

Factors Affect the Social Responsibility among Universities in Saudi Arabia: The Role of Government Support

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Abstract: - Research into Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) focused on business organizations in developed countries. The purpose of this research is to examine the factors that affect the CSR in public universities in Saudi Arabia. Building on stakeholder theory and transformational leadership (TL) theory, this study proposed that TL and its dimension will have a significant effect on CSR. Training is expected to affect CSR and mediate the effect of TL on CSR. Government support (GS) is expected to moderate the effect of TL on CSR. Data was collected from 319 academic staff in eight public universities in Saudi Arabia. The data was analysed using Smart PLS. The findings showed that TL and training affected the CSR. All the dimensions of TL have significant effects except for the individualized consideration. Training mediated the effect of TL on CSR while GS moderated the effect of TL on CSR. Decision makers are recommended to implement effective training and TL style. Government support is critical for improving the role of CSR by universities.

Key-Words: Social Responsibility, Transformational Leadership, Government Support, Training, Individualized Influence Public Universities, Saudi Arabia

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1 Introduction

Universities are the source of knowledge. Countries around the world compete in developing their universities to attract more students and increase the economic growth [1]–[3]. Generally, there are three main objectives of university which are related to the research, teaching and community services [4], [5]. The role of university in spreading knowledge and awareness and contributing to the society is considered as important objectives that increase the reputation of universities and enhance their responsibility toward the community [6], [7]. Accordingly, universities are similar to other institutions aim to enhance their corporate social responsibility (CSR) to benefit the society. For this reason, CSR has become one of the critical issue for all organizations [8]. CSR practices are widely known and practiced in developed economies while when it comes to the developing countries, the practices are limited [9].

In Saudi Arabia, the vision of 2030 focused on the role of university and higher education to help in fulfilling the vision and develop the skills and capabilities of students to help in improving the productivity of private and public sector [10]–[12]. This fits with the mission of universities to develop knowledgeable graduates who are capable of producing knowledge and employing it efficiently in all areas of community activity, and actively

participating in various community institutions [13]. Social responsibility is a concept that includes many areas that revolve around moral responsibility, community responsibility, and national responsibility. In business context, researchers divided CSR to economic, ethical, legal, and philanthropic responsibility and found that CSR improved the public image of organizations [14].

One of the factors helping to achieve the role of CSR in a university is the creation of a positive university climate that allows a degree of social interaction, in which the spirit of cooperation, harmony and collectively prevails, and the creation of positive opportunities to support and praise the national culture and adhere to its content without closing or rejecting the product of knowledge development, and developing the feeling of each individual that he has an active role within the organization and the community. This can be done by implementing effective leadership such as the transformational leadership (TL) [15]. Additionally, effective training can help in improving the skills and capabilities of the organizational member to achieve their role in fulfilling the organizational objectives [16].

Most of prior literature focused on the role of CSR among business organization while limited studies have examined the CSR of educational institutions. Several studies indicated that there is limited studies that examined the social

responsibility among organizations in developing countries. A review of CSR using scientometric approach and including 2,583 articles between 1973-2018 indicated that research on CSR is still dominated by Western countries with recent increase in other non-western countries [17]. Several studies referred to the importance of leadership of the university as well as the training and government support. Leadership is critical for improving the contribution of a university to the community. One important type of leadership is the transformational leadership (TL) [18]. Along with leadership, training is important to support the capability of academic staff in the university to achieve their role in educating the community [19]. In this regard, the government support plays essential role in enable public and private institutions to fulfil their roles [20]–[22]. However, few studies examined these factors in the context of higher education in developing countries.

There has, in recent times, been an increasing interest in understanding CSR reporting in developing countries. However, many of these studies fail to investigate fully the contextual factors that influence CSR and reporting in those countries, preferring to rely on theories and hypotheses developed from studies undertaken in the West, particularly the US, UK and Australasia [23]. Therefore, this study aims to examine the factors that affect the CSR among university in Saudi Arabia. The study aims is to examine the effect of TL and training on the CSR of public university in Saudi Arabia. The study aims to examine the mediating role of training and the moderating role of government support between TL and CSR of public universities in Saudi Arabia. The next sections discusses the literature, research methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion.

2 Literature Review

This section discusses the literature of this paper. The section discusses the concept of CSR as well as the conceptual framework.

