

Environmental Disclosure And Its Role In Achieving Sustainable Development In Industrial Companies, An Exploratory Study In The Factories Of The Northern Iraqi Cement Company

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the efforts made by industrial companies to achieve environmental disclosure, sustainable development and reduce the environmental risks caused by these companies. It aims to identify the availability of environmental disclosure in industrial companies, and whether these companies work to preserve natural resources to achieve sustainable development. According to significant results, recommendations can be made that achieve the purpose and objective of conducting this study.

The importance of this study is in shedding light on the concept of environmental disclosure and its importance, as well as highlighting the concept of sustainable development and its importance and applicability. The researcher also reached a number of results:

1. The users of financial reports support the adoption of the approach of expanding environmental disclosure, because it plays a role in the process of administrative decision-making through accounting for environmental costs, which is an integral part of the environmental management system.
2. Environmental pollution has negative social, economic and health impacts that lead to the deterioration of material and human resources.

Introduction:

Since the middle of the last century, the world's attention has revolved around the issue of development. This development aims to make a set of intended radical changes in a particular society to give that society the ability for continuous self-development and development as a conscious, permanent and directed societal process according to an independent national administration. This is to create transformations and bring about economic, political and social changes. It allows achieving a steady escalation of the capabilities of society and a continuous improvement of the quality of life. On this basis, the contents of development expanded and its dimensions were multiplied to include all aspects of life, and development is seen as seeking to achieve the needs of future or future generations and the protection of man and the general surrounding environment, and here we find a relationship between the environment and industrial activities. The development,

protection and preservation of the environment are no longer optional by those industrial companies at the present time, but have become an inevitable, due to a number of economic, legal, moral and social conditions and factors that surround the work environment at the present time.

The problem of the study :

The main problem of the research is the inability of the traditional accounting system in industrial companies to clarify the efforts made by them in the field of environmental protection. Another problem is the failure to disclose environmental costs. These costs will lead to an irrational depletion of natural resources. Many industrial companies integrate these environmental costs within the costs industrial.

Thus, the problem can be clarified through the following questions:

1. What are the reasons for not disclosing environmental costs information?

2. What is the degree of application of the dimensions of sustainable development in industrial companies, and to what extent can industrial companies contribute to achieving sustainable development?

The study hypotheses :

The main hypothesis: The disclosure of its components (accounting disclosure, environmental disclosure) does not contribute to achieving sustainable development, and the following two hypotheses emerge from this hypothesis:

1. Accounting disclosure does not affect sustainable development.
2. Environmental disclosure does not affect sustainable development.

The importance of the study :

The importance of the research is embodied by highlighting the concept of environmental disclosure and accounting disclosure and their importance, and drawing attention to the concept of sustainable development, its importance and applicability.

The aims of the study :

The research aims to clarify the role of accounting disclosure through the following:

1. Stating the role of environmental disclosure in the process of sustainable development.
2. Identifying the efforts made by industrial companies in achieving environmental disclosure, sustainable development and reducing environmental risks.
3. Are companies working to preserve natural resources to achieve sustainable development?

Research methods:

To achieve the goal of the research and test hypotheses, the researcher relied on the descriptive approach in formulating the research by studying and analyzing what was written on the topic of research in the previous scientific references.

Research outline:

The first topic: the conceptual framework of environmental disclosure.

The second topic: the role of environmental disclosure in achieving sustainable development.

The third topic: the analytical aspect of the research.

The first topic: the conceptual framework of environmental disclosure

Concept of Accounting Disclosure and Environmental Disclosure:

The role of accounting disclosure appears in providing the necessary information to be used in many areas. It also involves a statement of appropriate accounting policies, the risks involved, and the management's policy to control these risks, and the role of accounting disclosure in providing information that helps investors in this regard (Al-Ghazali, 2014).

The Accounting Principles Board (1970), (AP, B) considers that accounting disclosure is that the financial reports include fairness and clarity of reliable information about the sources and uses of funds in a manner that is useful in controlling them from the investors' point of view about calculating the rate of return on shares. The state is concerned for the purpose of taxes and creditors to indicate the extent of the company's ability to pay obligations. In addition, it helps the company's internal management with the information in monitoring, planning, evaluating performance, and any other information that is appropriate for investors when making their rational decisions (Abed, 2006).

Environmental disclosure is defined as the disclosure that expresses the method or method by which industrial companies can inform society with its various parties about their various activities with environmental content. Also, the financial statements or reports attached to them are an appropriate tool to achieve this (Al-Masry, 2011).

