

A Research on the Corporate Social Responsibility Perception: An Evidence from Turkey

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Abstract

Today, there is a growing perception among enterprises that sustainable success cannot be achieved solely through maximizing short-term profits. Corporate social responsibility's growing importance on business success and positive impact on society is accepted by the enterprises. In this study, it is stated that the members' perception of corporate social responsibility of Junior Chamber International (JCI), an international non-governmental organization operating in 115 countries, differ in respect to demographic factors, especially such as sex, age and regional factors which are analysed through frequency analysis, correlation analysis, t test and variance analysis. The results of this research reveal that JCI Turkey's female members' corporate social responsibility perceptions are more developed than the perception of male members. Besides, when regional factors are considered, southern region's corporate social responsibility level of perception is found to be higher than that of the other regions.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), CSR Perception, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Case Study.

Introduction

As a consequence of the globalization, the economic fluctuations, technological and political developments as well as natural disasters, and various issues related to environment, health and security have strengthened the awareness of the individuals with regard to the social matters. Hence, in order to enhance the social welfare of the community they operate and the sustainability of the prosperity, the businesses commenced to give more importance to the social costs of the moral, ethical, social and environmental issues and human rights in addition to work force (Gerçek, 2011:39). The basic concept of these social costs is founded upon the “corporate social responsibility” (CSR).

For most of the enterprises in Turkey, the social responsibility practices have neither become widespread nor been institutionalized due to the absence of incentive or deterrent attitudes (Kaya, 2008:96). Thanks to developing technology and increasing competition, the businesses need to acquire their brand value and prestige in order to outstand among other companies with their CSR position by trying to enhance the satisfaction of the employees and customers. Thus, with respect to CSR it is a vital attempt to understand the opinions and the perception of the members of an international non-governmental organization (NGO), which aims to contribute to the positive transitions of the society by enhancing leadership and entrepreneurship capabilities of its members.

To that end, it has been explored whether the perception of the members of Federation of Young Leaders and Entrepreneurs Association (JCI) in Turkey differ depending on the demographic and regional features. The subject of the research covers the perception of social responsibility of Turkish society as well as the approach, expectations, perception of the NGOs regarding CSR. Within the framework of the subject, the study objects to reveal the perception of professional corporate employees and NGO members who work voluntarily. In consideration of the study results, it targets to bring forward proposals for the companies and NGOs and to build a background for the following researches. Because there is not an ample number of studies' regarding the subject, it is expected that this research will contribute to the literature, and more data will be accumulated about the CSR of Turkish business world.

1. The Birth of Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR has come along with the replacement of perception concerning production orientation, maximum profitability, efficiency and economy with the perception of responsibility intended to the society (Kelgökmen, 2010:305). For the CSR, common ethical and social principles started to be created in the 1970s. When the fact that the American companies took role in the coup d'etat against the government in Chile in 1973 was manifested as well as the bribe given to the Japan politicians to win the tenders in 1975, the social responsibility studies of the governments and non-governmental organization were launched.

In 1976, OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) issued a guide for the multinational businesses in order to organize the employees and accept the joint agreements. In 1977, ILO (International Labour Organization) adopted the trinity declaration about the multinational businesses and social responsibility, but because of the fact that it did not have a mechanism of sanction, it failed. In the 1980s the philosophy of business responsibility commenced to prevail; for the topics of environment and working life, several researches were conducted and their reports were published. At the beginning of 1988, ILO accepted the "Declaration of Fundamental Rights and Fundamentals at Work". This agreement is also referenced for several national and regional scaled regulations, legislations, guidelines and framework agreements. Social Accountability 8000 is an example of these regulations (Arıkök, 2002:14-15).

From the 1990s, CSR has become a requirement for the businesses rather than being a strategic option. The institutions such as United Nations, European Commission, European Union, and World Bank created a division of CSR within the scope of the institution by making regulations and conducting educational facilities (Balı and Cinel, 2011:49). According to the definition made by European Commission, CSR is the voluntary facilities of enterprises as well as their engagement with the partners to integrate economic, social and environmental subjects as a cultural value (European Commission, 2002:7). On the other hand World Bank defines CSR as a solution tool for the economic development, and education of the society along with the protection of environment (Bryane, 2003:116; Balı and Cinel, 2011:47).

