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Original Article (Quantified)

Analyzing the impact of corporate social responsibility and knowledge management infrastructure on sustainable performance with regard to the mediating role of organizational ambidexterity

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Abstract

The present study aims to analyze the mediating role of organizational ambidexterity in the effect of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and knowledge management infrastructure on corporate sustainable performance. In terms of purpose, the study is applicable; and methodologically, it follows a survey design. The statistical population consisted of all managers and headquarters experts of Dr. Tamin Company (N = 300). Using simple random sampling and Cochran's formula, a sample of 168 participants was selected. Data were collected through standard questionnaires, whose validity was confirmed through expert judgment in the field of management, and whose reliability was verified via Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Data analysis was performed through structural equation modeling by SmartPLS 3 software.

The findings indicated that the path coefficient of CSR to organizational ambidexterity was 0.417 (T = 5.081); the path coefficient of knowledge management infrastructure to organizational ambidexterity was 0.379; the path coefficient of CSR to sustainable performance was 0.513 (T = 11.980); the path coefficient of knowledge management infrastructure to sustainable performance was 0.439; and the path coefficient of organizational ambidexterity to sustainable performance was 0.571—all statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Moreover, results revealed that organizational ambidexterity mediates the effect of CSR on sustainable performance by 0.751, and also mediates the effect of knowledge management infrastructure on sustainable performance by 0.655. Accordingly, fostering an organizational culture that reinforces social and environmental values and encourages employee participation in CSR initiatives can significantly enhance corporate sustainable performance.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

With the emergence of increasingly complex challenges such as global competition, social problems, and environmental degradation, companies are required to simultaneously respond to dual demands and manage internal tensions in order to balance conflicting objectives (Annosi, 2024). In this regard, the closest concept in managing dual structures is **organizational ambidexterity** (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013), which has attracted extensive scholarly attention. Organizational ambidexterity is widely regarded as a key concept referring to an organization's capability to engage simultaneously in both exploration and exploitation. In this context, an ambidextrous firm is not only capable of identifying external barriers but can also effectively reallocate its resources to provide appropriate solutions, thereby securing its competitive advantage as a market adapter (Rahman et al., 2026). In other words, this concept is defined as the organization's ability to pursue different—and often competing—strategic actions simultaneously. Evidence suggests that ambidextrous organizations not only respond effectively to conflicting demands but also achieve superior performance (Annosi, 2024).

Furthermore, organizational ambidexterity refers to situations in which firms, under conditions of environmental volatility and uncertainty, simultaneously seek to combine incremental and radical innovation practices—namely exploitation and exploration (Adler, 2009). This construct helps organizations maintain strategic agility by aligning with the current environment while adapting to potential turbulence (Clauss et al., 2021). According to Duncan (1976), businesses seeking the successful adoption of creative ideas and long-term profitability must adopt a dual structure based on exploration and exploitation. Consequently, organizational ambidexterity creates a favorable environment for developing structures that promote seemingly contradictory yet complementary perspectives (Mankgele, 2023).

However, achieving organizational ambidexterity requires the institutionalization of social and environmental practices through **corporate social responsibility (CSR)**, as well as the establishment of an ecosystem based on idea exchange and decentralized structures, namely **knowledge management infrastructure**. Such conditions ensure that knowledge does not remain restricted and that employees feel comfortable sharing new ideas, which ultimately leads to organizational innovation and enhanced **sustainable performance** (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2023). Sustainable performance represents a combination of environmental, economic, and social performance that not only benefits the natural environment and society but also generates economic advantages and long-term competitive benefits for firms (Mokbel Al Koliby et al., 2024).

To enhance this type of performance, organizations strengthen their ambidexterity by fostering innovations that enable the simultaneous exploration and exploitation of knowledge. While exploitation-based innovations improve efficiency and economic profitability, exploration-based innovations can develop new practices that enhance social and environmental well-being, thereby improving the triple-bottom-line dimensions of sustainable performance (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2023).

Although international studies have examined the constructs of this research (e.g., Martínez-Falcó et al., 2023), a review of the literature reveals a lack of empirical evidence regarding the mediating role of organizational ambidexterity within this causal chain in the context of online building-materials supply platforms in Iran. This issue remains largely overlooked in the literature of this industry—an industry characterized by unique features such as high operational risk, the need for specialized information, and close interaction with contractors. Therefore, the present study, for the first time, re-examines this model within **Dr.**

Tamin Company, the first online platform for supplying building materials in Iran, with the aim of validating prior findings and enriching the literature on organizational survival strategies under different economic conditions and contexts. Addressing this contextual gap and localizing the CSR and knowledge management infrastructure model within the online building-materials supply industry highlights the necessity and novelty of the present study.

Accordingly, the main research question is formulated as follows:

Do corporate social responsibility and knowledge management infrastructure have a positive and significant effect on the sustainable performance of Dr. Tamin Company, considering the mediating role of organizational ambidexterity?

