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A Survey of Sustainable Business Development from the View of Consumer and Consumer Alienation in Iran Khodro Company in Tehran

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ABSTRACT

The present study evaluated business sustainable development from the view of consumers and consumer alienation in Iran Khodro in Tehran. A questionnaire was applied in the study. The study population was Tehrani consumers of Iran Khordro Company as more than 1 million people. Convenient sampling method was used as data collection was from the entire population and it was not economical. The required data were obtained of statistical sample. By convenient sampling, the questionnaires were distributed among 384 Tehran consumers in Iran Khordro Company. The statistical findings showed that gender, marital status, education and age had no influence on consumers' perception of business sustainable development in Iran Khordro company but the monthly income and job content were effective. The results showed that none of demographic factors had impact on consumer alienation in Iran Khordro Company.

Keywords: Sustainable development; Business sustainable development; Sustainable development of business index; Consumer alienation

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, business sustainable development is taken into consideration in the scientific world. The goals, activities, inputs and outputs of the companies should be reviewed based on sustainable development (M. Santos-Corrada and Figueroa, 2012). The company should consider itself as an independent unit of society with various Stakeholders, their benefits and integrity of them lead to business sustainable development (Druckrey, 1998).

Sustainable development and the barriers to global growth issues are raised since 30 years ago. The main discussion is based on serious focus on the limitations of balance between economic and environmental development (Garvare and Isaksson, 2001).

Government sustainable development policies leading to national development and international development are required to establish sustainable development influencing the globe. Government sustainable development policies encourage sustainable development strategies in companies and they apply sustainable development in their strategies (Fernando, 2012).

The companies should consider environmental, social and economic developments. The goals, activities, inputs and outputs of the companies should be reviewed based on sustainable development (M. Santos-Corrada and Figueroa, 2012).

The companies should consider the definition and perception of law, society, technology, economy, politics, customers, citizens of sustainable development. Indeed, the problem of a company is good decision making to maximize the satisfaction and health of Stakeholders of company (Berry, 2008). According to Freeman, Stakeholders are groups or people being influenced by or influence organization achievements. Based on this definition, shareholders, providers, customers, staffs, investors, society and etc. are stockholders of company (Bouglet et al., 2012). The companies' consumers and customers as important section of stockholders play important role in demand and following sustainable development of companies (Svensson and Wagner, 2012).

One of the important issues that are not discussed in local researches is consumer alienation with market. This issue is about negative attitudes of consumer to market and his alienation, it is based on psychology and sociology and now it is one of the effective phenomena on health and individual life quality and one's interaction with market space. Various issues are considered as relevant factors to consumer alienation with market. Some items as the type of one's attitude to new technologies (Tarek, 2011), life satisfaction (Johnson, 1991), attitude to government interference in market (Pruden et al., 1974) and etc. cause consumer alienation.

The investigation of consumers' alienation and reduction of alienation can give required information to various businesses to improve consumer satisfaction and guarantee future success. The present study is required to answer one of the basic business environment questions: How is the Tehrani consumer attitude to business sustainable development and consumer alienation in Iran Khodro Company?

Answering this question not only eliminates the ambiguities in this regard, but also it compares it with the attitude of car consumers in other societies. The present study investigated sustainable development literature, business sustainable development, and business sustainable development index and consumer alienation.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Sustainable development

The term, sustainable development was raised since 1970, during aftermath of Second World War. At first, only economic aspects were considered in development, later multiple dimensions of development were raised in sustainable development. Indeed, sustainable development is combination of development social dimension with its economic dimension and it estimates the needs of current generation based on environment protection for future generation (Edgeman, 2000).

Indeed, sustainable development is re-thought about capitalism. After environmental issues, the management of companies, employees and stockholders and civil society are considered. Here, professional ethics, social responsibility of company and many theories and doctrines are raised. Sustainable development is equality of people in human rights and the rights were raised in universal declaration in 1948 as: Freedom of speech, freedom of beliefs and freedom of movement. The term sustainable development in undeveloped and developing countries is consistent with the development countries (Berry, 2008). Sustainable development is coordinated growth of three terms: Economic (exchange among the countries and their development and reduction of deprived areas), social (guaranteeing the achievement of health and education and creating good work conditions) and environmental (protection against pollution and destruction of natural resources and supporting various species in nature) (Bouglet et al., 2012).

The companies should consider environmental, social and economic developments. The goals, activities, inputs and outputs of the companies should be reviewed based on sustainable development. The organizations should consider three sustainable development aspects: Economic development (economic growth and company profitability), social responsibility (to employees, consumers and society) and environmental (considering nature, soil, water and forests) (M. Santos-Corrada and Fiqueroa, 2012).

