THE STATUS OF CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY IN TURKISH COMPANIES

ESRA NEMLİ, Assistant Prof., PhD.
Istanbul University, Faculty of Political Sciences
Chair of Management, Beyazit, Istanbul
enemli@istanbul.edu.tr
enemli@superonline.com

Track 2-4: Corporate Environmental Management Models

Keywords: Corporate sustainability, environmental sustainability, social sustainability, sustainability reporting

ABSTRACT

Sustainable development, as defined in the “Our Common Future” is development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is a broad concept in that it combines economics, social justice, environmental science, business management, politics and law. The achievement of this multidimensional concept requires the cooperation of governments, international agencies, industry and consumers.

Corporations are the fundamental cells of modern economic life and they have an important role in bringing about the changes needed for sustainable development. Parallel to the efforts to integrate the three dimensions – economic, environmental and social- of sustainable development, businesses are accepting their role in sustainability. Corporate sustainability is a business approach that creates long term shareholder value by embracing opportunities and managing risks deriving from economic, environmental and social developments. While corporate sustainability recognizes that corporate growth and profitability are important, it also requires the corporation to pursue societal goals, specifically those relating to sustainable development such as environmental protection, social justice and equity and economic development. Recently, the concept of sustainability has been captured within
the framework of the triple bottom line, which companies seek to address in order to minimize harm resulting from their activities and to create economic, social and environmental value.

Business interest in corporate sustainability in the World is growing. In Turkey there are a small number of companies that are pursuing sustainability strategies. The aim of the research is to investigate leading Turkish companies’ approach to corporate sustainability:

- The attitudes and approaches toward sustainability,
- The main practices relating to environmental and social sustainability,
- The reasons why companies adopted sustainability practices,
- The reasons why companies have not adopted sustainability practices,
- Which companies are producing environmental, social, or sustainability reports.

The research population consists of 30 companies which applied for The National Quality Award of Turkish Society for Quality (KalDer) and Turkish Industrialist’s and Businessmen’s Association (TUSIAD) in the last 5 years. National Quality Award assessments are based on the EFQM Excellence Model used in European Quality Award. The reason why these companies are selected for the research is that these companies are the leading companies in their sectors, they are innovative firms, they have quality systems, and hence are more likely to have a positive approach to corporate sustainability and have integrated environmental and social dimensions in their sustainability strategies.

The results of this study will provide insights into the current status of corporate sustainability in Turkey.