

The Impact of Sustainable Practices on Organizational Reputation: The Mediating Role of Social Responsibility in Saudi Organizations

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ABSTRACT:

This research paper deals with a study on the relationship between sustainable practices and organizational reputation through the mediating role of social responsibility in Saudi organizations. The main purpose of the research is to contribute to understanding how sustainable practices can enhance organizational reputation. The study uses a quantitative research design, and surveys data collected from a sample of 304 administrators working in a number of Saudi organizations. The organization of literature sources and problem-solving methods indicate that the importance of this scientific problem lies in the need for an empirical examination of how sustainable practices can improve organizational reputation through the mediating effect of social responsibility. The methodological tools of the research included the use of SPSS v.23 and AMOS v.23 to test the hypotheses. The results of the empirical analysis show that sustainable practices positively affect organizational reputation, and this relationship is mediated by social responsibility. The results of the study confirm that the application of sustainable practices can enhance the organization's reputation by enhancing its social responsibility. The results also confirm that there are no gender differences in the perception of the practices of the study variables. The results of this study can also be useful to policy makers and university administrators who seek to promote sustainable practices and enhance the organization's reputation through effective social responsibility initiatives.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility; environmental sustainability; organizational image; reputational management; sustainable business practices.

1. Introduction

The sustainable development of the planet, from an economic, social, environmental, and cultural aspect, has become one of the most important themes today. Such importance is based on recognizing that solving present problems without compromising the ability of future generations to obtain their own resources involves making decisions that reconcile economic benefits, equity, and respect for the environment (Tu & Wu, 2021), and respect for the environment (Tu & Wu, 2021). Moreover, the consumer's role has been implemented as a social force, which exerts pressure to protect animals, the environment, and improve working conditions, as they are willing to pay more for products from socially responsible companies (Sardana et al., 2020). Sustainability practices in organizations play a significant role in enhancing their reputation and competitive advantage in international and domestic markets (Zaman et al., 2022).

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Organizations are increasingly perceived as being accountable not only for the economic consequences of their activities but also for the social and environmental aspects of their activities (Kumari *et al.*, 2021). This broadened accountability implies new performance demands and reporting requirements on businesses and organizations, which might result in substantial legitimacy consequences for firms and organizations.

The role of social responsibility as an intervening variable in Saudi organizations is increasingly recognized, particularly in enhancing performance and investment efficiency (Alobaid *et al.*, 2024). The integration of cultural aspects into sustainable practices within Saudi organizations is greatly influenced by local traditions and societal norms. These cultural elements shape perceptions and behaviors toward sustainability, making them essential for effective implementation (Arous *et al.*, 2024). Traditional values in Saudi culture emphasize respect for the environment and acknowledge the interconnectedness between humans and nature. Cultural practices often include sustainable resource management, reflecting a historical commitment to environmental stewardship (Adom, 2017). The studies suggest that cultural traits, such as environmental awareness and time orientation, promote green entrepreneurial activities in Saudi cities (Alwakid *et al.*, 2020). Aligning local cultural values with sustainable practices fosters an enabling environment for green initiatives and enhances community engagement in sustainability efforts (Macagnan, & Seibert, 2023).

Organizations in Saudi Arabia are increasingly adopting sustainability frameworks that include cultural dimensions, recognizing that cultural sustainability is as vital as economic and environmental factors (Gerner, 2019). Conversely, while cultural aspects can enhance sustainability efforts, there is a risk that modern economic pressures may overwhelm traditional practices, creating a potential disconnect between cultural heritage and contemporary sustainability initiatives.

Research indicates that corporate social responsibility (CSR) not only influences financial outcomes but also mediates relationships between various organizational factors, such as employee performance and turnover intention. This multifaceted role of CSR is evident across different sectors in Saudi Arabia. Higher CSR disclosures correlate positively with investment efficiency in Saudi firms, particularly in non-financial sectors (Alobaid *et al.*, 2024). Sustainable practices not only enhance operational efficiency but also positively impact public perception. As organizations adopt these practices, their commitment to social responsibility resonates with stakeholders, thus enhancing their reputation. Many Saudi organizations are adopting sustainable environmental paths within their community service, and societal expectations are evolving to elevate these practices to improve their reputation with the public through social responsibility initiatives.

