

NEW COMMUNICATION TREND OF THE CORPORATIONS: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY - AN ANALYSIS REGARDING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE CORPORATIONS HAVING THE HIGHEST CORPORATE REPUTATION IN TURKEY

Fatma GÖKSU*

Abstract

Corporate social responsibility campaigns which are one of the most fundamental determinative subjects in the connection of a corporation with the world and one of the most important parameters of corporate reputation are a long-term communication system. When we look at history, we see that the elements encouraging humans to social behaviours dated back centuries ago.

Corporate social responsibility incorporates many studies such as making studies within the framework of ethical rules and preparing voluntary social campaigns other than obeying to the laws. Also, corporate social responsibility not only includes obeying to the legal and economical obligations but also proactive and voluntary administration efforts regarding social and environmental problems.

This study aims to reveal the viewpoints of the corporations of the highest standing in Turkey to CSR enterprises. Corporate social responsibility enterprises-related principles, strategies, social enterprise fields and evaluations of public relations implementers of "The Most Admired Companies in Turkey", determined by Capital Monthly Business and Economy Magazine in 2008, will be presented. Therefore, a status determination study was performed by having a thorough interview with public relations' implementers that develop more integrated management policies by taking into consideration projects providing benefits to society and all the social stakeholders and the environment, and contribute to excellent communication and accordingly the development of corporate reputation.

Key words: *Corporate social responsibility, corporate reputation, sustainability in corporate social responsibility*

Öz: Kurumların Yeni İletişim Trendi: Kurumsal Sosyal Sorumluluk -Türkiye'de Kurumsal İtibarı En Yüksek Kuruluşların Kurumsal Sosyal Sorumluluk Bilincini Analizine Yönelik Bir İnceleme

Bir kuruluşun dünya ile bağlantısında en temel belirleyici hususlardan ve kurumsal itibarın en önemli parametrelerinden biri olan kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk kampanyaları, uzun vadeli bir iletişim sistemidir. Tarihe baktığımızda insanları sosyal davranışlara teşvik eden unsurların yüzyıllarca geriye uzandığını görmekteyiz.

* Dr.Öğr.Gör. İstanbul Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Halkla İlişkiler ve Tanıtım Bölümü. fngoksu52@yahoo.com

Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk; yasalara uygun hareket etmek dışında etik kurallar çerçevesinde çalışmalar yapmak, gönüllü sosyal kampanyalar düzenlemek gibi birçok çalışmayı içinde barındırmaktadır. Ayrıca, kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk sadece yasal ve ekonomik yükümlülüklere uymayı değil, aynı zamanda sosyal ve çevresel problemlerle ilgili proaktif ve gönüllü işletme çabalarını da içermektedir.

Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de itibarı en yüksek kurumların, kurumsal itibarın en önemli parametrelerinden biri olan kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk iletişimine bakış açılarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Capital Aylık İş ve Ekonomi Dergisi’nin Aralık 2008’de belirlediği “Türkiye’de İtibarı En Yüksek Firmalar”ın topluma yarar sağlayan projeler ve tüm sosyal paydaşları ve çevreyi de dikkate alarak daha bütüncül işletme politikaları geliştiren, mükemmel iletişimi ve buna bağlı olarak kurumsal itibarın oluşumuna katkıda bulunan halkla ilişkiler uygulayıcıları ile derinlemesine görüşme yapılarak bir durum saptaması yapılmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk, kurumsal itibar, kurumsal sosyal sorumlulukta sürdürülebilirlik*

INTRODUCTION

What is principally expected from business enterprises is their manufacturing of quality products and acting in accordance with the laws. But, the expectations from business enterprises, whose domains and influential aspects are expanding with globalization, are also increasing and becoming diversified. In addition to the responsibility of making profit, business enterprises are also assigned the responsibility to be more responsive to the issue of the extension and sustainability of welfare increase by collaboration with public sector, other private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Corporate social responsibility, which appears before us as an ascending value of today’s business world, consists of corporate actions providing the general well-being of society where voluntary commercial practices and corporate resources are assigned for these actions. Issues like corporate philanthropy, corporate donations, social activities of corporations, their social relations, commu-

nication, development, corporate identity practices and marketing of the societies in corporate terms, which are considered to be oriented towards social well-being, can be discussed within the frame of corporate social responsibility. Voluntary commercial actions planned beyond natural commercial actions should be organized within a strategic frame which will show that the corporation also bears social responsibility and it should also serve a purpose (Pira, 2005:155).

Recently, corporate social responsibility manifests itself in different ways than before. There are two reasons for this: The first is globalization and particularly the noticeable increase in big and multinational companies whose activities are considered by people to do harm to life. The harmful activities of such organizations can be listed as employee abuse, environmental indifference and unnecessary effect on local politics. The second factor is the increase in non-governmental organizations undertaking goals like protecting the environment and human rights.

These organizations become organized in a good manner and they can convince many business enterprises in these issues with their continually growing international memberships. (Owen, 2002: 3-11).

Conceptual Framework of Corporate Social Responsibility

As a general concept, CSR consists of various thoughts and applications. The first of CSR applications is the activities carried out by organizations during disasters; the second is the seemingly voluntary and non-profit activities carried out by organizations besides their economic functions. These activities are also known as crisis management and public programs in public relations (L'Etang & Pieczka, 2002:156).

The idea of CSR started to be discussed in the 20th century. Social responsibility is particularly defined in the book of Howard R. Bowen published in 1953 with the title "Social Responsibility of the Businessman" as an activity necessary for the organization to influence the society it belongs to. These activities are social relations, voluntary benevolent corporations, health enterprises, cultural heritage protection, special education / training programs and environmental beautification etc. The main idea here is simply giving back what is received from society (Corporate Social Responsibility, 2005:2).

