

The Corporate Social Responsibility and Sponsorship Illusion of the Commercial Companies in Public Elementary Schools of Turkey

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to discuss the transformations, namely in the structure, meaning, conduct, and presentation of education, and the teaching profession and students as created by the companies via corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sponsorship projects in public schools of Turkey. The outlook of these transformations was discussed through a literature review, web pages search and by projects samples of corporate social responsibility and sponsorship of commercial companies. Since discussing and critically examining one by one all CSR projects conducted in almost each field of education, from pre-school to higher education levels, need a lengthy assessment, this study focuses on some selected examples from CSR projects on “nutrition,” “hygiene,” “traffic,” and “healthcare” by multinational companies operating in the food, cosmetics, and automotive sectors. The examples here are limited to those devoted to the elementary schools, and the projects conducted at secondary education, higher education, and teacher education are excluded from the scope.

Keywords: *Neoliberalism, Corporate Social Responsibility, Sponsorship, Commercialization, Globalization, Public Schools*

Introduction

In many countries around the world, public education is being transformed into a commodity that everyone can or cannot use depending on her or his social position and economic condition, rather than being a fundamental right for all individuals in a society, and the content of education is adjusted to the needs of capital. Although abandoning the notion of education as a public service domain and transforming education into a form and sphere of commercial activity is not a new trend, this trend has gained impetus as it has been besieged by neoliberal policies produced by policy-making and policy-implementing organizations of global capital including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD). Global capital has three plans for education: *the capitalist plan for education* (education training a labor force equipped with submissive attitudes and skills with possible added value); *the capitalist plan in education* (deriving profit and benefits from education itself) and *the capitalist plan for global education companies* (companies in edubusiness in Britain, US, Australia, New Zealand and at a local level deriving profit from international privatization, franchising, and marketization activities) (Hill, 2007).

The international and national companies extend each and every day their field of activities (i.e. profit making) and diversify their practices via explicit or implicit methods. One of the populist concepts as adopted thereby is the corporate social responsibility and sponsorship. The corporate social responsibility concept suggests at first glance that it is related to the benefit of the society; however, the true purpose is to maximize the interests of companies by creating a perceptual illusion. The illusion, here, does not simply mean an erroneous mental representation but neoliberal ideology. In this context, Norris (2011, p.57) states “while corporations might describe their relations with schools as ‘partnership’ and emphasize the advantages that schools reap, they are in fact motivated only by profit. This is not corporate benevolence but is what marketers describe as ‘strategic philanthropy’”. Also Rikowski (2005) regards corporate sponsorship activities as the precursor of a habituation process used by corporations to make students, teachers, parents and other individuals accustomed to working with them and to completely turn schools into for-profit organizations in the future. The reason of companies is not only to carry out “school sales” or “selling in schools”, but perhaps more importantly, it means to create a labor market from schools that can meet the demands of magnates (Hirrt, 2007).

Today the projects conducted at educational institutions are mainly sponsored by the national and multi-national companies in the name of corporate social responsibility. Some companies open schools, others support vocational high schools, some establish information technology classrooms, others build schools and name it after their company name, some distribute tooth brushes, and others organize competitions. Despite the fact that the short term objective for the companies is not profit making via direct sales in the context of the aforementioned practices held in educational institutions, it is evident that the main goal in the long term is to increase the sales of their products, and promote their products via advertisements and logos; thus creating brand loyalty and positive image in students, i.e. the future consumers. The involvement of the companies in the field of education in disguise of corporate social

responsibility diverts the direction of educational reforms and practices from democratic basis to company interests

Globalization and the Rise of Corporate Social Responsibility

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) concept incorporates the notions of ‘social’ and ‘responsibility’, thus the meaning and function thereof suggests a humane approach at first glance. However, as stated by Okçabol (2007) in relation to the lifelong learning, learning society, information society, and information age concepts, behind the shiny image of globalism there emerges the fact that also the corporate social responsibility concept is an inhuman corporate strategy. The concept has economic functionality for the companies, which seek to have better market share by moving ahead of their competitors in global competition, or which are in fear of losing market share. Especially the fact that the CSR concept correlates with such concepts of the business world as the ‘corporate citizenship’, ‘sustainable business’, ‘social and environmental accountability’, ‘business ethics and corporate responsibility’, and ‘stakeholder theory’ (Broomhill, 2007; Matten, Crane and Chapple, 2003; Garriga and Melé, 2004) further reveals the economic functionality of the concept.

