

**SOCIAL PERFORMANCE OF SAUDI HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN
THE LIGHT OF VISION 2030: THE INTERNATIONAL INDICATORS FOR
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ASSESSMENT- A MODEL**

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ABSTRACT: *In the light of National Transformation Program 2030 and Vision 2030, their objectives and initiatives for developing the Higher Education institutions in order to cope with their stated strategies thereof; this paper provides an analysis of Higher Education goals stated in Education Policy Document. The paper highlights the vision's objectives for establishing a dynamic society with prosperous environment. It also examines Strategic Plan of developing the educational environment in the Saudi Society, through improving the social performance of Saudi Higher Education institutions in the light of the International Indicators for Social Responsibility Assessment, assuring the correspondence between the KSA Vision 2030 and I objectives included therein. The paper concluded to a number of recommendations for activating the social responsibility of Saudi Universities in order to achieve Vision 2030, such as: it is necessary for the Saudi university to take the initiative to focus on the future issues in Higher Education, serious thinking about more profound association between the scientific research programs and post- studies in Saudi universities and the environment and society issues. The study concluded to a number of recommendations for activating the Social Responsibility (SR) of Saudi universities to achieve Vision 2030. The study also recommended university participation in achieving KSA Vision 2030 by: focusing on the future issues in Higher Education, serious thinking in developing university curriculum and teaching methodology to cope with those objectives, so that contributing to improving the social performance of Saudi universities and promoting their social responsibility in the light of the International Indicators for Social Responsibility Assessment.*

KEY WORDS: *social performance, social responsibility, higher education institutions, KSA vision 2030, international indicators.*

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education is one of the major pillars of the contemporary state, as it is considered the locomotive of the development, a stronghold of the finest level of the human thought, a source of investment and human & societal development. The University survival and success depend on its effective response to various internal, external, local, national and global powers and variables. Under the repercussions of new global system, the acceleration of ICT Revolution, micro-electronics technology, emergence of giant economic blocs, it is a necessity for the Higher Education to get more globally concern in order to get ready for addressing these shifts with their unexpectedly returns on Higher Education at all levels; globally, nationally and locally. This can be achieved by developing proper adaption strategies to address these

changes, evolutions and challenges. In fact, Saudi universities have no alternatives but accepting these challenges and changes, developing new roles and functions based on a set of sound procedures, standards and practices; that guarantee their quality and improve their outcomes. All that for facing the modern global systems and outliving in global competition market.

University-society relationship is multi-dimensional organic; gets strengthened, sometimes, and other times, gets weak. In both cases, it is directly and indirectly influenced by the systems philosophies. Each change in the society is reflected on the university. On the other hand, the development in the university accompanied by change in our society.

University- Development relationship's principles are derived from several resources: first of all revolves around the man, as the core of development process concept. That is due to, human resource is the intellectual and human capital of the developmental process on one hand, and the development tool and target, on the other hand. The second is producing, communicating, developing and retain the knowledge. In addition to creativity, and effective connection, as it is the core of university's role. Third, the university value commitment and actual responsibilities with its 3-dimensional role in education, research and society service. The three principles integratedly contribute to building the country and citizens; thus, the university goes beyond its traditional role of education.

The characteristics and areas of the university roles in society service, are involving the three dimensions; education, scientific research and society service, and they are closely associated. Creative instruction / teaching mainly depends on scientific research. In addition, teaching and scientific research in their vast sense, enable the universities to do their function in communicating and promoting the social attitudes and desired human values that help society progress.

Recently, Social Responsibility (SR) has been wide spread. (SR) means the institutions gets concerned about the societies' good and taking the responsibility of consequences of the institutions' activities that affect the customers, personnel, shareholders, community and environment. This responsibility is not limited to legal commitments only but, it extends to include improving the relationship with stakeholders. Institutions of social responsibility education are not included within the educational institutions structure. However, they play a pivotal role as a mechanism for foundation and promotion of SR's principles in citizen's personality. They train the youth on taking the responsibility. This kind of training is mostly done progressively on limited consecutive areas of the responsibility structure. If there is a consent that Social Responsibility institutions include family, school, Media and IT, we see the family has the basic role- traditionally- in this field. As it introduces the child to limited area of social responsibility (Salmon, 2014, 32). Then, other educational institutions with different stages take the turn in training children on new areas of taking social responsibility. Usually, these are the areas of the frontiers between family and general society; that impose new elements of responsibility regarding citizenship values, man's attitudes and duties towards different fields of general society. In this aspect, we see each education stage adds value- added to re-education for taking social responsibility plus the previous one; till the university stage

when the person becomes, or about to be, a reasonable adult. Therefore, the man becomes a citizen able to take his full social responsibility (Cornwall, 2014).

