Assessing Corporate Social Responsibility in Cultural Organizations in Iran

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Abstract

This article aims to measure the level of corporate social responsibility in cultural organizations. Therefore, the main question of the research is how a quantitative model can be designed to measure the level of social responsibility in culture and respectively, the sub-questions l organizations include: how to identify dimensions and components of social responsibility, how to identify the importance of each aspect and components of corporate social responsibility and how to design a quantitative model to measure social responsibility in cultural organizations. In the next step, in order to answer the research questions, hypotheses were set. Then, indicators were determined and questionnaires were prepared in regard with the research objectives and questions. After recollecting the questionnaires, two methods of descriptive and inferential were applied and the data from the questionnaires were analyzed to approve or reject the hypotheses.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, organizations, cultural organizations, measurement model

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR, also called corporate conscience, corporate citizenship, social performance, or sustainable responsible business) (Wood, 1991) is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model. CSR policy functions as a built-in, self-regulating mechanism whereby business monitors and ensures its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards, and international norms. The goal of CSR is to embrace responsibility for the company's actions and encourage a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public sphere. Furthermore, CSR-focused businesses would proactively promote the public interest (PI) by encouraging community growth and development, and voluntarily eliminating practices that harm the public sphere, regardless of legality. CSR is the deliberate inclusion of PI into corporate decision-making, that is the core business of the company or firm, and the honouring of a triple bottom line: people, planet, profit (Wikipedia).

Social accounting emphasizes the notion of corporate accountability. D. Crowther defines social accounting in this sense as "an approach to reporting a firm's activities which stresses the need for the identification of socially relevant behavior, the determination of those to whom the company is accountable for its social performance and the development of appropriate measures and reporting techniques." (Crowther, 2000). The scale and nature of the benefits of CSR for an organization can vary depending on the nature of the enterprise, and are difficult to quantify, though there is a large body of literature exhorting business to adopt measures beyond financial ones (e.g., Deming's Fourteen Points, balanced scorecards). Orlitzky, Schmidt, and Rynes (Orlitzky, Frank, Schmidt, Rynes, 2003) found a correlation between social/environmental performance and financial performance. However, businesses may not be looking at short-run financial returns when developing their CSR strategy.

The definition of CSR used within an organization can vary from the strict "stakeholder impacts" definition used by many CSR advocates and will often include charitable efforts and volunteering. CSR may be based within the human resources, business development or public relations departments of an organization (Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethical Careers, 2008), or may be given a separate unit reporting to the CEO or in some cases directly to the board. Some companies may implement CSR-type values without a clearly defined team or program. In terms of human resources, a CSR program can be an aid to recruitment and retention (Bhattacharya, Sen and Korschun 2008), particularly within the competitive graduate student market.

Potential recruits often ask about a firm's CSR policy during an interview, and having a comprehensive policy can give an advantage. CSR can also help improve the perception of a company among its staff, particularly when staff can become involved through payroll giving, fundraising activities or community volunteering. CSR has been found to encourage customer orientation among frontline employees (Korschun, Bhattacharya and Swain, 2011). See also Corporate Social Entrepreneurship, whereby CSR can also be driven by employees' personal values, in addition to the more obvious economic and governmental drivers. On the other hand, the rise in popularity of ethical consumerism over the last two decades can be linked to the rise of CSR. As global population increases, so does the pressure on limited natural resources required to meet rising consumer demand (Grace and Cohen 2005, 147). Industrialization, in many developing countries, is booming as a result of both technology and globalization. Consumers are becoming more aware of the environmental and social implications of their day-to-day consumer decisions and are therefore beginning to make purchasing decisions related to their environmental and ethical concerns (Eisingerich, Rubera, Seifert, Bhardwaj, 2011). However, this practice is far from consistent or universal.

Another driver of CSR is the role of independent mediators, particularly the government, in ensuring that corporations are prevented from harming the broader social good, including people and the environment. CSR critics such as Robert Reich argue that governments should set the agenda for social responsibility by the way of laws and regulation that will allow a business to conduct themselves responsibly.