And Salim Kadıbeşegil defines CSR as non-commercial policies adopted with the awareness of performing a task with no commercial intents.

From these definitions, we can infer that the realities underlying the success of CSR concept are "sustainability" and "accountabili-

ty". Then, along with their financial responsibilities, business enterprises should perform CSR activities within the scope of sustainability, which is expressed as the concomitant commitment of social, economic and environment responsibilities. That means, business enterprises should provide a strategic solution to social and environmental issues they bring about while performing their activities and they should be regularly accountable before all stakeholders as regards their compliance with social interests.

The Significance of CSR

Given that corporations are a part of the system in their environment, they need to accommodate to the changes in this system and use responsibility, which is the principal feature of modern business administration, as a tool to sustain their existence. The concept of responsibility, which emerges as a part of social life, comes before us as CSR with increased aspects and scope depending on the changing conditions.

Corporations that come into prominence by their contributions to social issues also gain a value in the eyes of public administration. It is considered to be a respected approach to achieve this value by making social contribution, not deriving personal benefits. As a result of this approach, the idea that; corporations should have an important responsibility of maintaining and improving public well-being in addition to their own benefits, is becoming widely-accepted.

Moreover, corporations are now forced to undertake their social responsibilities in the face of the increasing pressure with the awareness of consumers, requirements of company employees and huge demands of

non-governmental organizations (Ural, 2006: 42).

Social responsibility practices performed within the scope of corporate interests strengthen the confidence of customers, add spirit to the brand, make the employees get a share from the reputation of the corporation they work for, contribute to the valuation of shares, and being the preferred corporation / brand in the minds of customers and employees, create competitive advantage and enable to overcome the crisis more easily by the established trust. Today, it is clear that; low prices, quality products or after-sale support services are not enough to achieve customer loyalty.

Furthermore, CSR practices are also considerably important in terms of building up, developing and maintaining corporate reputation. Reputation, which provides significant information to all stakeholders about the nature of the corporation, provides important advantages due to its difficulty in being imitated by competitors. Corporate reputation forms as a result of all the studies of the corporation. In this context, it is possible to say that; many components are effective in the development of corporate reputation (Rajendra et al., 2003: 62). Today, along with traditional factors like quality, service, price and advantage, other variables like company practices, employee behavior, social responsibility and environment are also effective in the success of a business.

Strategic CSR Applications

What we call strategic CSR is aimed at the realization of strategic purposes of corporations, and is based on the idea that; favors and philanthropic actions done are for the

benefit of society as well as corporations. Corporations return a part of their earnings back to their target groups by means of strategic CSR as they believe this method is the most proper way for their own financial interests. In other words, they assist their shareholders while also aiding their social stakeholders (Lantos, 2001: 35).

The basic thing distinguishing strategic CSR approach from philanthropy-oriented CSR is that; corporations do favor and throw that favor to the sea with the aim of catching fish. The strategies making it possible to catch these fishes can vary from corporation to corporation. For this reason, the selection, improvement, application and evaluation of the social fields in the social responsibility practices of some corporations may differ.

By 2000s, priorities that match up with corporate values and support corporate objectives have been determined, and attention has been focused on practices where subjects aimed at basic products and main market are preferred. Areas valued by the society, customers, employees and all stakeholders are prioritized by providing support within a governance formed as a result of the participation of public relations and other departments with a view to take decision in favor of the corporation in crisis periods or international legal regulations. In the practices realized in line with these priorities, the desire to “do a favor in the best possible way” is strong. Besides, it is seen that; today’s managers perform long-term CSR practices in a strategic cooperation with state or one or more non-profit organizations (Pira, 2005: 161).

Today, it is becoming gradually common that; budgets allocated for CSR applications are met by marketing, promotion etc. budgets instead of after-tax profits of corporations. Thus, corporations that used to present values to public outrightly, today aim at gaining value themselves and adopt win-win approach. In this sense, most efficient investments in our day are seen to be investments strategically made by top management and managers which are a part of the corporate goals of the corporation (Yönet, 2009: 258). On the other hand, among the conditions paving the way for corporations to tend towards strategy from philanthropy in their corporate contribution efforts, customer complaints, increase in the special interest group pressures, increase in the incentives applied by states and governments towards corporation in certain subjects and areas can be included. While tax reductions, import advantages and incentives imposed for companies engaging in social responsibility activities enable corporations to perform their social responsibilities, they also provide several advantages in the long term like earning money, expense deductions from tax, and gaining the sympathy of various government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

In this context, according to the results of the survey conducted by KPMG, a professional service provider in America, on the top 250 companies of Global Fortune in 2002, while the importance given by the companies in America to social responsibility campaigns was 35% in 1999, this rate has increased to 45% in 2002. Moreover, another result of this survey is that; there are also sections about community-oriented donation activities in the annual activity reports of the corporations and special annual public benefit re-

ports are also published (Kotler&Lee, 2006:5).

Recently, it is observed that; corporate donations, corporate social responsibility initiatives, and benevolent corporation initiatives fit into certain standards with strategic management. Just like in developed countries, these initiatives are becoming increasingly popular in Turkey as a cardinal corporate activity.