Social responsibility represents essential basic pillar of life. Without it life turns into some kind of chaos. the Law of the Jungle dominates, cooperation disappears, competition, selfishness, individualism and egocentrism overwhelm; thus the mankind may die out like dinosaurs did. Right life norm needs social conscientious among individuals and groups to maintain balance between materiality, derived from self's desires, and spirituality, morality, principles and divine rules (Shaladan, Saymah, 2014, p.152).

Sellami & Rafiqah, (2013) stated that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is considered one of the most essential constituents of the organization's internal environment. It influences the behaviours and performance of human resources. It is also an important impetus for achievement. In other words, CSR is the key determinant of business success or failure; which could be a competitiveness advantage enables the organization to reach a powerful competitive position.

Al- Hassan, (2014) assured that SR is the most important source of success and excellence and it is also a solution for many problems in the institutions, e.g.; low performance. It is also innovative and creative energy creates competitiveness advantage and it improves the institution's performance. In case of investing Social Responsibility, it becomes a strategic resource results in creation of institution value and performance development. Adopting SR. practice in the light of ISO 26000 improves social environmental performance in economic institutions, both private and public, and makes them a powerful engine of social development. Thus, Social Responsibility philosophy is based on considering social and moral considerations in marketing practices. Besides, the necessity of balancing the contradictory interests; benefits, social good and customer's satisfaction. In the light of increasing advocate for assessing social performance in Higher Education institutions, it has become necessary for these institutions to continue trying to improve performance of university's three jobs generally, and social performance in particular; in order to support their developmental progression. This cannot be achieved, unless the university adopts new standards of social responsibility in the light of the International indicators. Therefore, during pursuit raising their social performance, the universities have to keep conducting self-assessment studies, through which they identify their effectiveness in different aspects. Thus, the current study focuses on the importance of developing Standards for Improving the Social Performance in Higher Education Institutions in the light of the International Standards for Assessing Social Responsibility.

Purpose of the Study:

In the light of National Transformation Program 2030, and KSA Vision 2030 with its objectives and initiatives for developing Higher Education; in order to cope with strategies stated thereof. The study aims at analyzing the Education Policy Document, in terms of Higher Education goals.

Significance of the Study:

The study sheds light on the Vision's objectives for establishing dynamic society with prosperous environment and the Strategic Plan for developing the educational environment in Saudi Society through improving the Social performance of Higher Education Institutions in the light of ISO 26000. The study also seeks to confirm the correspondence between the KSA's Vision 2030 and these Objectives.

Theoretical Framework:

First: Social Responsibility of Universities:

The concept of Social Responsibility emerged as a normal result of several aspects characterized the international economic scene. The interest in SR concept has begun in U.K. 1970. This interest got growing, as one of the key factors in doing jobs appropriately. Then, the concept transferred into voluntary organizations to achieve the benefits for society. (*www.qccountability*). The concept of Social responsibility has long historical origins (Abdul-Majeed,1984, 240). The appearance of labour unions and corporations, after the Industrial Revolution in 1750s, was the early sign of this concept emergence. These unions were held to claim for the workers' rights and meeting their needs; such as proper conditions, safe workplace, stability, and improving the relationship between workers and employers. That way, the role of unions notably developed, till it becomes effective and influential in all work fields.

Vallaeyes, et-al. (2009) showed that there are four definite steps of the Social Responsibility in the university:

- Commitment: it is reflected on the university for its good, projects, function and value as a social institution.
- Self- diagnose: the tools, quantities and qualities needed for diagnosing performance of the four key roles of the university; Organizational Management, Teaching and Knowledge, Scientific Research and Social Involvement.
- Following-up: checking the diagnose results in terms of the university function, and planning for improving the quality of social responsibility.
- Accountability: through assessing the performance and sharing information for improving and optimizing the institutions' plans.

Social Responsibility Dimensions are identified in:

-Human Dimension:

Social Responsibility involves full utility of human resources; through improving education, medical services and fighting poverty. Social Responsibility pursuit's redirection of resources to guarantee meeting the human needs; basic, economic, social and cultural, in the first place. Then, it works on providing secondary needs such as social entertainment, culture diversity, Human Capital investment (Astrid, 2012:64).