The issues surrounding government regulation pose several problems. Regulation in itself is unable to cover every aspect in detail of a corporation's operations. This leads to burdensome legal processes bogged down in interpretations of the law and debatable grey areas. For example, General Electric failed to clean up the Hudson River after contaminating it with organic pollutants. The company continues to argue via the legal process on assignment of liability, while the cleanup remains stagnant (Sullivan & Schiafo 2005).

The second issue is the financial burden that regulation can place on a nation's economy. This view shared by Bulkeley, who cites the Australian federal government's actions to avoid compliance with the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, on the concerns of economic loss and national interest. The Australian government took the position that signing the Kyoto Pact would have caused more significant economic losses for Australia than for any other OECD nation (Bulkeley 2001, pg 436). On the change of government following the election in November 2007, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd signed the ratification immediately after assuming office on 3 December 2007, just before the meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Critics of CSR also point out that organizations pay taxes to government to ensure that society and the environment are not adversely affected by business activities (Wikipedia).

This research is concerned with the extent to which the cultural organizations is considering dimensions of CSR. In this regard, it is trying to design and provide a quantitative model for measurement of social responsibility in cultural organizations.

Research Objectives

Ideal Goals
Enhancing the efficiency and social responsibility in cultural organizations
Enhancing social responsibility among citizens
Helping the cultural and social development by increasing social responsibility in cultural organizations

Main Goal
Designing a quantitative model to evaluate and measure social responsibility in cultural organizations

Sub-Goals
1. Identifying dimensions and components of social responsibility in cultural organizations
2. Identifying the importance of each dimension and components of corporate social responsibility in IRIB
3. Designing a quantitative model to measure social responsibility in cultural organizations

Applicatory Goals
Implementing the model and working in direction with it in cultural organizations in order to measure the corporate social responsibility

Research Questions

Main Question
How can a quantitative model be designed and offered to measure the level of social responsibility in cultural organizations?

Sub-Questions
1. Which are the dimensions and components of social responsibility in cultural organizations?
2. How important is each dimension and component of corporate social responsibility in cultural organizations from the viewpoint of the experts?
3. Which is the quantitative model to measure social responsibility in cultural organizations?
4. How can the quantitative model for measuring the social capital be implemented in cultural organizations?

Research Hypotheses
Considering that in this research, the researcher tries to design a model to evaluate and measure the level of social responsibility in IRIB, the model itself serves as the research hypothesis which alternatively could be evaluated and measured or in other words, tested.

Research Methodology
Regarding that the purpose of applicatory researches is developing applicatory knowledge in a specific field, i.e. applicatory researches lead in functional application of the knowledge (Bazargan, 2004), this research is a non-experimental and applicatory one and its main purpose is to offer a suitable model for evaluating and measuring social responsibility in cultural organizations. In this research the survey method has been applied.

Based on the initial exploratory studies on social responsibility in the studied population in four dimensions of ethics, managerial models, environmental issues and beneficiaries for conversion, social responsibility or sub-systems have been used. Certainly, this initial classification has been based on the exploratory studies and in the future, it would be revised based on the experts' opinions and refined during the research process.

Research Domain
In modern research methodology, each research shall be limited in three dimensions of time, location and subject; so that the study could be focused on the subject and the researcher could reach the intended responses by posing some questions on the issue. Considering the above-mentioned issue, the time, location and subject domain in this research are as follows:

Location: The location domain of this research includes all the managers of the national media and faculty members of the universities in the field of the national media and experts in cultural organizations. The purpose of designing the model is to measure the level of social responsibility in cultural organizations.

Time: This research intends to design a model to measure the level of social responsibility in cultural organizations in the future.

Subject: The subject of this research is to design a model to measure the level of social responsibility in cultural organizations.

Research Conceptual Model
All research studies are based on a conceptual framework which determines the variables and the relationship between them (Edwards et al., 2000). This conceptual framework is a model based on which the researcher theorize on the relationships between factors which are recognized important in emergence of the problem (Khaki, 1999). Since every field and survey research needs a mental map and a conceptual model in framework of which the suitable analytical tools, variables and the relationship between them are illustrated (Mirzaei and Ahranjani, 1996). In this research the conceptual model will be used as follows:

The purpose from conducting this research is to design a quantitative model to measure social responsibility in cultural organizations. To achieve this goal, three dimensions of social, economic and biological in social responsibility and their components will be identified and offered. In weighting or determining the importance of each dimension and component of social responsibility, once each dimension will be scored based on its importance and another time, by observing all components, the intended components will be scored.

