Research Article

THE EFFECTS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) ON CORPORATE REPUTATION AND BRAND VALUE: A CASE STUDY OF DANA INSURANCE COMPANY CUSTOMERS IN ARAK

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ABSTRACT

With regard to the inevitable globalization process of production and industry, manufacturers are forced to modify conventional methods, change their perspective and adopt a new approach in their production policies. Other than its financial objectives, this approach maintains the long-term interests of the society and preserves natural resources with proper methods. The main focuses of these policies are customer and maintaining the interests of the society and the environment. Social responsibility is the result of this perspective which is considered by modern organizations as a sensitive issue. To show clarity and accountability to their stakeholders for their actions, excelled and accountable organizations should express their commitment to social responsibility via their values and ensure that they are followed throughout the organization. This research seeks to determine the effects of CSR on corporate reputation and brand value. Five hypotheses are formulated for this purpose. In this regard, after having introduced the general framework, research data is gathered using field and desk methods. This is a descriptive field study. A 26-item question questionnaire was designed and distributed among the population for field data collection. The population included all the customers of Dana Insurance in Arak. Afterwards, the data was analyzed using student's t-test in LISREL and two hypotheses were rejected. Some recommendations are also presented after result analysis.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Reputation, Customer Satisfaction, Brand Value, Dana Insurance

INTRODUCTION

Other than their technical, administrative and human skills, modern managers should also benefit from the skills of managing social issues and accountability to social and environmental needs and consider social issues as their organizational objective. This calls for the development of necessary structures in the organization and establishment of a friendly and holistic culture. Reinforcement of belief in social responsibility is the cornerstone for public affairs management. If managers consider social responsibility in their organization necessary and believe in it, they would definitely provide necessary mechanisms for its realization.

CSR is going beyond the minimum legal requirements in organization's realm of activity. As a matter of fact, CSR is a transcendental approach to business which considers the social effect of an organization on both internal and external populations and its primary goal is to gather all sectors including public and private sectors and volunteers for cooperation so that on one hand, economic benefits and the environment are in line and on the other hand, business succeed, grow and become sustainable. However, it should be noted that the dependency of businesses to social responsibility is proportional to the type of work and size of the economic unit.

Although unethical behavior will not probably cause significant losses, those who ignore ethical principles get into many troubles in the long run. That is why environmental problems have attracted the attention of all citizens, corporations and institutions throughout the world during the past 30 years in a way that international research has indicated that customers and corporations are more concerned about environmental changes and have changed their behavior (Papadopoulos *et al.*, 2010).

In line with this change in perspective, one of the reactions of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Company towards the homeless was to open a store in New York's Harlem neighborhood and use the homeless for selling

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ice cream so that they are employed. Or in another action in line with CSR, Burger King donates computers to schools with respect to the number of cash bill it receives (issued by the vending machine). This company is also significantly active in providing expelled students with education and social services (Stoner *et al.*, 2008).

These actions indicate that CSR is one of the primary concerns of corporations. As stated before, large global corporations invest in social responsibility activities with full consent. The main reason for this action is that corporations' community orientation and their sensitivity to the society can be a competitive advantage for them. By effectively using the CRS, a CEO can distinguish his corporation from rivals and improve its image in the society and give it a competitive advantage (TahHsu, 2011).

Being distinguished from rivals is much harder for service businesses whose products are intangible compared to producers. As a result, gaining competitive advantage in other ways (such as considering CSR) can considerably help corporations succeed. One of the industries of which the society has high expectations and is under careful examination is the insurance industry. Therefore, this research investigates the effect of CSR advertising on corporate reputation and brand value. This research investigates customer satisfaction as a dependant variable. Therefore, the effects of CSR advertising on corporate reputation. In order to test its hypotheses, this research will evaluate Dana Insurance Company customers in Arak.

Research Literature

The concept of social responsibility encompasses several topics regarding the behavior of corporations in the context of their society. Social responsibility deals with issues beyond financial issues and profit and loss bills (Parada, 2009). In spite of extensive studies on CSR, a fixed universal definition accepted by all has not been provided for this concept (Green and Ploza, 2011). Therefore, several definitions can be found for this concept which may confuse the reader.

