

Emirati Journal of Business, Economics and Social Studies
Vol 3 Issue 2 (2024)
Pages 4 - 15
Available at
www.emiratesscholar.com

Media sustainability coverage and its impact on CSR adoption in the business sector in Dubai

Abubaker Mousa Eltoum
Sustainability, Mostadam Project Management Services, United Arab Emirates

ARTICLE INFO

KEYWORDS

Keywords: corporate social responsibility; sustainability; awareness; business; media

HOW TO CITE

Eltoum, A. M. (2024). Media sustainability coverage and its impact on CSR adoption in the business sector in Dubai. Emirati Journal of Business, Economics and Social Studies, 3(2), 4-15. https://doi.org/10.54878/fe762n57

ABSTRACT

In light of the growing global interest in sustainability and its requirements as a result of the environmental, economic and social conditions that the world is witnessing, it is necessary to consider the roles assigned to all sectors of society, perhaps the most important of which is the business sector, and the extent to which it fulfils its social responsibility through its operations and activities. It is important to consider the lack of integration of this concept in many business sector organisations and their delay in doing so. This study aims to examine the relationship between media coverage of sustainability topics and issues in the UAE and the amount of corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitment in Dubai. In order to investigate the relationship between these two variables, a sample of 314 individuals from the Dubai community was selected through an online data collection platform. This study utilised a mixed-method approach that included interviews and a general questionnaire containing several questions. Descriptive analysis, regression analysis, and correlations were used to process the data. The results of this study were encouraging regarding the strength of the relationship between the UAE media's coverage of sustainability topics and issues and the level of CSR commitment of companies and organisations operating in the Dubai community, opening the door for further studies that can investigate additional influencing factors. The findings and conclusions of this study represent an important factor that can be taken into consideration while searching for solutions to enhance the commitment of companies and organisations operating in Dubai's community to their social responsibility by focusing on creating and sustaining systematic media programmes that cover sustainability issues and requirements

Double-blind peer review by independent reviewers.

Received: 10 Jul 2024, Accepted: 03 Nov 2024, Published: 02 Dec 2024

*Corresponding author: amaeltoum@mostadam.ae

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Introduction:

As one of the largest emirates and cities in the UAE, Dubai has a population of 3.4 million and attracts 16.73 million annual visitors. The local government has drawn and developed several ambitious visions towards sustainable development, including the Dubai Integrated Energy Strategy 2030, Dubai 10x Goals, and the Dubai Green Building Code (DGBC). As a result, companies operating in Dubai have the greatest awareness of socially responsible and developmental practices in the UAE.

Evaluating the practices of this sector is therefore critical to achieving the sustainable development goals of Dubai and the UAE as a whole. Although there has been a wave of interest from the sector to truly engage in sustainability and triple-bottom-line governance, addressing environmental issues such as climate and waste management, these attempts are relatively modest compared to the substantial capital in the sector in Dubai.

However, there is an opportunity to develop these practices as long as the sector lives and grows within a society and is subject to its laws and influences. There are many examples throughout history of the impact of external factors and stakeholders on the functioning of commercial organisations. Some companies have thrived and made huge profits, while others have faced losses and exited the market. This demonstrates how external influences can shape the practices and behaviours of organisations in any society.

The other variable in this study is what is historically known as the fourth estate, the media, which is considered a major driving force in any society. When the media increases its focus on any topic, it directly raises awareness about that topic. Nowadays, the media has become an integral part of our daily lives, akin to food and clothing, with a strong social and cultural impact on society. It is often the reason for the development of many regulations, laws and policies within organisations, including business organisations.

