

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY IN FINANCIAL INSTITUTES ACCEPTED IN TEHRAN'S STOCK EXCHANGE

RESPONSABILIDAD SOCIAL Y EFICIENCIA FINANCIERA EN LOS INSTITUTOS FINANCIEROS ACEPTADOS EN LA BOLSA DE TEHERÁN

Mohammad Yami **1**
Mahdi Joghataei **2**

Master of Marketing Management, Azad University of Qeshm
Island, Qeshm, Iran. E-mail:
mohammadyami@gmail.com **1**

Master of Human Resource Management, Shahroud Branch,
Islamic Azad University, Shahroud, Iran
E-mail: mjaghataei@gmail.com **2**

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate social responsibility and financial efficiency of financial institutes accepted in Tehran's stock exchange. It is considered as a descriptive-correlational study and in terms of purpose, it is considered as an applied study. The employed research method is post-event, meaning that the study has been conducted based on previous data. The population of study includes the entire firms accepted in Tehran's stock exchange. Research time domain is between 2011 and 2016. Through a systematic elimination method, 84 firms were selected as sample of study. In this regard, companies that met the predetermined criteria of study were selected. According to research findings, banks' social responsibility has a statistically significant and positive effect on their financial efficiency. Therefore it can be concluded that social behavior is profitable and profitability is obtained through team-work. As a result, a holy loop is created. In other words, responsible social policies result in higher profitability and vice versa.
Keywords: social responsibility, financial efficiency, profitability, bank

Abstracto: El propósito de este estudio fue investigar la responsabilidad social y la eficiencia financiera de los institutos financieros aceptados en la bolsa de Teherán. Se considera un estudio descriptivo-correlacional y, en términos de propósito, se considera un estudio aplicado. El método de investigación empleado es posterior al evento, lo que significa que el estudio se ha realizado en base a datos anteriores. La población de estudio incluye a todas las empresas aceptadas en la bolsa de valores de Teherán. El dominio del tomo de investigación es entre 2011 y 2016. A través de un método de eliminación sistemática, se seleccionaron 84 empresas como muestra de estudio. En este sentido, se seleccionaron las empresas que cumplieron con los criterios de estudio predeterminados. Según los resultados de la investigación, la responsabilidad social de los bancos tiene un efecto estadísticamente significativo y positivo en su eficiencia financiera. Por lo tanto, se puede concluir que el comportamiento social es rentable y la rentabilidad se obtiene a través del trabajo en equipo. Como resultado, se crea un ciclo sagrado. En otras palabras, las políticas sociales responsables dan como resultado una mayor rentabilidad y viceversa.

Palabras clave: responsabilidad social, eficiencia financiera, rentabilidad, banco

Introduction

Nowadays, the roles of commercial enterprises in communities have changed significantly in a way that, commercial enterprises are not only expected to consider their own profitability, but also are expected to act responsive towards the community and prove beneficial for the community with which they interact. Commercial enterprises can't avoid their communities and likewise, communities can't exist without commercial enterprises. Therefore, a mutual relationship exists between communities and commercial enterprises. Companies are increasingly focusing their attention on societal subjects while simultaneously working towards improvement of their economic efficiencies in order to satisfy the stakeholders. Environmental theories in addition to economic and social theories have forced companies to create integrated systems for monitoring of observance and performance of law in every field while having a general focus on public societal good and welfare and a specific focus on their stakeholders.

Through general and molecular communities, stakeholders play their role in having demands with moral perspectives and company level behaviors and therefore, enforce their strong influence on formation of strategies by the management board. They require clarity, efficiency and effectiveness with some of the managers in order to obtain economic benefits. As a result, integrity guarantees the long-term functionality of the company while it also creates social responsibility policies which can be seamlessly enforced on companies. From the perspective of academic activities, there is a growing demand for development of commerce ethics that seamlessly pursues research goals in tracking of illegal businesses that violate social rights. Business and commercial ethics is not a new subject; rather it's been a trendy subject that has been going on until now. Previous studies have shown that determination of ethical standards and logic principles has been a rather sustained issue that has been developed during years and has been subjected to various tests during time (Brian, 2011). Today, companies' social responsibility and commercial ethics are related to experiential and academic perspectives in a complicated manner. We have considered several different definitions stated in the literature of subject matter that have been concentrated voluntarily participation for finding a solution for determined societal issues. Basically being responsive towards societal issues is a multidimensional phenomenon that comprises a vast area of functions of the company with regard to its resources, processes and output sources (Vadok, 1997).