Having a long historical background and a huge literature (such as Kotler and Lee, 2005; Benn and Bolton, 2011; Visser, 2011) the corporate social responsibility (CSR) concept cannot be easily and clearly explained. The difficulty in definition stems from the fact that the very definition thereof varies with whom, from what position, and for which purpose utilizes the concept. In other words, individuals, companies, different economic currents, non-governmental organizations, governments, and multinational organizations discuss and define the concept through different perspectives. Therefore, this study focuses on the background and function of CSR rather than a detailed definition thereof.

The corporate social responsibility (CSR) concept is discussed as the last manifestation of the long-standing debate on the relationship between the business world and the society (Jenkins, 2005). Aforementioned debate continued in the periods subsequent to the rise of the companies in the late 19th Century, when the company hegemony field expanded and the society tried to control the power of companies. Through these periods, having been exposed to regulative attempts in accordance with their conduct of operations, public criticism, and anti-trust initiatives, the companies in response there to and with the aim of regaining their legitimacy, started to emphasize the corporate responsibility and charities in order to prove

that the government regulations were not necessary (Broomhill, 2007). Therefore, regulative impositions on the operations of the foreign investors in the developing countries became an international affair in 1960s and 1970s, and a series of initiatives were taken in the UN to establish a code of conduct for the operations of transnational companies. Nevertheless, companies and Northern countries proposed self-regulation as an alternative to confront the global attempts that suggest imposing compulsory regulations for multinational company enterprises, and the International Chamber of Commerce, the representative of transnational conglomerates issued its own Guidelines for International Investment in 1972, which was adopted by many American companies (Jenkins, 2005).

The global restructuring and the rise of neoliberalism in 1980s led to a withdrawal of government investments both in the developed and developing countries. Escaping from the countries that adopted and enforced legal standards on the conduct of the transnational companies in terms of labor force, environment, and human rights, companies started to move their capital, investments, and production to the countries, where such laws fail to exist or proved to be loose (Winston, 2002). In other words, the increase in the capital mobility provided the transnational companies, which threaten to move their production facilities to countries with more convenient regimes, with the opportunity to abuse the regulative differences with the government. These courses of events were reflected in the national policies to the benefit of companies by the developing countries, which withdrew from imposing regulations on company operations in order to attract foreign direct investment in a fierce competition environment (Jenkins, 2005).

In 1990s, due to the surfacing of many corporate scandals, ecological disasters caused by global companies, the occurrence of “sweatshops” in developing countries, and the child labor, activist groups in the USA started to protest both against the cooperation with companies and against the companies themselves (Bendell 2004). The demand for more corporate responsibility arising from a range of sources, including international commercial organizations, non-governmental organizations, and ecological organizations forced the discredited companies to respond. Therefore the social responsibility discourse and programs re-emerged as a part of efforts to directly confront these pressures (Broomhill, 2007). At the end of the 1990s, multiparty development agencies assumed an active role in the promotion of CSR. In this period especially the World Bank advocated CSR and established a Corporate Social Responsibility Practice within the Private Sector Development Vice Presidency. The

Practice advises developing country governments in order to mobilize and encourage them for corporate social responsibility. Moreover the World Bank Institute, the educational branch of the World Bank, started to organize periodical electronic conferences and training courses on CSR. Through these periods CSR started to be related to development as well. In this context, the United Nations issued the Global Compact in 2000, with the participation of the enterprises, labor and non-governmental organizations, and governments. The nine principles included in the initiative were introduced based on the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” The International Labor Organization's “Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work”, and the “Rio Declaration on Environment and Development” (Jenkins, 2007). Global Compact, which is claimed to have been based on protecting, improving, and supporting the human rights, and taking a stand against human rights violations, applying universal values in employment and business life, overcoming environmental challenges by undertaking initiatives to promote environmental awareness and responsibility, and working against corruption in all its forms, is the world’s largest voluntary CSR initiative with 8700 companies and other stakeholders from 130 countries (UN Global Compact , 2011).