Turkey and The CSR Concept

Cooperation of multinational companies with public agencies and organizations, the corporate structure they create and corporate governance structure or other driving forces like culture have made a great contribution to the development of corporate social responsibility in Turkey. Since corporate governance structures, investors and non-governmental organizations impose more sanctions over these multinational companies, these companies generally implement group-wide strategies. Therefore, with more responsibilities on them, the CSR applications and experiences of multinational companies are normally more advanced. Moreover, multinational companies have initiated the process of regional performance of CSR applications with their activities where they launch associated enterprises with local companies and cooperate with new stakeholders (Corporate Social Responsibility Report in Turkey, 2009: 11).

Multinational companies mainly perform CSR applications devoted to children's health and education, volunteering, contribution to public development, improvement of brand name and corporate reputation. In addition, some of the studies remain at the level of direct sponsorship or get the support

of public relations and consultancy companies instead of stakeholders.

Both the international factors and also the economic and social crises in Turkey have established the proper environment for discussions about CSR practices, in which business world takes the principal role and civil society functions as a supervisor and beneficiary. The researches of Canada-based Global Scan research company also support this analysis. The Turkish leg of this international research under the name of "CSR Monitor" is performed by Yöntem Araştırma. According to this research, though the concept of corporate citizenship is well-recognized in Turkey, companies cannot make their functional presence felt with regard to working rights and environmental issues (Yöntem Araştırma References, 2009:1)

Therefore, the economic and political events faced in the last 50 years in Turkey and high inflation fluctuations have not made it possible to make long-term plans and achieve sustainable development. Serious improvements were shown by Turkey as of 1980s in order to liberalize economy and increase it to a level that can make it possible to compete with the economies of developed countries. But this process has brought along some disadvantages with it and as the growing competitive environment put the companies under price pressure, it forced them to defer their CSR activities so as to maintain their profitability

Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Reputation

Corporate reputation is a concept about the cumulative impressions of internal and external stakeholders. From this point forth, it

is possible to say that; corporate reputation is about the perceptions of all stakeholders of a corporation. Having a positive reputation underlies the perception of the stakeholders of the corporation that the corporation is more attractive than other corporations (Carmeli & Tishler, 2005: 13). A corporation with good reputation produces more quality products, offers more quality services, becomes a better employer, has better customer relations, is more powerful in financial terms, gives more reliable messages and becomes a better corporate citizen.

It is known that; corporate social responsibility, which is seen as a natural part of business strategy in today's world, positively contributes to corporate reputation. The relation between the concepts of social responsibility and corporate reputation is clearly shown by "The Reputation Quotient", which is a scale developed by Charles Fombrun and Haris Interactive Research Company with a view to evaluate and measure corporate reputation, indicating the social responsibility is among the six dimensions of this scale (Fombrun & Riel, 2004: 52).

Enron company, which is the biggest natural gas distributor in USA and which ranked number seven in the top 500 companies of USA in 2000, Fortune 500, drew all attention of public to CSR practices and corporate management concepts while restructuring its reliability, which was lost as a result of accounting scandals in 2002. Even before these scandals were revealed, defenders of citizenship rights criticized multinational companies in that; they employed child labor for the sake of being more successful in global competition, renounced working conditions and became increasingly covetous. Enron

company took several measures, particularly new regulations in laws and reporting, to regain its trust in the business world. The desks of analysts and other units were filled with extensive social responsibility reports along with annual activity reports (Heinonen, 2006: 1).

In another research by Hill & Knowlton consultancy & public relations company, it is revealed that; 9 out of 10 Chinese companies considered reputation as the key of company success. Hill & Knowlton conducted 5 reputation researches on Asian managers in 2004 and Chinese managers in 2005. European and North American managers are aware of the fact that; reputation is the key to be protected from crisis and generate more income. Many Chinese companies, claiming that other concepts are also necessary to be different and privileged in the market, consider reputation as a significant concept in raising awareness. According to the results of a research done by Hill & Knowlton in 2004, 87% of Chinese managers accept corporate social responsibility as a booster of the reputation of companies (Wright, 2005: 2).

In a research done by Cerulli Associates, which is a consultancy and research company, it was asserted that; the ethical investment portfolio in the world as of September 2001 is 1,42 trillion dollars and investors do not invest their money on companies with poor social responsibility performance anymore (Capital, 2005: 61). This situation shows that; investors are another factor that forces companies towards social responsibility practices. Corporate investors administering great sums of funds primarily take into consideration the subjects making up the reputation of a company while investing their funds in that company.

Firestein (2006: 25) asserts that; “if corporate reputation is damaged, it is hard to ameliorate it and long-term uncertainties will show up as a result”. Therefore, companies need to develop efficient and sustainable programs to maintain their reputation. They should perform corporate reputation studies by taking into consideration many factors like structure of the company, its culture, the sector it’s in, expectations of the stakeholders and position of the competitors. During this process, both corporate social responsibility practices and CSR communication play a key role in terms of reaching the stakeholders and acquiring a different and powerful position in their minds. And this generates the necessity that; companies wanting to hold a powerful reputation and maintain their existing reputation should carry out strategic CSR-oriented studies.

Measurement and Reporting in Corporate Social Responsibility

Feeling the importance attached to social problems with a greater insight, today’s society has started to inquire why companies are not concerned about social problems and why they do not fulfill their social responsibilities.

Throughout the world, CSR reporting has become a necessity like financial reporting. And huge companies even make the evaluation of the social, environmental and common economic responsibilities of their senior managers and measure their success. Corporate Social Responsibility practices are not merely a public relations study covering merely projects, and it is expected from companies to develop world class strategies in their area of activity and make these a part of their activities in order to be able to perform their CSR-related responsibilities to the

fullest extent. Thus, it is becoming harder for a company to compete in international terms, unless it develops some practices like education, innovation, stakeholder participation and measurement of areas of influence or makes commitments related to these issues (Aydede, 2009: 1).

