



Research Article

Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Image in the Food Services Sector: A Quantitative Research Study in Cajamarca, Peru

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Abstract

The business dynamics of services evolve drastically, making it necessary for organizations to be willing to look for management models that add value to the company through social responsibility and sustainability and impact its related community. The preservation of the organizational image capitalizes on the value of companies, giving them differentiating elements to stand out in the market. This study aims to determine the relationship between the dimensions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Corporate Image of companies belonging to the food services sector in Cajamarca, 2022. For this purpose, a quantitative scientific approach, correlational level, non-experimental cross-sectional design was used, employing a questionnaire with applicability validity and a reliability of 0.90 as an instrument. The results confirm the existence of a significant and positive correlation (Spearman $r = 0.740$), regarding the significance level ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the research hypothesis (H_1), which states that there is a positive relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Image according to the rule of interpretation, is valid.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, corporate image, linked community, sustainability, economy, society.

Introduction

The business world is constantly changing in line with the generation of new industrial processes, demanding more resources; organizations seek to expand and grow in their operations, bringing economic benefits for countries and generating negative impacts on the sustainability of the ecosystem [23, 19].

In this context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was born, a concept linked to the theories that emerged in 1960 and proposed incorporating value to the company through respect for sustainability and its incorporation as part of its mission [8, 23].

CSR conceptualization has changed in response to the variability of the environment and organizations. Disruptions in the quality of life of society reaffirm the need to incorporate practices in the management of companies that validate that the development of the organization is generated in harmony with the preservation of the environment and the elements that compose it, respecting the sense of equity in the economic aspects, protection of the suitable environments for the related community, reduction of the impacts of its processes on the environment [29, 31].

In the last decades, the incorporation of the concepts of responsibility with the preservation of the planet and all the actions performed by the company towards the community increased. This converges with the development of awareness by the markets and regulatory companies [12, 20].

In this sense, organizations must be aligned with the requirements of their markets; they cannot remain immobilized in the face of the sustainability demands of current or potential customers. Maintaining a neat organizational image brings benefits, such as differentiation

from competitors, brand capitalization, sales increase, or even the development of the possibility of price increase since people would pay more for products and services that show empathy and responsibility with their related communities. In addition, organizations with a correct corporate image become reference places to work [27, 5].

In Peru, incorporating CSR aspects into organizations is still minimal, and is generally concentrated in large organizations that are representative of their sectors. Some small and upstream companies hardly comply with the legal framework. However, the regulatory framework is still weak; they do not carry out their established duties toward the government.

However, over the years, the awareness of environmental respect has been emerging in markets, giving competitive advantages to companies that assume CSR as part of their organization [6]. Therefore, this research aims to determine the relationship between the dimensions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Corporate Image of companies from the food service sector (See Fig. 01).

Based on the above, this research poses a basic question: What is the relationship between the dimensions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Corporate Image of the companies from the food service sector, in Cajamarca 2022? (See Fig. 01) This research is especially relevant in expanding the theoretical bases regarding conceptualizing and dimensioning the variables treated. On the other hand, it will validate or disprove the relationship proposed. This study follows the scientific method, which offers validity and reliability to the results that will be presented, as well as provides procedures focused on developing CSR in our country.

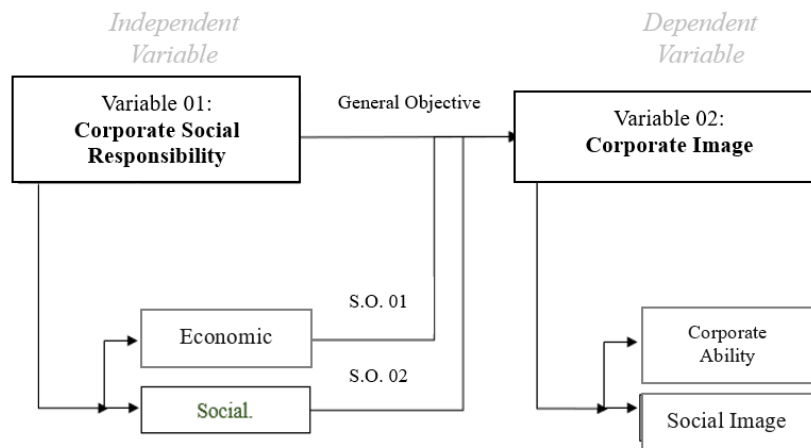


Fig. 1. Correlational research objectives

Theoretical Framework

Corporate Social Responsibility in the Food Service Sector

One of the business practices and government regulations that generate interest in the markets is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The CSR approach implies a commitment to long-term efforts and incorporating this new vision into all the organization's processes, making it one of the driving forces of management [32].

