

# The Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on Competitive Advantage: Afield Study at Jordanian Airlines

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## Abstract

*The study aimed at investigating the impact of CSR on competitive advantages: A field study on the Jordanian Airlines. The study is considered as descriptive and cause/effect study. Data were collected from 125 out of about 300 managers and employees in current operating Airlines in Jordan (Royal Jordanian, Royal Wings, Jordan Aviation, and Solitaire). After checking the questionnaires, only 121 were accepted for further analysis. After confirming the normality, validity and reliability of the study tool, descriptive statistical analysis used to describe the variables, the correlation between independent and dependent variables were conducted, and multiple regressions used to test the hypothesis. The study results show that the researched companies implementation of CSR variables are medium, however results show poor implementation of environmental responsibility. The results also show that the competitive advantages dimensions have medium implementation, however cost and innovation show poor implementation. Moreover, results show that the relationships among corporate social responsibility sub-variables are strong to very strong, and the relationships among competitive advantages dimensions are also strong to very strong, and the relationship between corporate social responsibility and competitive advantage is very strong. Finally, results show that Corporate Social Responsibility elements (social, economic, environmental, national and international norms) affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), where the environmental responsibility rated the highest effect on competitive advantages of Jordanian Airlines, followed by economical responsibility, then national and international norms, and finally, social responsibility has lowest effect on competitive advantages of Jordanian Airlines,*

Key words: corporate social responsibility, social responsibility, economic responsibility, environmental responsibility, national and international standards, competitive advantage.



## **1- Introduction**

In globalization era, the social responsibility became to be the main concern for all organizations, wherever they are, because it affects all people all over the world. It is the concern of governmental, public and private organizations. It has many names such as corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, and sustainability. Almost all authors and practitioners agree about three main components social, economic and environmental responsibilities. Some authors added the national and international norms. United nation and almost all governments have laws impose regulations to encourage organizations social contributions, economic contribution and to protect the environment, as well as, to respect the national and international norms. Corporate social responsibility affect organizations business' performance of almost all organizations. It can create competitive advantages for those organizations, who implement all CSR components.

European Commission (2001) stated that recently, there is an increased attention from business, consumers, academics, and policy makers for CSR. Shintaku (2005) stated that technological advancement and sustainable competitive both affect creativity and innovation. Mosconi, et. al. (2008) United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) brought up and defined cleaner production defined as "the continuous application of an environmental, integrated and preventive strategy to processes, products and services to increase global efficiency and reduce risks for human beings and environments". Graf and Snabe (2010) explained that for any organization to be able to survive and compete in the market; it should apply the rules and regulations. McWilliams and Siegel (2011) said CSR plays key role for improving the quality, and increase credibility of firm. Saeed and Arshad (2012) said CSR is becoming mandated and as one of strategy pillars for all organizations. Choudhary and Singh (2012) stated that corporate should adjust their plans according to the needs, interests and benefits of both corporate and community. Barboza and Trejos (2013) stated that corporates should consider CSR when developing new technologies and innovations to enhance life standard. Manasakis, et. al. (2013) stated that CSR implementation helps organizations to make future profit if they can apply CRS strategies well. El-Garaihy, et. al. (2014) mentioned that CSR is related to competitive sustainability, economic performance, customer satisfaction. Gawali and Nare (2014) stated that to be successful in the global market, organizations must be innovative in using resources,

which affect the cost. Gupta (2014) said philanthropy helps to transfer the business ecosystem to create shared value and economic value through the community. Motilewa and Worlu (2015) stated that Corporate Social Responsibility includes the economic, legal, ethical perspectives for the organization. Makovere and Ngirande (2016) said that behaving wisely and carefully through obeying governance laws and regulations related to environment lead to organization success. Hakimi, et. al. (2016) claimed an economic, environmental and social variable influence customer behavior positively, and creates competitive advantage. Mehraj and Qureshi (2016) said social sustainability should focus on national and international norms related to natural sources, human rights, workers health and safety.

From the above discussion, now-a-days it seems that the CSR is a precondition for any organization to carry its activities internationally. Applying CSR can affect organizations competitive advantages. Therefore, this study is dedicated to investigate the effect of CSR initiatives: social, economic, environmental, national/international norms on competitive advantage dimensions: cost, quality, speed, reliability and innovation in Jordanian Airlines' Business Performance.