2. Literature Review

The concept of CSR was first described by the economist, Howard R. Bowen, as the compatibility of the enterprises' policies, decisions and facilities with the objects and values of the society (Bowen, 1953:6). According to Bowen, while the organizations are in the decision process, they have to take into account the social results, too. Aktan and Börü (2006:54-55) explain that CSR means that the businesses should behave honestly, ethically and responsibly for their partners without noticing the internal or external environment and that they should take decisions and realise these for the benefit of the partners (Aydemir and Ateş, 2011:171). In other words CSR may be defined as the organization management which suggests maintaining the economic facilities of the business by avoiding the disadvantages of the interest of any partners (shareholders, employees, consumers, society) (Dinçer, 1998:155). In most of the researches, it was found that for the enhancement of competition through market opportunities, efficiency, powerful human resources and the quality of the environment they operate, the social responsibility and work opportunities had a corresponding relationship (Özalp et al., 2008:73).

Kotler stated that CSR is a commitment undertaken to enhance the social welfare by means of optional business practices and enterprise resources (Kotler and Lee, 2006:2-3). According to the definitions mentioned, CSR is understood to be the aggregate of the economic, legal, and ethical actions as well as philanthropy (voluntary responsibility) which are expected by a society for a specified time (Carroll, 1979:500; Carroll, 1991:40; Carroll, 1999:289).

In Figure 1, it is seen that Carroll classifies the social responsibility in four different areas in Corporate Social Responsibility Pyramid, and she claims that the organization may only achieve its responsibilities by conducting its social responsibilities and that the businesses should clarify in which level their facilities equals to.

Economic responsibility: The basic economic entity of the society, the businesses gain profit by offering the product/service in order to meet their customers' demands and needs. Economic responsibility which is at the lowest level of the pyramid is the core social responsibility of the organizations. Other responsibilities of the corporation are founded upon this responsibility.

Legal responsibility: While the businesses continue their facilities, they have to comply with the legal regulations. In the second step of the pyramid, according to the legal responsibilities upheld by the society to manage the competition, the businesses both have to be profitable and comply with the legislations.



Figure 1. Corporate Social Responsibility Pyramid

Source: Carroll, 1991:42

Ethical responsibility: While the businesses perform the economic and legal responsibilities, they have to act regarding the ethical norms and values, and be righteous and honest in all their facilities. According to the third level principle of the pyramid, businesses have to conform to the moral rules with service manner and avoid from harmful behaviours.

Philanthropy: The businesses should undertake beneficial facilities for the country and society voluntarily as if a decent citizen, and have to struggle to improve the life standard of the society. Apart from the economic, legal and ethical responsibilities; philanthropy ranking at the highest level of the pyramid, includes the voluntary services which a business may provide for its partners despite being dispensable. Philanthropy may be exemplified as a resource allocation of the business for the art, education, environment and social projects (Erkmen and Şahinoğlu, 2012:272).

CSR perception covers to take active role in issues such as contributing to cultural, art or sport facilities and protecting and smartening the environment in order to create a strong image. It also implies a high social responsibility to enrich and colour the life, and to make it more satisfying. This idea also refers to the responsibilities as to all the partners, such as shareholders, employees, suppliers, competitors, customers, social groups, nature and society unlike the legal liabilities (Özalpet al., 2008:74; Carroll, 1991:26).

