

Chapter 1

A Systematic Literature Network Analysis (SLNA) Towards Corporate Sustainability in the Context of Triple Bottom Line

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability basically means to continue, to maintain anything. The equivalent of sustainability on a firm basis is expressed as corporate sustainability. Corporate sustainability has three dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. This study aimed to use the systematic literature network analysis (SLNA) method to evaluate corporate sustainability on triple bottom line (TBL). In this context, SLNA on the development and evolution of the corporate sustainability issue was carried out with 1929 studies obtained from the Scopus database. VOSviewer software tool was used for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks and Gephi software tool was used for network visualization. The studies on corporate sustainability, published in the period between 2016-2021, were mainly examined on the basis of year, journals, author details, keywords, and citation information parameters. This study is important as it is the first bibliometric study on corporate sustainability using SLNA.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainability basically emerged from the idea of people continuing their lives by preserving natural resources. People's future concerns about conserving natural resources go back centuries. Admittedly, our Paleolithic ancestors were concerned about the extinction of their prey, while early farmers were concerned about preserving soil productivity (Kuhlman and Farrington, 2010: 3437). With the industrial revolution, the global population has increased from 1 billion to over 6 billion, and people have begun to live longer, get better education and consume more. Increasing consumption, on the other hand, has led to many problems such as water pollution and scarcity, loss of biodiversity, land degrada-

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tion, degradation of coasts and seas, exposure of living things to chemical and radioactive substances, sea level rise and climate change (Barnett et al., 2008: 355). The study titled “Silent Spring”, which was put forward by biologist and writer Rachel Louise Carson in 1962, focused on the environmental pollution caused by the current industrialization and focused the attention of the whole world on the systematic effects of environmental damage caused by chemical pesticides. The aforementioned book is considered to be the beginning of the environmental movement (Wood and Skates, 2006: 414). The concept of sustainability has gained importance as the activities carried out in the name of development cause environmental destruction. The concept of sustainability is expressed as sustainable development at the global level and corporate sustainability at the enterprise level. With the publication of the Brundtland report, the principle of sustainable development is generally accepted (Wiersum, 1995: 321). In the aforementioned report, the notion of sustainable development was comprehensively addressed and officially approved for the first time (Meadowcroft, 2000: 370). In the related report the sustainable development was defined as “meeting the needs and expectations of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and expectations” (WCED, 1987: 51). The description of sustainable development made by WCED in 1987 is based on three principles such as environmental integrity, social justice and economic well-being. Sustainable development cannot be achieved if any of the principles, each of which is important in itself, is not taken into account (Bansal, 2005: 198). In other words, it is widely recognized that sustainable development is a holistic concept where environment, social equity, and economics intersect (Bansal, 2002: 123).

The equivalent of sustainable development on a firm basis is corporate sustainability. This concept is related to the extent to which companies contribute to sustainability. For example, an economically sustainable firm uses its resources effectively. An environmentally sustainable company carries out its activities without harming natural resources and biodiversity. A socially sustainable company, on the other hand, values social equality and invests in the training of its employees. In order to make a sound corporate sustainability assessment, it is necessary to consider the concept of triple bottom line (TBL) and consider three dimensions as economic, environmental and social.

In this study, it is aimed to use the Systematic Literature Network Analysis (SLNA) method to evaluate corporate sustainability in a TBL approach. In this direction, the course of trends and developments in the field of corporate sustainability has been tried to be revealed. In this context, SLNA on the development and evolution of the corporate sustainability issue was carried out with 1,929 studies obtained from the Scopus database. The studies on corporate sustainability, published in the period between 2016-2021, were mainly examined on the basis of year, language, type of document, countries/territory/organizations, journals, author details, keywords, and citation information parameters. This study is important as it is the first bibliometric study on corporate sustainability using SLNA. It is thought that the study will be a reference for researchers in the future and contribute to the literature.

The rest of the article is organized as follows: The case studies on the topic was presented in Section 2. The conceptual framework of corporate sustainability was included in Section 3. Section 4 presents the research methodology. Section 5 provides with the results of the SLNA under different parameters. Finally, the results and evaluations of the study are included in the last section.

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