Key Terms:

The level of adoption of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the business sector in Dubai, which is symbolised in the study (BCSR): This term covers the extent to which organisations in the business sector integrate the requirements of sustainable development in their strategic and operational aspects, starting from the vision and strategic plan of the organisation, programmes, projects, and key performance indicators. It covers the extent to which organisations incorporate the requirements of sustainable development in their strategic and operational aspects. The term addresses the impact of all these aspects on the three areas of sustainability (environmental, economic and societal), as well as the magnitude of these impacts, as some companies achieve CSR through policies, work systems and similar, while others limit this concept to certain charitable acts such as donations of funds to non-governmental charities. In the context of this study, the focus is on the right practice - not partial or superficial - but a practice rooted in the vision, mission, values, strategies, projects and activities of the organisation. They should reflect the commitment of its leadership and set clear and ambitious goals aimed at driving sustainable development in its communities over the long term.

Media Sustainability Coverage (MSC): It is usually at the core of the work of media institutions to develop programme cycles that are included in programme plans on an annual basis, and this is what the study focuses on, as it takes into account the value of the percentage of programmes or coverage that discuss sustainability issues and topics out of the total annual plans. This may take the form of talk shows, documentaries, or periodic reports on climate change, biodiversity, climate issues, etc. It is important that this coverage is planned and permanent - not just temporary and incidental - and not dependent on a particular event. This variable reflects the amount of coverage that media organisations adopt and systematically and strategically address sustainability topics and issues, whether through direct programmes or indirectly through media production in general. It is believed that practising this approach and adopting the topic of sustainability on a permanent basis will broadcast and consolidate the importance of sustainability and its practices among viewers, listeners and the general public who receive what the media broadcasts in any society.

Literature review:

Some literature has classified the media as an important general driver of corporate performance (Deephouse, 2000), while others have framed this impact as a model of corporate social responsibility within the business sector, identifying it as a partial impact (Aguilera et al., 2007). This is in the context of considering media or institutions as stakeholders.

A study of a sample of 109 Spanish non-financial companies found that media coverage has a positive impact on corporate social responsibility. The focus that comes from media coverage leads companies to exhibit greater commitment to the needs of their stakeholders through CSR investments. This provides strong evidence that media coverage is an important driver of corporate

social responsibility (Bona-Sánchez, Pérez-Alemán and Santana-Martín, 2023).

Furthermore, extensive literature highlights the existence of a link between the coverage of sustainability issues and the adoption of social responsibility within companies in the business sector. For example, Zyglidopoulos et al. (2012) were guided by a number of studies on the impact of the media on corporate social responsibility, especially its positive effects within these companies.

This is related to the private discussions that take place about the influence of stakeholders in driving the pressure to adopt CSR within companies (Freeman, 1984). Drawing on stakeholder theory, several studies suggest that increased media attention is positively associated with increased corporate CSR (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). In his case study, "Communicating Social Responsibility via Corporate Website," Radwan (2014) found that many companies in the UAE published their social activities on their own websites using media news and coverage to attract public attention.

Zyglidopoulos et al. (2012) conducted a study on the impact of media attention on corporate social responsibility behaviour, using a sample of 367 companies in the United States of America and their social ratings from 2000 to 2004. They hypothesised that companies respond to increased media attention by improving their CSR performance. This is consistent with this study's focus on this relationship, which creates motivation to increase the level of corporate social responsibility within the business sector. They concluded that the media is an important driver of corporate social responsibility adoption, enhancing companies' strengths but not their weaknesses.

In addition, in relation to the literature in this area, the study found that there is relatively little focus on the impact of the media on business in general or on the adoption of corporate social responsibility in particular, nor is there much literature on the importance of the media as one of the stakeholders influencing the organisational behaviour of businesses in the media sector (Deephouse, 2000).

These stakeholder theories consider the media as an external stakeholder with a potentially powerful impact on companies in the sector (McQuail, 1997). The company itself can absorb this impact in the context of improving its image or positioning in relation to the rest of society (Wartick, 1992) and other stakeholders of the same company. These impacts, which companies can control in the business sector, are often positive and directed at achieving a range of impacts and influences on targeted segments or society at large.

However, there is an impact that companies cannot control, which can be positive or negative, depending on the strength, resilience and reliability of companies in their commercial and operational activities in general. The negative effects depend on the existence of systematic reporting by specific and often individual institutions that focus on negative aspects or failures in the activities of the company itself (McQuail, 1997).