Having further developed with the incorporation of new concepts since 1990s, the CSR has become a sector in itself with full-time staff, web-sites, news bulletins, professional associations, counselors, career programs, generally in the university business administration departments, academic reviews, and research centers (The Economist, 2004; Henderson, 2001b). For instance such organizations as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (with 190 members, including Rio Tinto, the Royal Dutch/Shell Group, General Motors, Dupont, 3M, Deutsche Bank, Coca-Cola, Sony, Caterpillar Inc., and BP), the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Employers Organization, and the World Economy Forum issue CSR reports in the name of the companies. Besides, many counseling organizations conduct studies on CSR. For instance, Business for Social Responsibility in the USA, provides companies with information, tools, and training and counseling services on CSR as an integral part of their operations and strategies, while numerous studies are published by one of the largest CSR counseling organizations of the world, i.e. England-based Account Ability, which operates in five continents. Similarly, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) develops a Guideline for Social Responsibility (Broomhill, 2007). In Turkey, many organizations including the Corporate Social Responsibility Platform of Turkey, Turkish Corporate Social Responsibility

Association, and Business World and Sustainable Development Association as represented at World Sustainable Development Business Council provide information, documents, and training services on CSR, organize conferences, and encourage CSR.

CSR has found a place not only in trade organizations but also in academic circles. Many universities especially in the USA, England, Canada, and Australia established research centers to conduct academic studies and organized undergraduate and graduate level career programs. For instance the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (ICCSR) at the Business Administration Faculty of Nottingham University is one of the largest and impressive centers in Europe (Broomhill, 2007). In Turkey, there is no dedicated center or training program under CSR title in any university, but, there are many postgraduate and doctoral theses on this subject. “Corporate social responsibility” keyword retrieves 80 thesis works in the thesis search catalogue of Higher Education Council (YOK). These theses were conducted at graduate programs in the fields of business administration, communications, and public relations.

Apart from all those developments above, many governments today adopt and approve CSR. For instance, the British Government appointed a minister in charge of promoting corporate social responsibility in general. The European Commission has published the Green Paper on CSR upon encouragement of ministers of European Union member countries. The purpose of this book is expressed as making a comprehensive CSR policy both in Europe and in the international level (Henderson, 2001a). The Turkey Corporate Social Responsibility Baseline Report as prepared by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) underlines that although there are no specifically enforced laws regarding CSR practices, there are laws, such as Public Procurement Law, Environmental Law, and Trade Union Law etc. that could be related to CSR. Aforementioned report also states that the “Corporate Governance Principles” issued by the Capital Markets Board of Turkey (SPK), in charge of administration and auditing of the monetary markets in Turkey, is the only legal document regarding CSR practices (UNDP, 2008).

Corporate Social Responsibility and its Benefits for the Companies

Milton Friedman, an intellectual architect of neoliberalism, stated in his article “Social Responsibility of Business is to increase its Profit,” published in the New York Times in 1970, “Only people can have responsibilities. A corporation is an artificial person and in this sense

may have artificial responsibilities,” that the only objective of corporate social responsibility is to increase profits. According to Friedman “there is one and only one social responsibility of business—to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud. “Similarly, Henderson (2001b) emphasizes that in today’s world positive answers to the social demands arising from various sections of the society is presented as a key to the long-term commercial success of companies, that profit depends on reputation, and reputation depends on acting socially responsible, and that following CSR provides companies with a good level of profitability.

The corporate image of companies, which earned esteem in the society via CSR, gains value and this in turn is reflected to the brand value, which increases the employee loyalty by creating a positive effect on company staff, and also plays an important role in attracting the qualified labor force to the enterprise. Moreover, companies, which attach importance to social responsibility may both borrow with better terms and conditions, and have their stock value increase. Corporate social responsibility facilitates penetration to new markets and ensuring customer loyalty for the companies, the efficiency and quality are improved, and risk management becomes more effective; this also ensures that the public opinion and the regulator attaches importance to what the company thinks (Argüden, 2002). Similarly, Paksoy (2009) lists the long-term gains of the companies, which adopted and signed the aforementioned United Nations Global Impact, which is the largest corporate social responsibility initiative as follows: they use UN logo and have a more prestigious status; they are more advantageous compared to the other corporations in influencing, retaining, and attracting qualified employees; they ensure cost savings and trust of stockholders, brand awareness and reputation before all stakeholders. The Research on the Perspective of the Business World regarding Corporate Business Responsibility, conducted Arya Sponsorship and Communication Consultancy Inc. and GfK (the Turkish subsidiary of GfK Group, which is the fourth largest research group of Europe and Turkey) in 2005, supports the above statements with respect to the gains of the companies. The research participants expressed their purpose for the CSR project selection as follows: providing benefits to the society (94%), contributing to corporate reputation (92%), increasing brand loyalty (36%), increasing awareness and visibility (31%), strengthening image (25%), and sales support (11%) (Arya Sponsorluk ve İletişim Danışmanlığı Ltd., 2006).

