

The Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Internal Business Process in Private Universities

Fahmi Fadhil Al-Hosaini¹ & Saudah Sofian²

¹Department of Accounting and Finance, Faculty of Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 UTM Johor Bahru, Malaysia

² Department of Accounting and Finance, Faculty of Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Most of the previous investigations on organizations performance were directed towards the financial status at the expense of other social requirements, particularly with respect to firms' operating environments. In addition, such studies were geared towards better understanding of the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Organizational Performance without adequate considerations for those of the non-financial factors, such as the Internal Business Perspective (IBP) that also affect the success of organizational strategic goals. The incorporation of CSR into organizational processes in driving home their strategic management success have been proven to be linked. In this paper, the influence of CSR on IBP in Yemen's Private Universities' and HEIs was investigated, through the implementation of the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) from a survey PUs faculties of Yemen's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The regression analysis results showed that the CSR has a positive influence on the IBP of the PUs. This study therefore justified the ongoing drives towards better understanding of the influence of the CSR on the IBP.

KEYWORDS: Corporate Social Responsibility; Internal Business Perspective (IBP); Higher Education Institutions; Private Universities; Structural Equation Modeling.

1 INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility or "corporate citizenship" is a term that refers to a system of business that allows the generation and dissemination of wealth for the welfare of stakeholders via the integration and employment of ethical systems and sustainable management activities [1]. Its represents the intentional inclusion of social and environmental concerns by organizations in their operations in light of their connections with relevant entities [2]. According to van der Wiele, Kok [3], CSR refers to the firm's obligation to employ its resources in a way that is beneficial to the society via its contribution as a societal member, while taking the while society into consideration, and enhancing it notwithstanding the direct benefits obtained by the firm.

CSR is a strategic management tool [4] that affects the relationships and roles of organizations and the society at large, particularly with respect to governance and sustainability. According to Chalmers and Palomero [5], Carroll [6], and Carroll and Buchholtz [7], among the new trends among organizations are the incorporation of economic, social and environmental sustainability initiatives with management tools in order to achieve better operational plans. The challenges involved with these economic, social, ethical and environmental factors in relation to CSR were further highlighted by some authors, such as Carroll and Buchholtz [7]. In addition, Carroll [6] disclosed the current trends in CSR researches in both evolving economies in Asia, Africa, and South America as well as across Europe.

On the other hand, Internal Business Process (IBP) or Internal Process Perspective (IPP) evaluates the IT processes and other operational purposes of organizations. It measures developed products and services, post-sale services and so on [8]. It represents an organizational practices and methods used to fulfill customer and stakeholder expectations [9].

As such, the strategic management tools have different frameworks that are also suited for performance evaluation of Private Universities (PUs) generally and for the case of Yemen's PUs, so that better accountability, performance and regular feedbacks that help in shaping the strategic directions of organizations, such as the Yemen's PUs and HEIs.

* **Corresponding Author:** Saudah Sofian, Saudah Sofian, Department of Accounting and Finance, Faculty of Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 UTM Johor Bahru, Malaysia, Tel: +60197277416.
E-mail: Saudah@utm.my

In this study therefore, the influence of the CSR on IBP were evaluated with respect to Yemen's Private Universities (PUs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The remaining parts of this paper are highlighted as follow: related literature in the context of this study is presented in the next section, its covers the CSR, IBP and the interrelationships among them. Thereafter, the research methodology is presented with the implementation of structural equation modeling (SEM) involving the measurement model and structural model, next is the statistical analysis from the results obtained, and lately followed by the discussion and conclusion.

2.0 Related Literature Reviews and Research Hypotheses

The incorporation of CSR into organizational processes in driving home their strategic management success have been proven to be linked. Whereas, the Internal Business Process offers managements of organizations the means of assessing the various feedback from their customers so that the operational strategic management structure could be better or improved. In this paper, the influence of CSR on IBP in Yemen's Private Universities' and HEIs was reviewed, as shown in the following sub-sections.

