood	2.66	.47	2.61	.48	2.99	.089
Total	2.46	.51	2.58	.49	3.07	.091

The results of Post-hoc test as reported in Table 3 illustrate that SQU Sociology and Social work students were highest for the self domain (M= 3.24), followed by family (M=3.11), followed by friends (M=2.79), followed by neighborhood (M=2.66), followed by country (M=2.54) while the world domain was the least important (M=2.12). Among the business students, the self domain came first (M=2.99), followed by the family domain (M=2.79), followed friends (M=2.76), then neighborhood domain (M=2.61), then country domain (M=2.55), while the world domain was the least important (M=2.22). The F test results revealed that sociology and social work significantly lay more emphasized some on SR domains (self and family) more than business students did, (F=8.23, p £ .000, F=7.01, p £ .000). While business students lay less emphasize on any of these SR domains

TABLE 4
The Sr Domains Mean, Standard Deviations, and F Test Results among Squ Students Divided By Educational Attainment

SR domain	high		low		F	Sig. of F
	M	SD	M	SD		
SR of self	3.25	.501	2.40	.421	4.55	.041
SR of family	3.08	.418	3.25	.458	1.186	.277
SR of friends	2.80	.497	2.95	.531	1.133	.288
SR of country	2.98	.445	3.06	.391	1.152	.284
SR of world	3.01	.490	3.22	.590	1.101	.295
SR of neighborhood	3.02	.503	3.32	.503	.406	.524
Total	2.49	.501	2.68	.468	57.791	.000

Data in Table 4 illustrate that high GPA students were highest for the self domain ($M=3.25$), followed by family ($M=3.08$), followed by the neighborhood ($M=3.02$), followed by the world ($M=3.01$), followed by the country ($M=2.98$) and the friends domain was the least important ($M=2.80$). Among the low GPA students, the neighborhood domain came first ($M=3.32$), followed by the family domain ($M=3.25$), followed by world ($M=3.22$), then country domain ($M=3.06$), then friends domain ($M=2.40$), and the domain was the least important ($M=2.22$). The F test results revealed that there are non-significant differences in SR among both levels of low and high educational attainment, in other words they have similar emphasized on all SR domains, while there is significant differences between low and high attainment in the total scale ($F=57.79$, $p \leq .000$).

Discussion

The findings of this study show that SR domains response among SQU students ranged, between high (SR toward self and family) and middle (SR toward friends, neighborhood and country), while the SR toward the world was low. These results were less than expected because, perhaps the nature and activities of social life in SQU were not oriented to develop social responsibility among students. At the same, time we find that all students still depend on their families for sustain ace their life requirements, which means in turn decreasing the chance to develop their responsibility specially toward their life such as: SR toward world, neighborhood and country. Moreover, these results revealed high scores of SR in self and family, which reflects the kind of family socialization and orientation for kids to be more selfish and dependable. This result is unexpected because it is not consistent with SQU philosophy which emphasizes Islamic tradition in modern life. This philosophy is thought to help students to develop talents to deal successfully with modern life expectations. It is worth mentioning that these results are in harmony with studies such as Momani 2012 in some Jordan universities which indicated that SR toward life aspects appeared as a central source of judgment and preference for college students..A result which reflects a profound social change in Omani society. This social change has created a kind of conflict between past and present customs and beliefs. The new Omani generation seems to experience this conflict, seems to adhere to individualism and is more open to new experiences than were Omani older generations. These results clarified the preference of Omani youth for new social life styles.

Moreover, the results revealed that there is a significant difference between the means of males and females in SRs domains. These differences in all domains means were higher for males than females. This result is consistent with the findings of other researchers, e.g. (Dlaimi 1989 and Meshrif 2009) and is logical in Omani society, because, it is still traditional or in other words males society; this imposes more determinations and obligations on females in one hand and more freedom to males in the other.

In regard to the SR of SQU students in terms of specialty, the results revealed that there is a significant mean difference between sociology & social work and business students in the direct relationships (SR toward self, family and neighborhood). These differences reported that sociology and social work students were higher in social responsibility than business ones. This result was expected by the researcher and it is consisted with the findings of other researchers e.g. (Altik 2004, Alshayeb 2003, Omari 2008 and Stephans et al, 2000). The result may be due to the fact that sociology and social work students receive more human values, orientation and social feeling and commitment through their study and training than business students. In this regard, Stephans et al, 2000 have indicated to a serious problems in the business courses, which is suffering from lack in some concepts and applications about social responsibility.

Finally, the results of this study could not report any significant differences between study's subjects in terms of educational attainment (GPA), This result is contrary not only for my expectations but to the findings of other workers in the field. This result may be due to that students care about their GPA only for school achievement regardless any other sources of development for their social personality.

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