The Impact of Social Responsibility on the Mental Image of Organizations

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ABSTRACT

In times when social responsibility forms the basis of organizational success, how institutions are perceived by their stakeholders has never been more critical. This study explores how economic, legal, and moral responsibilities influence the mental image of organizations among students in Jordanian private universities. Students, being future professionals and a force of discerning consumers, hold special insights into how organizations' socially responsible actions impact their reputation. Guided by the principles of social responsibility, this research applies a quantitative approach using structural equation modeling for the analysis of data collected from students. The results show that the economic responsibilities of an organization, directed at financial stability and contributing to society, come up as the most significant factor in shaping its mental image. In the same breath, moral responsibility, which covers ethical conduct and values, comes out as the most relevant, underlining the increasing relevance of ethics in how students relate to organizations. Legal responsibility, though important, shows a more tempered impact, outlining how organizations need to follow the law to stay in good repute. These results highlight the new expectations of Jordanian youth, where profitabil-ity must be coupled with ethical commitment if an organization is to achieve a long-term positive reputation. Given the nature of such multidimensional expecta-tions, during which organizations seek to redefine themselves in pursuit of these challenging expectations, the contribution of this study becomes valuable within the context of how balancing economic performance with legal and moral integri-ty yields a more salient mental image for the promotion of long-term success and the improvement of trust among a new generation of stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

The association of social responsibility in institutions with moral and human values has made it one of the reasons for the success and dis-tinction of these companies, and that social responsibility has clear ef-fects in providing these companies with services and societal necessi-ties, thereby achieving the welfare of society and achieving the growth and prosperity of the company with its community work, in addition to supporting its goals in a way that distinguishes the company itself in the competitive market and keeps its positive mental image firmly in the minds of all parties, according to the opinion of many researchers who linked social responsibility to the mental image, which necessarily af-fects the growth of the company and its survival in the market for a long period of time (Al-Adamat et al., 2023a). The company's interest in social responsibility and giving it its due with conscience and con-science helped the company advance and rise, which benefits society, its customers, and other external parties, including the surrounding en-vironment (Al-Azzam et al., 2023).

According to the above, companies and institutions have sought to study the mental image taken from them and work to maintain the posi-tive mental image and even improve it. This can only be achieved by these companies working to achieve and implement their social respon-sibility, and thus it is reflected in the mental image, which has become one of the most important goals of competitive companies in light of the globalization of the economy and technological progress and mov-ing away from old competitive images such as achieving profits and returns with deliberate neglect of any responsibility and moving away from

investment aspects that stimulate social principles (Al-Adamat et al., 2023b).

In light of such globalization and competition, researchers agreed on the necessity of investing in all initiatives that would serve social re-sponsibility (Al-Hawary & Al-Syasneh, 2020). This led to many com-petitive companies introducing into their economic activities a group of supportive and environmental social activities and providing time and money for projects that serve the local community in which they oper-ate, in addition to the contribution of more than two-thirds of these competitive companies in charitable works, in addition to interest in training employees and providing assistance, as this social responsibility has an impact on the welfare and development of society on the one hand, and on the other hand, obtaining employee satisfaction and bene-fit for all parties. In this study, light was shed on the nature of social responsibility and the role of this responsibility in building and forming a positive mental image.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate Social Responsibility

Since 1950, the concept of social responsibility has emerged, and this concept is in continuous development and updating for any company seeking progress and growth (Al-Alwan et al., 2022a). This develop-ment was noticeable in the last decade, after which business organiza-tions began to establish the concept of social responsibility in their stra-tegic management and issue social reports to stakeholders and related parties (Aityassine et al., 2021). Under different names for this social responsibility, several concepts emerged, including social accountability (Corporate Accountability), business ethics (Corporate Ethics), organi-zational citizenship (Corporate Citizenship), and organizational obliga-tions (Corporate Obligations) (Mohammad et al., 2023a). In the early twenties of the twentieth century, Sheldon stated that every company must define its responsibility through its social performance and the statement of the benefit achieved for society (Al-Hawary et al., 2020). Business organizations began to respond by instilling the concept of social responsibility in their work, and rules and laws were established that impose, obligate, and emphasize social performance (Mohammad et al., 2023b). These companies had no choice but to commit to working with this social responsibility.