## **2- Research problem**

To be able to compete internationally organizations whatever they do, and wherever they do their businesses should apply Corporate Social Responsibility. During my meetings with many managers in Jordanian Airlines, they expressed their concerns about the weak application of CSR components. Many authors recommended studying the effect of implementing CSR on competitive advantages, such as Saeed and Arshad (2012) said that social responsibility is the main challenge for marketing departments while dealing with the community and environment, so organizations need improve quality of life of individuals, as well as, successful product. Choudhary and Singh (2012) recommended that business managers have to extend their functions to serve society. Chege (2013) stated that organizations' contentious success depends not only on making profit but also contentious growth CSR activities. Makovere and Ngirande (2016) said that companies should behave wisely, ethically, and carefully through obeying governance law and regulations, related to environments, which is a key factors for success globally. Finally, Hakimi, et. al. (2016) said that Social responsibility has created a new turn for marketing departments in all organizations.

Implementing CSR components can affect competitive advantages; therefore this study is devoted to answer the following main question: Do implementing CSR components affect competitive advantages of Jordanian Airlines.

Problem Questions:

The study problem can be viewed by answering the following main questions in details.

The Main Question:

1. Do Corporate Social Responsibility elements (social, economic, environmental, national and international norms) affect organizations' Competitive Advantages at Jordanian Airlines?

Based on CSR components main question can be divided into the following four sub-questions:

- 1.1. Does Social Responsibility affect organizations' Competitive Advantages?
- 1.2. Does Economical Responsibility affect organizations' Competitive Advantages?
- 1.3. Does Environmental Responsibility affect organizations' Competitive Advantages?
- 1.4. Do National and International Norms affect organizations' Competitive Advantages?

### **3- Study Purpose and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of applying Corporate Social Responsibility activities such as social responsibility, economic responsibility, environmental responsibility and national and international norms' at Jordanian Airlines and investigate their effect on competitive advantages. The main objective of this search is to provide recommendations to Airlines Industry and to discover if Jordanian Airlines are implementing the CSR drivers on their business. It may of interest for scholars and academicians who may use it as reference and for future comparison studies and it adds a new study to library.

Finally, the objective of this study is to provide also sound recommendations to decision makers and to other industries.

#### **4- StudyHypotheses**

Based on the above-mentioned problem statement and its elements, and according to the study model, the following hypothesis can be developed:

H01: Corporate Social Responsibility elements (social, economic, environmental, national and international norms) do not affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Based on the components of CSR the main hypotheses can be divided into the following four sub-hypotheses:

H01.1: Social Responsibility does not affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

H01.2: Economical Responsibility does not affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

H01.3: Environmental Responsibility does not affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

H01.4: National and International Norms do not affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

#### **5- Previousstudies**

Panda and Satpathy (2016) study titled: "**Overview of the Relationship between Innovation, Sustainability and Competitive Advantage in Construction**", aimed to investigate CA achievement in the business related with adaptation of innovation and CSR activities in the business strategy. The research concluded creativeness is one of the key elements of business achievement in the organization itself and for the other business. This study focused on construction buildings and their operational strategies analyzed by implementation of environmental, social economic sustainability on organization's competitive environments. The study concluded that

creative thinking and new technology was core factor of achieving competitive advantage for construction and for other industries.

Makovere and Ngirande(2016) study titled: **"The Influence Of Corporate Social Responsibility On Competitive Advantage: A Case Of Zimbabwean Stock Exchange Listed Companies"**, examined several Zimbabwean Stock Exchangers regarding the effect of CSR on firms competitiveness. The study implemented on 10 chosen Zimbabwean Exchangers during 2012-2013. Descriptive statistical analysis and mixed method applied on the model of the study. The results of this study showed that CSR has played serious role on a company business performance such as; increasing profitability, growth ,gain and retain of human resources, innovative of goods and services and productivity, quality of materials, which was all core elements of CA.

Flammer and Luo (2016) study titled: **"Corporate social responsibility as an employee governance tool: Evidence from a quasi-experiment"**, aimed to investigate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its effect on employee engagement and mitigate adverse behavior at the workplace. Researcher wanted find out changes in state unemployment insurance during 1991-2013. The study concluded that higher UI benefits were associated with higher engagement in employee-related CSR.

Bayraktar (2017) study titled: **"Competitive strategies, innovation, and firm performance: an empirical study in a developing economy environment "**, the aim of this study was to demonstrate the relationships between competitive strategies, innovation and steady performance in the context of Turkish manufacturing companies. Data has been collected from senior management of companies by way of interviewing a computer assistant. The study sample included 140 manufacturing companies in textile, automotive supplies, computer and electronics. structural equation model had been used. the study found that was a statistically significant relationship between Competitive strategies, innovation, and firm performance and Effect on developing economy environment.