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR is an advanced effective strategic management tool [4] that researchers considered to fosters on community value-focused change [10]. It affects relationships between businesses and society, and has also become a way of rethinking the role of all organizations in respect to governance and sustainability [4].

Literature lists considerable evidence of the CSR pursuits among firms and the advantages they acquire from it. In this regard, a firm benefits from its CSR investments with the inclusion of the investment it places on enhancing education and the local life quality (Porter and Kramer [11]). Such investments may contribute to the extension of the local market and in the lessening of corruption among local businesses, and will eventually enhance the company's competitive edge. According to several scholars, firm managers and stakeholders stress on the importance and the benefits that can be obtained from taking up CSR activities.

For instance, Porter and Kramer [12] listed reasons supporting CSR when they referred to it as moral obligation, sustainability, operating license and reputation. From the above reasons, moral obligation is described as the firm's obligation to act as a good citizen by doing what is right in light of sustainability. In this regard, the Norwegian Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland defined CSR as meeting the needs of the current times without compromising the needs of the coming generation – this definition is the one used by the U.N. Added to this, the license concept needs each firm to posses implicit and explicit consent from an extensive group of stakeholders to carry out their business. Meanwhile, reputation is employed by many firms to ensure that CSR initiatives are employed as this could translate to improving the image of the firm, supporting firm brand and increasing the stock value of the firm.

2.2 Internal Process Perspective

It is crucial for firms to consistently come up with innovations with regards to their products, services and internal processes in order to create customer value (Kaplan and Norton [13]). The innovation process is directed by the customer's needs, and are covered under four primary processes, which are, new products/services identification, management of R&D, new production/service design and development, launching of new products/processes in the market. Therefore, internal process can be described as a supply chain that provides customer services. It is important for the firm to maintain value in its processes to provide better services. These were achieved by the institution through the processes of innovation, quality service, customer management, and regulatory and social processes.

According to Bovet and Martha [14], the traditional supply chain involving the forecasting, purchasing, manufacturing, warehousing, and distributing processes is not longer sufficient to satisfy the dynamism and versatility of the market as value-added activities should initiate with demand-pull. In other words, customers should be allowed to have a say in the design level and service provision. The combination of customers, suppliers, and firm in a value net can form a dynamic system that is needed to meet the customers' needs and to maintain the core competitive edge of the firm. Hence, the internal process is a means to sufficiently and efficiently monitor effectiveness. On the basis of the above findings, it is argued that internal process perspective is related to the financial performance of HEI as in this case being applied to HEIs in Yemen. Thus, internal process perspective is embedded in the proposed theoretical framework of the present research.

2.3 The Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility Perspective and Internal Process Perspective

The relationship between CSR and Internal Process has been examined by researchers, and it oscillated with results suggesting a positive relationship [15-22] to those indicating a negative relationship [23, 24].

This relationship is the contribution of CSR to the internal process perspective which is being offered based on earlier researches that showed significance to this relationship. The current trends in research place CSR as a key

ingredient to social economic transformation and as major contributor to internal process perspective. As a fundamental argument, there is a notion that a company's productivity is embedded in existing social networks which influence how strategies are defined and implemented. Although there is still a raging debate among the academia, practitioners and researchers, their position on whether CSR contributes to the improvement in the internal process is more or less similar. Robust CSR programs provide an opportunity for improvement of internal systems of the firm in a variety of ways. CSR programs introduce another ingredient in the culture of the firm with which it may seek to identify itself internally and externally [18].

The link between CSR and internal process has also been established in Tanimoto [15], wherein an depth interpretive study involving six managers of major corporations in Japan, on how CSR institutionalization has been achieved was examined. The study demonstrated that CSR should be incorporated in the management process and corporate governance of the firm, paying attention to the internal process as a driver of overall performance. Good CSR programs boost the business growth of the firm by speeding up the staff morale internal learning, thereby making knowledge transfer from the original innovators to the rest of the organization easier [21].

