

Identify and Examine the Factors Affecting the Social Responsibility of Accountants and its Consequences Using the Logit Model

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, company social responsibility has been a sensitive issue. This study is conducted to identify the factors affecting the social responsibility of accountants according to the importance of social auditing. 110 institutions were randomly selected from them. The questionnaires were completed through interviews and were conducted in 2020. Finally, the variables were identified in three categories of organizational factors, social factors, and support factors, and government programs. It is suggested that managers be informed about their social responsibility and social auditing by holding conferences, seminars, and short-term training courses, due to the results of hypotheses and the greater influence of organizational factors on social auditing. Managers should try to incorporate social auditing into company policies.

Keywords: social responsibility, accountants, logit model.

Introduction

In the business world, one of the most important steps in improving company social responsibility is social auditing. To evaluate and measure social and environmental impacts, this is the first opportunity for many start-ups to go beyond financial measurements. This issue has become one of the correct foundations of company social responsibility (CSR) which is why the recognition and application of social auditing are expanding. On the other hand, large companies are more interested in social auditing. To achieve goals such as sustainable development and long-term profitability (Azizika et al., 2001), maintaining social

legitimacy (Alinka and Yogba, 2009), legitimizing various aspects of Organization (Basamala and Jeremiz, 2005), attracting investment, and meeting the expectations of society (Dagen and Bloomquist, 2001), gaining competitive advantage and stakeholder management (Sepasi and Satisfaction, 2015), private companies and businesses are interested in using social auditing. Due to the consequences and effects of the activities of business units on the environment and society, new issues and problems have emerged with the growth and development of various industries and business units. Due to the complexity of the relationship between companies in society and each other and also with the government and individuals in society, today, conditions have been created that not only companies should be responsible to stakeholders but also to individuals (Pak Maram, 2015). Therefore, the company will not just focus on increasing profitability if it wants to protect the interests of all stakeholders. It will also pay special attention to issues such as paying fair wages to workers, environmental pollution, and other ethical and social issues (Batra, 1996). First, companies perceived CSR only as a benevolent act. Then, companies began to strategically plan CSR activities and increase their scale, due to stakeholder interest in company social responsibility, (Choi & Ryu, 2021). Nowadays, managers are expected to pay special attention to the environment outside their organization but in the past, the managers were only advised to keep their workshops productive, and in terms of human relations, they were encouraged only to satisfy the psychological needs of their employees (Sepasi and Satisfaction, 2015). To earn profits and achieve the goals of companies, company social responsibility (CSR) is an essential factor for survival that provides various opportunities (Hamidi et al., 2021). This issue is a new topic in accounting and financial literature. Investors, analysts, managers, and researchers have considered this issue from various aspects. Today, shareholders are keen to invest in companies that properly perform social responsibilities. The term company social responsibility, refers to the emergence of a movement that seeks to incorporate environmental and social factors into company business decisions, business strategy, and accounting. Increasing social and environmental performance along with economic dimensions is their goal (Foroughi et al., 2018). Companies disclose the information to increase shareholder wealth and cash according to fans of social responsibility disclosure (Cheung, 2016). Investors' confidence in financial statements has decreased, due to the occurrence of financial scandals in the new millennium. In addition to the financial dimension, it has led shareholders and creditors to pay more attention to the obligations of business units in the field of social responsibility and its disclosure in the capital market (Yeganeh and Barzegar, 2014). Social responsibility reports provide investors information about the current and future costs and benefits of the company. Social responsibility reduces information asymmetry and increases investor oversight. It also reduces manager's opportunities to misuse projects cash, which increases cash. Social responsibility increases the accuracy of the company's financial performance. On the other hand, reducing supervision over the financial performance of companies reduces the liquidity of the company. As a result, the value of the cash will be more by increasing the quality of information and supervising (Chen et al, 2015). In recent years, company social responsibility has been a sensitive issue so that international organizations, such as the United Nations and the European Union, have provided standards in this area (Faraji et al., 2020). Based on its dimensions, the company's social responsibility can increase the productivity of employees by increasing their interest and creating a sense of responsibility in them. In this case, employees feel valued and do their job properly, which will increase the useful performance of employees. Companies that fulfill their responsibilities to society are usually supported financially and non-financially by the government. The government also provides incentives for these companies. People will support companies that consider the interests of society. Public support can improve a company's competitive image and affect financial performance. Based on the company's profit, the company's financial performance is measured, and based on public trust in the company, increasing profits can be achieved. The people and the government support the company that pays attention to their interests, this improves the financial performance of the company and, consequently, increases the value of the company. The value of the company affects increasing the stock price and maximizes the welfare of shareholders (Chieh-Tse Hou, 2019). This study is conducted to identify the factors affecting the social responsibility of accountants, due to the importance of social auditing. Studies have been done in this field, among which the following studies can be mentioned. Olaniyan et al. (2021) studied the impact of Company Social Responsibility on Financial Performance in Nigeria. This study was