1.1. Background and Rationale

Corporate governance, business ethics, and corporate social responsibility are important elements in all countries in maintaining enterprise reputation and strengthening the relationship with stakeholders. Governance practices by a company are always aimed at maintaining stakeholder relations such as employees, customers, suppliers, and society. This purpose extends beyond short-term wealth creation for its shareholders (Le, 2023). Through the realization of sustainable economic and ethical values, it also depends on the realization of some other values by society at large, such as the existence of a safe natural

environment, the availability of educational opportunities, and equality of opportunities in the economy through the assurance of a minimum level for income and some basic needs (Huq & Stevenson, 2020).

The concepts of corporate governance and social responsibility have gained renewed importance in the face of globalization, technological advances, and social transformations. Corporate governance includes the rules and practices that guide a company's operations, with an emphasis on accountability and stakeholder relationships (Zhang & Hao, 2024). Corporate social responsibility extends beyond profit maximization, with an emphasis on ethical obligations toward society and the environment (Alexiadou, 2023). Organizations are embracing CSR as a core operational component, enhancing their governance frameworks to address stakeholder expectations (Ariyo, n.d.). Ethical business practices also promote transparency, diversity, and inclusion, which are essential for sustainable development. Integrating ethics into corporate strategies can mitigate the risks associated with unethical practices, enhancing a positive corporate image (Ramírez et al., 2023; Bansal, 2022).

1.2 Research objectives and importances

The research aims to measure the impact of sustainable practices on the reputation of organizations directly, as well as using social responsibility as an intervening variable. It is worth noting that by realizing the importance of practicing sustainability now being the focus of all organizations, this research contributes to helping organizations increase their reputation as a competitive advantage by putting social responsibility into practice.

Organizations benefit from reputation care to enhance their competitiveness, and the impact of a positive reputation on the organization is enormous, as it creates a positive image in the minds of investors and customers. Companies with a good reputation inspire lower levels of investor concern, especially regarding short-term or debatable actions. Modern companies have greater flexibility in how they pursue development strategies, raise funds, and reward their employees. Moreover, modern organizations benefit from reputation care based on reliability and ethical business practices. In addition, companies are currently required to concretely define the social responsibility activities that they should undertake on behalf of society. The current study contributes significantly to the literature and research field of corporate reputation, sustainable HRM, and business management. The relationship between social responsibility and sustainable practices in Saudi Arabia varies across sectors, influenced by unique challenges and opportunities. The characteristics of each sector shape how social responsibility is perceived and implemented, impacting the overall effectiveness of sustainability initiatives. The telecommunications sector faces challenges related to corporate governance and IT investment, which are critical to enhancing firm performance. The mediating role of CSR is important, as effective governance can lead to better sustainability outcomes (Al-Falah et al., 2022). The adoption of CSR practices in the tourism sector is also essential for the development of sustainable tourism. Strategies such as marketing and education have been identified as particularly impactful, however the sector must overcome barriers related to awareness and implementation of these practices (Hassan et al., 2020). The integration of green supply chain management (GSCM) is also still under development, with challenges

in effectively applying sustainability principles. The lack of robust process analytics limits the potential for environmental sustainability outcomes (Iqbal and Noor Al-Hadi, 2024). There is a growing trend among consumers towards environmentally conscious choices, especially in the context of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which encourages brands to align with sustainability goals (Abu Bakr and Al-Mutairi, 2024). While some research suggests a positive relationship between sustainability practices and financial performance across industries, suggesting that companies can benefit economically from adopting sustainable practices (Hessa and Hanan, 2024). The potential for enhancing sustainability practices therefore exists across sectors, albeit with distinct challenges and opportunities. This complexity highlights the need for tailored strategies that take into account specific sector dynamics.

2.Literature Review.

Research in the field of business and society tends to give special importance to the expansion of the theory of integration that involves the concepts of sustainability and social and environmental responsibility. This means that there is a thinking about determining organizational positions within the framework of a dynamic and systemic approach that integrates societal and economic risks while striving to achieve sustainable performance, and among the elements of performance is the reputation of the organization, which is closely linked to its social responsibility as part of its management. The researchers revealed in their work that sustainability should be an integral part of the company's strategy, which in turn will positively affect the reputation of the organization, where an empirical study was conducted that identifies the role of social responsibility as a mediating variable in the impact of the dimensions of sustainable practices on corporate reputation in organizations. Moreover, such research is relevant in the context of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, where there are no such studies in the available literature.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Sustainable practices are empirical agents viewed from three perspectives: economic, social, and environmental. They include actions based on how innovative elements are created and integrated that aim to balance economic, environmental, and social objectives and aspects in their business activities. Organizational reputation is the perceived global evaluation of stakeholders. These concepts are based on the characteristics of the organization (Khanfar *et al.*, 2021). The conceptual model mainly supports the following theoretical models, including signalling theory and stakeholder theory.