Research Statistical Population and Sample

In this research, the statistical population is determined according to the main question. As the statistical population is the field to generalize the research results and findings, it encompasses all the studied people from among which the researcher selects his sample units. Thus, the statistical population in this research, according to the main research question, includes all the managers of the national media and faculty members of the universities in the field of the national media and experts in social affairs and the statistical sample includes the managers of the national media and faculty members of the universities in the field of the national media and experts in cultural organizations.

Research Findings

Summing up the status quo:

- Most people agree that social responsibility is a modern concept and requires planning based on new social needs and therefore demands new methods and perspectives. Of course, indicators in our religious and ethical educations in the field of charity and charitable affairs are not all the social responsibility but some part of it or its complementary.
- The number of people having or giving no idea about the questions in most items was more than one third of the total people answering the questionnaires. They are even more than expected number in most cases. This number shows the people's doubt about the function of cultural organizations and its internal issues. The staff of cultural organizations gives more certain opinions on the issue.
- Some people believe that cultural organizations in its routine function meets the requirement of social responsibility, bust some believe that they do not meet it.
- The fact that social responsibility is defined clearly in the principals of cultural organizations is doubted by many peoples.
- No certain conclusion can be made on that *training* should be included as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations as the opinions of people opposing and agreeing on the issue is almost similar.
- There is not a clear answer from the studied people for that *human right* is considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations.
- There is not a clear answer from the studied people for that *local development* is considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations.
- There is not a clear answer from the studied people for that *workers right* is considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations.
- Most studied people believed that *workers right* is not considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations.
- Most studied people believed that *profession orientation* in the society is considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations.
- There is not a clear answer from the studied people for that *clarity* is considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations.
- The result of the study on that administration health and preventing bribery is met as an indicator of social responsibility in cultural organizations as some intra organizational factor is totally mute.
- There is not a clear answer from the studied people for that *administration health* is considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations.
- Most studied people believed that *economic development* is considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations.
- Most studied people believed that *hygiene* in the society is considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations.
- Most studied people believed that *staff safety* is considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations, however, about half the studied people have not given any idea on the issue and this could at least mean that they are unaware or misunderstood the subject.
- Some studied people believed that *respecting audience's perception* is considered as an indicator of social responsibility in cultural organizations. However, since some people have not given any idea, no clear answer can be drawn.

- Most studied people believed that *general ethic* is considered as an indicator of social responsibility in cultural organizations.
- Most studied people believed that *nature protection* is considered as an indicator of social responsibility (and not as a plan or profession need) in cultural organizations.
- The review result of the item that organizational culture of cultural organizations helps the real consideration of social responsibility is mute.
- From the opinions given, it could be inferred that:

  1. Social responsibility is a new concept and needs new considerations, conditions and requirements.
  2. Hygiene, ecosystem and cultural development are the most important and agreed indicators which cultural organizations has considered in the issue of social responsibility.

In order to achieve a quantitative model for social responsibility in cultural organizations, people were asked to determine a score for each dimension and indicator based on the definition for each item. The result of scoring project in each dimension of social, economic and cultural is offered in the figures of 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Conclusion

This research was conducted to study the various dimensions and approaches to consider corporate social responsibility and was seeking to answer this question that how a quantitative model can be designed to measure the level of social responsibility in the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.

Basically, the lack of a suitable model for social responsibility in the organization leads to fail in using all facilities and capabilities within the organization to develop its relations, goals and interests because social responsibility is the commitment of decision makers to perform actions which help to improve the welfare of the community as well as their own interests. Therefore, identifying dimensions and components of CSR in organizations does not only remove such a lack, but also is the first step to design a quantitative model to measure the CSR.

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