The researcher believes that accounting disclosure is announcing all the accounting policies that companies relied on in preparing the financial reports. It also includes announcing all the accounting and non-accounting information and data that complement these policies in a comprehensive manner and usually fits with the needs of the users of those financial reports. Disclosure is one, whether accounting or environmental, but accounting disclosure is limited to presenting business results in the light of accounting policies and concepts, as it does not show what is produced by the various activities practiced by industrial companies that have impacts on the environment. It leads to a lack of information presentation in the field of the environment, especially those costs and

liabilities related to the environment In order to achieve its objectives, disclosure must provide all information related to all activities to enable the various stakeholders to take appropriate decisions that suit everyone within the limits of their interests.

The environmental disclosure includes the following items(Al-Qatati, 2007):

1. The future estimates of operating expenses or costs related to pollution control facilities and equipment.
2. The costs of restoring the site to what it was before pollution, and financing pollution control facilities or equipment.
3. The legal requirements related to the environment and the consistency of the facilities with them.
4. The discussion of environmental policies and requirements. Environmental rewards and prizes, with the presence of the environment department or environmental audit departments.
5. The environmental disclosure of environmental information items in many forms, such as: metadata, quantitative facts and allegations, numbers and notes in the financial statements.

The researcher argued that environmental disclosure is represented by the processes through which data and information related to the environment and resulting from the company's daily activities are presented, to enable the various stakeholders obtain the necessary information for control, planning and environmental performance.

Types of Environmental Disclosure:

A. Voluntary Environmental Disclosure:

Voluntary Environmental Disclosure is defined as the disclosure that aims to provide parties interested in financial statements with additional and optional administrative and financial information. It also provides the information required by the presentation and disclosure standard, such as historical information about the company, and the company's objectives, whether general, financial, or environmental goals. This disclosure aims to serve investors, lenders, external auditors, and serve the company's objectives such as environmental objectives, marketing objectives, financial objectives, profit rates and liquidity(Mariq, 2009).

There is also recognition of the value of environmental information that is voluntarily disclosed. Some studies have found that users of financial statements believe that the information is important for making their decisions and that they look for it in the annual reports of companies. Yet, they place environmental information after traditional financial information in terms of the order of importance for their decisions(Deegan, 2002). The researcher believes that environmental disclosure is still optional in most cases. However, many companies in developed countries took the initiative to apply environmental laws and legislations and worked to develop their environmental management and emphasized the placement of environmental reports within the annual reports at the end of the accounting period.

B. Mandatory environmental disclosure:

Mandatory environmental disclosure is the opposite of voluntary environmental disclosure. According to accounting policy makers, those in charge of the money market and the preparation of accounting rules and financial reporting standards, this disclosure must be in accordance with the needs of the interested parties. Also, it must provide the minimum missing disclosure in case Voluntary environmental disclosure, and works to reduce the asymmetry of information between management and investors, and the social costs borne by investors for searching and obtaining information(Al-Azm, 2005).

The existence of accounting standards that require disclosure of environmental costs has helped obligate companies to the necessity of environmental disclosure of these obligations. This is because the data of the presentation of information in the financial statements depend on the generally accepted accounting principles requiring the provision of an appropriate disclosure element in these lists regarding all material matters. Also, the intended disclosure element here is closely related to the form and content of the financial statements, the terminology and notes used in them, and the extent of the details they contain. It makes these lists of informational value from the point of view of the users of the lists(Al-Hayali, 1998).

The second topic: the role of environmental disclosure in achieving sustainable development

The concept of sustainable development:

Although this term may be new, sustainable development does not represent a phenomenon or a new concern, but rather an old demand and since years ago. It is a development focused on social welfare issues at the beginning of the fifties of the last century and on overcoming development problems in the sixties of it. It reduced poverty and meeting basic needs in the seventies, and consequently the concept and term of sustainable development appeared as a natural response to the underdevelopment caused by environmental degradation. It resulted from the traditional method of development, which is based on the rapid growth of production without paying attention to the negative effects of this growth on natural resources, the environment and humans, where sustainable development appears. Today, it is one of the most important management issues for companies that want to have a role in the twenty-first century. (Baroud, 2005, 2)

Here, the concept of sustainable development refers to a process that occurs at several levels that vary between global, regional and international, and to a phenomenon that occurs across generations. It is transformed from one generation to another, and it must occur over a period of time not less than two generations, and then the sufficient time for sustainable development ranges from 25 to 50 years (Grosskurth & Rotmans, 2005).