Al Shobaki and Naser (2017) study titled: **"The Role of the Practice of Excellence Strategies in Education to Achieve Sustainable Competitive Advantage to Institutions of Higher Education-Faculty"**, The study aimed to investigate the role of the strategies of excellence in education in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage for higher educational institutions in the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology at Al-Azhar University in Gaza. The study concluded that there was a strong relationship between the level of practice of excellence strategies in

education and the achievement of higher education institutions for the competitive advantage of sustainable development.

Saeidi, et. al. (2017) study titled: "**Mediating Role of Competitive Advantage Between Corporate Social Responsibility and Firm's Sales Growth**", This study investigated firms' sales growth and significantly affected by CSR implementation? and to examine whether the relationship between corporate social responsibility and firm's sales growth is mediated by competitive advantage. A total of 107 (out of 843) SMEs in manufacturing and consumer product industry from Iran were engaged in this study. the results were reveals that firms' sales growth is positively and significantly affected by CSR implementation. and discloses that the positive effect of CSR on sales growth is positively mediated by competitive advantage.

Khawaldeh (2017) study titled: "**The Effectiveness of Applying the Baldrige Quality Standards in Higher Education to Achieve Competitive Advantage: Case Study on Jordanian Private Universities**", purpose of this study to find out implementation of Baldrige quality standards in Jordanian private universities, to search for connectivity between quality and competitive advantages. the study to investigate six private universities in Jordan. Data was collected by using questionnaire, statistical technique has used by the researcher. The study has found that quality was effected by Baldrige standards which were commitment of higher management ,customer satisfaction, reliability.

Laari,et. al. (2017) study titled: "**Supply chain perspective on competitive strategies and green supply chain management strategies**", aimed to analyze to adaptation of green supply chain management activities in organizational practices while handling environments to suppliers. Data was collected from 128 manufactures in Finland. The study concluded that competitive strategy and GSCM strategy were related with each other. Organization should understand importance of implementation of GSCM activities into considered as competitive advantages in the market.

Eding and Scholtens (2017) study titled: "**Corporate Social Responsibility and Shareholder Proposals**", The aim of this study was to find out relationship between corporate social responsibility to organizations, and shareholder. the researcher used 250 firms in United States. and also the researcher examined environmental, social, and legal issues were related with ownership. The study results showed that there were no proof that for firms consideration except employees wellbeing.

Aguinis and Glavas (2017) study titled: "**On Corporate Social Responsibility, Sense making, and the Search for Meaningfulness Through Work**", the purpose of the study was to



address how employees made sense of corporate social responsibility and , find meaningfulness through work. Research main focus was on organizations and institutions and to found out relationship between CSR and organization' business performance. Researcher used 23 individuals, and investigated employees reactions toward their firm's CSR performance. and why and when each employee acted to differently to CSR. The analysis of the study showed that employees had less positive performance for themselves, their firms and stakeholders

Lim and Greenwood (2017) study titled: "**Communicating corporate social responsibility (CSR): Stakeholder responsiveness and engagement strategy to achieve CSR goals**", this paper aimed to find out difference between CSR communication strategies (engagement vs. responsiveness), along with communication channels. The study conducted online survey with public relations, corporate communication, corporate social responsibility, investor relations and sustainability executives within the companies listed on the Wilshire 5000 Total Market Index of publicly traded U.S. companies. Results showed that CSR engagement strategy had a positive effect on achieving all three CSR goals we identified through factor analysis: business, community, and employees. The responsiveness strategy was positively associated with only business and community goal achievement.

Liang and Renneboog (2017) study titled: "**On the Foundations of Corporate Social Responsibility**", aimed to investigate corporate social responsibility (CSR) ratings for 23,000 companies from 114 countries. Study has found that organization' CSR rating and its country's legal origin were strongly correlated. Legal origin was a stronger explanation than “doing good by doing well” factors or firm and country characteristics (ownership concentration, political institutions, and globalization): firms from common law countries had lower CSR than companies from civil law countries, with Scandinavian civil law firms had the highest CSR ratings. This study has found that civil law firms were more responsive to CSR than law firms.

## **6- Study tool**

The tool of the present study consisted of a questionnaire prepared to measure the reasons for the low achievement of students in mathematics from the point of view of teachers in the lower basic stage.