Theoretical Framework

Organizational Ambidexterity

Organizational ambidexterity is considered a relatively recent concept in organizational management studies (Mankgele, 2023). In the literature on strategic management and corporate entrepreneurship, an organization's ability to simultaneously leverage the benefits of two seemingly contradictory behaviors is referred to as **ambidexterity** (Hill & Birkinshaw, 2014). The term was first introduced by Duncan in 1976 to describe the dual nature and structural tensions within organizations. According to Duncan, in order to achieve long-term success, firms must adopt dual structures aligned with the different stages of the innovation process (Duncan, 1976).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

As the world faces increasingly complex social challenges such as malnutrition, poverty, and environmental degradation; companies are being called upon to address these issues. Such organizational engagement with social concerns is most commonly examined through the concept of **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** (Hill & Birkinshaw, 2014). CSR encompasses the simultaneous achievement of economic, environmental, and social outcomes (Annosi, 2024). This concept represents a set of ethical, legal, and business principles that guide organizations not only toward meeting their economic needs but also toward improving the well-being of the society in which they operate (Akbari et al., 2023). In essence, CSR entails a series of voluntary actions undertaken by companies to enhance the economic and social welfare of the local communities in which they conduct business (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2023).

Knowledge Management Infrastructure

Knowledge management refers to the systematic and coordinated creation, sharing, and application of knowledge to enhance innovation and generate added value within organizations (Naji, 2025). This process is increasingly supported by technological solutions—commonly referred to as knowledge management systems—which are employed to streamline organizational activities (Zamanifard et al., 2025).

Corporate Sustainable Performance

In the era of globalization, the emphasis on corporate sustainability has grown significantly (Shahzad et al., 2020), and organizations have become increasingly aware of the importance of sustainable performance. Today, many companies have committed to adopting more comprehensive performance criteria to evaluate their operations. In this regard, the most comprehensive and effective tool for assessing a company's performance is the set of

sustainable performance indicators, which simultaneously emphasize social, environmental, and economic dimensions (Mankgele, 2023).

Research Methodology

The present applicable study employs a descriptive-survey design. The statistical population consisted of 300 managers and employees of Dr. Tamin Company in 2024, from which 168 individuals were selected as the sample by simple random sampling and Cochran's formula. The data collection instrument was a standardized questionnaire comprising 4 variables, 11 components, and 49 items, all measured on a five-point Likert scale.

Research Findings

In accordance with recent methodological literature (Henseler et al., 2015), the HTMT (Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio) criterion was employed to ensure the absence of spurious correlations between constructs. The obtained HTMT values for all construct pairs were below the threshold of 0.85, confirming strong discriminant validity in the research model.

Since all T-statistics exceeded 1.96, all five direct research hypotheses were supported. Accordingly, corporate social responsibility and knowledge management infrastructure both exert positive and significant effects on organizational ambidexterity and sustainable performance. Additionally, organizational ambidexterity itself significantly influences sustainable performance. The presence of this causal chain necessitates examining indirect effects.

Results showed that the direct effect of corporate social responsibility on sustainable performance (0.513) and its indirect effect through organizational ambidexterity (0.238) were both significant ($T = 5.12$). Since the direct effect remains significant and the confidence interval of the indirect effect does not include zero, organizational ambidexterity plays a partial mediating role in this relationship. Consequently, the total effect of corporate social responsibility on sustainable performance was calculated as 0.751.

Findings also indicated that the direct effect of knowledge management infrastructure on sustainable performance (0.439) and its indirect effect through organizational ambidexterity (0.216) were significant ($T = 3.95$). Given the continued significance of the direct effect and the absence of zero within the confidence interval of the indirect effect, the partial mediating role of organizational ambidexterity in this relationship was likewise confirmed. In this pathway, the total effect of knowledge management infrastructure on sustainable performance was determined to be 0.655.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the impact of corporate social responsibility and knowledge management infrastructure on corporate sustainable performance, considering the mediating role of organizational ambidexterity in Dr. Tamin Company. Based on the research findings, all research hypotheses were supported. The results are consistent with evidence reported in previous studies, including Martínez-Falcó et al. (2023), Zaragoza-Sáez et al. (2023), Mankgele (2023), Tabatabaeian et al. (2022), Restuputri et al. (2024), Elashry and Ali (2024), and Shahzad et al. (2020).

In light of the findings and with the aim of improving firms' sustainable performance and strengthening their ambidextrous capabilities, several practical recommendations are proposed. First, educational courses and seminars on organizational ambidexterity and sustainable performance should be organized for entrepreneurs, business owners, and employees in order to familiarize them with the positive outcomes of ambidexterity and

enhance their ambidextrous capabilities. Second, establishing, developing, and promoting corporate social responsibility programs that focus on community needs, environmental protection, and employee well-being can be highly constructive. Such initiatives may include environmental projects, support for education and local community development, and improvements in working conditions. Third, organizations should promote a culture that reinforces social and environmental values and encourages employees to participate in CSR programs, as such a culture can contribute to improved innovation and productivity.

To address the limitation related to sample size and to enhance statistical power, future studies are recommended to test this conceptual model using larger statistical samples (above 200 or 300 participants). This would increase the statistical power of structural equation modeling analyses and improve the model's sensitivity in detecting weaker relationships among variables.