Social audits, emerging as an evaluation procedure of social responsibility, are typically carried out annually or sometimes semi annually. Today, the number of organizations preparing social audit reports and publishing them in order to show their level of social responsibility to public opinion is gradually increasing. For example; "Some companies like Atlantic Richfield and General Motors are preparing special reports about social performance to exhibit a positive image before public. Moreover, Ben&Jerry's Homemade Inc., which is an ice-cream producer, has recently added a four-page social audit report to its annual report" (Boone, Kurtiz & David, 1999 : 82).

In many European countries, corporations are required to report their sustainability and social responsibility activities on an annual basis. Such an obligation was imposed in France years ago. As a result, EU is advancing towards developing common rules to report such events as corporate annual reports (Rudolph & Hoag, 2004: 3). Measurement is one of the leading factors in every marketing campaign and social responsibility campaigns are not exceptions to this. Rather than a measurement based only on sales results, a long-term measurement that has become a major component of business administration within the frame of a proper program is necessary.

Sustainability in Corporate Social Responsibility Applications

Dyllick and Hockerts (2002: 131) adapted the concept of sustainable development to business administration and defined corporate sustainability as; "meeting the needs of a firm's direct and indirect stakeholders (such as employees, clients, pressure groups, communities, etc.) without comprising its ability to meet the needs of future stakeholders as well." Corporate Sustainability is generally related to company performance, financial capacity of company, reduction of negative environmental influences and coherence of social expectations. Therefore, we can talk about three basic elements with regard to sustainability (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006: 113):

Economic sustainability (long-term profitability)

Environmental sustainability (environmental conservation)

Social sustainability (social development and contribution to well-being)

According to Griffiths, CSR and sustainable business practices contribute in employing the best personnel (Griffiths, 2005: VII) :

to develop the skills and motivation of labor,

to build up trust among customers,

to manage risks and opportunities in the long term, and

to empower reputation.

CSR concept, that simultaneously gained importance and popularity with the ascension of sustainable development concept in the world, is described with the positive contributions of companies to the community and all the stakeholders they are account-

able to within the frame of “corporate citizenship” understanding, not diversifying an offered service or a manufactured product. Business world is now aware of the fact that; sustainable development is not merely within the domain of public sector and non-governmental organizations, and in addition to their own financial sustainability, they should also rapidly go into action by taking an active role in the sustainability of resources and community development. At this point, an increase in multi-stakeholder dialogue and sharing between the actors becomes significant. (Corporate Social Responsibility Report in Turkey, 2009: 11). Employees, employee families, local community and society at large should work together and contribute to corporate actions aiming to improve social quality of life.

There are two associations in Turkey that centre their studies on CSR and sustainable development issues. These are Turkish Corporate Social Responsibility Association and Business World & Sustainable Development Association. Many other associations are working on CSR, but they deal with CSR as a sub-heading. Business World & Sustainable Development Association represents Turkey at the international level in World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Habitat II Conference, that was organized in Istanbul in 1996, provided an opportunity particularly for people living in Istanbul to observe a platform where social issues like reduction of poverty and discrimination, maintenance and support on human rights, meeting the basic needs of everyone like freedom, education, health and nourishment are discussed. This conference was the pioneer in creating the environment necessary for discussing subjects related to sustainable development in Turkey (Corporate Social Responsibility Report in Turkey, 2009: 13).

As Turkey becomes a part of international agreements, campaigns and initiatives increasingly, the country’s level of awareness about CSR and related issues also exhibits an increase. It is inevitable that; government policies are required for validating the sustainability of CSR, which will be formed within the scope of an integrative approach, and for generating pro-active solutions to social issues.

SAMPLING AND METHODOLOGY

This study aims to reveal the viewpoints of the corporations of the highest standing in Turkey to CSR enterprises. Corporate social responsibility enterprises-related principles, strategies, social enterprise fields and evaluations of public relations implementers of “The Most Admired Companies in Turkey”, determined by Capital Monthly Business and Economy Magazine in 2008, will be presented. Therefore, a status determination study was performed by having a thorough interview with public relations implementers that develop more integrated management policies by taking into consideration projects providing benefits to society and all the social stakeholders and the environment, and contribute to excellent communication and accordingly the development of corporate reputation.

Top 20 companies with the highest reputation in Turkey, listed for seven years by Capital Magazine, was selected as the sample. “The Most Admired Companies in Turkey” list could be fixed as a result of the research conducted by Capital Magazine for seven years and which included 1.351 managers from 36 sectors in 2008. The reason of selecting this list of companies as the sample is that; beside qualities of companies like leadership and innovativeness, criteria that

affect reputation like public relations and corporate social responsibility are also included in "The Most Admired Companies" research of Capital like Fortune Magazine in USA. It is considered that; "The Most Admired Companies" give more place to CSR enterprises in order to establish a reputation. But, though I explained individually and repeatedly to these 20 companies that I'm waiting for their contributions, only 9 companies accepted my interview request and answered my questions.

The companies who answered our questions from the above are Turkcell, Koç Holding, Garanti Bankası, Doğuş Holding, Microsoft, Zorlu Holding, Bosch Sanayi, Siemens and Akbank. As some of the individuals assigned by some business administrations were not fully equipped in their CSR activities, some subjects could not be discussed in detail in these interviews.