In line with the stakeholder value perspective, the current study emphasizes that when organizations do more than what is legally required of them for society, they should enjoy a better reputation than they would have had they not engaged in such actions (Perera *et al.*, 2022). The path does not stop there. The social performance of the organization will be reflected in enhancing the organization's reputation, which leads voters to appreciate the organization so that the organization can translate its high reputation into economic rewards. It should be emphasized that the above logic is also consistent with the signalling theory as proposed by the direct path of the model (Gali *et al.*, 2020). In other words, organizations can differentiate themselves in the marketplace

by making their corporate social performance objectively visible; this signals to stakeholders that "the company cares." Firms with a good reputation are seen as more effective because they are seen as socially responsible, less risky investments (Padilla-Lozano & Collazzo, 2022). Organizations with a superior reputation should have better access to investors, management talent, consumers, and suppliers than organizations with a lower reputation.

2.2 Sustainable Practices in Organizations

Sustainable practices in organizations often genuinely implement their social responsibility to stakeholders by aligning ethical standards and integrating environmental and social aspects. A company's operations follow three dimensions, namely environment, society, and economy, which include CSR practices such as corporate governance, corporate ethics, and philanthropy (Chukwu et al., 2023; Zimon et al., 2020). Thus, companies may inspire their operational concepts and theoretical contexts that emphasize environmentally conscious products and services, social responsibility, and shared value as a means of enhancing business profits and dealing with risk and uncertain markets (Bilderback, 2024). There is a hypothesis that there is a strong relationship between the concept of sustainability and the stakeholders who interact with the organization. Research on corporate ethics strategy has shown that organizations that are perceived as ethical tend to have a loyal customer base (Yarram & Adapa, 2021). When a company has a high rating for CSR, consumers are more likely to trust the organization, which typically leads to increased customer loyalty and engagement. These consumers actively purchase the company's products and spread positive word of mouth about the company (Barlas et al., 2023; Iglesias et al., 2020).

2.3 Reputation Management

Reputation management is undoubtedly gaining increasing attention in today's competitive environment and knowledge-based market economy (Chen et al., 2021). Essentially, reputation, which has different dimensions, reflects in one way or another the overall means of how an organization is perceived by internal and external stakeholders. Most corporate executives view reputation as an indicator of good organizational performance (Kumari et al., 2021). Reputation is a multifaceted construct that measures how competent and responsible a company is perceived by its stakeholders. As such, it provides a company with much-needed external legitimacy in a world where ethical and environmental reputations are increasingly viewed as a source of security by both customers and investors (Gillan et al., 2021). Most of the strategies used for reputation management are certainly those that organizations currently use, such as those aimed at enhancing the organization's image and that of its stakeholders. Moreover, maintaining the longevity of reputation usually requires more effort than simply managing crises. As the high-end part of CSR political activism, "reputation insurance" is seen as a means of promoting CSR through media dialogue (Barauskaite & Streimikiene, 2021), thus "reputation management is not only about valuable information and good communication, but also involves a massive and rapid response to allegations of wrongdoing, even when these allegations are not grounded in fact (Hou et al., 2021).

2.4 Social Responsibility as an Intervening Variable

Social responsibility is a term with many faces, and it demands further attention to conceptualize more specifically the ones in need for the field it concerns. This research concentrates on the social role of business entities and whether they are operationalizing acts of responsibility as a value to generate reputation to position themselves in favor of their stakeholders. The value premise includes reliance on the product and/or psychological appeal synonymous with the consumer (Tamvada, 2020). Organizations are turning to and filtering through carefully how they are to direct social activities that source value in modulating positive financial return (Domínguez *et al.*, 2024). One manner of examining the intricate interrelationships between sustainable practices and organizational reputation is through the possible intervening variable that establishes and mediates both phenomena. Social responsibility has been identified as one of the possible intervening variables in sustainable practices (Islam *et al.*, 2021).