Some previous studies have elaborated on the issue of relationship between companies' social responsibility and efficiency of their financial resources. Results of these studies have mostly shown that the relationship between the former and latter has a positive relativity; however there still remains heterogeneity between results. There are two reasons for this: 1) lack of existence of a casual method that could be used as a criterion for comparison of results, and 2) there is no precise method for measurement of the profitability caused by a company's social responsibility (Jolberg, 2009). The perspective is seamless and general, it takes the entire society into the account and is considered as the main pillar of the present study. A company's suitable social responsibility policy accompanied by proper performance of the management board will result in reformation of social profitability; also it is for the best of stakeholders, employees, customers, suppliers and the entire representatives who are affected by the decisions made by the company. Academic subjects relating to this method have been evolved during years. Criterion, instrumental and descriptive aspects of this theory are present in the study. Although that these theories are different from each other (as shown by Donaldson, 1999), they are complementary to each other as well and have the ability to describe the trend between a company's social responsibility and its' financial resources (Scott, 2001). Descriptive aspects provide a theory for definitions of company. Donaldson and Patterson (1995) have defined this aspect as a tower for competitive and collaborative theories with inherent values. From the instrumental perspective, this theory [provides a framework for testing companies and analyzing the relations between management and successfulness of efficiency goals. This theory advocates that companies establish a combination in priorities between beneficiary groups and value the priorities that have the best conditions. Therefore, the amount of a firm's efforts towards enforcement of social responsibility is highly dependent on relative importance of aforementioned beneficiary groups. This type of comparison with standard aspects of this theory which is focused on legibility of a company's beneficiary groups always considers for value despite their corresponding group. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce good advises as important factors.

Corporate control results from separation of commerce ownership and controlling the latter towards responding to the system and firms are controlled and oriented upon it. Agency theory provides a relation between a possible difference that can emerge between stakeholders and managers (Cadbury, 2000). As described by Martin et al., (2004), the issue of owner controls and its influence on management lies in the mechanism for operation of control as CG. One known mechanism for controlling the performance of the management board plays a key role in arrangement and enforcement of management in terms of making the best decisions in every stage for every organization. The management board must guarantee the long-term survival of the company through maximization of profitability for stakeholders and align the opinions and interests of the company with beneficiary groups' interests and opinions. Decisions made by the management board influence various levels of financial resources and guarantee the possible execution of company's social responsibility policies and employment of special strategies for socially responsible investments (Mill, 2006).

Alborda (2013) emphasizes that social responsibility reporting standards grow under the control of GRI model through convergence towards codification of homogeneous guidelines. Bosso et al., have shown the solidarity of these standards which test the applicability of the company's social responsibility principles and the GRI reporting guidelines according to the GRI guidelines in relation to the company's social responsibility. This allows for sustainability of firms in formulation of their social responsibility strategies as well as helping stakeholders with evaluation of similar strategies. Ultimately, Strand (2013) has shown that by putting a strong focus on social responsibility, the possibility of obtaining rank in Dow Jones' sustainability index may increase up to three times. In their experimental analyses regarding DJSI along with execution of the company's social responsibility policies, Lopez et al., (2007) have validated this content.

From the theoretical point of views, the theory of stakeholders provides a framework for the relation between the company's social responsibility and its' financial efficiency and therefore, beneficiary groups are provided with access to company resources (Mc. Grey, 1998). In order to do so, we require a suitable company performance in terms of considering for environmental issues and fair and logical working relations. In cases in which the company ignores social responsibility the yielding costs will pile up tremendously and therefore, a financial burden including reduced profitability is created which ultimately results in reduction of awareness about interests of the community. On the contrary, in cases in which companies adhere to social responsibilities that are more profitable, socially responsible investments will result in creation of incentives with increased investment in social responsibility programs (Pava, 2008).