Demographic Properties of Participants

4 of the participants of the thorough interviews made within the scope of the research are between the ages 30-35, 1 of them is over 35 years old and 3 participants have bachelor's degree and 6 participants have master's degree. Considering the sex distribution of the participants, 8 of them were female (78%), and 2 of them were male (22%).

FINDINGS

In the light of the interviews with companies, the following findings were attained about CSR perception in Turkey, strategic objectives of companies about social responsibility campaign organization, their principles and measurement of CSR practices from the point of companies:

While 78% of the participants stated their agreement with the idea that CSR practices are a voluntary responsibility, 22% of them expressed their disagreement with this idea. Moreover, all of the participants remarked that; CSR practices are an ethical responsibility and 4 of the participants (45%) said they had no idea to the question "Are CSR practices a legal obligation?" and 3 of them (33%) told that; CSR practices are performed within the scope of a legal obligation and 2 participants (22%) told they disagree with this thought. In addition, 7 of the participants (78%) said that; CSR practices are an economic responsibility, and 1 participant (11%) remained undecided and another 1 participant (11%) disagreed with it. In the light of the data obtained, companies consider CSR practices as a voluntary and an ethical responsibility and most of them tell that; they adopt an economical point of view that includes utilizing the owned resources in an efficient way and offering goods and services to public by making profits.

5 participants (55%) responded that; CSR practices are not focused on social problems in individual terms, 3 of them (34%) thought social problems could be solved with individual participation and 1 participant (11%) left this question unanswered.

All participants support the idea that; measurement of CSR practices is necessary to review subjects like how many individuals had services, was the intended objective accomplished, what kind of positive-negative impacts it had upon companies after they finish their CSR campaigns efficiently and to re-develop projects and new projects afterwards. If companies start a project and do not follow it well or do not

care about it, they may meet some public reactions that will cast a slur on company image.

All of the participants asserted that; CSR practices are beyond the concept of philanthropy, they fulfilled their responsibilities to their stakeholders with these CSR practices, CSR practices are necessary and important for sustainable development, and these practices create permanent values and benefits to companies. In the light of these data, it is not wrong to say that there is a transformation from classic philanthropic approach to a more participatory structure in the viewpoint of Turkish companies to CSR activities.

All of the participants claimed adopting the notion that; CSR practices “should not only be social projects for companies, but also an administration model” and they defended that; CSR practices “generate permanent values and benefits to companies”. Besides, they all agree to the idea that CSR practices should be adopted by all employees.

All of the participants expressed that; CSR projects are performed according to corporate communication strategy, that means there is a continuous information flow with internal and external target groups related to CSR studies, and they are to put an integrated and a consistent communication strategy into practice in order to ensure the participation and support of all social stakeholders to CSR practices.

Most of the participants stated that; they achieved positive results in the solution of the social problems they handled with their CSR projects, and planned and implemented CSR projects in a way to make the solution of the problem sustainable.

According to table 1, (38) while 7 participants (78%) agreed with the idea that; web-

sites will contribute to the recognition of CSR campaigns by public, 1 participant (11%) proposed that websites are not effective in the promotion of CSR practices. And 1 participant was unsettled about this.

5 of the participants (56%) answered the question, posing what the strategic aims of CSR campaigns are, as disagreeing with the idea of getting more customers, 3 of them (33%) said strategic aims are mainly the wish to get more customers and 1 participant (11%) was unsettled. That means, most of the CSR implementers think that; their primary aim is socially-oriented, rather than getting more customers while performing these activities.

5 of the participants (56%) claimed not having the aim of making propaganda during their CSR campaigns, 2 participants (23%) said they performed their CSR campaigns with the intent of making propaganda. And 1 participant remained doubtful.

The question “What kind of influence can CSR practices bring upon employees?” was answered by all participants that; participation to CSR practices in person promotes employees’ sense of belonging, plays an important role in terms of the loyalty of employees to their company, and increases the satisfaction and motivation of employees. In the companies ameliorating employee participation and working conditions by CSR practices, error margin decreases and productivity increases. Moreover, this state is also helpful in forming the new labor force. Generally, corporations with powerful corporate social responsibility understanding attract new labor force to themselves and make these individuals stay at this corporation for a long time.

When the participants were directed the question about the role of CSR practices in building up corporate reputation, they expressed that; being convincing and developing trust in their target groups take a long and a continuous effort, and from this point forth, they attach importance to being known to be a well company and what they present in social terms in addition to the value they offer to their customers. And therefore, they emphasized that; CSR practices have an essential role in business administration for the purpose of establishing an efficient communication in the eye of all social stakeholders, primarily its employees, customers, suppliers and society at large in order to build up a reputation in public opinion.

According to table 2, (38) 4 of the participants (45%) answered “no” to the question “Are you intending to increase retail sales by performing CSR projects?”, and 4 of them (45%) said “yes”. 1 participant (10%) was undecided about this question as well.

The participants were asked if one of their strategic objectives in organizing a CSR campaign could be achieving competition advantage, and 7 participants (78%) replied “yes” and 2 participants (22%) were unsettled about this matter.

According to table 3, (39) 5 participants (56%) indicated that; CSR campaigns have a significant role in creating product and service awareness, 3 participants (33%) were unsettled about this and 1 participant (11%) did not agree with this idea.