Sustainable development is a development that reforms environmental development, economic development and social development. It thus creates a viable circle between these three poles, economically effective, socially just, and environmentally feasible. This means it respects natural resources and ecosystems and supports social life to ensure the economic aspect without forgetting the social goal, which is manifested in combating poverty, unemployment and inequality, and the search for justice (Deeb, 2009).

Dimensions of sustainable development:

The concept of sustainable development represents multiple main dimensions, interconnected with each other, and integrated. There are those who see that sustainable development has different dimensions. It does not only focus on the environmental aspect, but also on economic and social aspects. It should be noted that these dimensions are interrelated,

overlapping and integrated and it is not permissible to deal with separately, because they all devote the principles and methods of sustainable development. Three basic and interacting dimensions can be mentioned here:

A. The economic dimension of sustainable development:

This dimension is concerned with the environment as an integrated economic entity, and a base for development, and any pollution and depletion of its resources that ultimately lead to the weakening of future development opportunities for it. Then a long-term economic perspective must be taken to solve problems in order to save effort, money and resources.

For this reason, a vision of sustainable development came by introducing environmental and social costs into the economic accounts. The economic development has taken into account the environmental and social variables in order to get rid of the previous development methods (the factory economy) that used to achieve economic well-being. It carries with it natural and human disasters as a result of environmental pollution (Al-Shaabani & Al-Nasser, 2012).

B. The social dimension of sustainable development:

This dimension refers to the relationship that exists between the humans and nature and to the advancement of human well-being, improvement of access to basic health and educational services, and meeting the minimum standards of security and respect for human beings.

C. The environment is a basic dimension of sustainable development:

This dimension is one of the basic dimensions of sustainable development, because it works to preserve natural resources and optimal use of them. It is used through the foundations on which sustainable development is based in terms of environmental considerations, and also through obtaining encouraging and interrelated methodologies with management of the environmental system to reduce pressures on the environment. An environmentally sustainable system must maintain a stable base of natural resources, avoiding excessive depletion of renewable and non-renewable resources, and this includes the protection of biodiversity, atmospheric balance, soil

productivity and other natural ecosystems that are not usually classified as economic materials (Abd al-Rahman, 2011, 25).

Benefits of Environmental Disclosure of Environmental Costs:

Accounting is of great importance in the company's management process, because of its critical role in providing basic financial information that contributes to guiding investment decisions and other important decisions on the environment. Therefore, the outputs of the environmental accounting system are the link between the company on the one hand and the internal and external parties on the other hand. This is done through environmental disclosure. The practice of disclosure in traditional accounting may not fully reflect the environmental concern and the environmental effects resulting from the activities of industrial companies. Thus, there is a lack of evidence for disclosing information related to the company's costs and liabilities that have negative effects on the environment. At a time when costs and liabilities have increased dramatically, they necessitated their disclosure. There may be a need to prepare an audited annual report that reflects changes in environmental qualities and complements the traditional annual financial statements, to give an accurate picture of the financial position and to form a vision and strategy for environmental protection and pollution control, which support sustainable development.

Disclosure of the costs of environmental protection and the results of pollution control achieve and serve several benefits for industrial companies, which are as follows (Bamzahem, 2008):

1. Supporting the trust and respect of society and individuals for the company, and then increasing the demand for its products and expanding its investments, which ultimately affects the outcome of its activities and its financial position.
2. Obtaining distinguished tax treatment in terms of exemption or reduction of taxes imposed on it, and the United Nations is one of the first countries concerned with encouraging industrial companies to protect the environment and sustainable development.
3. Reducing the cost of production due to material support or low-cost financing, which leads to an increase in the volume of the company's activity, so the company uses its

resources as efficiently as possible and at the same time protects the environment from the harmful effects of pollution helps it increase profits.

Directions for Environmental Disclosure of Sustainable Development:

First: Social Responsibility: The importance of social performance has been mentioned since the beginning of the twentieth century when many scholars explained that the responsibility of each company is determined through its social performance and the benefit achieved for society, because of the accounting of social responsibility of a dynamic nature. For this reason, social responsibility is a changing and ever-evolving concept that is linked basically to sustainable development. Also, because sustainable development is a conscious, permanent and directed social process, according to an independent national administration to create structural transformations and bring about economic, environmental, political and social changes, allows achieving a steady escalation of society's capabilities and a continuous improvement of the quality of life in it (Jabbar & Ali, 2012).