CSR activities with engagements combined with incorporating some face-to-face interactions provide a good ground for exposure to new knowledge and new systems which can later be incorporated into the internal processes of the firm. Researchers contended that firms will benefit by establishing systems that enable learning together within and between organizations. This contribution outlines the basic requirements for global responsibility which entails many illustrations of learning processes that different organizations experience resulting in fruitfulness in pursuit of their missions. The different theories tested provide for focus groups, formal informal gatherings that can be implemented using virtual learning as important means of enhancing productivity [21].

Companies which adopt a synergetic approach of transferring CSR to the organization adopt strategies that tend to mobilise internal support for all initiatives thereby gathering the momentum from the base of the company. However, more research is needed to fine tune all processes to generate the desired results in terms of overall performance [19]. In a study reported by [17] on 18 companies, an analysis of the company process was made revealing sense-making as a key strategy employed as a means of maintaining a comparative advantage over competitors. The link between these variables provides an opportunity for a company to align its culture towards more efficient methods and processes that have been tested and assimilated from other companies. Successful implementation of strategies requires adopting a pragmatic approach that continues to refine all steps based on the new knowledge and experiences explored during the CSR activities. In most of these cases, a positive relationship is identified between CSR and Internal process of the company. The hypothesis to be investigated is therefore based on these foregoing arguments and is therefore stated as follows:

The CSR perspective has a direct, positive significant impact on the internal process perspective.

3 METHODOLOGY

Data was collected after the survey instrument had been well structured, from respondents comprising of the Deans and Deputy Deans from 136 faculties in Yemen's PUs and HEIs. The was divided into four sections, with a total of 24 questions after the removal of those that were not up to 0.7 threshold values, using a 5-point Likert scales, adapted from Wu and Lu, (2012) for IBP, while Carroll (1991); Smirnova (2012) were adapted for the CSR construct, that ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The data was later processed for statistical analyses using SPSS and PLS for the implementation of the PLS-SEM regression algorithms. The objective of this paper was thereafter achieved through the regression analyses of the influence of CSR perspective on IBP that was initially hypothesized, and tested for the inter-relationship between the CSR and the IBP.

4 Statistical Analysis and Results

SmartPLS 2.0 software was employed to implement the PLS-SEM for the evaluation of the model fit. In PLS, the model fit is generally gauged via the measurement model and the structural model as explained by prior studies (e.g. Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2011; Valerie, 2012; Chin, 1998). It is basically evaluated through the indices of validity and reliability of the inner model, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), R square value, effect size, predictive relevance, and bootstrapping (for testing the hypotheses). For this paper, while the measurement model could be assessed through the measurement items of the main constructs, particularly in line with these fit indices: convergent validity, discriminant validity through analysis of the confirmatory factor analyses (CFA), factor loadings, and Cronbach Alpha values. Whereas, the structural model could be evaluated by the following fit indices, such as: composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE).

4.1 Measurement Model / Outer Model

The measurement model, also known as the outer model is primarily evaluated through the use of the indices including construct validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2011; Valerie, 2012; Chin, 1998), based on the criteria established by Hair et al. (2011) and Hair et al. (2014). The criteria to be met are; factor loading ≥ 0.70 ; AVE value > 0.50 ; consistency reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha values > 0.70 thresholds. However, other prior studies (e.g. Bhatnagar et al., 2014; Kline, 2013; George & Mallery, 2003), considered the Cronbach's alpha values could ranged between from 0.6 and above.

4.1.1 Convergent Validity

On the basis of the study of Hair Jr. et al. (2014), convergent validity is defined as the level to which a measure is correlated in a positive manner with alternative measures of a specific construct, and it can be assessed through the values of factor loadings and the AVE (Hair, 2010). In the present study, convergent validity values is presented in Table 1 and all the values were found to be suitable for the present investigation as the entire values of factor loadings for the items significantly loaded and are significant in a statistical manner. All of the values are over the required value of 0.70. Moreover, the AVE values are also over the 0.50 established threshold.