- Social Dimension:

Social Dimension is one of the development Pillars. Human social behaviour is the engine that runs the wheel of development; with its values and concepts. These values and concepts move and direct the social behaviour towards work and production. They reject poverty and extreme inequality between the rich and the poor. Good societal management requires social control; sets for achieving social justice among people and meeting their valid needs (Paul H, 2008:5).

- Cultural Dimension:

Cultural Dimension of the University is production, development and attaining of culture; as the core of the university's job. The university's job is creation, innovation in phenomena interpretation and communicating knowledge and culture. It is all based on original scientific fields' contents with their scientific approaches and collaboration of these fields. Moreover, it is based on developing university's philosophy and mission in order to target setting and encouraging moral values, as well as raising social strata. That is for self-development of individual in proportion to one's talents and willingness. In addition to raising the individual's intellectual and cultural level; to the extent that guarantees being able to correct cognitive and behavioral concepts that contradict contemporary scientific values, and being able to take reasonable decisions (Joel Ernult, Arvind Ashta, 2007:18).

This cultural role is reflected in the university moral commitment to taking its actual responsibility, in doing its 3- dimensional function: education, scientific research and society service. The fully performance of this role contributes to building citizen, formulating his personality, implanting moral and cultural values; and enables this citizen of effective contribution to building the society and raising up the society thought (Manne, et-all. 2015:3).

- Economic Dimension:

University Education's goal is no longer limited to preparing qualified manpower to meet the need of national economy. The developmental role of the university extends to guarantee meeting the society service requirements. Thus, the core and mechanisms of university developmental role should be developed. University is considered as Experience House for consultations and aid, providing assistance and different experiences. That is due to the university's scientific abilities, cognitive experiences, qualified human resources and employing these abilities in various applied fields. This could be achieved through fixing cooperation relationships and connecting university's production units of different fields: industry, agriculture, business, in addition to service sectors, consumer protection and civil society institutions (Mehallow, Cindy, 2011).

This way, university does not only stick to its developmental role, but it also emphasizes its eligibility, dynamic societal connections for the development process. This also helps it to overcome some drawbacks of limited views, that see the university as only a financial burden on the government or a an expenditure outlet with no instant direct economic returns, in addition to being unproductive institutions.

Second: Strategic Planning for Achieving University Social Responsibility (USR):

Speaking of strategic planning process for achieving social responsibility of educational institutions, we had to examine influencing factors on social responsibility, between initiative and response. These factors may be derived from either the organization itself or from external environment. Therefore, the organization has to recognize these factors.

*** Social Responsibility Strategies**

The social performance revolves around four strategies (Al-Ghalby, Al- Amery, 2008,96-97).

¶ **Impedance (Not to adopt) Strategy:** This strategy **pays** great attention to enterprises economic priorities with no adoption of any social role; as it is out of their interest's domain. As they focus on optimizing benefits and returns.

¶ **Defensive Strategy:** It means to do a limited social role in accordance with the imposed legal requirement only. The organization adopts this strategy, at minimum, to avoid criticism. This role is included in the competition requirements and the pressure exerted by environmental activists.

¶ **Adaption Strategy:** according this strategy, the organization takes further steps towards participating in social activities; through adopting expenditure for issues related to ethical, legal and economic requirements. Thus, it does a prominent social role; performed through interaction with norms, values and society expectations.

¶ **Voluntary Initiative Strategy:** here, the administration take the initiative in social activities; by responding to many social requirements according to administrators' evaluation of different situations. The key characteristic of this strategy is that comprehensive performance of organizations' business always considers not to take any decision or action contradicts the society aspirations or interests.

Third: Co- Factors of Growing Social Responsibility of Education Institutions:

The key factors in developing social responsibility of any community (Samady, Al- Baqawi, 2015, 74) are:

1) Teacher: teacher is considered as a leader and social pioneer in his school, domain and society. He is a leader of several groups of students; those who represent the society future. Teacher influences his students. This is reflected in their achievement, behaviours, attitudes and tendency towards his subject and the learning process generally. Thus, the teacher's attitudes and tendencies transfer in to his students. So the teacher has to be highly social responsible with the three components (interest-understanding- participation); in order to do his role in developing social responsibility among students; through his speech, deeds, appearance and behaviours.