Various studies (Cochran and Wood, 1984; Aupperle et al., 1985; McGuire et al., 1988; Waddock and Graves, 1997; McWilliams and Siegel, 2000; Orlitzky et al., 2003; Smith, 2003; Ortas et al., 2014) have stated that an everlasting dichotomy exists between a firm's social responsibility and its' financial efficiency. However, there are always clear results that will explain existence of negative and positive relationships or nonexistence of any relationship at all. The reason of these defects in studies lies in ignoring of the currently observable variables in models, lack of analysis of relations between the cause and effect, lack of precision in implementation of methods and underestimation of research studies. In addition, previous studies have stated that there is a weak but yet positive relationship between effects of a company's social responsibility and its financial efficiency.

Tissot Sura (2014) elaborated on investigation of the association between companies' social responsibility and their financial performance. Results of the study have revealed a positive and significant relationship between a company's social responsibility and financial performance. In another study titled as "corporate social responsibility and corporate financial performance", Scott et al., (2011) investigated the association between companies' social responsibility and their financial performance and concluded that a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between the former and latter. Ekeeper et al., (2008) argued that the problem of lack of correspondence between beneficiary groups exists as a contradiction in results. The solution is to identify the majority and the most important beneficiary groups. In this regard, kick (2011) states that positive information relating to the company's social responsibility results in implementation of the company's tendencies and reformation of procurement and investment destinations.

Research studies have asked whether all beneficiary groups are of equal importance. Kick's studies based on beneficiary groups theory, states that if the index of the company's social responsibility included the relative importance of beneficiary groups, the results would be positive (AK pier, 2008). Customers, employees, suppliers, stakeholders and the community are the general beneficiary groups of a company. Yet, the instrumental theory states that when all features are equal and there exists information regarding social responsibility, investments must be oriented towards supporting companies that manifest excellent social behaviors. This theory further states that a company's efforts in various corporate-social-responsibility related subjects depend upon the value determined by beneficiary groups (Choi, 2010). Steinberg (1999) argues that there are two main problems with the method of beneficiary groups. The first problem lies in the need for settlement of contradictions between values, objectives and opinions of stakeholders; while the other problem is the need for reformation of delegation of responsibilities. Further he emphasizes that management boards of traditionally held companies are responsible for stakeholders while the employees and other agencies are responsible to be responsive to senior vice-presidents and liable employers. However, this theory rejects both of these responsibilities in a unique way. This rejection is one of the differentiating characteristics of the stakeholder method that unveils the diffused and ineffective structure of responsibilities. Mc. Williams (2000) obtained interesting results: the lack of coordination between a company's social responsibility and its financial efficiency is caused by errors that occur in financial analyses through ignoring investment on the variable of research and development. The other factor, being the ignoring of the element of investment in research and development has a direct relation with the company's social responsibility. They further stated that research and development should be in coordination with the company's financial efficiency and social responsibility. This relation is the result of investment in R&D and innovativeness in products and services. The results of the study conducted by Choi et al., (2010) were mostly positive; however some were negative, mixed and uncoordinated. Margoles (2003) conducted a similar study on 127 cases and obtained similar results. Results showed a majorly positive coordination irrespective of dependence or independence of the variable of corporate social responsibility. On the other hand, Scholar (2006) unveiled the deep importance of corporate social efficiency and its relation with corporate financial resources, while also emphasizing on the unclear nature of the former relation. This paper states that:

1. Shortages in experimental results damage the association between corporate social efficiency and FP.
2. The so-far-applied theoretical models have numerous defects (assuming a direct relationship between FP and corporate social efficiency); also by defining the relationship between FP and corporate social efficiency and its structure in broader aspects, they showed the manner of yielding of FP through corporate social efficiency.

Clone and Thomas (2009) have recently tried to measure corporate social responsibility through two different methods in an updated research study, and identified the key variables of the subject matter in the literature and further, unveiled the nonlinearity of certain variables. The results of their work emphasize the positivity of the relationship between corporate social responsibility and financial efficiency.

Importance and sensitivity of the bank and credit system in the whole economic system of every community has forced governments to promote cash flow (depending on facilities, needs and the values of every society) through adoption and implementation of a set of measures also known as monetary and credit policies. On the other hand, during the past few decades, being socially responsible has gained a great deal of importance since it is related to several other issues including unemployment, poverty, environmental contamination and other societal issues. It is currently universally accepted that absence of ethics in commerce not only results in several harmful consequences for financial sectors, but also harms the whole community and environment. On this basis, investigating the relationship between corporate social responsibility and financial efficiency seems important. According to the upper mentioned studies and in order to overcome the gap in efficiency of Iranian financial institutes, no previous studies have tried to investigate the former relationship between among Iranian firms. Considering the fact that every single firm and company must be committed to adherence to social responsibility, according to the theory of stakeholder,

we expect to obtain more financial resources with a better positive relationship between corporate social responsibility and better levels of it. The opposite of this relation also holds. As a result the present study tries to fulfill the following hypothesis:

Main Hypothesis: social responsibility has a statistically significant effect on improved profitability of financial institutes.