When corporations do not merely consider economic issues, they face a set of social rights and responsibilities preventing them from considering only profit. Corporations face environmental, ethical, legal, economic and social challenges from this perspective. It determines their behavior.

The conventional definition of corporation is an economic unit manufacturing and supplying goods for satisfying the needs and demands of consumers. In the past, companies aimed at manufacturing products with the maximum value and benefit for customers. However, after the concept of the social responsibility emerged, the conventional definition of corporation slightly changed and an economic – social dimension was added to it. Robbins and Coutler (2005) believe that the social responsibility of management is sacrificed for economic goals and profit and defends social welfare. They believe that the definition of corporation is not merely maximizing profit and meeting customer needs. Other than the aforementioned objectives, corporations should achieve the satisfaction of all the individuals associated with them in some way (such as shareholders and stakeholder groups).

Besteraten and Pujol (2005) believe that a socially responsible corporation is a competitive economic organization trying to fulfill its responsibilities in order to protect the environment and guarantee the conservation of environmental resources (Parada, 2009). However, the definition by the EU is relatively complete. Therefore, its definition of CSR suffices. According to the EU:

"CSR is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with the environment and society".

Carol (1979) also believes that socially responsible corporations have several types of responsibility and objective:

1. Economic responsibility for increasing profit and corporation's financial value

2.Legal responsibility for the corporation's conformity with local, provincial, national and international regulations

3. Ethical responsibility for fulfilling those expectations by the society which are not included in written and approved regulations such as avoiding social harm, respecting citizen rights and doing the right, just and fair things

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4. Discretionary responsibility for behaviors and activities beyond the corporation's responsibility. In fact, this type of responsibility is doing the things which are accepted by the society but are not among the corporation's responsibility thus done voluntarily (such as humanitarian activities such as donation to different cultural and social institutions) (Galbreat, 2009).

CSR Principles

When approaching and fulfilling social responsibility, the main objective of organizations is increased participation in sustainable development including social welfare. Although no comprehensive list of CSR principles is available, corporations should comply with at least 7 principles in accordance with this objective:

1.*Accountability*

Corporations should be Accountable for Their Consequence on the Society.

This principle suggests that corporations should properly investigate issues and take responsibility for responding after investigations and find themselves responsible towards those being affected by their decisions and activities and also towards the whole society for the overall outcome of their decisions and activities on the society.

Accountability has a positive outcome on the corporation and society. The degree of accountability should always be consistent with the extent of authority. Apparently, corporations with the maximum authority pay more attention to the quality of their decisions and mistakes. Accountability also includes taking the responsibility for mistakes, taking proper measures for correcting them and taking actions for preventing them from occurring again.

A corporation should be responsible for the following issues:

The outcome of its decisions and activities including important outcomes even the ones which are accidental and unpredicted and important outcomes of decisions and actions on the society and environment (CSR Promotion Center website, Omidvar, 2011).

2.*Transparency*

Corporations should be transparent in their decisions and activities affecting the society and environment. They should state their decisions and activities including their obvious and potential outcome on the society and environment clearly, accurately, completely, sufficiently and reasonably. This information should be easy to use and directly available to those affected by their activities. They should be timely, real and ready to be presented clearly and impartially so that stakeholders are able to carefully evaluate the outcomes of the decisions and activities of the corporation on their interest. Transparency does not require the disclosure of personal information and presenting legally protected information. Otherwise, disclosure will be contradictory to legal, commercial, security or privacy regulations. Corporations should be transparent in the following cases:

• The goal, nature and location of its activities

• The method of decision making and their implementation and revision such as defining roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and authorities in line with various applications in the corporation

- Standards and criteria with which the corporation evaluates its social responsibility performance
- Obvious and probable outcomes of its decisions and activities on the society and environment

• Identification of stakeholders and criteria and methods used for identifying, selecting and employing them

3. Ethical Behavior

Corporations Should Always Behave Ethically.

The behavior of Corporations should be based on the ethical principles of sincerity, impartiality and trustworthiness which emphasize the importance of individuals, animals and environment and commitment to consider others' interests.

