

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACCOUNTING, DISCLOSURE AND REAL PRACTICE: EVIDENCE FROM JORDAN



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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to present a true image of social responsibility accounting (SRA) in Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE). A survey questionnaire was employed to check the level of SRA practice, and a checklist was used to discover the level of SRA disclosure which was collected from the annual reports of the firms listed on the ASE. The questionnaires and annual reports were employed to collect information from 104 companies in the financial, services, and industrial sectors for this study. SPSS was used to for data analysis and the results showed that the level of SRA practice in listed companies on the ASE is good, while the level of SRA disclosure is very low. The latter could be related to many reasons, including lack of awareness of Jordanians companies' managers in the culture of SRA and related issues due to the novelty of SRA disclosure in Jordan and developing countries. In addition, companies mostly focus on product quality when they practice SRA.

Contribution/Originality: In this study a questionnaire and checklist were both employed in order to give a full picture of the real level of social responsibility accounting (SRA) in the context of Jordan. These methods have not been used in previous studies in this field and can assist in better comprehending how to encourage listed companies in Jordan to improve their SRA practices and disclose their SRA activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational leaders and theorists have been concerned about their responsibilities relating to society for at least half of this century. Social responsibility comprises strategies as businesses display efforts to take part in the social sphere as conscientious parties (Fernández & Rajagopal, 2014). Nowadays, both developed and developing societies are facing a number of social challenges; therefore, this principal is clearly important and currently relevant. The concept of SRA has transformed during recent decades, being impacted by each decade's advancements and crises; it has been considered to be a source for improving stakeholders' satisfaction, and corporate image, and is now mostly related to the enhancement of social benefits (Fernández & Rajagopal, 2014; Fernandez, 2015). In order to effectively create positive collateral effects on business and society, firms should converge CSR strategies with business growth strategies. Numerous studies have clarified social responsibility accounting according to its level of importance to firms, communities, and the environment. The most popular definitions of social responsibility accounting in the twenty-first century can be traced to different researchers, such

as Gray, Dey, Owen, Evans, and Zadek (1997); Gray (2000); Owen, Gray, and Bebbington (1997) and Gray (2002). Social responsibility accounting was comprehensively defined by Gray (2000) as:

“The preparation and publication of an account about an organisation's social, environmental, employee, community, customer and other stakeholder interactions and activities and, where possible, the consequences of those interactions and activities. The social account may contain financial information but is more likely to be a combination of quantified non-financial information and descriptive, non-quantified information. The social account may serve a number of purposes but discharge of the organisation's accountability to its stakeholders must be clearly dominant of those reasons and the basis upon which the social account is judged”.

In another definition, social responsibility accounting was considered as the process of identifying, measuring and reporting the relationship between the business and the environment within which it operates (Freeman & Reed, 1983). Social responsibility accounting indicates the activities taken or not taken by a company within the social responsibility cycle (Cottell & Perlin, 1991).

Social responsibility accounting is also considered as the procedure of reporting the social and environmental performance of organizations and other economic actions offered to a particular group of people within a community or society (Gray, Owen, & Maunders, 1987). SRA's emphasis on corporate accountability has caught the interest of a number of academics, such as Habidin, Fuzi, Zamri, Hibadullah, and Desa (2014), who defined social responsibility as processes of social awareness, programmes and policies relating to society. In addition, Crowther (2000) argued that social responsibility accounting can be defined as a systematic method of reporting the activities of a corporation that emphasises the need for expressing social behaviour, determination and identification of those who are accountable and responsible for a firm's social performance. This includes a firm's efforts to create acceptable reporting procedures. It's a crucial stage that enables firms to enhance CSR programs on their own that look to be more successful than government-mandated CSR (Armstrong & Green, 2013). Sridhar (2014) mentioned that the fundamental principle behind the social responsibility of firms is that businesses should aim to play a major role in making the world a better place.