2) Curricula: they are the subject materials and contents students study within the educational institutions. Studying these curricula, social, economic or historical, help learners, students and their societies develop and advance academically.

3) Educational Groups: most of educational activities and tasks are performed in groups. so the groups to which a person associates has a great influence on developing one's social responsibility and other aspects of life. Member of a group adopts its values and beliefs; respects other members and participates in selecting its leader.

Fourth: KSA's Efforts in Social Responsibility Field:

Social Symbiosis principle is the most important form of social responsibility. It is a part of the Saudi society culture and norms; that mainly based on Islamic doctrine and principles. Since very early, social work has been introduced in KSA. It takes many forms; individual, family and tribal (Al- Harithy,2009, 7).

The state effectively contributed to spread and promoting the social responsibility culture by embracing a number of organizations of social and service nature. It also activates The Sustainable Development Programmes. In addition to the government's role, the Charity Sector has an effective role in practising social responsibility programmes. Several civil organizations and associations of social work exist all over the Kingdom. These associations and organizations practise this kind of work in an organized style that meets the society needs. Chambers of Commerce & Industry in Kingdom are key entities that represent the interests of private sector in front of public authorities. They have directly contributed to improving the social performance ; through supporting private sector organizations and businessmen and encouraging them to practise the social responsibility. In addition to these contributions, there is a notable contribution of the private sector. The most significant fields to which the private sector contributed : social service and aids, medical care service, education and training service, contribution to establishing the infrastructure and public facilities, supporting government social service's functions and the contribution to relief work. Below, some of the efforts and achievements in social responsibility field in KSA (Al- Harithy, 2009,13:14):

- Organizing the 1st Social Responsibility Forum all over the Kingdom, 2006. This forum discussed the concept, applications and strategies of the Corporate Social Responsibility of major organizations.
- Establishing executive committee of social responsibility in Saudi Commerce & industry Chamber .This committee conducts studies on sustained economic and social programmes , to be used in implementing social responsibility programmes of the private sector.
- Adopting the Saudi Chamber of Commerce & industry award for Social Responsibility (Social Responsibility Award), which allows embracing distinguished programmes sponsored by the organizations of private sector.
- Setting a guidebook of social responsibility programmes and database of these programmes.
- Coordination with pioneer corporate in practising social responsibility; for getting benefits from and generalizing their experiments.
- Making cooperation agreements for exchanging experiences among different Saudi chambers of commerce and industry.

There are many successful experiments of CRS for a number of corporate in KSA:

- * **STC:** it launched a number of social responsibility programmes ; Al-Waffa Medical, Al-Waffa Education, Al- Waffa Sports (MERAS COUNCLING,2010, 58).
- * **Dallah Al-Baraka Holding Group:** one of the major Saudi multi- activity corporates. It adopted some social responsibility programmes such as; " Empowerment of Saudi Youth Programmes, beside reinforcement of scientific research (Al- Harithy,2009,14).

Fifth: ISO 26000 Guidelines of Social Responsibility:

ISO 26000 is an international standard guidelines that provides guidance on the social responsibility principles and relevant essential issues. It also concerned with techniques of social responsible behaviour inclusion in educational institutions (Gad El- Rub,2010,8).

Historical overview on ISO 26000 International Standard Guidelines (Bou Motiea,2008).

- May 2000, consumers showed interest in social responsibility.
- May 2001, ISO started a feasibility study on developing standards for social responsibility, then gathering view of whom may be involved.
- September 2002 ISO / TMB established a strategic advisory group, consists of the stakeholders to provide consultations on setting the International Standards for Social Responsibility.
- February 2003, this group investigated the benefits of setting the International Standards ISO 26000 and the value- added to the existing programmes.
- 2004, the strategic advisory group issued a report and recommendations included an overview on social responsibility initiatives, shedding light on issues should be considered by ISO Committee.
- October 2004, ISO submitted a proposal for setting the International Standards ISO 26000, including social responsibility standards; provided that to be effective by the end of 2008.

The New Standard Guidelines 26000's Four Aspects of Social Responsibility:

1. Cultural aspect
2. Socio-Civilized aspect
3. Environmental & legal aspect
4. Economic developmental- related provisions

ISO 26000 is a standard specification provides underlying guidelines of social responsibility of social responsibility key principles and relevant issues. It shows how to integrate the concept of social responsibility into the strategies framework. It is also defined as, "The international standard provides guidance on social responsibility for organizations of both public and private sectors in developed and developing countries; to help them with their goals to act socially responsible, that is increasingly required by the society".