3. Methodology

3.1. The Object of the Research and Hypotheses

The most important reason why CSR practices have been adopted by the society in most developed countries is that these facilities are observed to be beneficial for all parts of the society by the researches and practices and have been understood by the partners. In order CSR to be at the higher levels in our country and to activate the institutions to undertake facilities regarding the society's needs, more research should be conducted (Erkmen and Şahinoğlu, 2012:278). Considering this fact, it bears great significance to comprehend the CSR perception of the members of JCI Turkey who actively take charge as managers or in different positions of the business world in Turkey. An active NGO like JCI will serve as a basis to understand much more about Turkish business world. The main objective of the research is to specify and criticise the CSR perception of JCI members in Turkey and the diffractions of CSR levels “economic responsibility”, “legal responsibility”, “ethical responsibility”, and “philanthropy”. This study is descriptive and the hypotheses are as follows:

H1: There is a difference between the CSR perception of male and female members of JCI Turkey members.

H2: Among JCI Turkey members, there is a difference in CSR perception depending on the age groups.

H3: In terms of CSR perception of JCI Turkey members, there is a difference according to working experience in the organization (NGO experience).

H4: Among JCI Turkey members, there is a discrepancy with respect to the regions in terms of CSR perception.

3.2. Sample

In accordance with the object of the study, a “survey” was conducted as an evaluation instrument of the CSR perception of JCI members who actively take in charge as managers or in different levels of the business world in Turkey. As an economic and easily-accessible way for the researcher, the random sampling method was used.

According to the data of 2013, 107 members who participated in the research survey consists %21.4 of JCI Turkey members. The sample of the study includes 100 association members who participated with the qualified answers enough to be used. For the survey, the reason why JCI Turkey, an international NGO, was preferred is the fact that it undertook several social responsibility projects from past to present, made its members actively participate in these projects and adopted CSR awareness as a corporate value. “Blood Donation Campaign with Red Crescent”, “Forest Project with The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA)” and “Employment Project with World Bank” may be shown as examples.

3.3. Methodology of Gathering Data and Analysis

For gathering data, survey as a research instrument was used. The surveys were communicated over local chapter presidents and completed at one-to-one visits. The data of the research was gathered according to the scale, which was referenced and prepared based on Archie Carroll's study titled “The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders” (1991). In the research, the CSR fields are classified as “economic responsibility”, “legal responsibility”, “ethical responsibility” and “philanthropy”.

In the first part of the survey, the statements are classified mainly as “economic responsibility”, “legal responsibility”, “ethical responsibility” and “philanthropy”. As 5 statements per each CSR field, there are 20 statements in total. From 1 to 5, these statements are expressed respectively “1-strongly agree”, “2-agree”, “3-neutral (neither agree, nor disagree)”, “4-don't agree”, “5-strongly disagree”. In the second part of the survey, demographic information was asked such as gender, region, age, education level and the working experience in the association as well as the position and education level. The data acquired appropriately as to the object of the research was evaluated via SPSS 19.0 programme, and was subjected to frequency analysis, correlation analysis, t test and variant analysis.

3.4. The Findings of the Research

According to the findings provided in Table 1, the 60% of the participants are male while the 40% consists of female. In terms of the regions, the north region covering İstanbul and the neighbouring cities constitutes the majority with a 49% proportion, and the west region follows it by having a ratio of 26%. The east and south regions have a proportion of 15% and 10%, respectively. The 65% of the participants are aged 30 or below, and the 35% of them are aged 31 or over. With respect to the educational background, the majority of the participants with a proportion of 66% have pursued either graduate or higher education. With regards to the working period, the ratio of the participants who have been working for less than 1 year in the association is 40%, while the ratio of the members who have been working for between 1 and 2 years is 37% and the ones working for 2 or more years are 23%. In terms of their positions in the association, 19% of the participants are new members while 43% of them are members and 38% of them are Executive Boards (EB) members.

The Cronbach α value of the scale used in the research is 0.93, and this value is above 70%, the ratio which is accepted generally in the literature (Nunnally, 1967:129; Saruhan and Özdemirci, 2005:118). In this phase of the study the factor analysis was applied. The compatibility of the data with the factor analysis was studied with KMO sampling adequacy and Barlett's test of sphericity. The KMO value is 0.872 while the results of Barlett test also make sense ($\chi^2=1563.688$ and $p<0.001$).