2.1 CSR in Educational Institutions

Universities as organization are more into providing the teaching and learning services. The role of CSR by higher educational institution is still emerging. Studies indicated that universities are paying less attention to the role of CSR compared with business organizations [8]. Prior literature examined the

factors that might lead to effective CSR by universities. Among the findings that size, status (public or private) and ranking are critical factors for the CSR by universities [8]. Studies of CSR are mostly dominated by the business organizations as well as developed countries. This has motivated us to conduct a study on the CSR among public universities which in developing countries.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Several theories that can explain the role of CSR by organizations. One of the widely used theory is the stakeholder theory. Stakeholder theory argues that corporations should treat all its stakeholders fairly and by doing so, can improve their performance [24] and thereby secure their future. Freeman [25] stated that if organisations want to be effective, they need to pay attention to their stakeholders. Stakeholder theory suggests that those who benefits from an organization, will be more satisfied when the organization took care of their stakeholders. Public universities are one of the leading sources of education and have responsibility toward the citizens, government, and country. Educating students and creating effective graduates can contribute to the community. In addition, educating citizens about emerging issues such as outbreak of a pandemic or general knowledge regarding an issue is a contribution of the universities toward the community. This study deploys the stakeholder theory to explain the CSR activities of a university. Along with this theory, the TL theory suggests that leaders will focus on the development of skills and capabilities of organizational member to develop the overall performance of an organization [26], [27]. In this context, the transformational leaders have the ability to develop the skill of academic staff in universities and in turn those academic staff will contribute to the CSR of a university.

2.3 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

Based on stakeholder theory and the TL theory, this study proposed that the effects of TL and its dimensions on the CSR of public universities in Saudi Arabia are positive. In addition, the study proposed training as a mediating variable between TL and CSR and government support as a moderating variable between TL and CSR. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework.

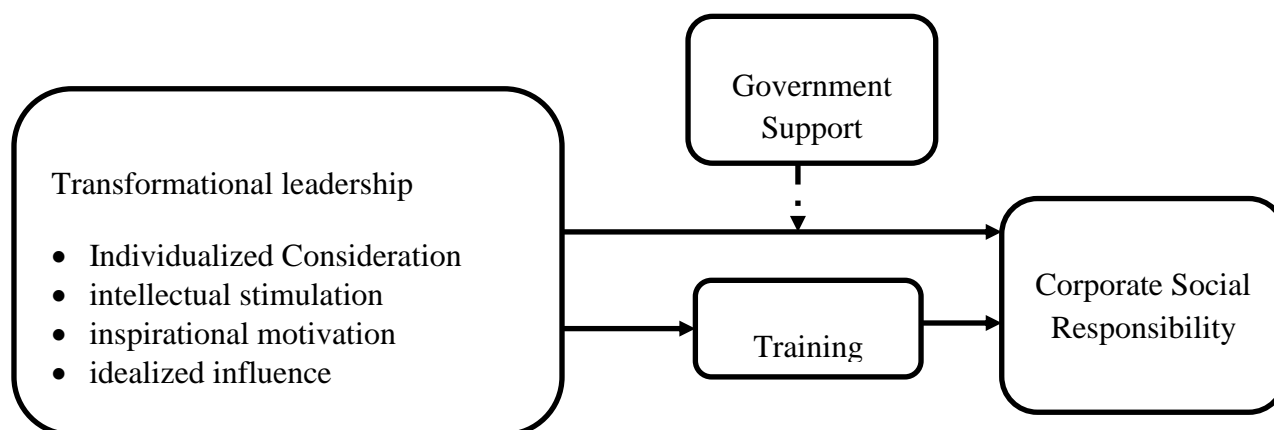


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

2.3.1 Transformational leadership and CSR

TL is defined as the one that creates valuable and positive changes in its followers through a process of helping members individually [28]. It differs from the transactional leadership because it has four components that are individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence [29]. The first components is individualized consideration and it is defined as the degree to which the leader attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the follower's concerns and needs. The second components is intellectual stimulation and it is defined as the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits followers' ideas. Third components of TL is the inspirational motivation and it refers to the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. The last components is idealized influence: this elements provides a role model for high ethical behaviour, instills pride, gains respect and trust [30]–[32].

TL was examined in business context, and few examined its effect on CSR. For instance, the effect of TL on CSR of SMEs was found positive [33]. TL affected positively the CSR of hospitals [34]. Further, in non-for-profit organizations, the TL affected significantly the CSR [35] and a positive effect of TL on CSR was found in higher education [36], [37]. Accordingly, this study expects that the TL and its dimensions will have a positive impact on the CSR of public universities in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the following is hypothesized:

H1: TL affects positively the CSR of public universities.

H2: Individualized Consideration affects positively the CSR of public universities.

H3: Intellectual stimulation affects positively the CSR of public universities.

H4: Inspirational motivation affects positively the CSR of public universities.

H5: Idealized influence affects positively the CSR of public universities.