We should not forget that in the twentieth century, the Islamic think-er Kutieshat et al. (2024) declared a statement based on the first princi-ple, which is benevolence, which means in the Islamic religion that the more fortunate individuals should help the less fortunate individuals in society by meeting their needs in their local community. As for the sec-ond principle, which is the principle of guardianship, which means that companies and wealthy individuals should act as agents or trustees not only of the financial resources of their shareholders but also of the eco-nomic resources of society, and that their properties should serve the interests of society (Khodeer et al., 2023). Due to the different ap-proaches to the concept of social responsibility and its interpretations, Bani-Hani et al. (2023) defined corporate social responsibility as "the controls and commitments that companies undertake to improve and raise the welfare of society, and this comes through discretionary busi-ness practices and contributions from the company's own resources."

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development also added the concept of social responsibility as a company's commitment to contribute to the economic development of society while preserving the environment and working side by side with workers and their fami-lies within the local community and society in general, aiming to im-prove the quality of life for all these parties (Lemoun et al., 2023). This definition is broad while trying to collect a number of areas that include corporate social activities, as Masadeh et al. (2024) listed it as "all vol-untary strategies and programs by companies that combine issues of social and commercial value and are seen as an integral part of corporate social responsibility." This study addressed the following dimensions of social responsibility:

Economic Responsibility: All business companies are huge economic institutions that produce goods and services capable of satisfying the needs and desires of the market, providing job opportunities, obtaining the necessary raw materials, and improving the quality of products (Na-rayan et al., 2012). Legal Responsibility: These are obligations imposed on companies and include a set of laws and regulations in force in the environment in which the company operates. This dimension includes environmental protection, occupational safety, justice, and consumer protection laws. Companies must respect and abide by these laws and regulations, which will result in the advancement of society and its well-being (Gustafsson et al., 2023).Moral responsibility: Changes in ethics and values must precede the creation of laws because they are the driving force behind the enactment of many laws and regulations. They are viewed as the foundation upon which values and norms are built, which are consistent with what society expects from institutions. These values must reflect a higher level than what the law requires (McIner-ney, 2024).

Mental Image

The mental image is defined as the distinctive place or position that the company occupies in the minds of people (Ghaith et al., 2023). This mental image may be formed as a result of people's direct or indirect experience with the company. It may be rational or irrational (emotion-al). This mental image may be formed as a result of correct and reliable evidence and documents or based on rumors and statements that are somewhat doubtful, but in the end, it may represent a true reality for people who believe in this image (Al-Fakeh et al., 2023).

Al-Husban et al. (2023) confirms that it is important for the company to be distinguished from other competing companies so that it can maintain its competitive position in the market, especially in the current circumstances that companies are experiencing, which is called (globali-zation). Here we are talking about companies that provide the same ser-vices, such as banks and airlines, which provide services characterized by stereotypes, so that companies can distinguish themselves from each other and so that they

can possess a unique competitive advantage.

Alzboon et al. (2024) says that companies should build a mental im-age that focuses on the difference in terms of service, speed of delivery, reliability, and safety. As for Al-Tit et al. (2024) say that the mental image of companies is considered one of the intangible resources in the company that supports and enhances the continuity of the competitive advantage that the company possesses. Al-Adamat et al. (2023) view the mental image as one of the strategic assets that lead to the creation of a competitive advantage and an encouraging environment for the company's survival and development. There are many writers who use the terms mental image and fame as two similar terms, while many writers have argued that there is a difference between the two terms, as mental image, from their point of view, may include negative meanings and be far from truth, reality, and maintenance.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Mental Image

Studies have proven that performing the role of corporate social respon-sibility increases profits and production and reduces tendencies and differences between management, employees, and the communities with which they deal, which leads to the affiliation of employees and beneficiaries of these companies (Dalky et al., 2023). Then, many com-panies and leaders began to compete and desire social participation with the aim of serving society and presenting human and ethical roles with the aim of development and participation in public work, not isolated from society, countries, and their goals.