Corporate social responsibility is the task of a company committed to achieving sustainable economic development that provides a quality of life for its external and internal customers and society as a whole.

It is the company's commitment to the environment, the promotion of sustainable development, and the search for mutual benefit [13].

CSR is a strategy that aligns the objectives of the organization with the fulfillment of the interests of the related community. Its role impacts and affects all aspects of business operations (one of them is trust in the outside world, the public, and the stakeholders). Socially responsible

companies significantly contribute to improving and developing their environment and benefit all involved parties. This allows for a clear definition of social responsibility [6].

This approach is aligned with the need for companies to generate value, primarily for their survival, and, in this line, the sustainability of those around them and those they impact. Social responsibility constitutes a determining aspect of sustainable development at the corporate level and toward the community. It is a challenge for companies to operate in a development environment, which is visualized in the positive impact directly on society and the environment. Many companies choose to establish policies that, when known and applied, generate loyalty and trust among stakeholders and, above all, among customers [28].

It has been argued that CSR benefits companies and increases their value. Different research works that address CSR were reviewed and concluded in dimensions for the independent variable (CSR) [7], confirming that it can be analyzed from three approaches (economic, social, and environmental). About the dynamics of the sector and the concentration of its operations, the focus for this study will be on the economic and social dimensions [11, 34, 21].

1. *Economic Dimension:* It is conceptualized as the relationship between the creation and distribution of added value to employees and shareholders, considering not only market conditions, but also concern, honesty, and reliability. For an organization to have a better chance of success, survival, and employee welfare, its financial performance must be positive. Therefore, economic indicators and sustainability allow for the impact of activities on communities and stakeholders. The economic development (at regional, national, or local level) must also be considered. Therefore, financial performance seems to be a necessary but not sufficient condition. It is essential to evaluate at the level of a broader context.
2. *Social Dimension:* The scope of the social dimension of an organization is determined by the impact that affects the social well-being of its partners, related community, and the region where it operates. This dimension refers to the joint and additional or complementary responsibilities of management personnel, such as managers, investors, partners, as well as employees and suppliers, who are expected to nurture and facilitate the quality of life at work and holistic development.

Corporate Image

The concept of corporate image has also evolved, no longer being the exclusive responsibility of the public relations area; it is now conceived as a concept that affects the entire company; it should be approached as a systemic thinking of the organization, taking into account that markets

differentiate and prefer it when selecting consumers [17].

After reviewing the related articles, this study defines Corporate Image as the validation of the organization's members on the community's perception of the company [19, 4].

It should be noted that the brand is an indicator to make known the personality and identity of the company, thus cementing its image from the customer's point of view or perspective. Brand image is considered a valuable asset, i.e., a transactional asset because consumers identify it in the product or service at the time of the commercial transaction. The corporate image is relevant in reflecting itself to the target audience. Likewise, the image allows knowing subjective perceptions by the parties involved at the business level. It is seen as an important intangible that creates value and generates trust, making it highly attractive [9].

Corporate image, the perception people have of a company, is usually varied and can be summarized in a simple adjective such as good or bad image. Therefore, it is practical to analyze the different dimensions that compose it; each dimension has a distinct impact on the success of corporate strategies [25]:

1. *Corporate ability* refers to the experience of how the company operates in terms of production and market, product quality, and customer service.
2. *Social image* reflects individuals' perceptions of the company's social obligations. Investments prioritizing social impact and environmental commitment promote financial stability, long-term investment, equal employment opportunities, and positive employee relations (see Table 01).