Other contexts (positive or negative) that companies do not have control over is the presence of systematic media coverage by several media institutions on a particular topic; this is the case because the media influence public opinion, continuously disseminate knowledge through their content and affect the business community (Kuhn, 2008). While a company may have many achievements in the areas covered by media organisations, this serves to enhance its reputation. Therefore, companies try to take advantage of this situation while they are in great default, and their business and activities are indirectly exposed to the public, forcing the company to take quick initiatives to rectify the situation (Sinha, Inkson, & Barker, 2012).

Other studies have provided detailed dimensions related to the environment and linked these to the salience of pollution and related corporate behaviour in terms of waste and greenhouse gas emissions. In their study, Wang and Zhang (2021) discuss evidence of a correlation between media coverage of pollution-related aspects of companies and the extent to which this increases the level of policy adopted and control maintained within these companies. Although this measures a response to an event that has occurred rather than a true prevention of pollution caused by corporate activity, this relationship illustrates the link between media coverage and corporate environmental behaviour.

On the other hand, the opposite may also occur, as the media may focus on companies with strong practices in social responsibility (Cahan et al., 2015). Here, these companies emphasise reflecting their reputation and market position, often seeing the economic benefits of this behaviour reflected in their profits. Other companies may consider adopting media, especially new forms such as social media, as a tool or channel for communication, understanding and interaction with stakeholders (Khanal, Akhtaruzzaman, and Kularatne, 2021). In this context, the media plays a significant role in determining the internal direction of corporate social responsibility and in adopting practices that have a greater impact on society and stakeholder interests.

Study hypothesis:

This study relies on two main variables, where the first variable is the UAE media coverage of sustainability

ISSN: 2791-3171 - https://doi.org/10.54878/fe762n57

topics, issues and themes, which is considered the independent variable, and the second variable is the level of commitment of companies in the business sector in the Emirate of Dubai to their corporate social responsibility, which is the dependent variable.

For the purpose of the study, the following hypothesis was developed to link these two variables. The hypothesis argues that when the media focuses on sustainability issues, it influences the level of corporate engagement in these areas. Additionally, the media has the ability to present this information in an accessible and understandable way for the public. This can be extended further, as the media can also produce TV or radio series that discuss sustainability issues, providing the audience with an overview of the ideal practices or activities that society should adopt to support this issue and contribute positively to it. The first hypothesis to be tested is:

H1: Media coverage of sustainability has a significant relationship with the adoption of CSR by business firms in Dubai.

Methodology:

The study involves the collection of data through a variety of methodological approaches. A quantitative approach is the survey method, where a list of questions is distributed and given to several people as a sample. A qualitative approach, the semi-structured interview approach, was also used. This approach is similar to the questionnaire but involves an oral exchange where the interviewer engages verbally with the interviewee to obtain the research information about opinions, attitudes, feelings, motives and behaviours (Carruthers, 2007). Interviews are conducted on an individual basis. A mixture of closed and open questions is used, usually followed by a (why) or (how) question. The interviews are completed in less than an hour, as more than that would exhaust both sides of the interview (Adams, 2015).

For the second round of data collection, the study conducts a semi-structured interview, which gives the study a chance to discover the "why" behind the attitude through the open-ended questions and the depth of the interviewee's knowledge or belief about the research area (Hossain, 2011). A semi-structured interview provides a better understanding and a chance to explore more about the research topic or area (Sumathipala et al., 2004).

The survey was conducted online, saving both time and effort and making it easier to analyse. Therefore, the paper uses a closed-ended questionnaire with restricted answers. The questionnaire contains questions followed by specific answers, and participants select their responses by ticking a box. This approach encourages participation as it is straightforward and efficient. It is also easy to categorise and analyse the statistical data. However, this closed questionnaire method has some disadvantages: participants may not find an answer that accurately reflects their response. The study overcomes this by selecting a ready-made answer that only serves the research objective. The study reached 384 respondents to the survey to represent the largest sample size, according to the sample size formula set by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The research team worked hard to spread the link to the survey created on the Survey Monkey platform as widely as possible. This resulted in a total of 541 responses with a completion rate of 72%, ending with 922 valid responses. The distribution and collection took almost 6 months, from 12 September 2020 to 27 May 2021.