(Cronbach's Alpha): Reliability test (Cronbach's alpha coefficients of internal consistency) used to test the consistency and suitability of the measuring tools. The reliability was evident by



strong Cronbach's alpha coefficients of internal consistency. Since Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values for independent sub-variables ranges between 0.734 and 0.843, and for dependent dimensions ranges between 0.678 to 0.809. Since all values are more than 70%, therefore, reliability of the tool is assumed.

**Table (1): Cronbach's Alpha and One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

No.	Item	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	KS-Z Value	Sig.
1	Social Responsibility	7	0.793	0.879	0.422
2	Economic Responsibility	7	0.734	0.964	0.310
3	Environmental Responsibility	7	0.843	1.255	0.086
4	National and International Norms	7	0.784	0.943	0.337
	<b>Corporate Social Responsibility</b>	<b>4 Sub-Variables</b>	<b>0.810</b>	<b>0.810</b>	<b>0.527</b>
5	Cost	5	0.678	1.329	0.590
6	Quality	5	0.744	0.915	0.372
7	Time	5	0.778	0.775	0.585
8	Reliability	5	0.701	1.277	0.077
9	Innovation	5	0.809	0.812	0.525
	<b>Competitive Advantages</b>	<b>5 Dimensions</b>	<b>0.848</b>	<b>0.490</b>	<b>0.970</b>

## 7- Statistical processing

In order to process the data statistically, the computerized statistical package program in social sciences was used by using the following descriptive and analytical statistical treatments:

- Arithmetical averages, standard deviations and percentages.
- Test (t) for independent operations.
- Unilateral analysis of variance (One Way Anova).

## 8- Testing hypotheses

Multiple regressions are used to test the effect of corporate social responsibility on achieving competitive advantage at Jordanian Airlines.

After confirming normality, validity, reliability and relationships between variables, the following tests should be carried out to be able to use multiple regressions: normality, linearity, independence of errors and multi-collinearity (Sekaran 2003).

### Multi-collinearity.

VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) and tolerance are used to test multi-collinearity. If VIF is less than 10 and tolerance is more than 0.1, the multi-collinearity model does not violate this assumption. Table (1) shows also that the VIF values are less than 10 and the tolerance values are more than 0.10. This indicates that there is no multi-collinearity within the independent variables of the study.

**Table (2): Multi-collinearity and Durbin-Watson Tests.**

Sub-Variable	Collinearity Statistics		Durbin-Watson
	Tolerance	VIF	
Social Responsibility	0.543	1.841	1.825
Economic Responsibility	0.404	2.473	
Environmental Responsibility	0.661	1.512	
National and International Norms	0.594	1.684	

**Main Hypotheses:**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Corporate Social Responsibility elements (social, economic, environmental, national and international norms) do not affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Table (2) shows that when regressing the four independent variables of corporate social responsibility together against dependent variable competitive advantages. R<sup>2</sup> shows the fitness of the model for multiple regressions and explains the variance of independent variable on dependent variable. Since R<sup>2</sup> is 66.6% then the independent variable can explain 66.6% of variance on dependent variable, since (R<sup>2</sup>=0.666, F=57.947, Sig.=0.000). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, which states that Corporate Social Responsibility elements (social, economic, environmental, national and international norms) affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

**Table (3): ANOVA Test - Regressing the Four Corporate Social Responsibility Sub-Variable Together against Competitive Advantages.**

Model	r	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.
1	0.816 <sup>a</sup>	0.666	0.655	57.947	0.000 <sup>b</sup>

**a. Dependent Variable: Competitive Advantages**

**b. Predictors: (Constant), National and International Norms, Environmental Responsibility, Social Responsibility, Economic Responsibility**

Table (4) shows the effect of each corporate social responsibility sub-variable on competitive advantages.