Corporations should promote their ethical behavior using the following items:

1) Development of guiding principles which contribute to the promotion of ethical behavior inside and outside the corporation.

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2) Identification, acceptance and application of standards of ethical behavior proportional to objectives and activities and consistent with the aforementioned principles in this international standard

3) Promotion of ethical behavior standards

4) Determining and notifying ethical behavior standards expected from employees especially those with

important status for influencing corporation's values, culture, trustworthiness, strategy and performance.

5) Avoiding interest conflict throughout the corporation and solving them. Otherwise, it will result in unethical behavior.

6) Providing mechanisms for monitoring, controlling and implementing social behavior

7) Providing mechanisms for facilitating social behavior violation reports without the fear of retaliation and recognition and management of positions where there are no local regulations or they are against social behavior.

4. Respect for Stakeholder Interests

Corporations should Respect its Stakeholder Interests, Consider them and be Accountable to Them.

Although the objectives of corporations are limited to owners, members or creators, other individuals or groups also have certain rights, claims or interests which should be calculated. Generally, corporation stakeholders include these individuals and groups too.

Corporations should:

1) Identify their stakeholders.

2) Be aware of their benefits and needs, respect them and respond to their concerns.

3) Determine their legitimate interests and legal rights.

4) Consider their relative capacity for the communication and commitment of the corporation.

5) Consider the relationship between their interests and the society's broader interests and sustainable development and also the nature of the relationship between them and the corporation.

6) Consider their viewpoints which may be influenced by corporation's decisions even if they do not have a formal role in the corporation or do not have any knowledge about their interests in corporations' decisions and activities.

5. Respect for the Rule of Law

Corporations should accept that it is Necessary to Respect the Rule of Law.

The rule of law returns to its superiority especially in the idea that no individual or organization is above laws and the government should obey them. The rule of law is against authoritarian action. Generally, it has been indicated in the rule of law that rules are clearly stated and fairly implemented writings created in accordance with executive methods. In the concept of social responsibility, respecting the rule of law is corporation's agreement with all applied rules. This implies that awareness of rules, notification inside the responsible organization, observation of rules and understanding that they are observed should be done step by step.

Corporations should:

1) Agree with legal requirements throughout their operating area.

2) Ensure that their interactions and activities comply with considered appropriate legal framework.

3) Agree with their own statute, policy, rules and procedures and administrative methods and apply them fairly and impartially.

4) Stay aware of all laws.

5) Review their compliance periodically.

6) Respect for International Norms of Behavior

Corporations should respect international norms of behavior the way they are loyal to the principles of rule of law.

1) Corporations should try to respect international norms of behavior in countries in which national law or its implementation does not provide the minimum environmental protection.

2) Corporations should make every effort to respect these norms to the maximum possible extent where national law or its implementation prohibits corporations from respecting international norms of behavior.

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3) In situations inconsistent with international norms of behavior and where violating those results in significant outcomes, corporations should possibly review the nature of the activities and relationships in their territory.

4) Corporations should consider legitimate situations and the methods for tracking their influence and authorities for modifying any contradiction with national law and implementing them.

5) Corporations should avoid participating in the activities of other corporations which have been unsuccessful in complying with international norms of behavior.

7) Respect for Human Rights

Corporations should respect human rights and determine its important and global issue

Corporations should:

1) Respect the rights set out in the International Bill of Human Rights and develop them.

2) Accept them as global rights applied in all countries, cultures and situations inseparably.

3) In situations where human rights are not supported, take steps for respecting them and not abuse these situations.

4) In situations where national law or its implementation does not support human rights properly, be loyal to the principles of respecting international norms of behavior.

Ethical Principles and Social Responsibility in Modern Corporations

Ethical principles and social responsibility are concepts discussing the quality of our interactions with the passage of time. Scandals exposed in the U.S. and Japan stock markets or bribes exchanged between corporations and the Italian government, the emergence of new technologies and their outcome and finally conflict or clash between cultures are only some of the issues raised about social principles and observation of ethical principles. Although unethical behavior may not cause a substantial loss, those who ignore ethical principles are ultimately faced with many problems. There are several cases nowadays by which individuals can determine social responsibilities and manage their corporation on this basis. Some of them are as follows:

Elliot Hoffman, the CEO of Just Desserts which is a pastry shop located in San Francisco has specified principles for employing individuals who have previously been convicted. "I really believe that business has to play a larger role in changing our society. Business people know how to get things done. We tend to think outside the box. We need to bring that creativity to our community".