Table 1
Results of Factor Loading and Average Variance Extracted

Model Construct	Measurement Item / Indicators	Loading	Average Variance Extracted
Economic	Eco4	0.899	0.832481
	Eco5	0.926	
Ethical	Ethic1	0.792	0.654033
	Ethic2	0.762	
	Ethic3	0.835	
	Ethic4	0.798	
	Ethic5	0.839	
	Ethic6	0.824	
Internal Process	IPP1	0.837	0.630918
	IPP5	0.740	
	IPP6	0.803	
Low	L1	0.763	0.601816
	L2	0.738	
	L3	0.811	
	L4	0.862	
	L5	0.716	
	L6	0.756	
Philanthropic	P1	0.760	0.617595
	P2	0.808	
	P3	0.780	
	P4	0.785	
	P5	0.830	
	P6	0.761	
	P7	0.775	

4.1.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the level to which a construct is differentiated form other constructs via empirical standards (Hair Jr. et al., 2014). Therefore, the confirmation of discriminant validity indicates that a construct is distinct and that it encapsulates the phenomenon that is not reflected by the other model constructs [25]. On the basis of the prior studies [Hair Jr, et al. [25], Hair, Ringle [26]], two measures are employed to assess discriminant validity and they are cross loading and Fornell-Larcker's 1981 criterion. Added to this, the correlation matrix can also be used to establish discriminant validity in that if the diagonal elements in the matrix are the average variance square root obtained from the latent constructs.

Table 2 shows the Crossing Loadings for the Discriminant Validity while the Correlations among Constructs and Discriminant Validity for the Fornell-Larcker's 1981 criterion is shown in Table 3. All the factor loadings values were highly loaded and statistically significant, and above the threshold values of 0.70.

Table 2
Loadings and Cross Loadings (after deletion)

No.	Items	Economic	Ethical	Internal Process	Low	philanthropic
Eco4	Eco4	0.899	0.414	0.439	0.372	0.246
Eco5	Eco5	0.926	0.504	0.529	0.473	0.260
Ethic1	Ethic1	0.338	0.792	0.269	0.427	0.323
Ethic2	Ethic2	0.469	0.762	0.402	0.486	0.236
Ethic3	Ethic3	0.454	0.835	0.390	0.531	0.265
Ethic4	Ethic4	0.299	0.798	0.303	0.466	0.154
Ethic5	Ethic5	0.508	0.839	0.280	0.504	0.184
Ethic6	Ethic6	0.376	0.824	0.311	0.544	0.210
IPP1	IPP1	0.456	0.455	0.837	0.470	0.280
IPP5	IPP5	0.334	0.168	0.740	0.299	0.435
IPP6	IPP6	0.470	0.296	0.803	0.307	0.385
L1	L1	0.256	0.489	0.358	0.763	0.195
L2	L2	0.228	0.441	0.325	0.738	0.125
L3	L3	0.297	0.404	0.391	0.811	0.334
L4	L4	0.442	0.536	0.436	0.862	0.347
L5	L5	0.424	0.436	0.313	0.716	0.175
L6	L6	0.488	0.524	0.314	0.756	0.325
P1	P1	0.237	0.321	0.402	0.309	0.760
P2	P2	0.231	0.117	0.298	0.168	0.808
P3	P3	0.285	0.271	0.411	0.287	0.780
P4	P4	0.134	0.208	0.352	0.295	0.785
P5	P5	0.212	0.224	0.310	0.231	0.830
P6	P6	0.193	0.246	0.308	0.279	0.761
P7	P7	0.230	0.135	0.367	0.236	0.775

Likewise, the Fornell–Larcker’s 1981 criterion values are above the 0.70 threshold values (Table 3). These results show that there exist an appropriate Discriminant Validity values for the measurement outer model of this study.