Companies also gain various taxation advantages while ensuring value by adding emotional and psychological aspects to their brands via CSR. The 2008 Turkey Corporate Social Responsibility Baseline Report stated that the tax incentives regarding CSR were provided in Article 89 of the Income Tax Law, No 193. Article 89 of the said law provides that the companies will be entitled to tax incentives upon charity contributions and donations in the field of education. The tax exemption is valid for the donations granted to other organizations operating in the fields specified as public benefit (UNDP, 2008).

Companies try to get involved in the CSR process mostly by sponsoring the projects of non-governmental organizations (Göçenoğlu, 2012). This is because of the fact that conducting projects in collaboration with the non-governmental organizations is an important tool for prestige (Bıçakcı, 2008) and the most effective non-governmental organizations in Turkey are those founded by the leaders of the business world (UNDP, 2008). Educational sponsorship is amongst the most prevalent social sponsorship types. Moreover, an institution, which assumes sponsorship of any activity in the education field, may have the sponsored unit named after the institution's title, depending on the size of the activity (MEB, 2008). In accordance with a research by GfK, conducted in 2006 on 500 major companies in Turkey, 42% of the participants described sponsorship as a marketing tool, 22% defined the same as corporate social responsibility, and 34% defined the same both a marketing tool and corporate social responsibility (Arya Sponsorluk ve İletişim Danışmanlığı Ltd., 2006). The web page of Arya Sponsorluk ve İletişim Danışmanlık Şirketi presents sponsorship not as donations or charity, but as a very effective marketing tool, and the purpose of sponsorship is defined as creating and strengthening image by promoting the corporation or the product, indirectly influence purchasing preferences, and therefore as a tool of communication targeting commercial outcomes. "The Public Relations and Organization Services: Sponsorship" module of the "Strengthening Vocational Education and Training Project" by Ministry of National Education (MEB) defines sponsorship as "a business agreement that covers planning, implementation, and auditing of all activities conducted by providing various persons, institutions, and organizations with support in kind, in cash, or in any other way for attaining the goals as specified by a corporation, with an aim of mutual benefit (MEB, 2008, s.4). The same module lists the reasons for sponsorship as follows: contribute in recognition and strengthening of corporate identity; promote the title of the corporation to the target groups; contribute in the promotion of the corporation; strengthen the corporate image; improve the

corporate culture; gain goodwill of people by contributing in society; support internal communication of the corporation; increase the motivation and loyalty of employees; appear in mass media; promote a new product; support sales; and providing various entertainment opportunities.

Upon assessment of aforementioned gains as a whole, adopting CSR by both transnational and local companies seems to be necessary for ensuring continuous public support. Even though the supporters of CSR present CSR as a non-profit activity based on sensitiveness for the society and the environment, and magnanimity in the reference frame of ethical principles, it is evident that the concept is a mask hiding behind the true purpose of the companies, which is “profit-making.” Henderson (2001a) emphasizes that modern capitalism tries to manifest “a humane face” via CSR to ensure remaining as acceptable and valid.

The Reasons of Companies to Conduct or Sponsor Corporate Social Responsibility Projects

The leading field of CSR activities is education with a percentage of 78%, followed by environment and healthcare (47%), culture & art (42%), social aid (39%), sports (25%), archaeology (8%), and employment generation (3%) (Arya Sponsorluk ve İletişim Danışmanlığı Ltd., 2006). Indeed, some companies open schools, others support vocational high schools, some establish Information Technology classrooms, others build schools and name it after their company name, some distribute tooth brushes, and others organize competitions (Aksoy, 2011). Naturally, the activities of the companies in the field of education are not limited to these examples, and exceed the constraints of this study.