In the interview phase, the target group of experts/affected employees in 5 different companies in Dubai were interviewed using 7 open-ended questions. The positions of the interviewees were Sustainability Manager/Corporate Sustainability Manager/Communication and CSR Manager/CSR Division Director/QHSE Manager (handling the CSR function of the company). The interviews lasted 30-50 minutes via virtual meetings where the interviewees were asked 7 questions, and their answers were collected and noted.

All questions used in the questionnaire and interviews were reviewed by experts in the field, as well as the assistance of the central statistical authority in the Emirate of Dubai (Dubai Statistics Centre) to ensure the effectiveness of these measurements, and a practical experiment was carried out on these measurements as a prototype, and the Cronbach's alpha reliability test was applied to ensure their reliability, in addition to data screening, sorting and normality assessment using Exploratory Data Analysis, where all these results were positive and confirmed the reliability and validity of the measurements and their readiness for descriptive and statistical analysis.

Once the research samples were completed and the sorting, screening and reliability stage was completed, the data were analysed descriptively and statistically, and then factor analysis and regression were carried out to show the relationship between the variables of the study hypothesis using: Exploratory Factor Analysis / Factor Score / Factor Loading / Rotation Method / Validation and Reliability of the Measures / Inferential Analysis / Regression Analysis.

Particularly in the case of semi-structured or unstructured interviews, interview analysis often involves a process known as "coding," where the study adopts

classifications and coding that approximate the variables and effects of the variables in the study; structured interviews, on the other hand, may follow a predetermined coding pattern. Tokens can be described as "labels to designate units of meaning of descriptive or inferential information collected during the study" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56) and are usually attached to pieces of data of varying sizes.

Results:

Through descriptive analysis, the data obtained through the implementation of the research methodology adopted in this study revealed interesting data that clearly delineated the main axes of the relationship between UAE media coverage of sustainability topics and issues and the level of CSR commitment by companies in Dubai. 60% of the sample are members of the community who do not work in business sector firms or media firms, as Table 1 shows the demographics, gender and general level of knowledge about CSR requirements in business.

Table 1. Demographics

Question	**Answer Choices**	**Responses in %**
Gender	Male	61.29%
	Female	38.71%
Workplace	Working in media firms	8.80%
	Working in a business firm in Dubai	31.38%
	Other	59.82%
Knowledge of the CSR concept	Negligible	18.18%
	Basic	18.48%
	Average	31.09%
	Good	23.75%
	Excellent	8.50%

This sample represented a knowledge level ranging from average knowledge (32 per cent) to good and excellent knowledge (32 per cent) and knowledge of sustainability science in general, as depicted in Table 1.

In addition to this general knowledge, approximately 59% of the sample also indicated that they perceive that the business sector in Dubai has a good contribution to the indicators that measure sustainable development in the emirate positively (Figure 1), and this is a result of these organisations integrating sustainable development requirements into their operations and operational activities, said 53% of the sample (Figure 2).

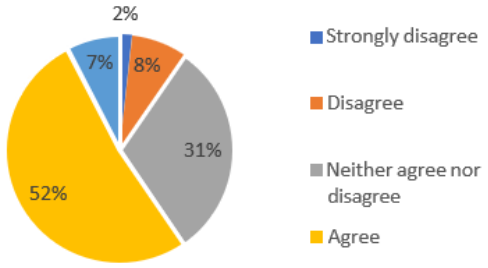


Figure 1

Business contribution to sustainability indicators

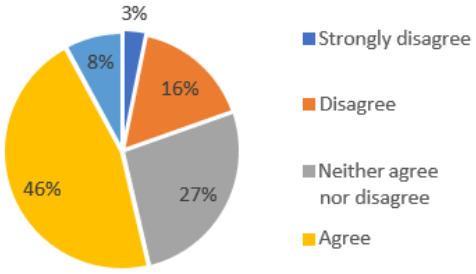


Figure 2

Businesses integrating sustainability into their operations and operational activities