✤ One of the reactions of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Company towards the homeless was to open a store in New York's Harlem neighborhood and use the homeless for selling ice cream so that they are employed.

♦ Burger King donates computers to schools with respect to the number of cash bill it receives. This company is also significantly active in providing expelled students with education and social services.

◆ In 1991, Reebok Company produced and marketed a type of basketball shoes and spent a part of the profit form sales for repairing basketball courts.

Ethical principles are defined as follows: investigation of the way in which individual's decisions affect others and also people's rights and responsibilities, ethical principles observed by individuals during decision making and the nature of these interactions between individuals (Stoner *et al.*, 2008).

Reasons for Corporations' Orientation towards Social Responsibility

The topic of social responsibility has grown significantly during the past 25 years and most corporations want to achieve it by helping charity institutions (Hassan *et al.*, 2009). Today, social responsibility is one of the important components of the corporation's strategies. Corporations have never been so much interested in environmental and social issues (Mattilda, 2009). Nowadays we witness various large global enterprises take significant measures in line with their social responsibility.

As an example, Pepsi has started significant efforts for raising awareness about environmental protection using its two websites (www.PepsiEcoChallenge.com and www.Pepsirecycling.com). "We're putting recycling front and center and giving our customers an incentive to do their part for the environment," said Victor Melendez, vp-marketing, sustainability for PCNA, Purchase, N.Y., in a statement. "Pepsi has always stood for fun and now we're channeling that Pepsi spirit into raising environmental awareness."

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PepsiEcoChallenge.com reads more like an interactive brochure that explains how the company is working to save energy and water as well as working to create sustainable packaging. It points out Pepsi is working to reduce its U.S. plants' water consumption by 20%, electricity usage by 25% and fuel consumption by 25% by 2015 (Brand Magazine website, www.brandmagazine.ir).

According to Melendez, there are three main reasons for corporations' interest in social responsibility:

For some individuals and corporations ethics and values are only a new fashion. They follow ethical and social issues merely because others do it. In fact they try to keep up with Joneses. Corporations turn to social responsibility not because of their responsibility towards the society, but for not falling behind other companies.

The second reason can be a response to the pressure on corporations. Fear of the society's anger over the corporation's activities or complain against it in court due to activities inconsistent with social and environmental interests can be named as examples.

The third reason is achieving more profit. Many customers may buy from a corporation because they consider it responsible. Therefore, its profit increases (Mattilda, 2009).

Analytical Model

Research's conceptual model is indicated in figure 1.

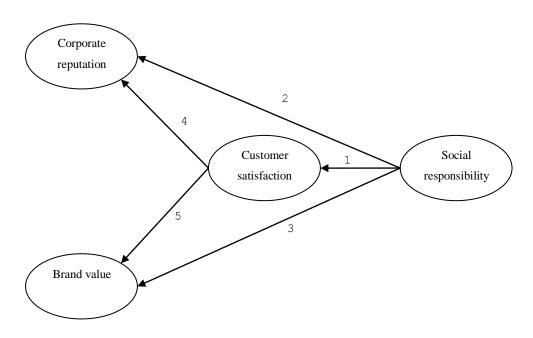


Figure 1: research's conceptual model, (TahHsu, 2011)

Research Hypotheses

The First Hypothesis CSR has a positive direct effect on customer satisfaction. The Second Hypothesis CSR has a positive direct effect on corporate reputation. The Third Hypothesis CSR has a positive direct effect on brand value. The Fourth Hypothesis Customer satisfaction has a positive direct effect on corporate reputation. The Fifth Hypothesis Customer satisfaction has a positive direct effect on brand value.

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Research Area

This research was conducted on the customers of Arak's Dana Insurance starting from the spring and ending in the summer of 2012.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

This is an applied casual research with respect to its goal and method.