Table 3
Correlations among Constructs and Discriminant Validity

Items	Economic	Ethical	Internal Process	Low	philanthropic
Economic	0.912				
Ethical	0.507	0.809			
Internal Process	0.534	0.404	0.794		
Low	0.467	0.611	0.462	0.776	
philanthropic	0.278	0.284	0.448	0.333	0.786

4.1.3 Internal Consistency Reliability

The models internal consistency reliability may be evaluated through the use of composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values for every construct, with the exception of the demographic variables. On one end of the spectrum, the values of both Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability should exceed 0.70 [26-29]. The value of alpha coefficient of 0.70 is considered good, but if the value is more than 0.60, it is acceptable [30, 31]. This shows that an acceptable Cronbach's alpha values in the range of ($0.6 < \text{Cronbach's alpha} < 0.7$) can be declared as supported by Bhatnagar, Kim [32], Kline [33], George and Mallery [34].

The CSR measurement items are displayed in Table 4 in terms of their Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability values; all the values are above 0.70 (Hair et al. 2014).

Table 4

Names of Constructs	Composite Reliability	Cronbachs Alpha
Economic	0.908566	0.79978
Ethical	0.918897	0.893923
Internal Process	0.836477	0.709822
Low	0.900327	0.866908
philanthropic	0.918666	0.896737

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliabilities of Constructs

4.2 Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

The next phase in the PLS-SEM analysis involves the evaluation of the structural or the inner model. The analysis entails the employment of the fit indices [26, 28, 35-38]: Coefficient of Determination (R^2 value), effect size (f^2), the model's predictive relevance and goodness-of-fit (GoF) along with the final testing of the proposed hypotheses.

4.2.1 The Goodness of Model

The model's goodness of fit measurement employed in this study includes the Coefficient of Determination (R^2 value), and goodness of fit (GoF) – both are described in the next paragraphs.

According to authors (Hair, Ringle [26]; Hair, Ringle [26]), the Coefficient of Determination value (R^2) is deemed to be an effective way to evaluate the PLS-SEM structural model, where the acceptable values fall in the range of 0.25 to 0.75 in the field of management, where the values are categorized as weak, moderate or substantial (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2014). In the present study, the R^2 value is approximately 0.350, indicating that it is of moderate range. This also indicates that 35% of the IBP variance of the PUs are explained by the CSR Perspective. In Figure 1, the item loadings, path coefficient and R^2 values obtained via Smart PLS software are presented.

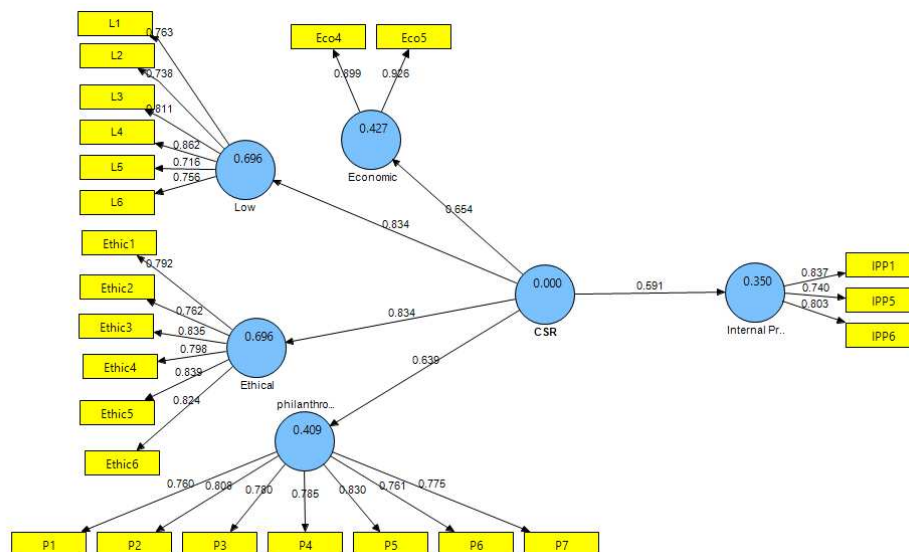


Figure 1
Item Loading, Path Coefficient and R^2 .