Why does the field of education rank the first amongst CSR projects by companies? This question is answered in an article, namely, “Magic Market,” published in Capital Magazine, dated January 1st, 2000, as follows: “Actually their consumption power is higher than their age... Apart from what they do... They shape the expenses of their parents, they steer the consumption to a large extent. They are the favourites of all the companies throughout the world, and especially in the USA since they are the “future consumers.” The fact that they influence purchasing in more than 100 products makes it clearly manifest.” Furthermore, the same article provides the companies with 10 important tactics to ensure success in the children’s market, and emphasizes that the customers should especially be gained at ‘school’

via advertisements with social marketing content such as adopting healthy life and protecting forests (Capital, 2000).

McNeal (1998) classifies the kids' market called 'Magic Market' into three distinct categories: primary, influence, and future. First of all, the children create the "primary market," where they spend pocket money they get from parents, senior members of the family or similar sources, in line with their own preferences. According to the Consumers Union of USA, children at primary school age and adolescents annually spend approximately 15 billion dollars, and 57 billion dollars respectively, out of their pocket moneys (Feuerstein, 2001; Bona, Chaudhuri, Jean-Baptiste, Menachem, and Wurzburg, 2003). Although there is no data with regard to the total pocket money expenditures of children in Turkey, the Assistant Product Manager of Cappy, i.e. fruit juice brand name of Coca-Cola, explains their tactics to capture these pocket money: "The pocket money of the child is important in the children's market. Therefore it is a market where there is intense price competition. We support 200 ml small sized package in price especially where we can have direct access to children" (Capital, 2000). In the second category, the "Influence Market," children have direct or indirect influence on a wide range of family expenditures from holiday preferences to car purchasing (McNeal, 1998, Calvert, 2008) and the size of this market amounts to 196 billion dollars annually in the USA (Feuerstein, 2001). The third market for the companies is where, the youngsters of today, will create, as the adults of tomorrow, the potential "future market," who is suitable for any kinds of products and services. The children begin to act as independent consumers at first grade. Even though they do not make direct expenditures for the products, they are exposed to numerous messages regarding the products (advertisements, logos, brand names). By the help of these messages, companies successfully teach students to buy their products and create the loyal customers of the future (McNeal, 1998).

Having foreseen this strong consumer and labor force potential, the companies either conduct million-dollar projects in educational institutions via CSR projects or sponsor the projects of non-governmental organizations. This is because of the fact that the schools for the companies are the spaces where they can find the loyal, brand-addicted future customers in the easiest way and in masses, and where massive brand advertisements and marketing can be conducted. Of course, companies are not only focused on children as the future potential customers via CSR projects. At the same time with the "socially responsible" face, they also attract the parents, teachers, and school administrators into their field of influence, and therefore increase

their customer potential or reference periphery by two-, three-fold. Thus companies, in return for increasing the consumption and creating new profit-making opportunities in the long-run, relate to a problem in the educational field, leak into educational institutions, and conduct CSR projects or sponsor those conducted by non-governmental organizations, with pleasure.

Some Examples of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sponsorship Projects

Unilever-Algida: There is Action at School

Algida is the food product of Unilever, which operates in Turkey since 1952, defines itself as a “multi-local multinational” company, and states that an annual approximate amount of 50 million dollars is allocated for social responsibility projects.

The project organized under partnership of the Ministry of National Education and Algida Max, under the title of ‘There is Action at School’ was first launched in May 2009, and 38 schools in Istanbul and Bursa provinces, which were specified as the pilot regions, were included in the scope of the project, where 30 thousand students were accessed. The 2010 target of Algida Max is to visit the same schools twice and access 50 thousand students in 50 schools. The aim of the project is to encourage school-age children to follow adequate and balanced nutrition and to be physically more active in order to help them to be physically, mentally, and intellectually healthier, happy, and successful for the entirety of their lives. As a result, the objective is to decrease the risk of children to develop chronic lifestyle diseases, such as “obesity” and ‘physical inactivity’. The contents of ‘Movement with Games’ was prepared by two professors from Nutrition and Dietetics Department and Child Development Department of Hacettepe University Health Sciences Faculty. The program is expected to improve such basic functions as effective communication, adaptation, focusing, and balance in children.