Statistical Population and Sample Size

The statistical population of this research is the customers of Arak's Dana Insurance. Generally, samples with a size greater than 200 suffice in models investigated using the structural equation modeling technique (Barrett, 2007; Joreskog, 2004). On this basis, 300 questionnaires were distributed in the supervision branch of Arak's Dana Insurance using simple random sampling and 279 questionnaires were collected.

Method and Data Collection Tool

Data was collected using filed method. They were collected by visiting the supervision branch of Arak's Dana Insurance. The most common data collection tool in field research, i.e. questionnaire was used in the present research. The questionnaire includes 26 questions all of which are designed based on Likert 5-item scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for the reliability of the questionnaire. For this purpose, 20 questionnaires were primarily distributed and after being collected, their alpha was calculated at 0.967 using SPSS which is an indication of its reliability. Content validity is used for determining the validity of the research. Ten experts were provided with the designed questionnaire to determine the validity of research's data collection tool. According to expert's opinion, the aforementioned questionnaire was capable enough for recognizing and obtaining the required information and consequently the validity of research tool was confirmed.

Variables	The number of questions (criteria)	Questions	
CSR	8	1-8	
Customer satisfaction	9	9-17	
Corporate reputation	5	18-22	
Brand value	4	23-26	

Table 1: Variables, criteria and the value of questionnaire questions' criterion

The Reliability of the Measurement Tool

If the research's measurement tool is given to a group of individuals several times over a short period of time and the results are close, it is reliable (Khaki, 2008).

An indicator called "reliability coefficient" is used for measuring reliability which usually varies between 0 and 1. Zero reliability coefficient indicates unreliability and 1 indicates complete reliability. Reliability is the ability of a measurement tool to maintain its stability over time. The most important method for ordinal scales is the Cronbach method or "attitude scale". Therefore, it is used in this research for the evaluation of questionnaire reliability. For this purpose, 20 questionnaires were primarily distributed and after being collected, their alpha was calculated at 0.967 using SPSS which is an indication of its reliability.

Table 2. Values of Crondach's appla coefficient						
Variables	The number of questions (criteria)	Cronbach's alpha coefficient				
The whole questionnaire	26	0.967				
CSR	8	0.897				
Customer satisfaction	9	0.924				
Corporate reputation	5	0.90				
Brand value	4	0.883				

Table 2: Values of Cronbach's alpha coefficient

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The value of Cronbach's alpha was calculated for all variables separately and presented in table 3-3. With respect to the fact that the minimum acceptable reliability coefficient is 0.70 and also the Cronbach alpha coefficient is greater than this value, research tool is sufficiently reliable.

Comparative Fit Index (CFI)

With respect to its meaning, this index is similar to normalized fit index corrected for sample size. It is also known as Bentler index. CFI varies between 0 and 1. A CFI close to 1 indicates a good fit (Hooman, 2005) (Schumacher and Lomax, 2009).

The following table shows the fit indices of research model which is an indicative of relatively good model fit.

Table 3: Fit indices

Chi-square	808.87	
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.14	
Normalized fit index (NFI)	0.70	
Non-normalized fit Index (NNFI)	0.71	
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.73	
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.67	
Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)	0.60	
p < 0.05 d.f = 294		

Data Analysis Method and Results

The data of the present research were analyzed with inferential statistics and structural equation modeling (confirmatory path analysis). Moreoever, confirmatory factor analysis in LISREL were used. Model hypotheses are tested after confirmatory factor analysis and ensuring the significance of the coefficients between latent variables (factor loadings) and measured variables (questionnaire items) and also model fitting. The significance of the path coefficients between latent variables is investigated with Student's t-test. Since in this research 0.95 significance level or 0.05 error level is considered, positive path coefficients with t-statistic greater than the absolute value of 1.96 are considered significant and the hypothesis related to them is confirmed.

Investigation of the First Hypothesis: CSR has a positive direct effect on customer satisfaction.