**Table (4): ANOVA Test - Regressing the Four Corporate Social Responsibility Sub-Variable Together against Competitive Advantages.**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	0.626	0.194		3.223	0.002
	Social Responsibility	0.120	0.061	0.142	1.958	0.053
	Economic Responsibility	0.206	0.074	0.234	2.769	0.007
	Environmental Responsibility	0.356	0.051	0.456	6.924	0.000
	National and International Norms	0.148	0.060	0.174	2.494	0.014

**t-Tabulated=1.980**

H01.1: Social Responsibility does not affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Table (4.15) shows that there is a significant effect of social responsibility on competitive advantages, where (Beta=0.142, t=1.958, sig.=0.053, p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that social responsibility affects competitive advantages of Jordanian Airlines, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

H01.2: Economical Responsibility does not affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Table (4.15) shows that there is a significant effect of economical responsibility on competitive advantages, since (Beta=0.234, t=2.769, sig.=0.007, p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that economical responsibility affects competitive advantages of Jordanian Airlines, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

H01.3: Environmental Responsibility does not affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Table (4.15) shows that there is a significant effect of environmental responsibility on competitive advantages, since (Beta=0.456, t=6.924, sig.=0.000, p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that environmental responsibility affects competitive advantages of Jordanian Airlines, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

H01.4: National and International Norms do not affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Table (4.15) shows that there is a significant effect of national and international norms on competitive advantage, since (Beta=0.174, t=2.94, sig.=0.014, p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis

is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that national and international norms affects competitive priorities of Jordanian Airlines, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

In summary, multiple regressions results shows that Corporate Social Responsibility elements (social, economic, environmental, national and international norms) affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), where ( $R^2=0.666$ ,  $F=57.947$ ,  $Sig.=0.000$ ). Results also shows that environmental responsibility has the highest effect on competitive advantages of Jordanian Airlines, where ( $Beta=0.456$ ,  $t=6.924$ ,  $sig.=0.000$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Followed by economical responsibility, where ( $Beta=0.234$ ,  $t=2.769$ ,  $sig.=0.007$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), then national and international norms, where ( $Beta=0.174$ ,  $t=2.94$ ,  $sig.=0.014$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and finally, social responsibility has lowest effect on competitive advantages of Jordanian Airlines, where ( $Beta=0.142$ ,  $t=1.958$ ,  $sig.=0.053$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

## 9- Discussion of Results

The study results show that the researched companies implementation of CSR variables are medium, however results show poor implementation of environmental responsibility. The results also show that the competitive advantages dimensions have medium implementation, however cost and innovation show poor implementation. This result is supported by the previous studies, such as: Military and Ionesco (2006), Moosaa and Sajid (2010), Simmons (2013), finally Chege (2013).

Moreover, results show that the relationships among corporate social responsibility sub-variables are strong to very strong, and the relationships among competitive advantages dimensions are also strong to very strong, and the relationship between corporate social responsibility and competitive advantage is very strong. The study results are matching with Smits (2014), Ojo, et. al. (2015) finally Odipo and Njeru (2016).

Finally, results show that Corporate Social Responsibility elements (social, economic, environmental, national and international norms) affect organizations' Competitive Advantages, at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), where the environmental responsibility rated the highest effect on competitive advantages of Jordanian Airlines, followed by economical responsibility, then national and international norms, and finally, social responsibility has lowest effect on competitive advantages of Jordanian Airlines. This result is supported previous studies, such as: Mohammed, et. al. (2016) and Military and Ionesco (2006).

## 10- Recommendations for Future Research

In the light of the current study results the following recommendations can be drawn:

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### **Recommendations for Jordanian Airlines:**

1. The researcher recommends increasing the awareness of department managers and employees in the associations of the importance of stages and trends of the term (Corporate Social Responsibility) as one of the most important concepts that lead to the growth and maturity of associations. By providing creative ideas to help them continue and succeed.
2. The researcher recommends the need to develop the methods and concept of the social responsibility component as the result of the test has no effect of this element on the Competitive Advantages. Because it is something that every organization or individual must do to maintain the balance between the economy and the ecosystem. Social responsibility is not only about business organizations but about everyone whose actions affect the environment.
3. The elements of (Competitive Advantages) positively affect the growth and reputation of associations, which can be an obstacle to their development and sustainability. It is necessary to study and understand the stages and levels of (Competitive Advantages) high quality. And how to manage those stages correctly.
4. The need for organizations to focus on research and development support to strengthen the area of (Corporate Social Responsibility), since it is important to improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery and to improve competitive advantages.
5. The researcher recommends conducting studies to compare the cost of implementing (Corporate Social Responsibility) and the benefits of implementing it to increase the awareness of the decision makers in the organizations.

### **Recommendations for Academics and Future Research:**

6. The current study recommends adding sustainable development elements to Corporate Social Responsibility in further studies.

This study was conducted on Jordanian Airlines. Generalizing Jordanian results to other countries is questionable. Therefore, the study recommends carrying out similar study in different countries especially Arab countries.

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