The company should consider itself as an independent unit of society consisting of various stockholders and their benefits and integration of the benefits cause business cause business sustainable development (Druckrey, 1998). International Commission of Environmental and Development defined sustainable development as: Sustainable development is meeting the current generation demand without creating any problem for future generation needs". This definition is based on two basic points, one needs and another environment protection for the next generation. In other words, sustainable development is based on responsibility, resources division, resources return, social and geographical dimension and etc. Sustainable development means the development of north and south countries (Reeve, 2000).

The companies are obliged to observe sustainable development principles by local and international stockholders. To respond this demand, we should consider the sustainable development regulations. Various indices are introduced to investigate the observation of sustainable development principles and company performance measurement. The most important indices include Dow Jones Sustainability, Index FTSE4 Good Index and MSCI ESG Index (environmental, social and governmental). The indices indicate whether the companies provide the required goods and services of customers in short-term and give importance to long-term retention of customers, staffs and natural resources.

B. Consumers alienation

Consumer alienation with market is less discussed in literature of management and marketing in Iran. Consumer alienation refers to the separation and lack of one's control on market space as the main audience of business space.

Alienation is derived from alienation Latin term and various views are presented by scientists and there is no agreement upon its meaning and whether it is an unavoidable social issue or a preventive psychological phenomenon (Williamson and Cullingford, 1997).

Alienation has many different meanings in various scientific fields. For example, alienation in legal terms is assets and preference sale and it is psychological distress in medicine. In social sciences, this term means individual alienation from others, homeland, God and other creatures (Dean, 1961, Ludz, 1976, Williamson and Cullingford, 1997). Alienation in industrial communities indicates anti-humanitarian conditions and it is defined by various methods and it raises deprivation of people in using their power for creativity and influence on existing conditions. Consumer alienation is evaluation of consumer behavior to cope with business. Consumer alienation deals with the attitudes of consumer regarding achievement and it are an undesirable phenomenon (Derleth and Herche, 2005).

Alienation of a person from market space is formed and he finds that he can not perceive the meaning of events occurred in market and there is nonnorm in these events. Different types of definitions of alienation terms are classified into two schools. The first school considers alienation "an objective-social condition as alienation is a series of social-objective processes with mental-internal reflections. Hegel- Marx, Durkheim and Serul are some branches of this school.

The second school considers alienation as "internal-individual condition" as alienation is an internal phenomenon with external reasons in social super structure. From social-psychological view of Seeman, alienation is individual deprivation created in an internal-subjective state and it emphasizes on central individual values and expectations (Seeman, 1959). Here, alienation is an internal individual disorder in which people are the main factor (not a social super structure).

In Seeman studies, external social identities and the reasons stimulating alienation and individual deprivation feeling are not considered but the importance of these external cases is not ignored. Despite the differences of these two thought schools, both schools have three main structures consisting the basis of alienation (Geyer, 1976):

- 1- Both schools refer to intrapersonal relation with environmental issues (e.g. economic system, job, others and etc.)
- 2- Both schools consider an association between alienation and separation (of self, others and society and etc.).
- 3- Both schools consider this phenomenon unsuitable and negative.

Alienation concept in marketing and business is based on Seeman view and it indicates how consumers feel alienated with the active companies in market (Allison, 1978, Lambert, 1980). This alienation with market creates various negative results for active companies and institutions in business namely if the consumer experiences high dissatisfaction and alienation (Lambert, 1980).

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Klaver and Jonker (2000) evaluated the development of a company based on sustainable development principles. These principles are dedicated to the importance of stockholders interests. Oskarsson and Von Malmberg (2005) extended companies development based on 3 sustainable development principles (social, environmental and economic) into 6 principles and these principles evaluated the companies from Business Ethic.

Porter and Kramer (2006) evaluated the sustainable development of companies from business value, value chain, value added. Robert and Klaver (2000) raised some principles and believed to achieve sustainable development, we should use PDCA.

Raibornand Payne (1996) believed that there is a close association between Total Quality Management and business ethics. Brendan (2001) in a paper introduced 7 success factors of business sustainable development (Brendan, 2001). Pitt, Tucker, Riley and Longden (2009) introduced the stimulants of business sustainable development (Pitt et al., 2009).