Two of the participants answered the question, asking which departments manage CSR

activities, as “General Manager”, “Human Resources Manager”, “Public Relations / Communication Advisor / Corporate Communication Official”, and “Marketing Manager”. Other 2 participants replied this question as “General Manager”, “Public Relations / Communication Advisor / Corporate Communication Official” and “Marketing Manager”, and 1 participant replied “All of Them”, and another participant replied “General Manager” and “Public Relations / Communication Advisor / Corporate Communication Official”, 1 participant included only “Public Relations / Communication Advisor / Corporate Communication Official”, and another participant replied “Human Resources Manager”, “Public Relations / Communication Advisor / Corporate Communication Official”. It is gathered from these answers that; CSR practices are performed almost in all companies and all the departments within the body of these companies act within the scope of a governance while performing this function.

Five of the participants (56%) said “yes”, 1 participant said “no” and 3 participants (33%) gave the answer “partially” to the question “Are you publishing CSR reports about your CSR practices?”

“Do you include your CSR applications in your company website?” question was answered by 8 participants (89%) as “yes” and 1 participant (11%) as “partially”.

“In what periods are your CSR projects published on your website?” question was answered by 6 participants (67%) as “continuously”, 2 participants (22%) as “1-year intervals”, and 1 participant (11%) as “3-month intervals”.

While eight participants (89%) said that; employees voluntarily took part in their CSR campaigns, 1 participant left this question unanswered.

While four participants (45%) did not answer the question "How much time do volunteers allocate for CSR campaign?", one participant (11%) answered it as one week, another participant (11%) answered as 2-3 days, and another participant (11%) as three days a week, and one participant (11%) answered it as one day a year, and one participant (11%) told that this time varied. But, CSR practices consist of long-term campaigns.

According to table 4, (39) 1 participant stated that; their CSR campaigns are aimed at conservation of natural habitat and prevention of pollution; 1 participant spoke about making CSR campaigns in the fields of "environment", "consumer protection and enlightenment", "donation" and "education"; 1 participant included "environment", "consumer protection and enlightenment" and "education"; 1 participant "environment", "donation", "education", "cultural and artistic activities"; 1 participant "environment", "donation", "education", "sports"; 1 participant "environment", "education", "social problems"; 1 participant "environment", "education", "cultural and artistic activities", "community development"; 1 participant "consumer protection and enlightenment", "donation", "education", "community development"; and 1 participant included "donation", "education", "cultural and artistic activities", "community development" in the CSR campaigns they conduct. It is observed that; the companies organizing CSR campaigns that create values from the point of public in real terms in respect of their re-

sults, made great efforts in order to improve both their business operations and the public. Yet, companies adopt a moderate policy towards easier social and environmental issues in general. On the other hand, there is still a need to improve subjects like human rights, employee rights and participation of employees to decision-making process.

According to table 5, (40) 6 participants (67%) expressed that they use newspapers, magazines, radios and TVs while announcing their CSR practices to public, 1 participant (11%) made the announcements through newspapers, magazines, business bulletins and internet, 1 participant (11%) preferred all mass media and 1 participant (11%) used only internet for announcing CSR practices. Then, we can say that; newspapers, magazines, radios and TVs are the most preferred mass media in announcing CSR campaigns to large masses.

4 participants (45%) said they observed an increase in customer loyalty as a result of the measurements after their CSR practices. 3 participants (33%) were undecided about this question and 2 participants (23%) expressed that; CSR practices are not adequate in delivering customer loyalty.

According to table 6, (40) 3 of the participants (33%) pointed out that; there are positive changes in the financial performance and profitability rates of companies, and 3 participants (33%) said there was no such change. And the other 3 participants (33%) did not state an opinion on this subject. From these results, we can gather that; CSR practices do not make a considerable impact on financial performance and profitability rate.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

It was found that; the interviewed companies were enthusiastic about social responsibility within the scope of corporate governance, and paid adequate attention to CSR reports and policies. Moreover, in the light of these data, it will not be wrong to say that; recent CSR implementers in Turkey are shifting from traditional philanthropy approach to a more participatory structure and they are making progress in their social enterprises.

Companies, which come into prominence with their contributions to social issues, are appreciated in public opinion. The respected approach is winning this appreciation by making social contribution, not deriving personal benefits. Due to this approach, it is becoming widely-accepted that; companies should have an important obligation to maintain and improve the welfare of society along with their own benefits. CSR activity implementers that take this responsibility in companies have the power to unite company benefits and public benefits in a common ground. Therefore, when the results of the interviews are considered from an integrated point of view, the support of all departments that I've interviewed regarding CSR activities show that their general beliefs about CSR campaigns are positive.

CSR is a sustainable and an accountable corporate communication activity, which concentrates on a social problem in individual or corporate terms, covers a certain and manageable process, is adopted by all company employees and administration being participatory and measurable, and creates permanent values and benefits to corporate reputation.

Within this framework, regardless of the characteristic of the social problem faced, they can establish a proactive communication by corporate social responsibility campaigns in order to perform corporate reputation management, which is the key of corporate reputation. Therefore, regardless of their strategies, the thoroughly interviewed companies see no harm in the recognition of the benefits, provided by their CSR enterprises to public, both by society and all other social stakeholders. Companies stated that; they will announce these social projects to public and attach more importance to this issue when it comes to their reputation.

As a result of the thorough interviews, it is clear that; sustainability and accountability are very important elements in the CSR projects carried out by the companies, and CSR fields cover the needs demanded by people in parallel with community development. It is such that; while a certain level of awareness about social responsibility is being improved in Turkish society, the expectations from companies increase likewise; and there are more demands saying that companies should take on responsibility in social issues.