Closely related to the questions directly related to the research hypothesis, nearly 67% of the sample (Figure 3) admitted that they follow and pay close attention to all media broadcasts on sustainability topics and issues. Not only that, but 71% of them said that through their coverage of sustainability topics and issues, the media influences their beliefs and behaviours (Figure 4), and to further this trend, 59% of the sample admitted that they learned at least one sustainable business practice from media broadcasts on responsible business and changed at least one habit (Figure 5).

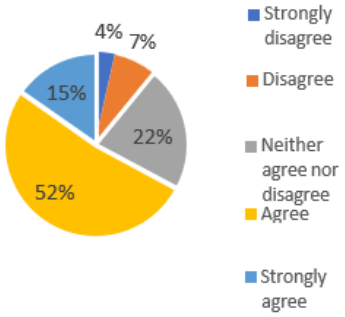


Figure 3

Attention media broadcasts on sustainability topics

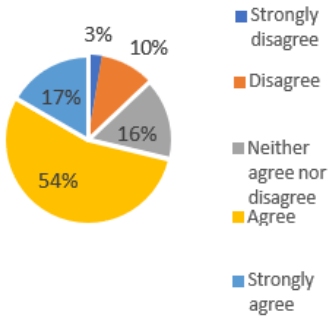


Figure 4

Media influences their beliefs

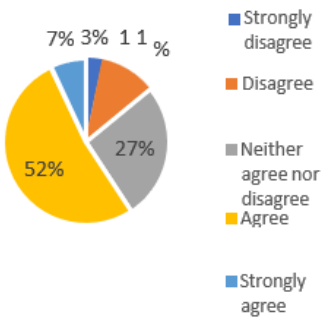


Figure 5

Media broadcasts on sustainability changed at least one habit

Regarding the direct question of the relationship between media sustainability coverage and the level of CSR adoption by the business sector in Dubai, 79% of the sample (Figure 6) believed that increased media focus on sustainability issues and requirements within their programme cycles would lead to greater committed to CSR by business sector companies.

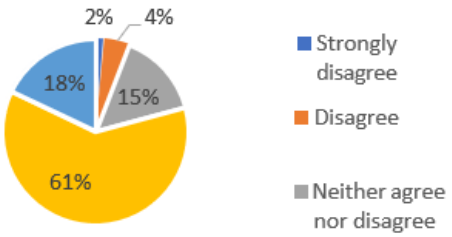


Figure 6

Opinions on the statement "Dubai business firms would operate in a more sustainable way if media covered it more."

As for the statistical analysis to test the relationship between the variables of the study hypothesis, the relationship between media sustainability coverage and the adoption of CSR by companies in the business sector in Dubai was investigated through correlation and regression analysis.

XY MSC BCSRcXY MSC BCSRc

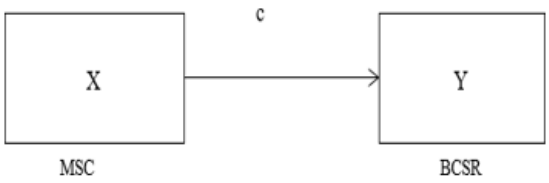


Figure 7

Total effect of MSC and BCSR

Total effect of MSC and BCSR

Corporate adoption of CSR (Y) was found to be lower than media coverage of sustainability (X), as shown in Figure 7. The relationship between coverage and CSR was significant (b = .551, SE

= .046, t(340) = 11.978, p < .005).Furthermore, the R-squared value of 0.297 indicates that 30% of the variance is explained as media sustainability coverage influencing the level of CSR adoption by business firms in Dubai. This supports the study's hypothesis that media sustainability coverage has a significant relationship with CSR adoption by business firms in Dubai.