Companies have realized the importance of social participation (social responsibility) and the impact it has on their profitability, prosperity, growth, and sustainability as they play their role and activity towards their employees and their level of well-being, the local community, the surrounding environment, and then the entire society (Aldaihani et al., 2023). There has also been more emphasis on the value of corporate social responsibility and society, in addition to the great value of what social responsibility provides to society, which contributes to presenting a positive image of the company or institution from which this respon-sibility stems (Al-Fakeh et al., 2023). Employee and customer satisfac-tion and many other factors are taken into consideration when measur-ing the extent of business success and excellence

Social responsibility also contributes to improving the company's rep-utation in terms of efficiency in performance and service delivery. All of these matters help to present a positive image of the organization, thus increasing the trust between companies and stakeholders and the level of transparency with which they deal with beneficiaries (Al-Fugaha et al., 2023). In addition to attracting competent employees, companies' commitment to their responsibility towards the community in which they operate makes them attract distinguished employees and workers, especially for large local companies that operate in specialized fields and use modern technology at the level of international compa-nies. Social responsibility also contributes to increasing sales and in-creasing the level of consumer loyalty when the consumer seeks not only high quality and safety of the product but also hopes that it will be safe, with his confidence that the purchased goods were produced in a socially and environmentally responsible manner.Accordingly, the con-ceptual model of research can be expressed in Figure 1.
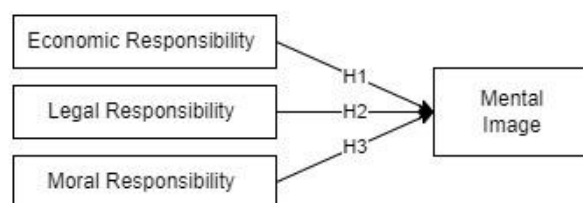

Fig. 1.Research Model

For the research purposes, the authors developed the following hy-potheses to investigate the effect of corporate social responsibilityon mental image:
H1: Economic responsibility has a positive impact onmental image.
H2: Legal responsibility has a positive effect on mental image.
H3: Moral responsibility has a positive effect on mental image.

METHODOLOGY

A positivist research philosophy was used to assess how corporate so-cial responsibility affected students' perceptions of themselves in Jor-dan's private universities. This philosophy assesses social phenomena and the causes behind their creation using an empirical evidence-based scientific method (Al-hawajreh et al., 2023a). While positivist theory advocates for longitudinal designs for gathering data, it also acknowl-edges that cross-sectional designs can be used to get around restrictions on research (Al-hawajreh et al., 2023b). Therefore, in order to get around the research's time and budgetary restrictions, a cross-sectional design was adopted in this study. Furthermore, a quantitative data ap-proach was used to evaluate the causal relationship between the re-search variables. Two primary sources provided the information used here. Whereas the secondary source is an extensive analysis of the per-tinent literature, which includes books, manuscripts, and published re-ports, the primary source is a quantitative survey.

The demographic that the current study focused on included students attending private universities in Jordan. An extensive survey was not feasible due to the size of the research population. Consequently, a min-imum sample size of 385 valid responses was chosen when applying the convenience sampling approach. 630 members of the target population received the research instrument

as a result, in order to ensure sufficient sampling in accordance with the guidelines of (Al-Husban et al., 2023a). The responses to the research instrument were 470 responses. These responses included 10 incomplete responses and 35 with a typical bias in the response, which led to their removal from the research sam-ple. Accordingly, the final research sample included 425 responses, which is 67.4% of the total sent.