conducted to mediate the role of moral social responsibility and its impact on the financial performance of a Nigerian manufacturing company. In stakeholder theory, this study is predicted as management theory, utilitarian theory, and rational theory. Ethical social responsibility is significantly associated with integrating corporate social responsibility through employee performance, which has a significant and positive impact. It is concluded by using structural equation modeling on 150 completed questionnaires to manufacturing companies in Nigeria. Rossi et al. (2021) also examined the effects of corporate ethics and company social responsibility. According to results, adopting an ethical approach and social responsibility is positively related to the quality of information disclosed. This finding may help reduce information asymmetry.

Materials and ways:

In terms of purpose, this study is practical. A survey and descriptive-analytical method have been used to study and identify the factors that affect the social responsibility of accountants. The managers and partners of institutions are the statistical populations of this research who are members of the Society of Certified Public Accountants. 110 institutions were randomly selected among numbers of institutions that are members of the Society of Certified Public Accountants at the end of 2020. The questionnaires were completed through interviews in 2020. Therefore, the time domain of the research is the mentioned year. In the first stage of the research, the library method was used to identify the factors affecting social responsibility. That is why, articles of Persian and English databases, books, and dissertations were studied. Finally, the present variables were identified in three categories. They were finally consulted with professors and auditing partners who taught in graduate schools in Tehran universities. After applying, in the category of organizational factors, some variables were studied and analyze such as the variables of the organization's desire for social auditing (Homer, 2001; Mohammadi and Bayat, 2012), the appropriate leadership of the organization (Morimoto et al., 2005), more and higher priority of social auditing at the board level (Morimoto et al., 2005). Integration of social auditing with organizational policies (Morimoto et al., 2005), Continuous training on social auditing to social auditing unit (Greenwood and Kamuch, 2013). In the second category, the variables of the government order to establish organizations related to social auditing (Batra, 1996), the formation of legal institutions such as the Department of Occupational Health and Safety (Mohammadi and Bayat, 2012), and the variables of training people specialized in accounting and social auditing at the national level by Government (Ahmad, 2012) were the factors of government support and programs. As a group of social factors, the variables of increasing public concern about the non-implementation of the social audit system (Hunter, 2013), coordination between government, business, and society to establish a social audit system (Morimoto et al., 2005), and community pressure on the implementation of the system Social audit (Gao and Zhang, 2006) were studied and analyzed. Then, auditing experts were interviewed and their views on the impact of each of these factors on social responsibility were collected. The obtained data were analyzed using the logit model. Economists assume that in acceptance and non-acceptance models, the dependent variable is a set of continuous values. Models with qualitatively dependent variables or dual regression models will be used for such purposes (Madala, 1991). In these models, there are only two values of zero and one for the dependent variable. The dependent variables are binary in these models. It is assumed that the average desirability obtained from a choice depends on the characteristics of the choice, which are different for different people. Logit patterns limit the number of estimated probabilities in the range of zero to one.

In logit models, the regression relation is defined as relation (1):

$$Y^* = \beta' X_t + \varepsilon_t \quad 1$$

Here, Y^* is called a hidden variable that is the desired characteristic.

If this feature exists, we will have $Y^* > 0$ and otherwise $Y^* \leq 0$. In the present study, this characteristic is the social responsibility of accountants.