As for the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, the main ideas related to the study topic, in particular, were collected and analysed to extract the main ideas that emerged from the participants.

Motivation:

For respondents from companies with high performance in responsible business, in terms of motivation, encouragement and motives for adopting CSR in their firms, most of the success is attributed to top management and the leadership team. As for the companies with a lower performance in CSR, their motivations were sometimes related to following the newspapers and laws issued by the relevant government agencies in the country, translating these laws into studies and case studies of their firms' field of work, and proposing programmes and projects to adopt CSR-related activities in the same area of sustainability media coverage that was studied.

Challenges:

In terms of challenges, high performers in the adoption of CSR in their firms have found that the awareness of community members resulting from media coverage can be a barrier to valuing their work towards environmental and sustainability goals; another barrier may be their organisations' understanding of the level of impact or return from these activities. This can lead to shareholders and senior management feeling uncomfortable and uncertain that their efforts will not result in tangible returns in the near future, depending on the current level of awareness in society.

The role of the media:

The interviewees agreed that the media plays an important role in raising individuals' awareness of responsible actions, and this influences the strength of the external motivations that influence the level of CSR adoption in their firms. Therefore, they all expressed their focus on transferring and disseminating their practices to the community. They are continually seeking partnerships to work with the media to achieve this, in addition to and primarily through their firms' media channels and social media accounts.

Interestingly, some indicated that there is a major challenge in disseminating their practices through their own media, as they believe that there is a lack of awareness among individuals in society of the value of their responsible actions. This creates a challenge for firms to justify to shareholders the returns and impact of their investments in this area, irrespective of the ethical aspect and motivation.

The impact of the media and its coverage of sustainability issues and requirements is not limited to individuals in society and their awareness; it goes beyond that to affect firms in the business sector. This impact can be damaging even for firms that make great efforts to operate responsibly, as they find it challenging to present the impact of their work on society and to mitigate external pressures on them.

Discussion:

The analyses conducted in this study concluded that its hypothesis of a relationship between media coverage of sustainability issues and requirements and levels of CSR adoption by the business sector in Dubai was accepted. Similarly, among other literature reviews conducted in other countries and regions, there is a focus on the impact of media attention as a driver of CSR in the

business sector (although some studies have only partially addressed this). From these studies, this study selected the work of Ziglidopoulos et al. (2012). They examined a sample of 500 companies included in the Kinder Lydenburg Domini Analytics Social Ratings Data (KLD) database, a US-based database, which is a source of data on the strengths and weaknesses of companies regarding their CSR performance. Other databases for financial data include Mergent, Lexis-Nexis and ABI/INFORM for media interest data.

The study defined the formal framework based on the understanding of CSR and not on what is common or current, which may be wrong; the study addressed the most common definition in the CSR literature, which is that CSR encompasses corporate actions that appear to make a positive contribution to society, which is merely what is expected or required by law. This is because the concept has been lost or confused by some members of society, firms and even the media.

The main conclusion of the study by Zyglidopoulos et al. (2012) revealed that increased media attention to sustainability issues and topics, especially in the field of the companies themselves, is positively associated with higher levels of CSR. The third objective of the current study was to examine the extent of CSR adoption by business firms in Dubai and its direct relationship with media coverage of sustainability and its issues.

What influences the adoption of CSR in companies in Dubai is the main and central issue of this study, given the sector's significant role in societies and achieving sustainable development. To address this, the study begins by reviewing the correlation and regression analyses between the extent of CSR adoption (dependent variable) and the media coverage (independent variable) according to the theoretical framework.

The analysis showed a significant correlation of 30% between sustainability coverage and the adoption of social responsibility, which represents about a third of all other influences, some of which were provided by people in the semi-structured interview sample, such as management directives or pressure from government legislation, regulations and laws related to the sector and nature of the business.

