

The relationship between social responsibility and business performance: An analysis of the agri-food sector of southeast Spain

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This study aims to contribute to the existing debate on the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) orientation on different measures of business performance through the proposal of a conceptual model. Drawing on stakeholder theory, we conceptualize CSR as a broad and multidimensional construct with seven dimensions: employees, partners, customers, farmers, environment, community, and competition. We also extend the concept of business performance, which includes tangible variables, namely financial performance (FP) and export performance (EXP), as well as intangible variables, namely image and reputation (IR) and the satisfaction of relevant stakeholders (SS). The research context of this study is the agri-food sector in southeastern Spain. This sector has been the focus of attention of numerous researchers due to the relevance that social and environmental aspects have had in its development. To test the proposed model, the partial least-squares technique (PLS-SEM) was applied to data collected by means of a survey from a sample of 107 companies, which represent 81.4% of the turnover of the sector analyzed. The results show that CSR has a positive effect on financial performance, improves the volume and performance of exports, positively affects the corporate image and reputation, and increases the level of satisfaction of relevant stakeholders. Further research should examine the model from the perceptions of other stakeholders (e.g., customers, employees, and suppliers), using a longitudinal research design and exploring other contexts. © 2019 by the authors.

Corporate social responsibility

Export performance

Financial performance

Partial least square technique (PLS-SEM)

Reputation

Stakeholder satisfaction

agricultural development

agroindustry

business development

corporate social responsibility

financial system

food production

least squares method

manufactured export

stakeholder

Spain