Avery and Bergsteiner introduced 23 factors and if they are observed well, the companies achieve business sustainable development and all stockholders of company will be satisfied. The factors include the followings: staff development , Friendly relationship of staffs, long-term retention of employees, success plans, giving value to employees, top executive managers leadership, business ethics, long-term perspective, organizational change, autonomy of financial markets, social and environmental responsibility, considering stockholders approach, considering business future, decision making, self-management, team orientation, empowerment culture, knowledge sharing, trust, innovation, loyal employees and quality (Avery and Bergsteiner, 2011).

Longman and Pruden in a study on various races of US residents showed that there is a direct association between consumer alienation and government interference in market (Pruden et al., 1974).

Johnson raised the theory that there was an association between consumer alienation and life satisfaction but there was no association between cognitive age of people and consumer alienation with market. Cognitive age is the age level a person belongs from emotion, thought and interest and it is different from real age (Johnson, 1991).

Based on the researches regarding sustainable development and consumer alienation in Iran, it is found business sustainable development and consumers' alienation is not studied and even there is no study regarding the evaluation of Iranian consumer attitude to business sustainable development and consumers' alienation. However, the present study evaluated this issue.

According to the conceptual framework of the study, the present research responded the following **hypotheses**:

- 1- There is a significant association between gender, marital status, education, age, income and job background with Tehrani consumers attitude to business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company.
- 2- There is a significant association between gender, marital status, education, age, income and job background with Tehrani consumers alienation in Iran Khodro Company.

4. METHODOLOGY

The present study is explorative-applied in terms of purpose and research classification. Explorative, due to attempt to discovering the relationship between two scientific and applied phenomena to use the theories, law, principles and techniques in basic researches to solve executive problems. Based on the special company issues, this study is considered a case study. Finally, the study is field (questionnaire) in terms of data collection (Sarmad et al., 2011). The data collection method is consisting of two parts as: Library studies and field research. Books, articles, internet and etc. are used in library studies. A questionnaire was used in field study as data collection measure.

The study population is Tehrani consumers in Iran Khodro Company as more than one million people.

Convenient sampling method was used as data collection was from the entire population and it was not economical. The required data were obtained of statistical sample. Kerjegy, Morgan and Cohen statistical population tables were used to determine the study sample. The sample size was 384 (Sekaran, 2002).

The questionnaires of the study were based on Avery, G., Bergsteiner (2011) titled “leadership practices for enhancing business resilience and performance”, The Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes (2012) provided by Sam company and Derleth & Herche (2005) study “Economic and Political Freedom and Market Alienation: A Comparative Study of Bulgaria, China, and the United States”.

Based on the first article, the factors of business sustainable development about which the consumers can give comments and investigate from the view of consumers, based on pyramid of business sustainable development, the views were extracted based on the experts and study analysis.

Based on Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes, some questions were designed and for the second time based on the views of experts and study analysis, the questionnaire of business sustainable development was provided. 7-item questionnaire of consumer alienation was based on second paper and a third part was added to the questionnaires including personal information of respondents.

5. STUDY RESULTS

First hypothesis: There is a significant association between gender and attitude of Tehrani consumers to business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 1. Chi-square test of first hypothesis.

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.732	4	0.604
Likelihood Ratio	2.783	4	0.595

As shown in Table 1, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. In other words, there is no significant association between gender and business sustainable development from the view of consumer. It can be said independent variable of gender has no effect on dependent variable of business sustainable development from the consumer attitude.

Second hypothesis: There is a significant association between marital status and Tehran consumers' attitude to business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 2. Chi-square test of second hypothesis.

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.055	4	0.726
Likelihood Ratio	2.024	4	0.731

As shown in Table 2, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is no significant association between marital status and business sustainable development from the view of consumer. It can be said independent variable of marital status has no effect on dependent variable of business sustainable development from the consumer attitude.

Third hypothesis: There is a significant association between education and Tehrani consumers' attitude to business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 3. Chi-square test of Third hypothesis

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.598	16	0.412
Likelihood Ratio	20.806	16	0.186

As shown in Table 3, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is no significant association between education and business sustainable development from the view of consumer. It can be said independent variable of education has no effect on dependent variable of business sustainable development from the consumer attitude.

Fourth hypothesis: There is a significant association between age and Tehrani consumers' attitude to business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 4. Chi-square test of Fourth hypothesis

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.677	16	0.766
Likelihood Ratio	12.764	16	0.690

As shown in Table 4, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is no significant association between age and business sustainable development from the view of consumer. It can be said independent variable of age has no effect on dependent variable of business sustainable development from the consumer attitude.

Fifth hypothesis: There is a significant association between monthly income and Tehrani consumers' attitude to business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 5. Chi-square test of Fifth hypothesis

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	42.182	16	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	43.300	16	0.000

As shown in Table 5, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is a significant association between monthly income and business sustainable development from the view of consumer at the level 0.01. It can be said independent variable of monthly income has effect on dependent variable of business sustainable development from the consumer attitude.