The probability occurrence of this characteristic is the probability occurrence of $Y_i=1$, which is determined by the structure Y. Therefore, if the probability $Y_i=1$ is shown by $P_i=1$, equation (2) can be written as follows:

$$P_i = \Pr(Y_i = 1) = \Pr(Y^* \geq 0) = \Pr(\beta' X_i + \varepsilon \geq 0) \quad 2$$

The logit model follows the logistic function as relation (3) (Jaj et al., 1988):

$$F(I_i) = F(X_i' \beta) = \int_{-\infty}^{I_i} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp(-i^2 / 2) di \quad 3$$

Here $F(I_i)$ is the function of the cumulative normal density of i -th person and I_i is also a linear function of the explanatory variables of the model. X_i , is the matrix of explanatory variables and X_i' is its transposition. β , is also a matrix of estimated parameters. The logit model can also be expressed as relation (4) (Jaj et al., 1988):

$$P_i = \Pr(Y_i = 1) = F(X_i' \beta) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp(-X_i' \beta)} \quad 4$$

In this equation, P_i , is the probability of a dependent variable to be one, and the value of zero means the lack of social responsibility.

The parameters of the logit model are estimated using the maximum verisimilitude method. If an instance with an observational T is present, the orthogonality function is defined as relation (5) (Madala, 1991):

$$L = \prod_{i=1}^T f(Y_i) = \prod_{i=1}^T P_i^{Y_i} (1 - P_i)^{(1-Y_i)} \quad 5$$

$$L = \prod_{i=1}^T F(X_i' \beta)^{Y_i} [1 - F(X_i' \beta)]^{(1-Y_i)}$$

As mentioned before, if the first option is selected, we have $Y_i = 1$ otherwise $Y_i = 0$. The logarithm is a function of verisimilitude as relation (6) (Madala, 1991):

$$LnL = \sum_{i=1}^T \{Y_i Ln[F(X_i' \beta)] + (1 - Y_i) Ln[1 - F(X_i' \beta)]\} \quad 6$$

In logit patterns, interpretations of final effects and tensions are important. Because the estimated coefficients (β) do not have a direct economic interpretation (Whistler, 1990).

The final effect of the logit model can be calculated as relation (7) (Jaj et al., 1988):

$$ME^L = \frac{\partial P_i}{\partial X_{Ki}} = F(X_i' \beta_k) \beta_k = \frac{\exp(-X_i' \beta)}{[1 + \exp(-X_i' \beta)]^2} \beta_k \quad 7$$

Here, ME^L is the final effect of the logit model, Φ is the probability density function for the normal distribution, β_k is the estimated parameter, and K is the explanatory variable.

The value of elasticity (E) also represents the percentage change in the probability of social responsibility of accountants for the change in each of the explanatory variables. It is calculated for the logit model as follows (Jaj et al., 1988):

$$E_{Ki}^L = \left(\frac{\partial P_i}{\partial X_{Ki}} \right) \frac{X_{Ki}}{F(X_i' \beta)} \quad 8$$

This equation E^L shows the elasticity in the logit pattern.

Results:

The table below shows the results of the logit pattern study. According to the results, among the variables considered in the model, some of them have become significant with a positive sign such as the variables of the organization's desire for social audit, coordination between government, business and society to establish a social audit system, proper leadership of the organization high priority of social auditing government order to establish organizations related to social auditing, the training of people specialized in accounting and social auditing at the national level by the government, the integration of social auditing with organizational policies, continuous training on social auditing, the formation of legal institutions such as health and occupational safety. Each business unit is a member of the community in which it operates and is constantly interacting with other members of the community. It is necessary that each business unit be aware of its obligations and responsibilities and not limit them to protecting the interests of shareholders. Even, it has other obligations and responsibilities towards other community groups such as creditors, employees, customers, vendors, and groups in the community and the environment. Today, companies cannot win the competition and satisfy customers only through operational or financial superiority. In today's world, we need more things to have a competitive advantage company. In the present era, companies and organizations are expected to be responsible and express clearly the effects of their activities on society from various economic, social, and environmental aspects to customers and individuals of the society (Sepasi et al., 2016). The variable of the organization's enthusiasm for social auditing has become significant at the level of 10% and with a positive sign, as the results showed. It means that this variable is one of the determining and effective factors on the social responsibility of accountants. Therefore, it is one of the factors that are related to the organization and is an important and influential factor. This part of the results corresponds to the results of Asgari (2007), Ghasemi and Shokar Aliabadi (2014), and Sepasi et al. (2016). To establish a social audit system, the coordination variable between government, business, and society at the level of 5% and with a positive sign has become significant. Therefore, it is one of the variables affecting the social responsibility of accountants. To go beyond financial measurement and