A standardized self-reporting questionnaire was used in the research data collection process. The target sample was emailed the electronic form created with Google Forms, and they were invited to reply be-tween April 17 and July 31, 2024. Reverse translation was used to con-vert items from English literature into Arabic for the questionnaire (Al-Husban et al., 2023b). In addition, there were three primary sections and an introduction outlining the goals of the study as well as the re-searchers' responsibilities regarding confidentiality and research ethics. The first section of the instrument included demographic data, which are categorical variables that define the demographic characteristics of the sample. The second section was for items on corporate social re-sponsibility, the independent variable, measured by 15 items derived from (Alkayed & Omar, 2023). These items are distributed into three first-order constructs: economic responsibility (five items), legal respon-sibility (five items), and moral responsibility (five items). The last sec-tion was devoted to mental image, the dependent variable, which was measured through six items consistent with (Chen et al., 2024).

RESULTS

Before testing the hypotheses through the structural model, the validity and reliability of the research measures were verified using confirmato-ry factor analysis (CFA). CFA is an integral part of structural equation modeling used to assess the degree of fit between the observed varia-bles and the hypothesized factor model consisting of latent variables (Al-Husban et al., 2023a). Table 1 lists the results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the corporate social responsibility and mental image measures.

Constructs	Items	Loadings	AVE	MSV	√AVE	CR
Economic Responsibility	ER1	0.703	0.511	0.429	0.715	0.839
	ER2	0.788				
	ER3	0.634				
	ER4	0.714				
	ER5	0.728				
Legal Responsibility	LR1	0.727	0.557	0.419	0.746	0.863
	LR2	0.736				
	LR3	0.742				
	LR4	0.753				
	LR5	0.772				
Moral Responsibility	MR1	0.731	0.592	0.437	0.769	0.879
	MR2	0.766				
	MR3	0.792				
	MR4	0.814				
	MR5	0.741				
Mental Image	MI1	0.721	0.559	0.488	0.748	0.883
	MI2	0.830				
	MI3	0.719				
	MI4	0.674				
	MI5	0.822				
	MI6	0.707				

The factor loadings on the first-order latent constructs were found to range between 0.634 and 0.830, according to Table 1's results. Retention of the observed variables in the measurement model is based on loading values over the 0.50 threshold, which is seen as an indicator of a reasonable degree of link between the observed variables and their latent construct. Convergent validity was attacked using the average variance extracted (AVE). The indicator's results show that the values for the measures of mental image and corporate social responsibility were higher than the permissible minimum of 0.50. Consequently, it was determined that the measures had sufficient convergent validity.

The Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) comparisons were used to estimate discriminant validity. Comparative analyses revealed that AVE was higher than the constructs' maximum shared variance (MSV), which is regarded as preliminary evidence of discriminant validity (Al-Alwan et al., 2022b). By contrasting the square root values of AVE with the correlations between the components, these findings were demonstrated. This comparison's findings demonstrated that the square root values

of AVE were higher than the correlation coefficient values, proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that the latent constructs capture heterogeneous notions. Conversely, the measures' reliability was evaluated using the composite reliability (CR), which was determined by McDonald's Omega coefficients in accordance with Haija et al. (2023). According to the findings, the CR values were higher than the suggested threshold of 0.70, falling between 0.839 and 0.883 (Bani-Hani et al., 2023). The research measures were deemed valid and trustworthy in light of these findings.