The Conduct of Program: In the scope of the project, specialist trainers pay visits to schools and conduct programs of approximately two course hours with children in a classroom. The program starts with narrating the principles of adequate and balanced nutrition using the words of Max the Lion. Subsequently the trainers and children go out to the garden altogether and movements are introduced one by one to the children; games played altogether. At the end of the program, notebooks including the movements taught by the specialist trainers are distributed to the children. The notebooks cover three-week programs. The children, who

exercise the movements with the support of their teachers and parents, for three weeks are awarded success certificate, and then apply a more advanced and a far funnier movement program with the accompanying trainers, who are visiting the school again. One of the professors who prepared the program makes a statement regarding the importance of nutrition in childhood: “Another important topic in daily nutritional habits is milk. The children must drink at least two glasses of milk every day. Amongst the milk and dairy products, which are the sources of Calcium, Phosphorus, protein, and Vitamin B2 and A, there is also the ice cream, which is both loved by the children and has the same benefits along with cheese, yoghurt, and yoghurt juice” (Unilever, 2012).

Nestle: I Know Nutrition

One of the largest companies in the food sector, Nestle entered into the Turkish market in 1875 with baby formula and opened up its first chocolate factory in 1927. It is stated that during its operational period in Turkey, Nestle, on the one hand added value to the economy of the country thanks to its commercial performance, and on the other, acted consciously about its responsibility to the society (nestle.com.tr)

Ministry of National Education entered into a partnership with Nestle Türkiye Gıda Sanayi A.Ş (Nestle Turkish Food Industry Ltd. Inc.) for a Nutritional Training Program (I Know Nutrition) to be held between 2010 and 2013 with a budget of TL 900 thousand. The aim of the program is to create and raise nutritional awareness in 3rd and 4th grade students in specified provinces and selected primary schools. In the scope of the project, 30 primary schools were specified at first stage in 10 provinces and a classroom teacher from each school received trainers’ training on balanced and healthy nutrition (MEB, 2012a).

Danone: Smiling Future Nursery Classes

With 160 factories and 80 thousand employees in more than 120 countries, in five continents, Danone operates in Turkey, in the dairy products sector since 1998 under the title of Danone Türkiye A.Ş., (Turkey Co.) and under the title of Numil A.Ş. (Numil Co.) in the infant nutrition and medical nutrition field as of the end of 2007. Listed in Euronext Paris stock exchange, Danone is also listed in the Dow Jones Stoxx Sustainability Index, a social responsibility institution, and ASPI Eurozone and Ethibel Sustainability Index (danone.com.tr).

Danone has been supporting “Smiling Future Nursery Classes” and Playgrounds projects together with the Association for Supporting Contemporary Life (ÇYDD) and Ministry of National Education since June 2004. The Smiling Future Nursery Classes activities are held in existing primary schools as specified by National Education Directorates in related with the Association for Supporting Contemporary Life. Specified classrooms are equipped with furniture, various technological tools, and educational material by Danone. The company also contributes to healthy development of children via physical activities by establishing a playground for each nursery classroom (Danone, 2012). The web page of Çocuk Sevenler Primary School (Mamak, Ankara) of the Ministry of National Education provides that in the scope of the project Danone dispatched Danette yogurts to the nursery classes of the school, and that pictures in the said web-page depict that the nursery class students used the waste yogurt packs to prepare artworks under the title of “Welcome to Danino Village.”

Henkel-Tursil: Clever Children of Tursil

Having its headquarters located in Düsseldorf, Germany and established in 1876, Henkel holds market positions in industrial products sector with its renowned products of Persil, Schwarzkopf, Loctite, Vernel, and Tursil (henkel.com.tr)

The purpose of the “Clever Children of Tursil” project conducted by Tursil, one of the important brands of Henkel, and Association for Supporting Contemporary Life is to open much-needed libraries and provide books in the schools in Anatolia. In the scope of this project, 25 libraries were opened in 10 provinces in 2009, and as of the end of 2010 this number reached to 37. Due to the fact that 2011 represented the 75th year of operation of Tursil, in Turkey, the 75th library was opened in a Regional Primary Boarding School.. It is stated that Tursil by allocating 10% of its profit out of its sales to the Clever Children of Tursil project, enabled its customers directly contribute in the project and that the customers could become partners of the project (Türkiye Kurumsal Sosyal Sorumluluk Platformu, 2012).