2.3.2 Training and CSR

Training is defined as the planned intervention that is designed to enhance the determinants of individual job performance [19]. Training is critical for achieving the organizational objectives. Prior literature examined the moderating role of training between employee involvement and CSR and found that high level of training is important for CSR [38]. The mediating role of training was also examined and it was found that training mediated the effect of stakeholder pressure and adoption of environmental sustainability [39]. Training also affected positively the green initiatives in higher education and shareholder value [40], [41]. Training also was found to be a critical factors for the job satisfaction of employees in the public organizations [42]. Accordingly, this study examines the role of training on CSR, and it also examines its mediating role between TL and CSR. Thus, it is hypothesized:

H6: Training has a positive effect on CSR of public universities.

H7: Training mediates the effect of TL on CSR of public universities.

2.3.3 Government Support as a Moderator

Government support can be in several forms such as providing training, tax exception, and financial support [21], [22]. In this study, the public universities are examined, and government support these universities by providing direct fund of the activities of these universities. Government support

can play a moderating role. High government support encourages research and development activities which lead to better performance [43]. Government supported moderated the effect of research intensity on diversified performance [44]. It also moderated the effect of green innovation on sustainable development [45]. In this study, government support is proposed to moderate the effect of TL on CSR. Accordingly, the following is hypothesized:

H8: Government support moderates the effect of TL on CSR of public universities.

3 Research Methodology

This study is a quantitative in nature. The study is conducted among universities in Saudi Arabia. Public universities in Riyadh are selected as the population of this study. There are eight public universities working in Riyadh. The administrative staff or the academic staff are the population of this study. These are 18,883 academic staff. The random sampling technique was used, and the data was collected using a questionnaire. The sample size based on [46] is 377. The questionnaire was adopted from previous studies. Measurement of transformational leadership and its dimensions were adopted from [47], [48], [49]. Measurement of government support was adopted from [50], training was adopted from [51]. Measurement of CSR was adopted from [52]. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic and validation was conducted by three experts. The comments and feedback of experts were used for improving the questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted prior to data collection. A total of 377 questionnaire were distributed on the academic staff in the eight universities. The contact details were collected from the websites of the universities. A total of 343 responses were collected after follow ups. These responses were further filtered based on missing value (MV), outliers, normality, and multicollinearity. Missing value analysis resulted in removing seven of the responses and the outlier's analysis has resulted in removing 17 responses. This has made the valid responses 319. Table 1 shows the results of data examination, and it shows that the data is distributed normally because the skewness (SK) and kurtosis (KU) is less than 1. In addition, the table shows that there is no high correlation between the variables because the Variation inflation factor (VIF) is less than 5 and the tolerance (T) is greater than 0.20.

Table 1. Data Examination

Variable	Normality		Multicollinearity	
	SK	KU	T	VIF
TL	-.61	-.51	.51	1.31
IS	-.31	-.79	.32	1.46
IC	-.51	-.71	.44	1.35
II	-.34	-.93	.58	1.43
IM	-.34	-.34	.66	1.34
TR	-.41	-.81	.54	1.66
GS	-.43	-.43	.56	1.33
CSR	-.61	-.59	.51	1.93
LE	-.20	-.69	.51	1.93
ET	-.45	-.51	.53	1.85
PH	-.40	-.55	-	-

Note: TL: Transformational leadership, IS: Intellectual stimulation, IC: individualized consideration, IM: Inspirational motivation, II: idealized influence, TR: Training, GS: government support, CSR: corporate social responsibility, LE: Legal, ET: Ethical, PH: Philanthropic

4 Findings

This section presents the background of the respondents as well as the hypotheses testing of this study.

4.1 Background of Respondents

A total of 319 respondents have participated and answered the questionnaire of this study. The respondents are majority males (81%) working as academic staff (65%) and have experience in teaching of more than 5 years (78%). The respondents have participated at least one time in CSR activities during the last year (100%).

4.2 Measurement Model

Researchers indicated that the measurement model (MM) can be assessed by examining the factor loading which is supposed to be larger than 0.70 and the reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR)) which are expected to be larger than 0.70 for both. In addition, the convergent validity which assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE) is supposed to be greater than 0.50 [53], [54]. The first order and second order models were assessed. As shown in Table 2, all the values achieved the required level, and this is because some items with low factor loading from CSR, government support, and training were removed. For the discriminant validity it is also achieved because the value of root square of AVE as shown in bold in Table 2 is greater than the cross loading. Table 2 shows the results of the measurement model. It shows the bold values are greater than the

cross loading. In addition, CA and CR are greater than 0.70. the AVE is greater than 0.50.