3. Methods

This research aims to study the impact of sustainable practices in organizations on their reputation through social responsibility in the context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study uses a quantitative approach, and a questionnaire was designed to serve a sample of 304 administrators to test theoretically hypothesized relationships. A set of preliminary analyses were also conducted to investigate the reliability and convergent and discriminant validity of the study concepts. Moreover, the direct and indirect effects of the proposed relationships were tested statistically using Spss, Amos.

3.1 Research Design

In order to reach a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the variables, the study structure was designed as shown in Figure (1). This research design was chosen for its ability to confirm the test hypotheses and clarify the direct and indirect results. It aims to ensure that the results are consistent with the hypotheses and confirm their validity (Meyer *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, this methodology enables testing the research hypotheses and experimental and exploratory verification, which ultimately leads to identifying the best version. In addition, this design clarifies the size and importance of the variables in the conceptual models, thus improving the reliability of the results. It is important to realize that each research design has its own strengths and limitations, which contribute to ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the study results (Van de Schout *et al.*, 2021). Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire based on four main sections: the first section covered demographic data, including gender; the second section focused on the independent variable, the second section tested the mediating variable, and the fourth section was dedicated to the dependent variable. This allowed us to accurately assess the interactions between the main variables in the study.

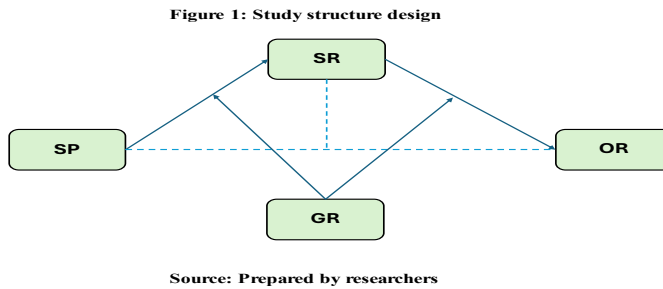


Figure 1 Structure Design. Source: Prepared by Researcher

3.2 Model Structure

Sustainable Practices (SP)

Direct arrow to Social Responsibility (SR)

Indirect arrow to Organizational Reputation (OR) through Social Responsibility (SR)

Social Responsibility (SR)

Direct arrow to Organizational Reputation (OR)

Gender (GR)

Bidirectional arrows pointing to both Social Responsibility (SR) and Organizational Reputation (OR), indicating its influence on both.

3.3 Study hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Sustainable practices positively affect social responsibility in the organizations under study.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Social responsibility positively affects organizational reputation in the organizations under study.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Sustainable practices indirectly affect organizational reputation through social responsibility, in the organizations under study.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Gender influences the level of social responsibility in the organizations under study, indicating that levels of social responsibility differ based on gender differences.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Gender directly affects organizational reputation, indicating that there may be differences in how reputation is perceived based on gender.

3.4 Data Collection

The methods used to collect relevant data for this research were primary and secondary data sources. To obtain direct knowledge and evidence, a direct methodology was adopted. There was an emphasis on collecting information directly from the participants. They were working in organizations in Saudi Arabia. To obtain the required data and insights in this research study, a developed survey questionnaire was used. It was created according to the objectives and relational model of the study to ensure that the

collected data was sufficiently capable of addressing the objectives. The question-naire was divided into four main parts. These parts were formatted to limit missing data in the responses and make it easier for the respondents to complete. In a pilot before the actual survey, the questionnaire was tested for comprehension, completeness, relevance, clarity and ease of understanding. Convenience non-probability sampling method was used. It was decided to use this method to obtain input from the people who participate in the response. A non-probability method was adopted due to its convenience and comfort and due to ethical considerations related to human subjects. This research sampled employees from different organizational backgrounds in different cities to ensure data variability and maximize the generalizability of the results.

3.5 Sample Selection

The questionnaire developed was designed to target senior management teams and HR managers from all types of Saudi organizations and of different sizes and industries. Since the current study was not limited to individual organizations, no member was targeted, except for the organization's president and HR managers. The organizations were selected based on industry type, major departments, and number of employees. We believe that the results can be generalized to most Saudi organizations regardless of geographic location simply because the organization has a large budget. A sample size of this size is a good choice. The sample design and the required sample size are mainly based on thinking based on both the research strategy and statistical considerations.