understand the social and environmental impact that the company has on its stakeholders, this is the first opportunity for many start-ups. Therefore, companies and organizations must take the necessary actions to make this coordination. Another variable that affects social responsibility is the government order to establish organizations related to social auditing. It is a variable that should be done through government support and programs. Fakhari and Shafie's study (2015) also refers to the role of government. The leaders of organizations have faced unpredictable problems, due to the complex and difficult current environment of organizations. To solve problems and to deal with the turbulent environment around organizations, the leaders are required to have high flexibility. One of the influential variables with a positive sign at the level of 5% on social responsibility is proper leadership of the organization. This variable is one of the organizational factors. Therefore, it can play an important role in organizations. Taheri and Taghizadeh (2015) also refer to the role of organizational leadership in the re-formation of organizational culture. They consider this variable as one of the influential variables in organizations. The study of experts on the organization based on written criteria and documents and justified and documented sources is called social auditing. To improve the quality of human resources, the experts comment on the organization's human resources in achieving the goals of the organization and provide suggestions (Bamdad Sufi, 1998). The higher priority variable of social audit is effective at the level of 5% and with a positive sign. The priorities of commercial enterprises also changed along with industrial development. Companies now focus more on protecting the benefits of their activities. Own and Swift (2000) also emphasized in their research the effect of social audit variables. Another variable that affects social responsibility at the level of 10% is the training of specialists in the field of social accounting and auditing at the national level by the government. The results of this study are also consistent with the findings of Sanobar and Heydarian (2012), Ferrero et al. (2017), and Weber et al. (2010). The results showed that an important factor that has been significant at the level of 5% and with a positive sign on social responsibility is the integration of social audit with the policies of the organization. Therefore, it is effective. Continuous training on social auditing and the formation of legal institutions such as the Department of Occupational Health and Safety has also become significant at the level of 1% and with a positive sign. Managers marginalized initially safety and health. They were sometimes assumed to be a complementary task to the general responsibilities of managers. Some managers believe, to respond to this responsibility and fulfill any obligation in this area, hiring a health or safety specialist or manager is enough. . More than 80% of managers have not been trained in the field of safety and health according to research in Australia. The most important problems in Australia are lack of training and insufficient resources by employers to cover health and safety laws. This issue indicates that most employers' mindsets have not changed and due to external pressures, most improvements are gained. It should be noted that to improve safety and health, there are councils to monitor safety and health that put pressure on employers in most countries, including Iran. McFadden's coefficient of determination is 50%. It shows that the explanatory variables of the model have well explained the changes of the dependent variable. Even the statistics of Madala and Sterla confirm this issue. The percentage of correct prediction is 86%. According to the explanatory variables, the estimated model was able to predict a high percentage of the values of the dependent variable. In other words, according to the available information, almost 86% of the respondents answered correctly.

Table 1- Results of logit model estimation

Variables	Estimation coefficient	Amare t	Estimated tension	Final effect statistics
The organization's passion for social auditing	0.258×10 ^{4*}	1.825	0.699	0.521×10 ⁵
Coordination between government, business, and society to establish a social audit system	0.294**	2.164	1.179	0.059
Community pressure on the implementation of the social audit system	-0.677×10 ²	-0.566	-0.210	-0.137×10 ²
Proper leadership of the organization	1.526**	1.968	0.354	0.307
The more and higher priority of social auditing	0.956×10 ^{5**}	1.925	1.083	0.192×10 ⁵
Government order to establish organizations related to social auditing	0.306**	2.035	0.187	0.061
Training of people specialized in social accounting and auditing at the national level by	1.719*	1.667	1.008	0.346
Integrate social auditing with organizational policies	2.008**	2.191	0.547	0.405
Ongoing training in social auditing	2.892***	3.332	0.705	0.583
Establishment of legal institutions such as the Department of Occupational Health and Safety	3.789***	4.638	1.253	0.764
Increasing public concern about the lack of implementation of the social audit system	0.0871	1.466	0.141	0.0377
Fixed coefficient	4.814	1.583	3.465	
0.4				MADDALA R-SQUARE
0.5				MCFADDEN R-SQUARE
0.86				PERCENTAGE OF RIGHT PREDICTIONS
83.92				LIKELIHOOD RATIO TEST
0.000000				P-VALUE