The existence of this relationship validates the influences already addressed in the literature review (Rahman, 2019), which contribute to the power of the media in directing sectors of society with its programming and the messages it repeats and focuses on. Different aspects of television, radio, and newspapers (Jan, Ji, & Yeo, 2019), as reliable sources of information, are important elements in any society. This is where the influence of the media comes into play.

In this context, it is also worth noting that companies may be more sensitive to media coverage of sustainability issues that address specific social concerns, depending on how closely these issues align with public opinion and the intensity of societal reactions to the topic. This is evident when there is a general tendency to discuss social responsibility in society. The study "CSR Practices of Businesses in Dubai during the COVID-19 Pandemic" discussed how the coronavirus crisis created a public movement in society that demanded a greater role for private sector companies in society - a movement that prompted many businesses to adopt CSR or raise the level of CSR adoption (Eltoum et al., 2021).

An important detail here relates to this study's finding regarding media attention, which often partially influences CSR strengths but not CSR weaknesses. As the study explains, this is because companies tend to engage in CSR that is not related to their negative impacts due to its lower financial costs, wider scope, and greater number of alternatives, giving them a greater reputation by increasing their CSR strengths. This comes at the expense of minimising CSR weaknesses, which should be a top priority.

This previous study referred to the so-called cycle path (Ackerman, 1975; Bigelow & Fahey, 1993; Mahon & Waddock, 1992). The term refers to a process whereby social issues or public opinion go through stages, reach a peak and then return to their normal state according to the social issue life cycle theory. In other words, society's interest in an issue changes in stages, and the importance of a social issue within society changes over time. The importance of media coverage of a particular sustainability issue varies greatly depending on the stage the issue has reached with the public and the extent of public interest in it. This is why companies engage in CSR activities related to the same issue that is receiving media attention, which is often seen as a strength rather than a weakness. Therefore, according to this comparison between the aforementioned study and this study, the media can be considered an important driver of CSR. However, it may move or influence one side of the issue more than the other.

Again, we see a positive relationship with the media, supporting safety values and green procurement. The media also plays an essential role in corporate investment decisions related to CSR (Kang and Kim, 2013). The media must be aware of their responsibility to solve problems, promote public opinion, social interests and

sustainable development, and be accountable to the public.

This ethical dimension of the media is what drives and supports the level of CSR in the business sector and influences its decisions. What the media are reporting today cannot be ignored. Several participants in the semi-structured interviews confirmed that a number of their company's decisions resulted from repeated waves of coverage, particularly by newspapers focusing on issues related to a specialised area of their company. This media coverage provided a strong impetus and incentive to support their plans to address these social issues, support sustainable development and increase their level of community involvement.

The questionnaire also explored this item ("I feel that businesses in Dubai would operate in a more sustainable manner if the media (TV, radio and newspapers) covered this topic more"), with the mean result and interpretation of participants' perceptions being M = 3.897. SD = 0.792, which was considered quite high; the percentage of those who agreed and strongly agreed was 79%. The correlation and relationship between media coverage and CSR adoption are strong and influential from the point of view of the research sample, as well as its different methodologies. In the literature, Ziglidopoulos et al. (2009) have shown that the attention that the news media pay to a particular company influences its CSR behaviour for a number of reasons, and companies that receive high levels of media attention may be more concerned about this effect.

This influence can be centred on spreading awareness and explaining concepts related to sustainable development and its issues, or it can be through supporting government initiatives, contributing to refuting them and facilitating their accessibility to all. The media has learned to support the efforts of existing political systems to achieve sustainable national development - their plans and programmes in all axes of development - which must continue to be covered until the practices are adopted or disseminated in society through these programmes and plans take root. Hence, this role of covering these sustainability topics should be embedded in media firms to support the government, especially those topics that are directly related to the business sector.