Table 1: Structure of variables' operationalization

VARIABLE	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
Corporate Social Responsibility	Economy	Compensation
	Social	Freedom of expression Demand rights
		Training Donations
Corporate Image	Corporate Ability	Variety
		Security
		Technology
		Professionalism
	Social Image	Offices
		Fulfillment of promises
		Social Service Communication

Materials and Methods

The research has a quantitative approach because it used data collection to validate a hypothesis, through numerical measurements and statistical analysis that tested the proposed theories. The research design is registered as non-experimental, since in its process there is no registration or deliberate handling of the variables as the background information to be collected is gathered in its natural environment. It is also cross-sectional since the data were collected in a unique stipulated period. It is correlational because through its execution the relationships between the variables addressed in the research are validated or not, determining a focal point for the disclosure of the results [16].

In this study, the population consisted of all the employees of a corporate food services company, 354 workers.

To determine the sample, the probabilistic method was used; to calculate the sample, the 95% confidence level and the confidence factor of 1.96 were taken into account: Z Confidence level at 95%: 1.96%; p Probability of success: 0.5; q Probability of failure: 0.5; E Magnitude of error 5%: 0.005; N Population 354; N Sample size: 185.

Therefore, when finding a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of 0.05%, 185 people were considered as a sample.

The method used to collect and analyze the data was inductive-deductive since it allows the

generation of knowledge from the general to the specific.

The data collection technique applied in conducting the research was the survey, the instrument used was the questionnaire, and the validity of the selected instrument was corroborated by the judgment of three experts with long experience in the field of research. In addition, the instrument reliability was evaluated by calculating Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which showed a value of 0.901, showing its applicability.

The method of analysis implemented for data processing was descriptive-correlational, which allowed for establishing the respective statistical results, describing data, and determining the correlations between the study variables and their dimensions, exposing these results in tables and graphs, which were used to develop the discussions, results, and conclusions of the study, using the SPSS v26 program.

The ethical aspects of this research have safeguarded the principles of reliability (by keeping the respondents' answers in reserve), information authenticity, with the authorization of the organization studied (a company that is fully informed about the objectives of the study), and compliance with copyright (all studies have been duly cited to comply with copyright following APA standards).

Results and Discussion

To ensure the correct use of statistical methods, the type of distribution of the sample data was validated, and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic was used to determine the normality criterion. It is observed that there is no normal distribution; therefore, a non-parametric test should be applied during the process of hypothesis testing and response to the research objectives. Thus, the statistical test was Spearman's Rho.

Regarding the general objective of the research that sought to determine the relationship between the CSR variable and Corporate Image, there is an average positive correlation ($r_{\text{Spearman}} = 0.740$), according to Spearman's rank, following the present scale (+/- 0.600 - 0.79...). Likewise, concerning the p-value ($\text{sig} = 0.000$), it is less than the significance level ($p < 0.05$), i.e., the research hypothesis (H_i) is valid. There is a positive relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and the Corporate Image of the company *Servicios Alimenticios Corporativos SAC* (See Fig. 02).

Regarding the first specific objective of this research, which sought to determine the relationship between the economic dimension of the Corporate Social Responsibility variable and Corporate Image, it was concluded that there is

an average positive correlation ($r_{\text{Spearman}} = 0.550$), according to Spearman's rank, following the present scale (+/- 0.600 - 0.79...). Likewise, concerning the p-value ($\text{sig} = 0.000$), it is less than the significance level ($p < 0.05$), i.e., the research hypothesis (H_i) is valid, which states that there is a positive relationship between the economic dimension of the Corporate Social Responsibility variable and the Corporate Image of the company *Servicios Alimenticios Corporativos SAC* (See fig. 02).

Regarding the second specific objective of this research, which sought to determine the relationship between the social dimension of Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Image, an average positive correlation ($r_{\text{Spearman}} = 0.640$) was found, according to Spearman's rank, following the present scale (+/- 0.600 - 0.79...). Likewise, concerning the p-value ($\text{sig} = 0.000$), it is less than the significance level ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the research hypothesis is accepted, which mentions a positive relationship between the social dimension of the Corporate Social Responsibility variable and the Corporate Image of the company *Servicios Alimenticios Corporativos SAC* (See Fig. 02).