Source: Research findings, *, **, *** were significant at the level of 10%, 5% and 1%, respectively.

Conclusions and suggestions:

Every aspect of business has a social dimension. Company social responsibility is defined as methods that are based on ethical values and respect for employees, society, and the environment. Social responsibility accounting is a part of accounting knowledge. It is to measure and report the social effects (costs and social benefits) resulting from the activities of the business unit. Each business unit is a member of the community in which it operates. Therefore, it is essential that the business unit be aware of its obligations and responsibilities and does not limit them to protecting the interests of shareholders. They should also feel other obligations and responsibilities towards other community groups such as creditors, customers, vendors, and the environment. On the other hand, social auditing is an attempt by a company to measure its performance in cases that have social effects. This is an effort to identify, measure, evaluate, report, and monitor the effects of a company's activities on society that are not presented in traditional financial statements. Therefore, this study is conducted to identify and investigate the factors affecting the social responsibility of accountants. According to results of estimating the logit model, the variables of organizational enthusiasm for social auditing (Homer, 2001; Mohammadi and Bayat, 2012), appropriate organizational leadership (Morimoto et al., 2005), the higher priority of social auditing at the board level (Morimoto Et al., 2005), integration of social auditing with organizational policies (Morimoto et al., 2005)

and continuous training on social auditing to social auditing unit (Greenwood and Kamuch, 2013) have become significant in the category of organizational factors. Government order variables for establishing organizations related to social auditing (Batra, 1996), the formation of legal institutions such as the Department of Occupational Health and Safety (Mohammadi and Bayat, 2012), and the variables of training people specialized in social accounting and auditing at the national level by Government (Ahmad, 2012) are significant among the factors of government support and programs. Finally, the variable of coordination between government, business, and society to establish a social audit system (Morimoto et al., 2005) has become significant in the group of social factors with a positive sign. It shows the positive effect of these variables on the social responsibility variable. Therefore, to conduct social audits in institutions and companies, it is suggested to list and briefly describe the programs that the company performs with social issues according to the results of this study. Organizations should take steps to measure costs, resources, and successes in the field of social accounting and develop traditional management of social programs, due to the significance of organizational factor variables in this study. Today, managers should do things that are acceptable to society and related to its values. An organization that fails to be adapted to society, will not be successful in practice. To be able to maintain or improve their position in society, they need to act more on their social responsibility, and if they ignore it, their scope of activity will be limited. To accept and fulfill their social responsibility, management of social issues organizations face many problems, such as lack of clear boundaries and lack of clear and specific ways for managers to achieve goals and social responsibility. Social responsibility is a complex issue and in addition to economic factors to make decisions, managers should have sufficient insight into issues. To inform managers about their social responsibility and social auditing, it is suggested to hold conferences, seminars, and short training courses considering the results of hypotheses and the greater influence of organizational factors on social auditing. And managers try to include social auditing in company policies. Politicians and legislators should be informed of the importance of the issue to put society in this direction by enacting laws and regulations related to this issue, due to the impact of government policies on the implementation of social auditing. It is the accounting and auditing specialists and experts who should set specific standards for social auditing so that accountants and auditors can best deal with this issue. In addition, the type of chosen strategy is affected by managers' understanding of the depth of social issues and problems. The deeper managers understand social problems, the more participatory the strategy they choose. By applying the components presented in this research in another place and time, and in a larger statistical community, researchers are suggested to continue this research, and also to use prioritization methods.

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