Conclusion:

This study focused on the adoption of social responsibility in the business sector in the Emirate of Dubai and what influences the level of adoption. The study focused on what is considered an external influencer for organisations and is also one of their stakeholders, namely the media. The study developed the hypothesis that media coverage of sustainability issues and topics has an impact on the adoption of CSR within Dubai's business sector and that the media coverage of sustainability issues and topics has an impact on the adoption of CSR within Dubai's business sector. The focus here was on best practice adoption rather than partial or misunderstood adoption by some organisations in the business sector. The study focused on full adoption, examining the extent to which sustainability, its issues and requirements integrate into the core of organisations, starting from the general orientation and vision through the strategic plan with its goals, objectives and indicators and then translating these into action through projects, processes and daily activities that lead to the production of services or products.

Through the research methodology and subsequent analyses, the study reached the acceptance of its hypothesis, as the statistical analyses indicate that the R-square value of 0.295 accounts for 30% of the explained variance in media sustainability coverage and its relationship with CSR adoption among business sector companies in Dubai. In other words, the main result here indicates that there is a relationship, influence and correlation between the level of CSR practices and concepts of CSR strategies undertaken by companies and the amount of media coverage of sustainability issues and requirements.

This study represents an attempt to conceptualise how the adoption of corporate social responsibility is influenced by sustainability media coverage. Much of the literature reviewed in this study was based on the influence of external and internal stakeholders on business decisions (Freeman, 1984). It is worth noting that the majority of studies dealt with external stakeholders

(Tian, Liu, & Fan, 2015), particularly customers (Roman et al., 2015), as well as studies on the impact of media on CSR policies and practices in the business sector have been minimal in general (Khanal, Akhtaruzzaman, & Kularatne, 2021) and almost nonexistent in the region and Dubai in particular.

Therefore, the contribution of this study at the theoretical level is to provide a theoretical framework that proposes to address the impact of media coverage of sustainability as an important stakeholder-driven variable that significantly influences the level of CSR adoption in the business sector in Dubai. In addition to elaborating an aspect of Freeman's (1984) theory and partially supporting the corporate sustainability model (Epstein

and Buhovac, 2014) by suggesting that the media and its coverage of sustainability influence CSR adoption in the business sector, this study focuses on the role of the media as an influential stakeholder and, as some literature considers, a secondary stakeholder.

At a practical level, this study contributes through more than one practical perspective, namely the government agencies concerned with sustainable development and its issues that work on formulating relevant decisions and policies; the other perspective is the media institutions in the country, and the next perspective is the business sector firms.

At the level of government agencies, the study contributes important elements that can be directed towards enhancing the role of corporate social responsibility in the UAE in general or in Dubai in particular. Firstly, media firms can adopt policies and decisions that seek to incorporate systematic, planned and continuous programmes, plans and campaigns into their programming to increase the level of coverage of sustainability-related content; this may take the form of an introduction to the issues and their requirements or an overview of current issues, causes and solutions in society. These television programmes, whether live or animated, aim to promote the concept of sustainability and its requirements. Indirect and implicit messages can also be conveyed through TV series, films, and plays that aim to communicate ideas and practices to members of society. This can be replicated through various forms of audio media and local radio. Local newspapers can work to identify or dedicate special pages to articles or news on sustainability. In terms of social media communication, all of the above can be adapted to fit different social media platforms and attract the audience.

In practice, the desired role of media firms is to provide them with a deeper understanding of a key issue - the promotion of sustainable development in society - that is directly related to their main area of work. Providing recurring and permanent articles within the programme courses that focus on sustainability and related issues in all aspects reflects the full commitment of these media firms to play a crucial role in activities closely associated with their core business.

Businesses and business sector firms remain the most important, and officials in these firms are being asked to rethink how they engage with the media, in particular its coverage of sustainability and community awareness of sustainability, and to re-contextualise it as stakeholder behaviour that influences business decisions, practices and levels of CSR adoption. Through this understanding, bilateral engagement responds to the state of coverage and awareness in society and seeks to leverage it as much as possible to improve socially responsible performance (and therefore corporate reputation) and maximise its benefits and economic benefits for the firm.

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