Colgate-Palmolive: Bright Smiles, Bright Futures

Having founded in 1806, in the USA, Colgate is a multinational company that introduced its Palmolive soaps into the market in 1898, and conducts production activities in Turkey since 1985 (colgate.com.tr).

Ministry of National Education, Colgate Palmolive Cleaning Products Industry and Trade Co., Association of Mouth and Dental Health, and Tuvana Foundation For Educating Children (TOÇEV) entered a five-year protocol on January 3rd, 2008, with sponsorship of Colgate, under the title of “Bright Smiles, Bright Futures” to raise awareness on Mouth and Dental Health. In accordance with the project held pursuant to the protocol, one 3rd grade teacher each from the primary schools of different provinces received training between 2008-2010. The provincial trainers provide training to one teacher each from the towns of the province under the program, and then town trainers provide training to 3rd grade teachers of each primary school in the town, after which the educational material, toothpaste, and toothbrushes sent by the sponsor company, are distributed to the 3rd grade students.

During the student training, a cartoon film on the subject is shown and educational material such as booklets, flyers, and toothpaste, and toothbrushes sent by the relevant company are distributed. The trainings are repeated for the students attending to 3rd grade in the primary schools of the provinces in the scope of the project, and the classrooms with the teachers replaced and the newcomer teachers, who have not received the training, are informed about the project by the provincial/town trainers. During academic years of 2007-2010 the project reached out a total of 1.600.000 students in 36 provinces in the scope of the project, and as of the end of the educational year of 2010-2011 it is planned to access to 2.000.000 students (MEB, 2012b).

Procter & Gamble-Orkid: Adolescent Period Transformation Project

Having established in 1837 in the USA, Procter & Gamble is a multinational company operating in Turkey since 1987, in the fields of production and distribution of powder detergent, diapers, hygienic pads, and bleach (pg.com.tr).

The Adolescent Period Transformation Project (ERDEP) co-partnered by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), Toprak Pharmaceuticals and The Consumer Goods Industry P & G Co. first launched in 1993, under the title of “Change First Steps of Girls towards Adolescence. “In 1999, the project was extended with the collaboration of Orkid, a P&G brand, and Health Affairs Directorate of MEB to cover entire Turkey, also including the male students. The purpose of the project is to inform students about the physical, psychological, social changes during adolescence, reproductive systems, menstrual period, balanced nutrition,

and personal care. The target mass of the project is comprised of the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students, their parents, and teachers. In the scope of the ERDEP, nurses graduated from Higher School of Nursing, provided the one-hour training module prepared by the Project Training Unit and approved by the Board of Education of MEB, to female and male students in separate classrooms. Two different training materials were prepared for the teachers and students (MEB, 2012c). Training kits and gift packages, including the brand products of sponsor companies are distributed to the students in the schools that are in the scope of the project.

Renault-First Steps in the Street

Manufacturing a range of vehicles such as automobiles, trucks, tractors, tanks, trains, aircraft, motorcycle, bicycle, and buses, Renault was established in 1899, in France, and today operates in 118 countries. Renault MAIS Motor Vehicle Production and Sales Inc. was founded on January 10th, 1968, as a company of OYAK and the first Renault automobile was presented to Turkish consumers in 1971 (renault.com.tr)

The project, entitled “First Steps in the Street”, was first launched by Renault to raise road safety awareness among children and encourage them to adopt the habits of behaving safely in traffic entered its 10th year during the 2011-2012 Educational Year; and it was targeted to access 1.2 million students at the end of this period. First Steps in the Street Training Kit was prepared for 2nd grade students and teachers in all primary schools included in the scope of the project. The set includes student workbook, teachers’ pedagogical cards, interactive video, poster, stickers, and a diploma. During the training, Woosh the extra-terrestrial cartoon hero accompanies the children. In addition to Renault, the project is also supported by Total Oil, Turkish Traffic Safety Association, and Istanbul National Education Directorate. It is claimed that the First Steps in the Street is the longest lasting corporate social responsibility project in Turkey (renault.com.tr).