With respect to the positive path coefficient obtained between CSR and customer satisfaction variables (0.58) and t-statistic which was calculated at 13.63 and its comparison with the absolute value of 1.96 at the 0.95 confidence level, the null hypothesis that CSR has no significant effect on customer satisfaction is rejected and research hypothesis is confirmed (t = 13.63 > 1.96). Therefore, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

Investigation of the Second Hypothesis: CSR has a positive direct effect on corporate reputation.

With respect to the positive path coefficient obtained between CSR and corporate reputation variables (0.02) and t-statistic which was calculated at 0.18 and its comparison with the absolute value of 1.96 at the 0.95 confidence level, the null hypothesis that CSR has no significant effect on corporate reputation is confirmed and research hypothesis is rejected (t = 0.18 < 1.96). Therefore, the second hypothesis is rejected.

Investigation of the Third Hypothesis: CSR has a positive direct effect on brand value.

With respect to the positive path coefficient obtained between CSR and brand value variables (0.09) and t-statistic which was calculated at 1.52 and its comparison with the absolute value of 1.96 at the 0.95 confidence level, the null hypothesis that CSR has no significant effect on brand value is confirmed and research hypothesis is rejected (t = 1.52 < 1.96). Therefore, the third hypothesis is confirmed.

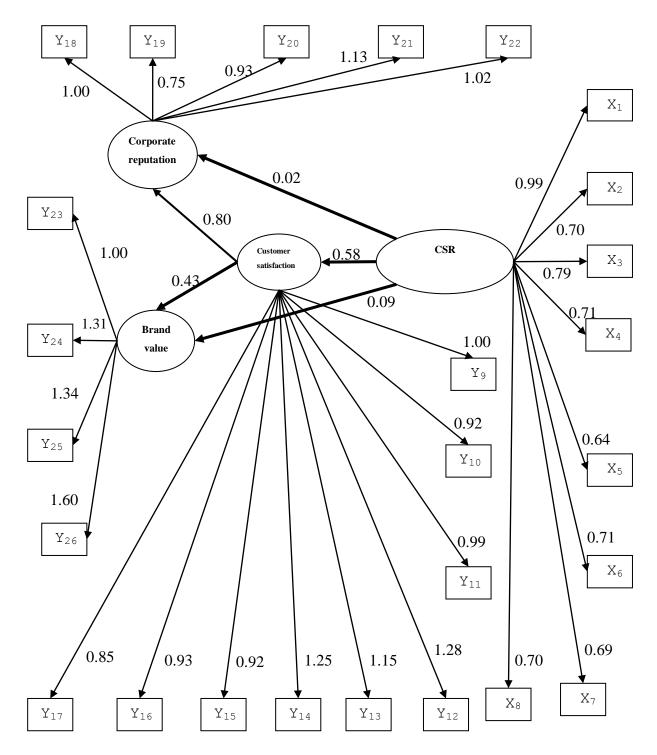
Investigation of the Fourth Hypothesis: Customer satisfaction has a positive direct effect on corporate reputation.

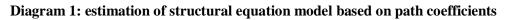
With respect to the positive path coefficient obtained between customer satisfaction and corporate reputation variables (0.80) and t-statistic which was calculated at 5.21 and its comparison with the

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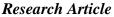
absolute value of 1.96 at the 0.95 confidence level, the null hypothesis that customer satisfaction has no significant effect on corporate reputation is rejected and research hypothesis is confirmed (t = 5.21 > 1.96). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is confirmed.

Investigation of the Fifth Hypothesis: Customer satisfaction has a positive direct effect on brand value.