ISO 26000 is developed by experts of more than 80 countries and 40 international and organizations concerned with social responsibility issues. It is an international optional standard, currently is not required in licensing, conformity, legislation or making contracts. It is not considered to be a trade barrier or to change the legal status of the organizations. Thus, it is not a statutory document for any legal procedures, either locally or internationally. The goals of the standard are: (Bin Naif, 2006,2)

- To help business organizations enact their social responsibilities, while respecting differences of cultural, social, environmental, statutory and economic development circumstances.
- To offer practical directions that make social responsibility applicable and practical.
- To enhance the credibility of reports prepared for assessing social responsibility practices.
- To comply with international conventions and initiatives relevant to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- To raise awareness of the social responsibility's relevance and benefits for the corporates.

- To co –work internationally in social responsibility field, and standardize its practices in order to facilitate standardizing assessment across different countries.
- To improve the relationship between Businesses and involved group of interests and stakeholder.

Significance and Relevance of ISO 26000:

In spite of early efforts, initiatives and programmes on social responsibility, the great challenge was how to convert principles into practices and effectively apply them. In addition, Social Responsibility concept may differ from a program to another. These early initiatives focus on the corporates role in social responsibility. However, ISO 26000 provides guidelines, not only for enterprises but also for public sector different organizations. ISO 26000 also concludes to a global understanding of social responsibility and what corporates have to do according to social responsibility.

How does ISO 26000 help organizations?

ISO 26000 provides guidance to different sorts of organizations, regardless their size, activities or locations, to work socially responsible. These outlines are about:

- 1- Concepts, terms and definitions related to social responsibility.
- 2- Backgrounds, attitudes and characteristics of social responsibility.
- 3- Principles and practices relevant to social responsibility.
- 4- Subjects and issues relevant to social responsibility.
- 5- Integration, implantation and reinforcement of socially responsible behaviours in the entire organizations , through their own policies and practices across their influence domain.
- 6- Identifying and engaging with the stakeholders.
- 7- Communicating commitments, performance and information relevant to social responsibility.

Benefits in applying ISO 26000:

Organization recognition of social responsibility can impact on other things such as:

- Competitiveness.
- Good reputation.
- Great ability to attract and retain good staff, members, customers and users.
- Maintaining employees' morale, commitment and productivity.
- Perceptions of investors, employers, sponsors, awarders and financial community.
- The relationships with companies, governments, the media, suppliers, peers and the society where the organization works.

Moreover, ISO 26000 integrates relevant international social responsibility experiences. That is, ISO 26000 will be a powerful instrument helps the organizations to move from good intentions into good deeds.

ISO 26000 Structure:

Figure (1) shows a schematic overview of ISO 26000. It helps organizations understanding the standard's clauses and the relation among them: (Author, 2011)

- 1- Introduction: it contains information about the standard guidance content and underlying reasons for developing it.
- 2- **Clause (1):** Scope; introduces the standard guidelines and the scope it covers and how applicable it is.