Table 2. Result of the Measurement Model for First Order and Second Order

First order variable	CA	CR	AVE	ET	II	IC	IM	IS	LE	PH
Ethical	0.944	0.960	0.857	0.926						
Idealized influence	0.932	0.941	0.719	0.607	0.920					
Individualized Consideration	0.915	0.925	0.810	0.652	0.230	0.901				
Inspirational Motivation	0.921	0.927	0.789	0.652	0.630	0.401	0.904			
Intellectual Stimulation	0.938	0.930	0.806	0.661	0.557	0.562	0.420	0.920		
Legal	0.956	0.968	0.883	0.673	0.542	0.536	0.306	0.506	0.841	
Philanthropic	0.947	0.960	0.826	0.683	0.433	0.667	0.433	0.433	0.526	0.874
Second order variables				TR	TL	GS	CSR			
Training	0.960	0.962	0.763	0.818						
Transformational Leadership	0.923	0.942	0.765	0.652	0.939					
Government Support	0.960	0.966	0.782	0.652	0.341	0.891				
CSR	0.913	0.909	0.741	0.661	0.541	0.432	0.883			

4.3 Structural Model

Based on the suggestions of [53], the structural model is assessed by examining the R-square, F-square, Q-square, and path coefficient. Figure 2

shows the structural model of this study. It shows the effect of TL on CSR as well as the mediating role of training and the moderating role of government support.

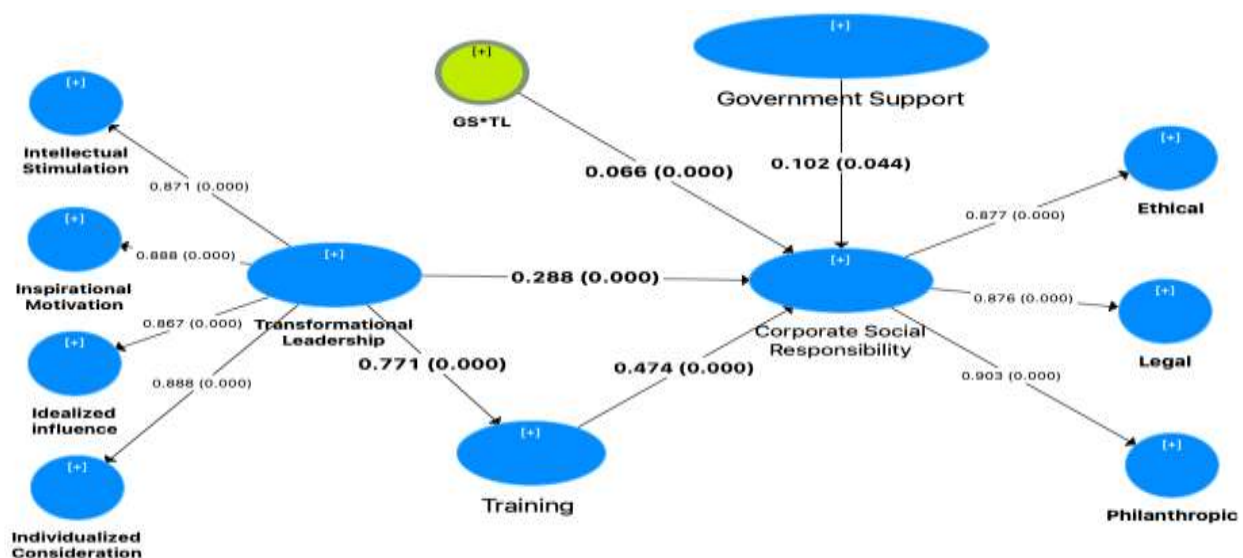


Fig. 2: Structural Model

For the R-square, the model showed that R-square of CSR is 0.631 indicating that 63.1% of the variation in CSR can be explained by the TL and TR. The R-square of TR is 0.183 indicating that 18.3% of the TR can be explained by TL. For the q-square, the value is greater than zero as shown in Table 3. Lastly, for the f-square (f^2), the acceptable

value is 0.02. For all the paths, the f-square (effect size) is acceptable except for the IC→CSR. However, this value is low because the related hypothesis is rejected. Table 3 shows the hypotheses (H), path, path coefficient (B), standard deviation (Std.), T-value (T), P-value (P), f-square (f^2), Q-square (Q^2), and R-square (R^2).