Table 1.The Frequency and Percentages of the Participants Regarding the Demographic Features

Demographic Features		Number	%
Gender	Male	60	60
	Female	40	40
Region	North	49	49.0
	South	10	10.0
	East	15	15.0
	West	26	26.0
Age	Under 30	65	65.0
	Over 30	35	35.0
Education	High School/ 2-Year Degree	34	34.0
	Graduate/ Bachelor	66	66.0
NGO Experience	Less than 1 year	40	40.0
	1-2 years	37	37.0
	More than 2 years	23	23.0
NGO Position	New Member	19	19.0
	Member	43	43.0
	EB Member	38	38.0
<i>N</i>		<i>100</i>	

The results of both tests show that factor analysis can be applied for the data related to the scale used in the study. At the end of the factor analysis, the questions which were under the sampling adequacy (equalling to 0.50), or composed a factor as a single question were examined as well as the ones which had a factor values close to each other. Thus, the 10th and 11th statements having a factor value smaller than 0.50 were excluded. When the reliability analysis was completed, all the factors were observed to have a reliability level over 0.60. The total variance explained of four factors was found to be 75.79%. In terms of factor loadings, economic responsibility's factor loading was found to be between 0.80 and 0.60 while the legal responsibility's factor loading was between 0.91 and 0.67. Moreover, regarding the ethical responsibility's factor loading differed from 0.80 to 0.76, and philanthropy's factor loading was between 0.85 and 0.62. These results demonstrated that these statements complied with the structure they were included because the factor loadings of all the statements were over 0.60.

In the Table 2, meanscores of CSR is shown. When the data was analysed, the arithmetic mean of the economic responsibility was found to be 1.93 while the legal responsibility was 1.68 and the ethical responsibility was 1.65 and the average of philanthropy was 1.75. According to these findings, in general the participants were observed to have a keen perception of CSR. The perception of ethical responsibility of the participants was the highest, and the perception of legal, philanthropy and economic responsibility followed it, respectively. The fact that the participants were working for an international association voluntarily caused the perception of economic responsibility to be at lower levels. While the core responsibility of the organizations is economic responsibility, the NGOs and the associations have different concerns.

Table 2.Mean Scores on CSR

Corporate Social Responsibility	Mean	Std.Deviation
Economic	1.93	0.95381
Legal	1.68	0.94338
Ethical	1.65	0.92037
Philanthropy	1.75	0.97600

It was examined whether there was a relation between the four dimensions of the scale and the six demographic questions, and if there was, what kind of a relation it would be investigated. Accordingly, the correlation analysis was conducted. With respect to the correlation values, there was a medium-level positive and meaningful relation between the economic responsibility and legal responsibility ($r=,50$; $p<0.01$), and also between economic and ethical responsibility ($r=,57$; $p<0.01$). While there was also a positive and meaningful relation between economic responsibility and philanthropy ($r=,52$; $p<0.01$), there was a low level negative and significant relation between economic responsibility and region ($r=-,21$; $p<0.05$).

It was found that the ethical responsibility and the legal responsibility had a highly positive and significant relation ($r=,89$; $p<0.01$) while there was also a positive and meaningful relation between legal responsibility and philanthropy($r=,83$; $p<0.01$). Lastly, there was highly a positive and meaningful relation ($r=,78$; $p<0.01$)between ethical responsibility and philanthropy.