The Goodness of Fit (GoF) of the Model is the geometric mean of the AVE and the R^2 and can be expressed according to this equation:

$$GoF = \sqrt{(R^2 \times AVE)}$$

Therefore, the computed GoF value is given by: $GoF = \sqrt{(0.350 \times 0.631)} = 0.470$.

This shows that when compared with Wetzels et al. (2009) threshold values (small = 0.1, medium = 0.25, and large = 0.36), the value is within the large region, since the computed value is more than the threshold value for large = 0.36.

4.2.2 Hypotheses Testing

The testing of hypothesis entails assessing the prior proposed hypotheses with the help of the PLS-SEM's bootstrapping method.

The achieved results are often expressed in values of path coefficients, bootstrapping and t-values. In this case, the t-value exceeded 2.58 (a value of 8.944) at a significant level of 1%. Hence, the initial proposed hypothesis is confirmed, indicating the positive affect of CSR on Internal Business Perspective.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Perspective has a direct, positive significant impact on the PUs Internal Process Perspective.

The hypothesis earlier formulated for this paper is to investigate the influence of CSR on Internal Process Perspective. The indicators for Internal Process Perspective revealed that if there is increase in efficiency and participation from the senior management teams of the PUs, will affect the strategic thinking of the customers towards better participations. This study therefore revealed that once there are improvements in the managements attitudes towards the feedback received from any of different levels of their customers (students, parents and their operating communities at large) they will be able to re-engineer the PUs operational structures, as well as the periodic reviews of these processes. These findings are part of the output received from the incorporation of Internal Process Perspective strategies. The acceptance of the PUs management by the customers in these ways also helped in shaping the other indicators, such as: students' complaints, alumni issues and pursuit of higher degrees not to be of paramount issues from the customers' perceptions of the Yemen's PUs, though they are parts of the agenda by the managements of the Yemen's PUs.

Based on these management strategies, there lie the bonds of connections between the customers and the managements of the PUs that was translated into the positive and direct effect between and within the elements of these two constructs as shown in the hypothesized relationship, resulting in an overwhelming increase in the efficiency of the PUs based of the customers' perceptions.

The estimates from the evaluation of the measurement model revealed that managements' efficiency relating to the work environment have been on the increase, representing the highest indicator for the Internal Process Perspective construct. This is followed by the feedback indicators being accorded as parts of the major prioritised feedback. There are also improvements in the efficiency of the PUs management due to their continuous reviews of the processes involved in the day-to-day operations of the PUs. In addition, customers' perceptions towards the PUs revealed the strong connection between CSR and Internal Process Perspective.

It is highly imperative for PUs in Yemen to achieve a better Internal Process Perspective for their workforces that normally interact with the customers, particularly while discharging their CSR capabilities. An improved internal operational structure of the PUs will therefore affect the output of the employees, which will later be translated to the customers. As such, the customers' satisfaction can only be achieved when the staffs feel the sense of belonging through the Internal Process Perspective.

Attention to CSR by the PUs gives a first-hand and free access to the customers, information flow, since part of the feelings of the customers is that the PUs management should cater for them, they will also feel free to provide necessary feedback that will improve the PUs services. The strategies adopted by the management teams will therefore help in achieving not only the mission and vision of the PUs and HEIs but also improved the academic performance of the customers and better Financial Performance of the PUs and HEIs in Yemen.

The practical contribution of this study offers empirical evidence to assists the management team in the organization strategic and long-term plans, for the entire workforce and the various departments that will later have impacts on the Financial Performance of the PUs and HEIs. Furthermore, these departments needs to be supported in

order to improve their perception and relationships with the customers, so that the customers can have better perception about the PUs and HEIs services with better patronage and better Financial Performance.

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