Second: Environmental performance:

Attention has increased globally and locally in developing the environmental performance of industrial companies. Thus, industrial companies meet the requirements of environmental performance and environmental development in and through which they operate. Environmental performance represents all activities and operations undertaken by industrial companies, whether compulsory or optional. It would prevent or mitigate environmental and social damages resulting from the activities of production or service companies. Environmental damages can be measured through environmental performance indicators that are concerned with the impact of industrial companies on living and non-living natural systems, including vital ecosystems, land, water and air. These indicators help determine the most important environmental impacts and show the environmental goals of companies and employee development. Since environmental indicators represent measures that are determined for their strategic importance in the success of environmental programs, we notice that companies prefer to

1.18	3.98	42%	21	34%	17	10%	5	8%	4	6%	3	1
1.22	3.20	14%	7	34%	17	20%	10	22%	11	10%	5	2
1.01	3.70	18%	9	52%	26	16%	8	10%	5	4%	2	3
0.97	3.58	20%	10	30%	15	40%	20	8%	4	2%	1	4
1.32	3.40	22%	11	34%	17	20%	10	10%	5	14%	7	5
1.17	3.26	14%	7	34%	17	24%	12	20%	10	8%	4	6
1.10	3.64	22%	11	40%	20	24%	12	8%	4	6%	3	7
1.13	3.16	12%	6	30%	15	26%	13	26%	13	6%	3	8
1.11	3.70	26%	13	38%	19	20%	10	12%	6	4%	2	9
1.32	3.48	26%	13	34%	17	12%	6	18%	9	10%	5	10
0.70	3.48	The general arithmetic means of statements for accounting disclosure										

The arithmetic means of all the expressions of the accounting disclosure axis amounted to (3.48), which is greater than (3.40), and the standard deviation is (0.70). This reflects the positive view of the sample members towards the totality of the statements of this element, and it was also confirmed that the member sof the samples agree positively with the content if the calculated value of (T) is greater than the tabular value of (T), which is equal to (2.01), at a degree of freedom (49), or the level of significance is less than (0.05). Here, the value of (T), calculated (35.07), is greater than the value of (2.01), tabular (T), at a level of significance less than (0.05), which indicates

that the company's employees apply the accounting disclosure well.

B. Analysis of environmental disclosure statements:

The researcher analyzed the responses of the study sample members to the environmental disclosure element through the data presented in Table (3). Frequency distributions, percentages, arithmetic mean and standard deviation values were extracted from the respondents' answers about this element as shown in Table (3) that:

Table (3) Opinions of the sample members about environmental disclosure

standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Completel y agree		agree		Neutral		disagree		Totally disagree		Q
		5		4		3		2		1		
		%	fre	%	fre	%	fre	%	fre	%	fre	
1.15	3.34	14 %	7	38 %	19	26 %	12	16 %	8	8%	4	11
1.11	3.12	8%	4	34 %	17	30 %	15	18 %	9	10 %	5	12
1.10	3.80	30 %	15	38 %	19	18 %	9	10 %	5	4%	2	13
0.50	4.46	46 %	23	54 %	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
1.24	3.48	24 %	12	32 %	16	20 %	10	16 %	8	8%	4	15
1.04	3.74	20 %	10	52 %	26	16 %	8	6%	3	6%	3	16

0.90	3.54	14%	7	38%	19	38%	19	8%	4	2%	1	17
1.29	3.44	20%	10	40%	20	18%	9	8%	4	14%	7	18
1.13	3.16	10%	5	34%	17	26%	13	22%	11	8%	4	19
1.06	3.64	22%	11	38%	19	26%	13	10%	5	4%	2	20
0.58	3.55	The general arithmetic means of environmental disclosure statements										

The arithmetic means of all the expressions of the environmental disclosure items reached (3.55), which is greater than (3.40) with a standard deviation of (0.58). This reflects the positive view of the sample members towards the totality of the expressions of this element. It was also confirmed that these statements are positive because the sample agrees to its content if the calculated value of (T) is greater than the tabular value of (T), which is equal to (2.01), at a degree of freedom (49), or the level of significance is less than (0.05), where the value of (T), calculated (42.67), which is greater than the value of (2.01), tabular (T), at a significance level less than (0.05). This means

that the company's employees apply the environmental disclosure well.