Formulating the structural model and determining the impact coefficients between the corporate social responsibility conceptions and mental image constituted the next stage of the analysis. SEM is a sophisticated analytical technique that aids in examining the causal relationship between the latent components by assessing the trajectories of the hypotheses and emphasizing the goodness-of-fit indicators, as shown in Figure 2.
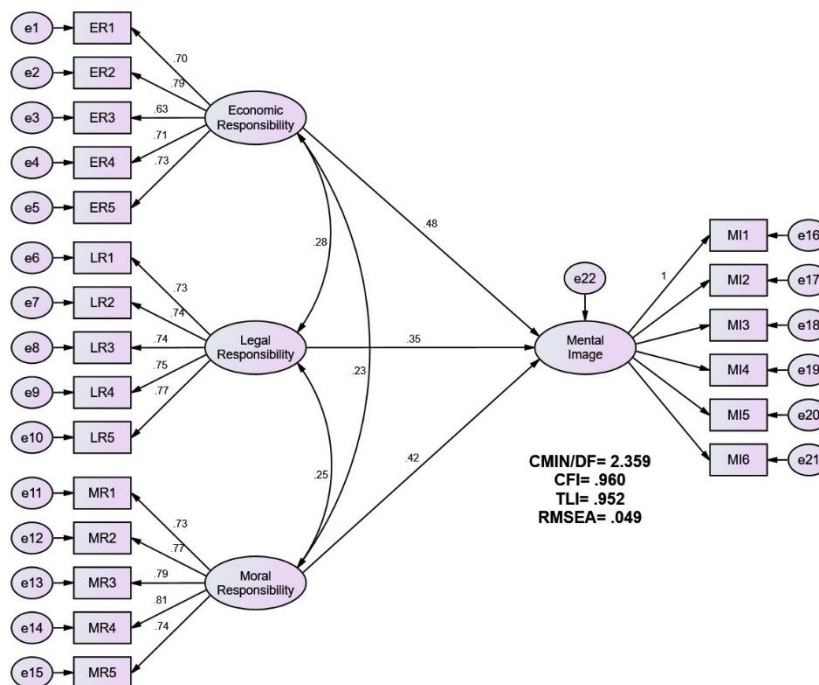

Fig. 1.SEM of Corporate Social ResponsibilityonMental Image.

The findings in Figure 2 demonstrate how the structural model of the study was assessed using two different kinds of goodness-of-fit indicators. Appropriate values were indicated by the absolute fit indices. It did not exceed the top limit of 0.08, as indicated by the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.049. Furthermore, as the pro-posed model did not meet the upper threshold of 3, the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF) was 2.359, indicating that it is compatible with the data employed. Values with appropriate degrees of fit were also indicated by the incremental fit indices. The Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) was 0.952 and the comparative fit index (CFI) was 0.960. An appropriate level of agreement between the suggested model and the null model is indicated by the values of these indices, which are greater than the 0.90 threshold. Therefore, the thorough assessment of the structural model indicated a suitable degree of fit, allowing us to move forward with the analytical steps and derive the impact coefficients provided in Table 2.

Table 1.Path Coefficients: Corporate Social Responsibility and Mental Image.

			B	β	S.E.	T
Economic Responsibility	→	Mental Image	0.490	0.476	0.072	6.80***
Legal Responsibility	→	Mental Image	0.364	0.351	0.078	4.66**
Moral Responsibility	→	Mental Image	0.438	0.424	0.071	6.16***

Note: * $p< 0.05$, ** $p< 0.01$, *** $p< 0.001$.

The research hypotheses argued that there is an impact of corporate social responsibilityon mental image, as the results of the path analysis showed support for these hypotheses.Economic responsibility had a positive impact on mental image, as the standardized effect coefficient (β) was 0.476, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).Moreover, moral responsibility had a positive impact on mental image, as the standardized effect coefficient (β) was 0.424, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).Finally, legal responsibility had a positive impact on mental image, as the standardized effect coefficient (β) was 0.351, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that there is an impact of the dimen-sions of social responsibility in building the mental image of the compa-ny, and measuring the extent of success and excellence of business or-ganizations can only be done through a set of

factors such as employee and customer satisfaction and others (Al-Shaikh et al., 2023). Social responsibility also contributes to enhancing and improving the reputa-tion of the institution in terms of efficiency in performance and provid-ing services capable of meeting market needs. This in turn helps to pre-sent a positive mental image of the company, which results in increasing trust between companies and stakeholders as well as the parties benefit-ing from the company's services (Al-serhan et al., 2023). Based on what the studies have provided, it has been shown that if companies adopt the concept of social responsibility, this will result in increased profits and productivity, and reduce conflicts and differences between man-agement and employees on the one hand, and the community surround-ing the company on the other hand, which is reflected in the affiliation of its employees and raising their loyalty, as well as the parties benefit-ing from the company, which has also been reflected in many competi-tive companies and their managements and created in them the ambi-tion for social participation, aiming to serve their communities and play a humanitarian and ethical role that enhances development and partner-ship in work, and that it is not isolated from the international communi-ty and its goals.

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