Method

This study is an applied study in the sense that it incorporates various theories, regulations, principles and techniques for settlement of actual problems. Results of this study can be influential on codification of rules and regulations of stock exchange. In addition, this study is a correlational research since it seeks a relationship between several variables. Furthermore, the research method is post-event in the sense that the study is based on previous information. The population of study includes the entire firms accepted in Tehran's stock exchange. Time table of the study is between 2011 and 2016. Based on a systematic removal method, 84 companies were selected as the sample of study. In this study, the research sample size is equal to the research population size and the included companies had to meet the following criterions:

1. Having been accepted in Tehran's stock exchange by the end of 2010
2. The ending of financial year must be March 20.
3. Having imposed in changes on the financial year during the mentioned five year period
4. Not being an investment company

Variables and their manner of calculation

In the present paper we have tried to evaluate financial efficiency as the independent research variable and therefore the important criterion of total return on assets has been made use of and for its calculation, the profit before tax is divided by the average total asset value. This criterion has been calculated for five years and ultimately it has been averaged.

The independent variable of the present study is social responsibility which has been measured with respect to criterions that are proposed by the so-called KLD2 American association annually ranking companies based on environmental and societal criteria. In our research, social responsibility includes four aspects with each aspect having its special advantages and weaknesses. By subtraction of advantages from weaknesses, the corresponding score is obtained. Ultimately, by summing the scores of the entire four aspects, a total score is yielded for social responsibility. It is worth mentioning that in case of absence of weaknesses or advantages, the number zero is used. The data required for these variables are disclosed by the reports of the management boards. In the present study, the indices of social responsibility in Iran, the ISO 9001 certificate, the ISO 14001 certificate and the OHSAS 18001 standard have been used for presentation of each aspect with respect to the essence of disclosure in Iran. Therefore the present research has not made use of the KLD model and instead, it has used criteria corresponding to Iranian Standards which as previously mentioned, are disclosed in reports of the management boards. The present model is a quantitative objective model that has been so-far used in several countries for measurement of corporate social responsibility. The model is as follows:

$$CSR-s = CSR-COM-S + CSR-EMP-S + CSR-ENV-S + CSR-PRO-S$$

CSR-s= social responsibility score

CSR-COM-S= the score of social collaboration disclosure that is yielded from subtraction of weaknesses (concerns) from advantages in the following way:

$CSR-COM-S = \sum \text{Strengths} - \sum \text{Concerns}$

We can also calculate the scores of other aspects of social responsibility including relationships between employees, environment and product features through the upper mentioned formula (Mishra et al., 2011).

The present study tries to investigate the relationship between social responsibility and internal information space and, tax avoidance under the mediating effects of clarity of financial statement in companies accepted in Tehran's stock exchange. The time table of research is 6 years

during which the data regarding 84 companies are investigated. It is worth mentioning that research variables have been calculated using the Microsoft Excel software and afterwards, the entire pool and panel data have been analyzed for entire companies using the E Views v.6.0 and Sata software.

Research findings

Table 1 provides the results regarding reliability of research variables among entire companies. The Levin, Lin and Chu test has been used for determination of reliability of research variables.

Table 1, testing the reliability of research variables

result	Im, boys and Chem test		Levin, Lin and Chu test			Test type variables
	p	Statistic value	result	p	Statistic value	
Not reliable	0.2347	0.72358	reliable	0.000	11.9705	Tax avoidance
Not reliable	0.000	139.082	reliable	0.000	1486.78	Total profitability
Not reliable	0.3940	0.26893	reliable	0.000	10.2831	Financial leverage
reliable	0.000	5.28739	reliable	0.8187	8.85	Ratio of assets

The parameters of dispersion are criteria for determination of level of dispersion of data from the mean. One of the most important dispersion criterions is standard deviation (Azar, Adel and Momeni, 2010). By comparing the standard deviation values of research variables, it was revealed that the variable of profits declaration speed with a standard deviation value of 0.33 had the lowest dispersion compared to other research variables. In addition the Jarkko statistic value has shown that research variables were not normally distributed. It is worth mentioning that lack of normality of research variables is one of the presumptions of regression models.