3.6 Reliability Analysis

Table1: Reliability Statistics

variables	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
SP	8	,806
SR	6	,766
OR	5	,873
All variables	19	,785

Source: SPSS Outputs

The reliability statistics presented in Table 1 indicate varying levels of internal consistency across different variables, as measured using Cronbach's alpha. This statistical measure is of great importance for assessing the reliability of instruments in research, especially in psychological measurement and the social sciences. The values indicate that while the overall reliability of all variables is acceptable, the individual components show different strengths of internal consistency. Implications for the interpretation of reliability coefficients: Cronbach's alpha above 0.7 is generally considered acceptable, while values above 0.8 are considered good (Uyanah & Nsikhe, 2023).

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SP	304	3,00	5,00	4,8355	,35658
SR	304	2,67	5,00	4,8268	,39611
OR	304	2,25	5,00	4,9079	,29738
Vali)	304				

Source: SPSS Outputs

Table2 provides descriptive statistics that provide basic insights into the data by summarizing key characteristics, such as central tendency and variance. The data presented indicate that the sample size (N) is 304, with means for SP, SR, and OR of 4.8355, 4.8268, and 4.9079, respectively. The standard deviations indicate a relatively low spread around the mean, indicating consistency in responses. The following sections explain these aspects; Mean values: The means for SP, SR, and OR are close to each other, indicating a high level of agreement between respondents. These mean values indicate that respondents generally rated the items positively, with all means exceeding 4 on a 5-point scale; Variance and standard deviation: The values (0.35658 for SP, 0.39611 for SR, and 0.29738 for OR) indicate low variance, indicating that responses are closely clustered around the mean. While descriptive statistics provide a clear summary of the data, they may not capture the complexities or underlying relationships within the data, necessitating additional inferential analysis to draw more comprehensive conclusions (Selvamuthu & Das, 2024).

4.2 Testing the hypothesis 1

Table3: Correlations

		SP	SR	OR
SP	Pearson Correlation	1	,779**	,631**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000
	N	304	304	304
SR	Pearson Correlation	,779**	1	,702**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000
	N	304	304	304
OR	Pearson Correlation	,631**	,702**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	
	N	304	304	304

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Outputs.

The correlation data presented in Table 3 indicate significant relationships between three variables: SP, SR, and OR. Pearson's correlation coefficients reveal strong positive correlations, indicating that as one variable increases, the other variables tend to increase as well. This analysis is crucial for understanding the interrelationships between these variables, which can be useful for further research and practical applications.

Correlation coefficients:

SP and SR: The correlation coefficient is 0.779, indicating a strong positive relationship ($p < 0.01$).

SP and OR: The correlation coefficient is 0.631, also indicating a significant positive correlation ($p < 0.01$).

SR and OR: The correlation coefficient is 0.702, reflecting a strong positive correlation ($p < 0.01$).

Correlation analysis serves as a fundamental tool in observational studies, allowing researchers to identify potential relationships that merit further investigation (Haley & Huber, 2023). It is also important to recognize the limitations of correlation analysis, such as the possibility of confounding variables and the inability to establish causal relationships. This requires careful interpretation and consideration of additional methodologies for comprehensive analysis (Lopez *et al.*, 2022).

Table4: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin - Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	,715 ^a	,511	,508	,20863	,511	157,304	2	301	,000	1,576

a. Predictors: (Constant), SR, SP
b. Dependent Variable: OR

Source: SPSS Outputs.

Table5:ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	13,694	2	6,847	157,304	,000b
Residual	13,102	301	,044		
Total	26,796	303			

a. Dependent Variable: OR
b. Predictors: (Constant), SR, SP

Source: SPSS Outputs.

Table6:Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2,105	,166		12,689	,000
SP	,178	,054	,213	3,316	,001
SR	,403	,048	,536	8,343	,000

a. Dependent Variable: OR

Source: SPSS Outputs.