The companies that we have thoroughly interviewed expressed that; they primarily and mainly support voluntary investments about education, then they run campaigns having the purpose of creating solutions to environmental issues, and then make charity donations. On the other hand, they mentioned about their enterprises like cultural, artistic activities, consumer protection and enlightenment, and promoting community development. But, while companies paid attention to education, environmental

awareness and charity donations in their CSR enterprises that form the basis of sustainable development, they fell short in sports, health, energy conservation, recycling, child labor employment, respect to human rights, sensitivity about employees and domestic violence prevention issues. But, society wants to see companies that are sensitive towards social and environmental developments, and that integrate with public in almost all fields within the scope of corporate social responsibility practices, and they sympathize with such companies more. Thus, companies should fulfill their responsibilities to all stakeholders they are directly and / or indirectly in a relation with, and that may be seriously influenced by their corporate decisions and activities, in addition to their duty towards the environment and public.

CSR is a value creation process for companies at the same time. The creation of this value and the employees working for its sustainability make efforts to contribute to the development of the world they're living in. Participation to CSR practices makes company employees see themselves as fac-

tors creating values in the social field and increases their loyalty to the company and their job performance. Thoroughly interviewed companies indicated that; there is an increase in the motivation and productivity of the individuals taking part in voluntary activities and their sense of belonging improved. It is not possible to talk about the success of a project without the conscious participation of employees to CSR activities. In that case, personal participation of employees to CSR enterprises should be delivered, and the organization should get closer to public by this way and the needs of public should be comprehended well in this respect.

In conclusion, CSR practices, which provide a rich communication potential between companies and their stakeholders as significant elements of the positive perception of corporate reputation, will become more common across our country in parallel with the global development and requirements, and it will continue to be an essential communication preference of companies in the years ahead.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Distribution of websites about the recognition of CSR campaigns

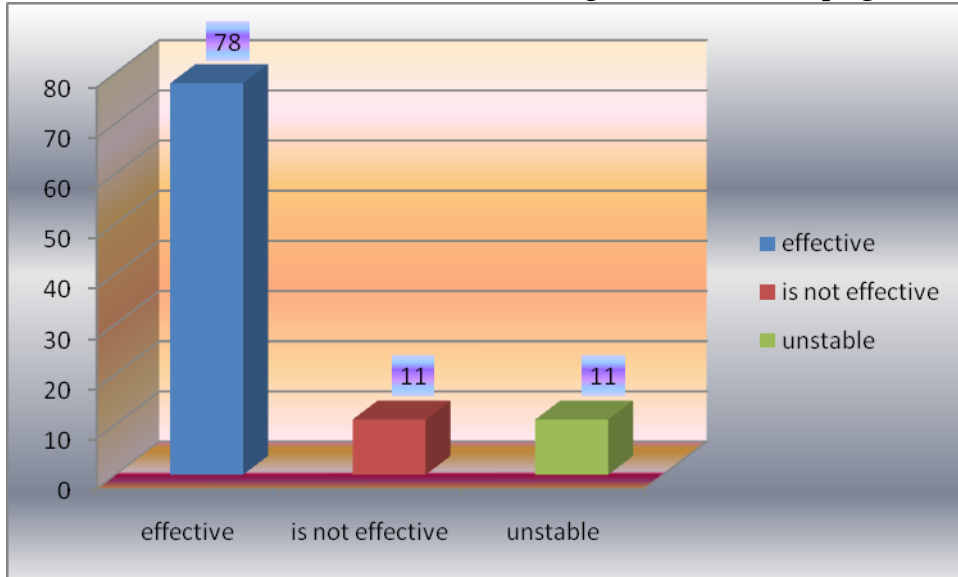


Table 2: Distribution about the increase in retail sales by CSR campaigns

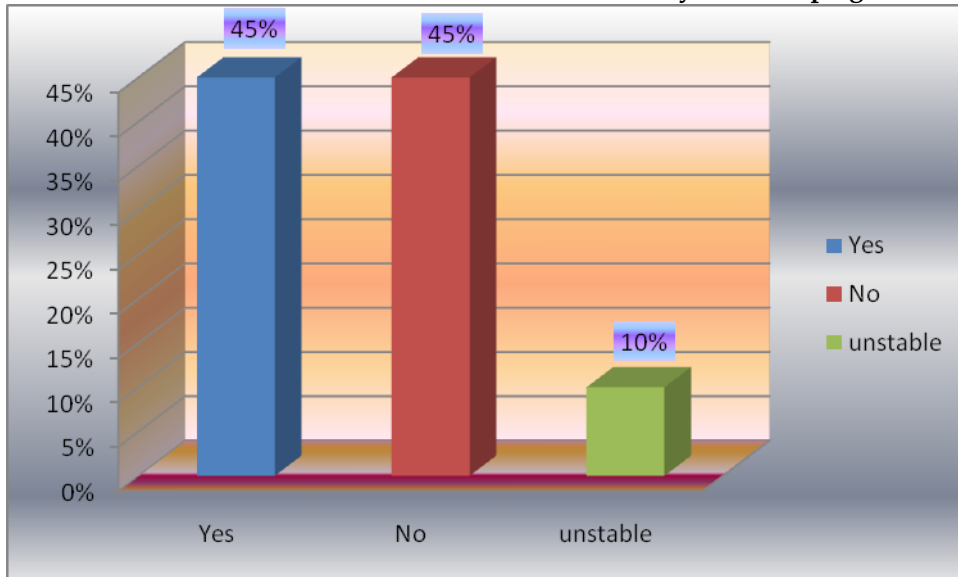


Table 3: Distribution of CSR practices in terms of creating product and service awareness