Table 2, descriptive statistics of research variables

P	skewedness	S.D	minimum	maximum	average	value	sign	criteria variables
0.0001	0.113-	2.313	1.000	10.000	5.000	4.904	CSR	Social responsibility
0.0001	12.381	3.847	0.0000	51.291	0.639	1.022	LEV	Financial leverage
0.0001	11.341	2.187	7.458-	35.69	0.068	0.254	ROA	Total profitability
0.0001	2.855	0.403	0.173-	3.363	0.231	0.372	CAPINT	Ratio of assets

Since combined data have been used, the Haussmann test has been also used for selection of a model for constant effects. The P value of the Haussmann test is larger than the significance level of 5% and therefore, there are enough evidences to reject the constant effects model and the random effects model should be instead used for testing research hypotheses.

Table 3, results of testing the association between social responsibility and disclosure quality

Investigation of financial efficiency and social responsibility			
P	T value	Regression coefficients	statistics variables
0.0446	2.54	0.122	Social responsibility
0.023	2.354	0.219	Firm size
0.0292	1.054	0.030	Financial leverage
0.401	0.839	0.054	profitability
0.6550	0.447	0.020	Fixed assets ratio

Durbin-Watson statistic	Probability of F statistic	Statistic value	P	Adj. Det. Coeff.	Det. Coeff.
1.87	0.0001	97.33	0.0001	0.653	0.663

With respect to obtained results in the upper table and considering the obtained F statistic of (97.33) and the obtained error value of 0.0001, then it can be stated with a confidence of 95% that the research model is of a suitable fitness and is also of a high significance. In addition the calculated Durbin-Watson statistic (1.87) shows that there is no correlation between phrases of residues of research model. The coefficient of social responsibility variable has been calculated as -0.122 and the error value obtained for it is equal to 0.044. On this basis, it can be stated that there exists a statistically significant relationship between social responsibility and financial efficiency of firms accepted in Tehran's stock exchange.

Discussion and Results

As it was expected, this article has shown that social behavior is profitable and profitability is yielded by team-work. As a result a holy loop is formed. In other words, socially responsible policies result in higher profitability and higher profitability results in better socially responsible policies. The two fold relations regarding social responsibility of banks and financial efficiency are positive on both sides and from an economic point of view, we have proven that with higher social responsibility, firms, and companies and also banks can have better financial efficiency. Banks with better financial robustness have a better index of social behavior. This phenomenon has created a mutual feedback that has forced banks towards more investment on social responsibility and providing better policies in order to be able to obtain more profits. However, there are contradictory results in researches in other countries. The present study is consistent with the studies performed by Smith et al., (1999); Sismondi et al., (2002); Berkley (2004); Codalen et al., (2010) and; Choi et al., (2010). In fact the present study approves the relationship between corporate social responsibility and financial efficiency. From academic point of views, we consider the importance of firms in correspondence with GC and good guidelines. We also approve that communication with the management board is beneficial for implementation of social policies as integrated parts of corporate principles. The management board should make use of these strategies for increase of feedbacks and profitability and development of corporate landscape. Future studies should focus on improvement and or promotion of variables of social responsibility and profitability of banks. In this regard, economic profitability initiates banks' social responsibility and if profitable banks tend to invest in social responsibility, they will obtain additional advantages that result in increased return of profits. On the other hand, the banks that behave socially responsible have better economic profitability. as a business strategy, long-term research focus must be centralized on information samples including at least 4 consecutive years. Investors are recommended to trust the banks that are more socially responsible and buy stocks from these banks. Since these banks assure us that their managers are taking steps towards making more profits. The present study is one the few studies that have been conducted in Iran's special economic atmosphere regarding corporate social responsibility and profitability. In addition the present study can be suitable example for future studies. For example, in future studies one can investigate the relationship between the corporate social responsibility and financial efficiency even among other countries and those that have been stated in the international standard of ISO26000. In addition, other criterions of financial performance can also be used for investigation of the relationship between the former and social responsibility.

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