Table7: Bootstrap for Coefficients

Model	B	Bootstrap ^a		Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval	
		Bias	Std. Error		Lower	Upper
(Constant)	2,105	,086	,486	,003	1,222	3,118
SP	,178	,011	,152	,263	,120	,474
SR	,403	,007	,102	,001	,185	,608

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

Source: SPSS Outputs

The SPSS outputs presented in Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7 indicate a robust regression analysis with significant predictors of the dependent variable, OR. The model summary shows a strong correlation ($R = 0.715$) and a large R^2 value (0.511), indicating that approximately 51.1% of the variance in OR can be explained by the predictors SR and SP. The results of the analysis of variance confirm the significance of the model ($F = 157.304$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the regression model is statistically valid. The coefficients table reveals that both SR and SP are significant predictors, with SR having a higher standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.536$) than SP ($\beta = 0.213$), confirming the greater influence of SR on OR. The R and R^2 values are: $R = 0.715$, $R^2 = 0.511$, indicating a strong fit of the model. Adjusted R^2 : 0.508, indicating a good model with adjusted complexity.

Standardized coefficients: Beta values (0.213 for SP and 0.536 for SR) allow a comparison of the relative strength of these predictors, showing that SR has a stronger effect on OR than SP (Fitrianto & Hanafi, 2014).

Durbin-Watson = 1.576: indicates no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, since the value of 1.576 is close to 2, which means that the residuals are likely independent, which is a prerequisite for efficient least squares estimation (Rutledge & Barros, 2002).

The retest results enhance the stability and reliability of the regression estimates, highlighting the significant positive effect of social responsibility (SR) on organizational reputation (OR). Sustainable practices (SP) show a positive effect but lack statistical significance in this context.

Through the above, the validity of the first and second hypotheses has been proven.

4.3 Testing the hypothesis 3 of mediation of RS between SP and OR.

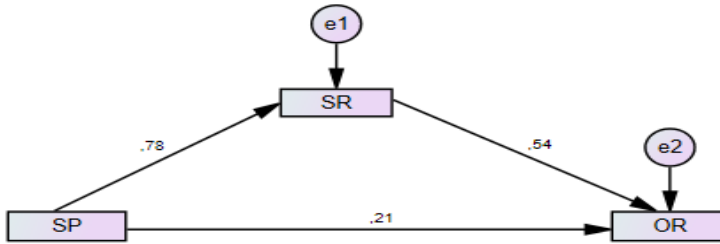


Figure 2 Mediation Analysis. Source: AMOS outputs

Table8: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
SR	<--- SP	,865	,040	21,624	***	
OR	<--- SR	,403	,048	8,371	***	
OR	<--- SP	,378	,053	3,327	***	

Source: AMOS outputs

Table9: Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

		Estimate
SR	<--- SP	,779
OR	<--- SR	,536
OR	<--- SP	,213

Source: AMOS outputs

Table10: Total Effects (Group number 1 - Default model)

	SP	SR
SP	,865	,000
OR	,526	,403

Source: AMOS outputs

Table11: Model Fit Summary

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	9	,000	0		
Saturated model	9	,000	0		
Independence model	3	499,625	6	,000	83,271

Source: AMOS outputs

Table12: Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	1,000		1,000		1,000
Saturated model	1,000		1,000		1,000
Independence model	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000

Source: AMOS outputs

Table13: RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Independence model	,019	,481	,558	,000

Source: AMOS outputs

Based on the output provided by Tables 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, which represent the output from the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis, the following is a summary of the basic information:

Regression weights:

- The path from SP (independent variable) to SR (mediator variable) has a standardized regression weight of 0.865, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).
- The path from SR (mediator variable) to OR (dependent variable) has a standardized regression weight of 0.403, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).
- The direct path from SP (independent variable) to OR (dependent variable) has a standardized regression weight of 0.378, which is also statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

Standardized regression weights:

- The strongest path is from SP to SR (0.779), followed by SR to OR (0.536), and the weakest is the direct path from SP to OR (0.213).

Total Effects:

- The total effect of SP on OR is 0.526, which is the sum of the direct effect (0.378) and the indirect effect via SR ($0.865 * 0.403 = 0.348$). This relationship exemplifies the path analysis framework, where independent variables (SP) affect mediating variables (SR), ultimately influencing dependent variables (OR) (Sulistyo & Pulungang, 2018).

Model Fit Summary:

- The model has perfect fit, with a CMIN/DF ratio of 0 and all fit indices at their maximum value of 1. The RMSEA of the independence model is 0.019, indicating a good fit.

From the above, the results indicate that SP has a strong direct effect on SR, and both SP and SR have significant positive effects on OR. This proves that the model fits the data very well.