Table 3. Results of Hypotheses Testing

H	Path	B	Std.	T	P	f ²	Q ²	R ²	Remark
H1	TL -> CSR	0.288	0.068	4.239	0.000	0.161	0.231	0.631	Supported
H2	IC-> CSR	0.101	0.100	0.961	0.341	0.002			Rejected
H3	IS-> CSR	0.383	0.081	4.573	0.000	0.049			Supported
H4	IM-> CSR	0.221	0.083	2.844	0.000	0.091			Supported
H5	II-> CSR	0.213	0.094	2.241	0.031	0.081			Supported
H6	TR -> CSR	0.474	0.065	7.300	0.000	0.181			Supported
H7	TL -> TR	0.771	0.034	22.912	0.000	0.391	0.198	0.183	
	TL -> TR -> CSR	0.365	0.049	7.457	0.000	0.092			Supported
H8	GS*TL -> CSR	0.066	0.017	3.798	0.000	0.048			Supported
	GS -> CSR	0.102	0.050	2.023	0.044	0.037			

The findings in Table 3 shows that the effect of TL on CSR is positive (B=0.288, P<0.05). Thus, H1 is supported. For H2, it is rejected because the effect of IC on CSR is positive, but the p-value is greater than 0.05. H3, H4, and H5 are supported because the effect of IS, IM, and II on CSR are positive at p-value less than 0.05. Accordingly, H3, H4, and H5 are supported. For H6, the effect of training on CSR is positive and significant because the value of B=0.474 and the P-value is less than 0.05.

For the mediating effect of training, it is a partial mediation because the direct and the indirect effect (TL→TR→CSR) is positive and significant at B=0.365 and p-value is less than 0.05. Thus, H7 is supported, and training can explain part of the relationship between TL and CSR. For the moderating effect of GS, the findings in Table 3 shows that GS moderated the effect of TL on CSR at value of B=0.066 and P-value less than 0.05. Additionally, the findings showed that GS also has a direct positive significant effect on CSR. Thus, H8 is supported.

5 Discussion and Implications

This study examines the factors that affect the CSR among public universities in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia. The study responded to the call for more studies in developing countries and enrich the literature of CSR in the context of non-business organizations such as universities. The study combined the stakeholder theory with TL theory and managed to explain large percentage (63.1%) of the CSR. In addition, the study contributed to the literature by examining the mediating role of training and the moderating role of GS in the context of higher education in developing countries. The study also contributed to the literature by examining the effect of TL and its

dimensions on the CSR in the context of public universities.

The findings of the study showed that TL, training, and GS are critical for the CSR. TL affected positively the CSR, and this indicates that universities in Saudi Arabia should practice this type of leadership to improve the level of CSR among the universities. The most important element of TL is the intellectual stimulation (IS) followed by inspirational motivation (IM) and idealized influence (II). This indicates that decision makers have to focus on IS and urge their followers to come up with new idea and help them to sharpen the idea and to point out their opinion. These findings regarding the effect of TL and its dimension IS, IM, and II are in line with the findings of previous studies [33]–[37]. The study found that individualized consideration is not significant, and this could be due to the fact that number of those who are under the dean or head of department is high which makes it difficult to consider the need of everyone.

Training has a direct and mediating role between TL and CSR. This indicates that training is a critical factor for CSR, and it can explain part of the association between TL and CSR. This finding is in agreement with the findings of prior literature [38]–[42]. The findings also showed that GS is a significant positive moderator between TL and CSR. This indicates that the high level of the GS can improve the positive relationship between TL and CSR. Accordingly, decision makers are recommended to enhance the GS because it will lead to a better CSR by public universities in Saudi Arabia.

Overall, it is recommended that head of department, dean, and chancellor of universities to implement TL style of leadership. It is also recommended that effective training policy to focus on developing the skills and capabilities of

academic staff in general and in CSR area in particular. Further, the GS is critical for improving the level of CSR among universities and decision makers are recommended to enhance the GS for universities.

6 Conclusion

This study was conducted in Saudi Arabia among public universities to examine the factors that lead to effective CSR by universities. The findings showed that TL and its dimensions except the individualized consideration are critical determinants of the CSR. Training is also important predictors and mediator between TL and CSR. Further, GS is a significant moderator between TL and CSR, and it has a direct effect on CSR. The study is limited to Saudi Arabian context and to public universities. Further work is recommended to examine the CSR among universities in other Gulf countries or other developing countries. Future works are also recommended to examine the CSR among private universities. This study focuses on administrative and academic staff. Future studies can examine the CSR initiatives among students. Future studies are also recommended to examine other factors such as the organizational justice, organizational commitment, and job security in the context of CSR. Examining these factors might lead to a significant increase in the variation of CSR among universities. Decision makers can benefit from the findings of this study in improving the CSR and the role of universities in fulfilling the vision of 2030 in Saudi Arabia.

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