Sixth hypothesis: There is a significant association between job context and Tehrani consumers' attitude to business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 6. Chi-square test of sixth hypothesis

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	44.581	20	0.001
Likelihood Ratio	39.321	20	0.006

As shown in Table 6, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is a significant association between job context and business sustainable development from the view of consumer at the level 0.01. It can be said

independent variable of job context has effect on dependent variable of business sustainable development from the consumer attitude.

Seventh hypothesis: There is a significant association between gender and consumer alienation in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 7. Chi-square test of seventh hypothesis

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.027	4	0.134
Likelihood Ratio	7.058	4	.1333

As shown in Table 7, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is no significant association between gender and consumer alienation. It can be said independent variable of gender has no effect on dependent variable of consumer alienation.

Eighth hypothesis: There is a significant association between marital status and consumer alienation in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 8. Chi-square test of eighth hypothesis

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.077	4	0.193
Likelihood Ratio	5.973	4	0.201

As shown in Table 8, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is no significant association between marital status and consumer alienation. It can be said independent variable of marital status has no effect on dependent variable of consumer alienation.

Ninth hypothesis: There is a significant association between education and consumer alienation in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 9. Chi-square test of ninth hypothesis

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.297	16	0.106
Likelihood Ratio	25.183	16	0.067

As shown in Table 9, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is no significant association between education and consumer alienation. It can be said independent variable of education has no effect on dependent variable of consumer alienation.

Tenth hypothesis: There is a significant association between age and consumer alienation in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 10. Chi-square test of tenth hypothesis

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.927	16	0.604
Likelihood Ratio	14.781	16	0.541

As shown in Table 10, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is no significant association between age and consumer alienation. It can be said independent variable of age has no effect on dependent variable of consumer alienation.

Eleventh hypothesis: There is a significant association between monthly income and consumer alienation in Iran Khodro Company.

Table 11. Chi-square test of eleventh hypothesis

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.577	16	0.240
Likelihood Ratio	22.563	16	0.126

As shown in Table 11, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is no significant association between monthly income and consumer alienation. It can be said independent variable of monthly income has no effect on dependent variable of consumer alienation.

Twelfth hypothesis: There is a significant association between job context and consumer alienation in Iran Khodro Company.

As shown in Table 12, decision criterion Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) is greater than 0.05. Thus, Null hypothesis is supported. There is no significant association between job context and consumer alienation. It can be said independent variable of job context has no effect on dependent variable of consumer alienation.

Table 12. Chi-square test of eleventh hypothesis

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.704	20	0.036
Likelihood Ratio	27.677	20	.117

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Some of the results of the study indicate the findings of hypotheses. The statistical findings showed that gender, marital status, education and age had no effect on consumers' perception of business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company but monthly income and job context were effective.

The results showed that none of demographic data had effect on consumer alienation in Iran Khodro Company. The results of complementary findings are shown in Table 13.

Table 13- The complementary findings of study

Demographic data	Association with business sustainable development from the view of consumer	Association with consumer alienation
Gender	No	No
Marital status	No	No
Education	No	No
Age	No	No
Monthly income	Yes	No
Job context	Yes	No

The results of the study showed that the higher the monthly income, the more negative their attitude to business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company. Because these people have more opportunity to use non-Iranian cars.

In addition, based on the study results, the people working in state, private and military sectors have positive attitude to business sustainable development compared to other people in Iran Khodro Company.

This is because of their income in these sectors and using domestic cars and the lack of experiencing other cars and perceiving their quality.

Applied recommendations

The applied recommendations are as:

- a) By investigating the business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company and its comparison with the consumer attitude to business sustainable development in this company, we can find the probable difference reasons and play for improving the business sustainable development condition in this company.
- b) The comparison of consumer attitude to business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company with other auto factories, presents a good attitude to managers and authorities of Iran Khodro Company.
- c) More than half of customers of Iran Khodro Company in Tehran are married, thus, Iran Khodro Company can improve consumer attitude to business sustainable development by presenting some facilities for married people.
- d) The majority of Tehrani customers of Iran Khodro Company dedicate to 20-30 year old and Iran Khodro can increase customers' satisfaction and achieve sustainable development by presenting the required facilities of this age group.
- e) The employees of state and military sectors have good attitude to business sustainable development in Iran Khodro Company. Thus, these sectors can be a good market for this company and Iran Khodro Company can increase its sale by considering some facilities in these sectors.

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