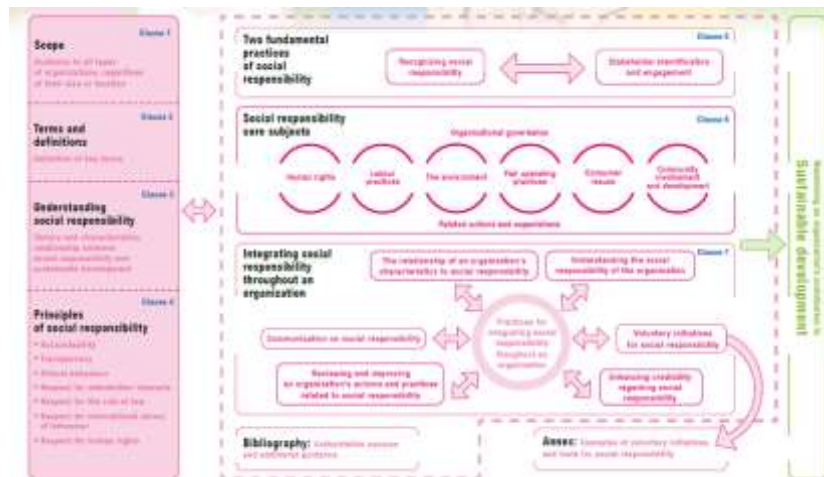


Fig.(1) ISO 26000 social responsibility clauses, www.iso.org

- 3- **Clause (2):** Standard References: this part contains a list of documents relevant to the standard guidelines; to be read.
- 4- **Clause (3):** Terms &Definitions; this section defines the terms used in the standard guidelines , which need to be defined.
- 5- **Clause (4):** Social Responsible Context; this section discusses the historical and contemporary context of the social responsibility. It also addresses the subjects appear through the nature of social responsibility concept and relevant subjects of stakeholders' interest regarding this section.
- 6- **Clause (5):** SR principles organizations should take into account; this section identifies a set of social responsible principles derived from various resources. It also introduces guidance on these principles and addresses subjects of stakeholders' interest regarding this section.
- 7- **Clause (6):** Guidance on core subjects and issues relevant to social responsibility: this clause is for providing separate guidance on a set of core subjects and issues and associates them to the organization. It also addresses subjects of stakeholders' interest regarding this section.
- 8- **Clause (7):** Guiding the organizations on implementing social responsibility; this provision introduces a practical guidance on implementation and integration of SR throughout the whole organization, including policies, practices and curricula, In addition to identifying subjects, performance assessment, reporting and communication . Then, it address subjects of stakeholders' interest regarding this section.
- 9- Annexes;
Annex (A): Presents a non-exhaustive list of voluntary initiatives and tools related to social responsibility that address aspects of one or more core subjects or the integration of social responsibility throughout an organization.

Annex (B): Abbreviated terms; Contains abbreviated terms used in this International Standard ISO 26000.

10- Bibliography: Includes references to authoritative international instruments and ISO Standards that are referenced in the body of this International Standard as source material.

The Standard Guidelines is based on a set of principles, including compliance to laws, respecting the internationally recognized principles and guidelines, identifying stakeholders and their interests, accountability, transparency, sustainable development, moral behaviours, respect for human rights and diversity.

Mechanism of Implementation (Integration) of ISO 26000 for Adopting Social Responsibility throughout the organization:

The organizations can implement and get benefit from ISO 26000 after considering characteristics of social responsibility and its relationship with sustainable development. For practising social responsibility, organization have to respect and implement these principles side by side with definite principles in each key subject. Before analyzing core subjects and issues of social responsibility in addition to all relevant procedures and expectations, the organization ought to consider two key practices of social responsibility; recognition of its social responsibility within its influence domain, and identifying & engaging with stakeholders. Once the organization understands the principles, core subjects and issues, the social responsibility gets identified. The organization ought to work on integration of social responsibility into its decisions and activities, subject to Clause (7). More guidance on core subjects and integration of social responsibility is available in reliable sources (references). There is also examples and voluntary initiatives in Annexes. By practising social responsibility, the ultimate goal is optimizing the organization's contribution to sustainable development (ISO, Discovering ISO26000,8).

Based on previously mentioned, the Standard Guidelines provides a framework which organizations can employ to take their social responsibility; with identifying stakeholders and working with them to achieve this matter.

RESULTS

The present paper concluded to a number of recommendations for activating social responsibility of Saudi universities in order to achieve KSA's Vision 2030:

- 1) The importance of Saudi universities' initiation to focus on future issues in Higher Education, serious thinking about profoundly associating the scientific research programmes and post-studies in Saudi universities to the issues of environment and society.
- 2) Developing curricula and methodology in university teaching in order to cope with the objectives of KSA's Vision 2030, which contribute to improving the social performance of Saudi universities and promoting their social responsibility in the light of the International indicators of Social Responsibility.
- 3) Ministry of Education ought to pay attention to establishing new information system that helps researchers and stakeholders recognize the Saudi society's requirements, attitudes and expectations from education in general.

- 4) Educational Institutions ought to vary programmes relevant to social responsibility towards their human resources, and try to develop them continuously and creatively in order to reach high level of job satisfaction, eventually, improve the institution performance as a whole.
- 5) The necessity of associating social responsibility policies and programmes, related to human resources, to the general policy of social responsibility adopted in the entire institution. These programmes should not be, if they are, just marginal activities; with no regularity or development.
- 6) Focusing on material incentives is not enough, so there is a need for adopting programmes focusing on non-material incentives. These programmes adopt performance- based incentives systems.

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