The Effects of Corporate Social Responsibility Projects on the Field of Education

Taking into consideration the examples covered in the previous section, the effects of the CSR projects on education can be discussed as follows:

1. In the out-of-the-school setting, it is rather a family preference or decision whether the children will be exposed to advertisements or whether they could be distanced from the influence of the advertisements. However the fact that the children are involved in CSR projects in the educational institutions by the authorities, who open the way for the companies without bestowing the right of choice and without family permission, and thus exposing them to product advertisements, transforms them into “captive” consumers. This also means that the students are exploited and abused; since, the students do not have the right to refuse to get involved in company CSR projects that are realized upon approval of the teachers and administrators in the school setting.
2. Healthcare and nutrition rights are basic human rights and that although it is the responsibility of the state itself to honor these rights of children, as seen in CSR examples, the same duty is transferred to such companies as Nestle, Danone, and Unilever (Algida). The companies advertise their own food brands using logos, posters, and attractive characters (e.g. Max the Lion), during the conduct of health and nutrition projects. Statements came without a regard to the nutritional values of the ice cream, chocolate, or fruit yoghurt being advertised. What’s more, the health of students is risked by creating an illusion that the nutritional values of ice cream is comparable with milk, and it may serve as a substitute, (as with the Algida case) referring to the fact that ice cream contains sugar, various fruits, chocolate, cacao, hazelnuts, pistachio, caramel, glucose syrup, vegetable oil, sahlepl, stabilizers, natural and nature-identical aroma (Türkiye Halk Sağlığı Kurumu, 2012)The fact that such statements came from the nutrition experts involved in CSR projects, may lead to the adoption of said information by the target mass without questioning its validity.
3. While it is the obligation of the state to provide the children with recreation and playground facilities along with adequate nutrition, it is evident that on the one hand decreasing the physical training course hours to a minimum, and on the other encouraging more physical action via Algida’s “There is Action at School” campaign, constitute a clear contradiction. In fact here the message is that the physical health of children could only be protected by the promoted product. It is said that by eating the promoted ice cream and moving with the ice cream sticks you will have a balanced and healthy nutrition.

4. The main purpose of the distribution of company products such as branded tooth brushes, tooth paste, ice cream etc. or stickers, balloons, diplomas, interactive CDs etc. with product logos, along with the training kits to the students and teachers involved in CSR projects held in educational institutions is direct marketing of the products, which may induce materialist tendencies in students. Defined in general as the tendency that the individual see money and materials as important tools in social progress (Flouri, 1999), this materialist tendency may lead to problems including anxiety, depression, psychosomatic symptoms, low sense of self, and poor social skills (Kanner, 2007).
5. As it is seen in above-mentioned examples, one can argue that CSR projects also manipulate the meaning and function of the teaching profession in line with company interests. By involving teachers in CSR project trainings, they are transformed into the collaborators of the process, in which the educational institutions are subject to marketization. Moreover, teachers assigned to such duties as conveying the learning contents prepared by the sponsor company to the students and distributing the products at the end of the training, are transformed into product marketers and in accordance with Giroux (2007), the social relations between the students and teachers are reduced to buyer – seller relation.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration the aforementioned statements and project examples, it is evident that corporate social responsibility brings many gains for the companies including at first profit, reputation, brand recognition, loyal customers, brand loyalty, tax deduction, and building trust by getting closer to the regulators etc. What are the benefits of the educational institutions, when the companies ensure these gains? A general review of CSR projects conducted by companies in educational institutions, as an indication of goodwill, provides that many students have access to libraries, playgrounds, books, a healthy body, and knowledge, skills, and behaviors related to live in a safer environment thanks to the companies, which can be seen as a benefit. In other words, CSR projects may be considered a win-win state, where both the companies and the target mass ensure mutual benefits. Nevertheless, such a superficial consideration that lacks a thorough insight into the situation will mean disregarding the fact that CSR projects, in fact, are tools of commercialization of education, that the educational institutions are transformed into product marketing fields,

therefore democratic public education may completely go under control of companies, and that CSR, in short, is a diversion, and illusion. CSR is an illusion since company practices in the commercial culture are in general assessed on the basis of making money or not, but not whether it is right or wrong, whether it complies with ethics and serves for public benefit or not. As Giroux (2007) articulates, the companies are not established in the capacity of responsible citizens. Their only purpose is to make money and grow.

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