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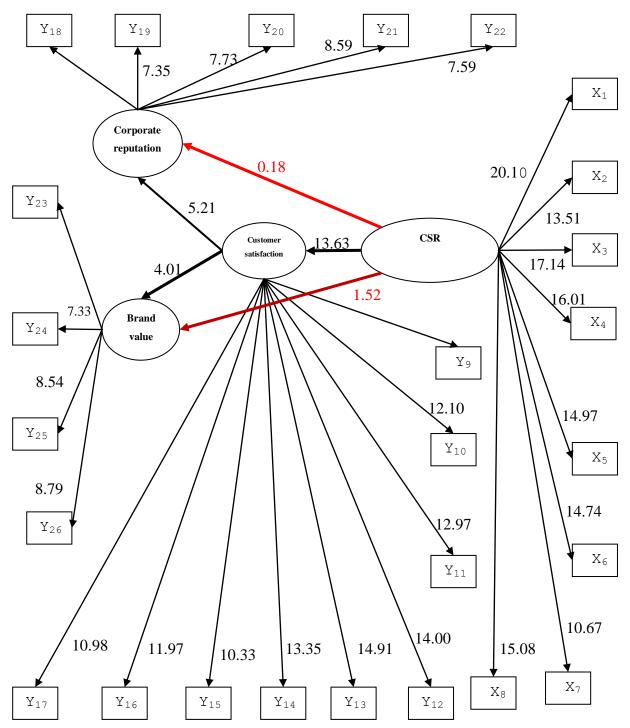


Diagram 2: estimation of structural equation model based on t-statistics

With respect to the positive path coefficient obtained between customer satisfaction and brand value variables (0.43) and t-statistic which was calculated at 4.01 and its comparison with the absolute value of 1.96 at the 0.95 confidence level, the null hypothesis that customer satisfaction has no significant effect on brand value is rejected and research hypothesis is confirmed (t = 4.01 > 1.96). Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is confirmed.

Rejection or confirmation results of hypotheses are indicated in table 1.

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Hypothesis	Investigated variable	Estimated path coefficient	t- statistics	Results
The fin hypothesis	st CSR – customer satisfaction	0.58	13.63	Confirmed
The second hypothesis	nd CSR – corporate reputation	0.02	0.18	Rejected
The thi hypothesis	rd CSR – brand value	0.09	1.52	Rejected
The four hypothesis	th Customer satisfaction – corporate reputation	0.80	5.21	Confirmed
The fif hypothesis		0.43	4.01	confirmed

Table 4: Hypothesis analysis results

CONCLUSION

Conclusion and Suggestion

The present research aimed at investigating the effect of CSR on customer satisfaction, brand value and corporate reputation of Dana Insurance. Research method was structural equation modeling and its population was the customers of Arak's Dana Insurance and questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire included 26 questions and Cronbach's alpha coefficient and confirmatory factor analysis were used for determining the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The obtained alpha for questionnaires indicates the proper reliability of the tool and the obtained factor loadings and t-statistic indicate its validity. Also the values of fitness indices were measured to investigate the fitness which indicated a relatively good fitness. Moreover, LISREL was used for data analysis. Data analysis indicated that in the studied statistical population, CSR does not have a direct effect on corporate reputation and brand value or it has little effect. The second and third hypotheses were not confirmed.

Recommendations Regarding Hypotheses

Recommendations Regarding the First, Second and Third Hypotheses

- 1. Participation in social activities such as holding social events
- 2. Widespread reflection of participation in social activities via mass media
- 3. Holding educational courses for employees regarding social responsibility and its standards

4. Giving awards to the employees who are the most active in the area of social responsibility to encourage others

- 5. Complete identification of corporation's stakeholders and the way in which its activities affect them
- 6. Complying activities with competition laws and cooperating with competition authorities

7. Meeting ethical, social, environmental and gender equality standards including healthy and safe purchasing, distribution and contracting policies

8. Conducting proper and relevant research and monitoring relevant organizations to avoid jeopardizing corporation's commitment to social responsibility

Recommendations Regarding the Fourth and Fifth Hypotheses

1. Installation of customer satisfaction measurement systems

2. Conducting research regarding customer satisfaction

3. Receiving customers' viewpoints and considering them to increase customer participation in corporation

Recommendations to Future Researchers

1. Future researchers can compare the structural model of the present research in other organizations to study its strengths and weaknesses and take a step towards improvement of the model for achieving a proper model with an indigenous community context.

2. They can add new variables to the model to measure their effect.

3. They can conduct a research at the national level.

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Research Limitations

1. The result of research with other statistical populations can be different.

2. It is difficult to measure concepts such as brand value and corporate reputation via questionnaire.

3. Only questionnaire was used for data collection in this research. Other tools can be also used.

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