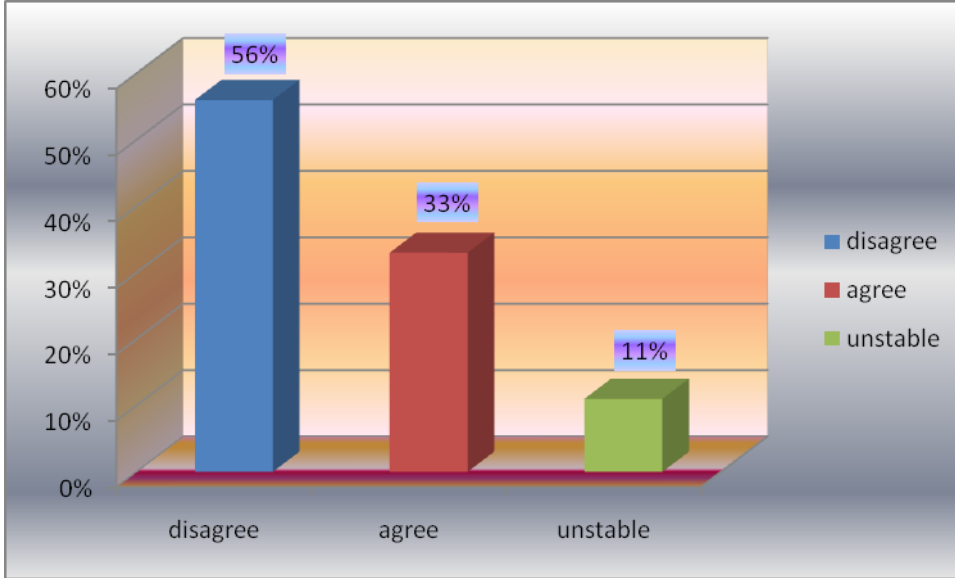


Table 4: Area distribution related to CSR projects

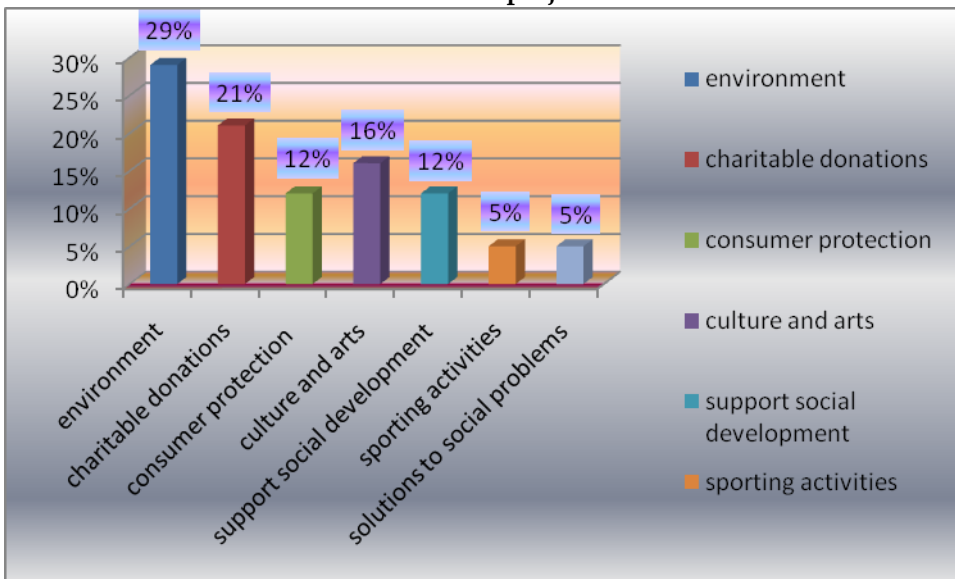


Table 5: Distribution about the mass media used in the announcement of CSR practices

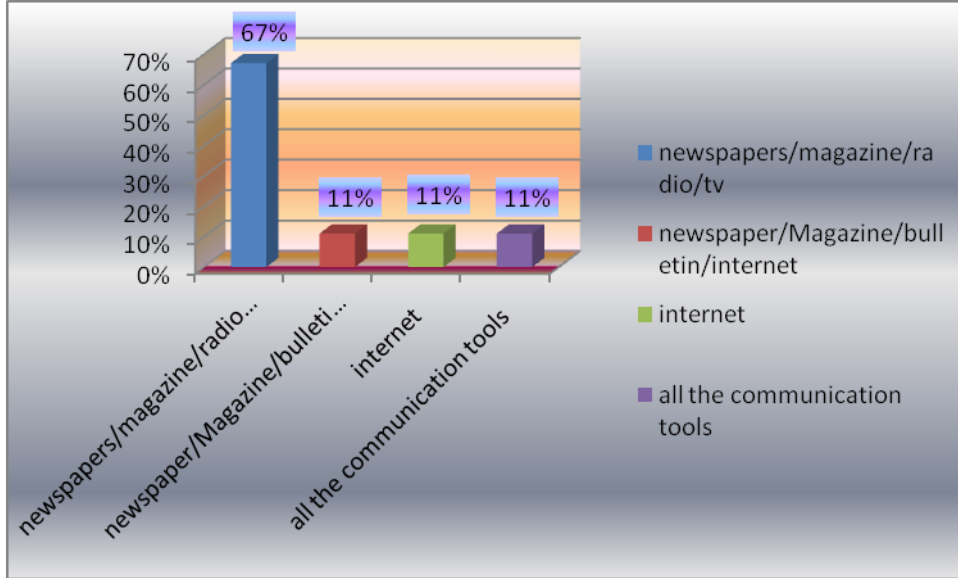


Table 6: Distribution of change in the financial performance and profitability rates of companies as a result of CSR practices