4.4 Testing the 4 and 5 hypotheses related to the different effects of gender on SR and OR.

Table14: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene's Statistic	ddl1	ddl2	Sig.
SR	7,253	1	302	,007
OR	2,800	1	302	,095

Source: SPSS outputs

Table15: ANOVA

	Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SR	Inter-groups	,218	1	,218	1,393	,239
	Intra-groups	47,324	302	,157		
	Total	47,542	303			
OR	Inter-groups	,041	1	,041	,462	,497
	Intra-groups	26,755	302	,089		
	Total	26,796	303			

Source: SPSS outputs

Tables 14 and 15 show the statistical analysis as follows:

- Levene's test for homogeneity of variances

SR: The probability value was 0.007, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met. This indicates that the variance between groups is not equal, which may affect the results of the analysis of variance.

OR: The probability value was 0.095, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met. Therefore, the results of the analysis of variance for this variable can be considered reliable.

- Results of the analysis of variance

SR (Social Responsibility): F: 1.393, Sig.: 0.239 This indicates that, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups regarding social responsibility. This indicates that gender has no significant effect on the level of social responsibility.

OR (Organizational Reputation): F: 0.462, Sig.: 0.497 Similarly, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups regarding organizational reputation. This indicates that there is no clear effect of gender on organizational reputation.

The results indicate that gender has no significant effect on social responsibility or organizational reputation in the sample studied. This may be because there are no significant differences in how individuals evaluate social responsibility or reputation based on gender.

5. Discussion

The examination of the results in light of the goals and hypotheses of the paper shows that sustainable practices in Saudi organizations have a substantial and important impact on their reputation. Additionally, the strong and sustained link between social

responsibility and reputation implies the fundamental role of social responsibility as mediating the connection between a range of sustainable practices and significantly enhanced reputation of an organization (Ammer et al., 2020). This study shows theoretical importance by contributing to the current literature in the field. This happens because, relying on the knowledge and main arguments about the effect of sustainable practices on the overall reputation of organizations, additional robust and significant findings are provided (Han, 2021).

Such a step forward has theoretical and managerial implications, as it guides the corporate sector, governmental units, and any other social or economic bodies in better orienting the practices, principles, and policies in the future, which relate to the fields of sustainability (Pizzi et al., 2021; Salvioni & Almicci, 2020). The same would happen in the field of management, specifically in organizational behavior and human resources, in the exploration of social responsibility as a powerful tool to improve the reputation of any organization in the market (Amorelli & García-Sánchez, 2021; Yuan & Cao, 2022).

Hence, the fact that this paper confirms and complements many of the previously reached results may be considered of great theoretical and practical importance. It promises an enhancement of the current knowledge and best practices, increasing the credibility of the findings overall (Ma et al., 2021; Wierda et al., 2021). It is assumed that the social and environmental challenges and trends would impact the management and operations of various internal sectors and departments. Hence, the research ideas may be seen as a contribution that explores the best alternatives, which would be open for the managers under the impact of these social, cultural, and behavioral trends and challenges.

The analysis of social responsibility and organizational reputation reveals that gender does not significantly influence these concepts. The results suggest that both social responsibility and organizational reputation are shaped more by organizational practices and stakeholder perceptions than by demographic factors such as gender. This finding is supported by various studies that emphasize the importance of CSR in enhancing organizational reputation and performance. Research suggests that fulfilling social responsibilities positively affects corporate performance, regardless of gender differences (Gao, 2024).

Internal structures of CSR, especially in nonprofit organizations, show that employee relations improve with established CSR frameworks, but are not significantly influenced by gender (Kim, 2024). Studies show a strong relationship between CSR activities and organizational reputation, suggesting that reputation is built through ethical practices and stakeholder engagement rather than gender influences (Etikan, 2024). The role of leadership and strategic integration of CSR are critical to enhancing reputation, suggesting that organizational factors outweigh gender considerations (Ahmadzai et al., 2023). While the findings suggest that gender does not play a significant role in CSR and corporate social responsibility, it is important to keep in mind that other factors, such as organizational culture and leadership styles, may have a deeper impact on these perceptions. This perspective highlights the complexity of CSR and reputation dynamics beyond demographic variables.