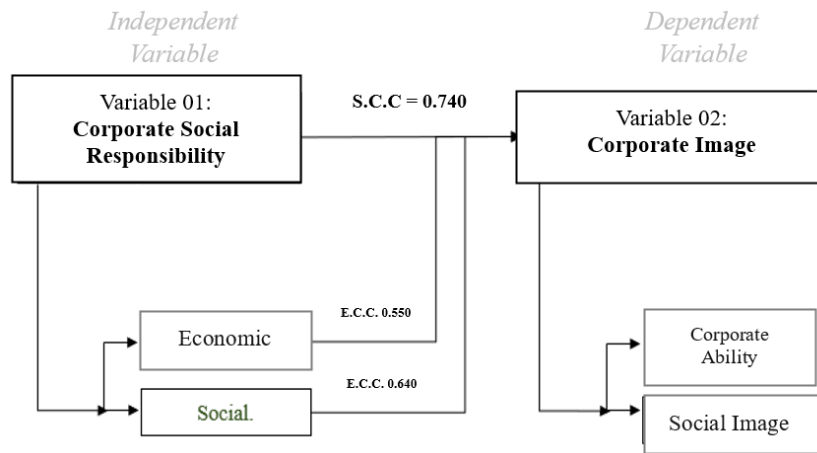


Fig. 2. Correlational research results

The results described above are in the same line as the findings of the reference [3], which conclude that CSR practices encourage the growth of business acceptance and market attractiveness. In other words, the implementation of CSR has a positive impact on corporate reputation and image. In this sense, it recommends establishing responsible practices by focusing on serving the community concerned, acting with integrity and honesty because it generates a synergistic effect for all

parties involved, considering the continuous implementation of CSR and, in parallel, the constant monitoring of brand perception, i.e., the organization's image.

On the other hand, the organization must establish solid CSR strategies to attract and retain customers, showing visibility and transparency. This will constitute a competitive advantage when resulting in a good corporate image [26, 3].

Changes in the food industry are becoming increasingly competitive, leading companies to rethink their business models to survive in such a demanding environment. As a result, organizations often need to meet the current demands of society. In this context, CSR initiatives enhance business and integration processes with the community. CSR must be applied in management since it helps to generate a better corporate image for organizations [21,11]. This coincides with what was demonstrated in this study: companies, especially those in the food industry, must contemplate business models based on social and environmental protection, in which CSR is essential and a lever for competitive advantage.

On the other hand, incorporating CSR into an organization's strategies impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty, as mediating variables, and, therefore, the corporation's image [2].

[7] The author states that there is a positive impact between the dimensions of CSR and Corporate Image. It is argued that the economic responsibility of the company focuses on creating and distributing surplus value among employees and shareholders, taking into account not only market conditions, but also fairness, honesty, and reliability. On the other hand, it is considered that one of the organization's objectives should be aligned to seek, through its operations, to contribute to the development of society, improving the quality of life of its stakeholders.

Reference [14] states that corporate reputation is a key component of CSR. This research has shown that corporate reputation mediates the relationship between corporate social responsibility and positive aspects at the stakeholder level; a company's reputation and image are intimately linked to the outcome of its CSR activities.

As for the impact of the dependent variable, i.e., Corporate Image, it can be seen that the CSR dimensions are positively related, in such a way that the organization can identify practices at the economic or social level to improve its image.

Conclusions

The findings of this research confirmed the positive average relationship between the independent variable, Corporate Social Responsibility, in its dimensions, with the dependent variable, Corporate Image. The validation of the link provides information on

how CSR can boost brand reputation resulting in a positive image of the organization, capitalizing on the intangible assets and their value in the market.

The economic and social impact practices were defined as dimensions of CSR, and, in both cases, a positive correlation was validated because a p-value of 0.000 was obtained, which is less than the significance level ($p < 0.05$); and an average degree of correlation (r Spearman = 0.550) and (r Spearman = 0.640), respectively.

In this sense, the main finding of the research validates that companies in the food service sector, which seek to capitalize on their value by improving their corporate image, can use CSR approaches as a management model, focusing on responsible economic and social practices.

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