Table 3.Correlation Table of the Variables in the Research Model

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Economic	1.96	0.82	1.00									
2. Legal	1.76	0.87	0.50**	1.00								
3. Ethical	1.76	0.88	0.57**	0.89**	1.00							
4. Philanthropy	1.98	0.82	0.52**	0.83**	0.78**	1.00						
5. Gender	1.40	0.49	-0.09	-0.14	-0.10	-0.03	1.00					
6. Region	1.91	1.09	-0.21*	0.12	0.16	0.06	-0.02	1.00				
7. Age	1.35	0.47	-0.10	-0.10	-0.09	0.05	0.11	0.15	1.00			
8. Education	1.11	0.31	0.09	-0.08	-0.08	0.07	0.06	-0.14	0.07	1.00		
9. NGO Expr.	1.83	0.77	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.12	0.08	-0.27**	0.26**	0.03	1.00	
10. NGO Post.	2.19	0.73	-0.03	-0.18	-0.17	0.05	0.04	0.02	0.18	0.00	0.39**	1.00

Note: * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$, N=100

According to Table 4, for the factors of economic, legal, ethical responsibilities and philanthropy ($p>0,05$) it was observed that the perception of CSR of the participants did not show an alteration with respect to the gender and the hypothesis of H1 was refused. After a detailed examination of the data; the CSR perception of the males was found to be relatively lower compared to the perception of the females in all factors (economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility and philanthropy).

Table 4.The Results of t Testfor Gender Factor

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. ErrorMean	T	P
Economic	Male	60	2.00	0.99326	0.12931	1.198	0.691
	Female	40	1.77	0.85531	0.13524		
Legal	Male	60	1.79	1.04650	0.13624	1.321	0.149
	Female	40	1.54	0.76071	0.12028		
Ethical	Male	60	1.73	1.01799	0.13253	0.946	0.155
	Female	40	1.55	0.76068	0.12027		
Philanthropy	Male	60	1.78	1.04241	0.13571	0.272	0.455
	Female	40	1.72	0.88639	0.14015		

Table 5 shows that the age factor didn't cause a change in CSR perception of the participants for economic, legal, ethical responsibilities and philanthropy($p>0.05$) and the H2 was refused. Following a detailed examination, all the factors of CSR perception of the participants who are under 30, were relatively lower compared to the participants who are over 30.

Table 5.The Results of t Test for the Age Factor

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	T	P
Economic	Under 30	65	1.99	0.90325	0.11203	0.852	0.425
	Over 30	35	1.82	1.04582	0.17678		
Legal	Under 30	65	1.78	0.98734	0.12247	1.370	0.340
	Over 30	35	1.51	0.84123	0.14219		
Ethical	Under 30	65	1.74	0.96374	0.11954	1.315	0.467
	Over 30	35	1.49	0.82185	0.13892		
Philanthropy	Under 30	65	1.77	0.97023	0.12034	0.339	0.940
	Over 30	35	1.70	0.99925	0.16890		

According to the Table 6, for the legal responsibility and philanthropy factors ($p > 0.05$) the NGO experience of the participants did not create a change, but it was found that it changed the perception of economic and ethical responsibility ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the H3 hypothesis was accepted partially. In the association, the participants having NGO experience for 1-2 years exhibited a more indecisive attitude in terms of the perception of the economic and ethical responsibilities of CSR.

Table 6.The Results of ANOVA Test related to the NGO experience

	NGO Exp	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F	P
Economic	< 1 year	40	1.78	0.52559	4.379	0.015
	1-2 years	37	2.27	1.02126		
	> 2 years	23	1.78	0.77718		
Legal	< 1 year	40	1.65	0.62388	1.549	0.218
	1-2 years	37	1.96	1.07996		
	> 2 years	23	1.63	0.86896		
Ethical	< 1 year	40	1.58	0.58439	3.307	0.041
	1-2 years	37	2.05	1.10103		
	> 2 years	23	1.60	0.82856		
Philanthropy	< 1 year	40	1.81	0.66624	1.435	0.243
	1-2 years	37	2.12	0.95260		
	> 2 years	23	2.04	0.85271		

According to the Table 7, for the perception of legal, ethical responsibilities and philanthropy, ($p < 0.05$) the CSR perception of the participants differed with respect to the regions, and it was found that only the perception of economic responsibility that did not change. Thus, the H4 hypothesis was partially supported. When the data was analysed thoroughly, in terms of the perception of legal responsibility the west region was observed to be more indecisive, and the north region covering Istanbul and neighbouring cities as well as the east region seemed to have comparatively more positive attitude. The highest level of perception regarding the legal responsibility was found to belong to the south region. In terms of the ethical responsibility, the west region seemed to be relatively indecisive while the north and east regions had a slightly more positive perception. The south region was considered to have a higher level of ethical responsibility perception.