2. Analysis of the phrases of the second axis sustainable development with the test of the impact relationship:

The researcher analyzed the responses of the study sample members to sustainable development through the data presented in Table (4). Frequency distributions, percentages, arithmetic mean and standard deviation values were extracted from the respondents' answers on this axis as shown in Table (4) that:

Table (4) The opinions of the sample members on the theme of sustainable development

standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Completely agree		agree		Neutral		disagree		Totally disagree		Q
		5		4		3		2		1		
		%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	
1.34	3.46	24%	12	36%	18	16%	8	10%	5	14%	7	21
1.21	3.22	14%	7	34%	17	22%	11	20%	10	10%	5	22
1.09	3.56	20%	10	36%	18	30%	15	8%	4	6%	3	23
1.19	3.46	22%	11	32%	16	22%	11	18%	9	6%	3	24
1.11	3.84	34%	17	32%	16	22%	11	8%	4	4%	2	25
1.31	3.54	32%	16	22%	11	22%	11	16%	8	8%	4	26
1.24	3.48	24%	12	32%	16	20%	10	16%	8	8%	4	27
1.26	3.20	20%	10	20%	10	30%	15	20%	10	10%	5	28
1.06	3.86	30%	15	42%	21	16%	8	8%	4	4%	2	29
1.00	4.04	38%	19	40%	20	12%	6	8%	4	2%	1	30

0.70	3.54	The general arithmetic means of the terms of the sustainable development	
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The arithmetic mean of all the terms of the sustainable development items was (3.54), which is greater than (3.40) with a standard deviation of (0.70). This is positive view of the sample members towards the totality of the phrases of this element, and it was also confirmed that these phrases are positive because sample agrees to its content with a calculated value of (T) greater than the tabular value of (T), (2.01), at a degree of freedom (49), or the level of significance lower than (0.05). Here the calculated (T), (35.49) is greater than the tabular (T), (2.01), at a significance level less than (0.05). This means the company's employees apply well all the policies that help in applying the dimensions of sustainable development.

Third: To test the correlation between the variables

Table (4) indicates that there is a significant correlation between disclosure and its components (accounting disclosure, environmental disclosure) and sustainable development, in the main hypothesis and the sub-hypotheses emanating from as shown below:

Table (4) The correlation relationship between the study variables at the company level

Total indicatore	Accounting Disclosure		Independent variable
	Environmental disclosure	Accounting Disclosure	
0.94	0.92	0.88	sustainable development

As for the main hypothesis, the previous table showed that there is a significant correlation between accounting disclosure with its components (accounting disclosure, environmental disclosure) and sustainable development, as the correlation coefficient between them is (0.94). This indicates means that the null hypothesis the main hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis that states that the components of accounting disclosure (accounting disclosure, environmental disclosure) contribute to achieving sustainable development is accepted.

1. Accounting disclosure correlation and sustainable development: Table (4) indicates the existence of a significant correlation between accounting disclosure as one of the dependent variables and sustainable development independent variables, as the correlation value was (0.88). Thus, the null hypothesis of the first sub-hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis "Accounting disclosure affects sustainable development is rejected".

2. Environmental disclosure and sustainable development correlation relationship: Table (4) indicates that there is a significant correlation between environmental disclosure as one of the dependent variables and sustainable development as the independent variables. The correlation value reached (0.92). So, the null hypothesis of the second sub-hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis "Environmental disclosure affects sustainable development" is rejected.

Conclusions and Recommendation

I. First: the conclusions

1. The users of financial reports support the adoption of the approach of expanding environmental disclosure, because it plays a role in the process of administrative decision-making through accounting for environmental costs, which is an integral part of the environmental management system.
2. Environmental disclosure plays an effective role in the sustainable development process by notifying the

management of industrial companies and related parties of the extent of depletion of natural resources due to the activities carried out by the company and its reflection on the future ability of nature to meet the requirements of the environment.

3. Sustainable development requires observance of very important criteria and indicators that start with the sustainability of production and consumption. Thus, the sustainability of environmental systems is a basis for maintaining our needs and the needs of future generations through the sustainability and preservation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources.
4. Environmental pollution has negative social, economic and health impacts that lead to the deterioration of material and human resources.

Second: Recommendations

This study recommends:

1. Taking the necessary measures to address environmental damages and formulate policies and strategies for sustainable, balanced, fair and effective urban planning.
 2. Developing deterrent environmental legislation and laws that are appropriate for the current time, as many violations committed against the environment today were not able to portray their severe damage, with the increase in industrial and technological progress. This in turn increase the enormous damage that occurs to the environment as a result of these violations which oblige all industrial companies to take the necessary measures to reduce the pollution phenomenon resulting from their practice of production activities.
 3. Supporting research works and studies, especially in the field of rehabilitation of polluted areas and waste and waste treatment techniques of all kinds.
 4. Granting industrial companies that preserve the environment a privileged tax treatment in terms of exemption or reduction of taxes imposed on them, in order to encourage them to protect the environment.
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