6. Implications and further research

6.1 Acknowledge Sample Limitations

In our study, we recognize that the homogeneity of the sample may limit the generalizability of our findings. While we did not find any significant gender differences, the lack of diversity in the sample may raise questions about whether similar findings might be observed in more diverse populations. This limitation suggests that our findings should be interpreted in terms of gender alone, as they may not reflect the experiences and perceptions of individuals from different cultural, socioeconomic, or other demographic backgrounds.

6.2 Suggest Areas for Future Research

Future research should prioritize the exploration of cultural and demographic variables' impact on the constructions examined in this study. Specifically, it is essential to include a more diverse sample that encompasses various genders, ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This diversification will enable researchers to uncover potential differences and nuances in perceptions that may not have been evident in our more homogeneous sample. Additionally, investigating how factors such as regional cultural norms and economic status influence these constructions could yield valuable insights, enhancing the depth and relevance of findings in this area. By addressing these gaps, future studies can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding the relationships we have explored, ultimately leading to more informed and applicable conclusions.

7. Conclusions.

The study underscores the critical role of sustainability in reputation-building, particularly for smaller organizations and startups that often face resource constraints. These entities can adopt cost-effective sustainable practices to enhance their reputation, which is vital for attracting investors, customers, and talent (Giordano *et al.*, 2023). By prioritizing sustainability, they not only improve their public image but also align with stakeholder expectations, which can drive their sustainability efforts (Setyaningsih *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, effective sustainability reporting can enhance transparency and accountability, further bolstering their reputation. Smaller organizations can leverage these strategies to build a positive reputation without the need for extensive resources, demonstrating that sustainability is achievable even within limited means. Ultimately, integrating sustainable practices into their core strategies can lead to long-term benefits, positioning them favorably in a competitive market. The current study aimed to advance insights into the fact that sustainable practices have an impact on an organization's reputation directly and/or indirectly through their effects on social responsibility, which encompasses the support, enhancement, and improvement of the environment, local community, and workplace conditions for internal and external stakeholders of the organization (Malik *et al.*, 2021; Bui *et al.*, 2022).

It is widely recognized that organizations that prioritize sustainability tend to establish themselves as ethical organizations in their industries. By integrating sustainable practices into their operations, organizations can not only enhance their reputation, but

also foster positive relationships with stakeholders, including consumers, employees, investors, and the broader community. This holistic approach to sustainability not only benefits the organization itself, but also contributes to the well-being of society, as it promotes environmental protection, community development, and improved workplace conditions.

In today's increasingly conscious market, consumers are becoming more concerned about the social and environmental impacts of the products and services they consume. Therefore, organizations that prioritize sustainable practices are more likely to attract and retain a loyal customer base. Furthermore, by actively participating in environmental initiatives, such as reducing carbon emissions, conserving natural resources, and promoting renewable energy, organizations can demonstrate their commitment to preserving the planet for future generations.

Additionally, organizations that invest in their local communities through initiatives such as job creation, philanthropy, and volunteer programs can build strong relationships and establish themselves as responsible corporate citizens. These efforts not only benefit the community but also create a positive reputation for the organization. Furthermore, organizations that prioritize the well-being of their employees—by providing fair wages, safe working conditions, and opportunities for career development—are more likely to attract and retain top talent. A positive workplace culture, built on the principles of inclusion, diversity, and work-life balance, not only improves employee satisfaction but also enhances the organization's reputation.

Overall, the importance of sustainable practices in enhancing an organization's reputation cannot be overstated (Kumari et al., 2022). As society continues to prioritize environmental and social responsibility, organizations that fail to embrace sustainability risk being left behind. By integrating sustainable practices into their business strategies, organizations can not only differentiate themselves from their competitors but also contribute to a more sustainable and prosperous future for all.

Future research should delve deeper into examining whether improved reputation consistently translates into measurable economic benefits for organizations. The relationship between reputation and economic outcomes is critical, as a positive reputation can lead to increased revenue and profitability over time. Additionally, understanding the specific sustainable practices that drive these financial outcomes is essential for organizations aiming to improve their sustainability strategies. CSR initiatives may play an important role in this dynamic, although evidence suggests that CSR activities are not always associated with improved financial performance. Furthermore, integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics into business practices is increasingly recognized as a path to long-term financial success [5]. Thus, a comprehensive exploration of these interconnected areas will provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to enhance their sustainability efforts and financial viability.

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