Finally, in terms of philanthropy the west region seemed to be more indecisive compared to the other regions and the north region had a relatively more positive perception and the highest levels of perception were found to be in south and east regions.

Table 7. ANOVA TestResults in terms of the Regions

	Region	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F	P
Economic	North	49	1.82	0.13541	2.767	0.172
	South	10	1.71	0.13247		
	East	15	2.37	0.29586		
	West	26	2.40	0.31236		
Legal	North	49	1.71	0.15292	2.908	0.002
	South	10	1.35	0.07082		
	East	15	1.60	0.14044		
	West	26	2.22	0.31421		
Ethical	North	49	1.65	0.14416	4.088	0.002
	South	10	1.33	0.08867		
	East	15	1.47	0.11331		
	West	26	2.31	0.30249		
Philanthropy	North	49	1.79	0.14764	3.107	0.000
	South	10	1.46	0.10140		
	East	15	1.43	0.13194		
	West	26	2.33	0.35486		

Conclusion and Discussion for Future Studies

At the present time, social awareness has increased about the CSR issue as a result of the rising competition, education level and technological improvements (Gürol et al., 2010:153). And this situation has been evaluated by the organizations in terms of economic, legal, ethical responsibilities and philanthropy which are presented by Carroll (1991). Because of the difficulty which are experienced by the organizations about the CSR facilities, in the business world the fact that the members of JCI working in different positions including the managers have a high level of awareness is of vital importance. Moreover, the perception of the members could be one of the determinants of the ethical position of the business world in Turkey.

In this study, what JCI Turkey members thought about the CSR was presented, and the relationship between CSR perception and demographic features was examined. When the average of the answers given to 20 survey questions related to the CSR was considered, it was observed that the participants had a positive expectation in terms of the social responsibility of the businesses and CSR. Whether the CSR perception differed according to gender, age, NGO experience and region was analysed through the t test and one-way ANOVA test. When the perception of the participants was evaluated in terms of gender, the CSR perception of the male were found to be relatively lower compared to the female's in all factors (economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility and philanthropy). Moreover, the CSR perception of the participants who are aged under 30 is relatively lower compared to the ones who are aged 30 or over. This finding can be explained with the fact that the members who are aged over 30 have more experience in business life and they are more experienced in solving problems compared to the members who are aged under 30. For the factors of legal responsibility and philanthropy, the CSR perception doesn't change depending on the NGO experience of the participants in the association. But it caused a change for the economic responsibility and ethical responsibility. The perception of the legal responsibility, ethical responsibility and philanthropy of the participants differs according to the regions, but only the economic responsibility perception does not differ depending on the region. When the data was analysed thoroughly, in terms of the perception of legal responsibility the west region was observed to be more indecisive, and the north region covering Istanbul and neighbouring cities as well as the east region seem to have relatively more positive perception. The south region was considered to have a higher level of ethical and legal responsibility perception. Finally, in terms of philanthropy the west region seemed to be more indecisive and the highest levels of perception were found to be in south and east regions. This study aims to constitute CSR perception of Turkish society throughout analysing the approach, expectations, perception of the NGOs regarding CSR. Within the framework of the subject, the study objects to reveal the perception of professional corporate workers and NGO members who work voluntarily. In consideration of the research results, it targets to bring forward proposals for the companies and NGOs, and to build a background for the following researches.

Because there is not an ample number of studies' regarding the subject, this research will contribute to the literature and more data about the CSR of Turkish business world will be accumulated. Although there are researches about CSR perception in the literature, these researches are conducted in different countries and cultures. But in Turkey, there are only a few theoretical researches conducted only in Turkey. Thus, for the future studies, it is suggested to take into account the intercultural differences while making a research on CSR perception.

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