SRA is considered as the accounting that delivers information to investors and shareholders via financial statements in the modern stage of economic growth (Shahwana, 2020) and critically evaluates the actions of social responsibility undertaken by companies (Tinker, 1985).

Previous research on SRA has mostly concentrated on developed countries, e.g., countries in the European Union, Japan, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States (see (Alvarado-Herrera, Bigne, Aldas-Manzano, & Curras-Perez, 2017; Echave & Bhati, 2010; Horváthová, 2018; O'Dwyer, 2005; Obara & Peattie, 2018; Schmidt & Cracau, 2018; Unerman & Bennett, 2004)). A comprehensive discussion on the adoption of SRA and its economic advantages can be found in the literature. Specifically, Alvarado-Herrera et al. (2017); Gray, Dillard, and Spence (2009); Parker (2011); Belal and Momin (2009); and Gray (2002) clarified different methodologies that have been developed to assess the influence of SRA on firm performance in developed countries. Developing countries, in comparison to developed countries, lack the skills to execute SRA and assess its effect on society (Barakat, Lopez Perez, & Rodríguez Ariza, 2015; Belal & Momin, 2009; Hamidu, Haron, & Amran, 2018; Jamali & Mirshak, 2007; Jian, Jaaffar, Ooi, & Amran, 2017; Nejati, Quazi, Amran, & Ahmad, 2017). According to Husted, Jamali, and Saffar (2016), developing countries have different social norms and cultures than developed countries, and awareness and expertise will lead to effective SRA implementation for the benefit and development of society and a country as a whole.

A typical understanding of sustainable development in developing nations emphasizes the importance of better integrating the economic, environmental, and social components of growth, as well as civil society and corporate groups (Fernández & Rajagopal, 2014; Habidin et al., 2014). Sustainable development is also taken into account in government policies as it is included in the strategies of many businesses (Fernández & Rajagopal, 2014; Steurer, 2010). The main social guiding structure, which is essential for all societal sectors, has been reduced to the levels of

corporations and people during the previous 20 years. In the process of this conceptual differentiation, corporate social responsibility and social responsibility accountability were interconnected in the sustainable development dialog (Shahwan & Esra'a, 2021; Steurer, 2010). Hence, social responsibility accounting is related to the responsibility of the firm to provide information to society on its activities, while corporate social responsibility (CSR) mostly deals with voluntary business contributions to environmental or societal sustainable developments that go above what is actually required by law (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002; European Commission, 2002; Steurer, Langer, Konrad, & Martinuzzi, 2005).

The accounting of financial and non-financial disclosure in relation to the social activities of a company can be described as social responsibility accounting. A number of researchers (e.g., (Aslani, Shahbazi, & Ebrahimpur, 2013; Filipi & Karapici, 2014; Mulgan, 2010; Shahbazi & Aslani, 2013; Sukoharsono, 2009)) reported that social accounting is commonly used in the context of corporate social responsibility. However, the concept of social responsibility accounting also measures the impact of economic and business activities on society and the environment and is also known as corporate social responsibility reporting, social accounting and auditing, and corporate social reporting (Gray et al., 1987). Moreover, many previous studies have tested SRA and CSR through social responsibility practices and disclosure, societal development, and environment protection (Abu-Sabha & Shoubaki, 2013; Al-Moumany, AlMomani, & Obeidat, 2014; Alkababji, 2014; Sridhar, 2014).

Similarly, many previous studies have documented that social responsibility accounting has several important aspects; it increases the organizational concern with economic and corporate social responsibility and provides data on costs and benefits to determine how companies are proportionately distributed in the community (Ball, Owen, & Gray, 2000; Barakat et al., 2015).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1. Data Collection

This study employed both primary and secondary data, and an integration of research methods, including a questionnaire and content analysis, was used to collect suitable data.

2.1.1. Using a Questionnaire as a Survey Tool

In the process of determining an appropriate research instrument, Davis and Sherman (1996) expressed that there is no definite measure to establish a perfect means for data collection (Davis & Cosenza, 1988; Shahwan & Mohammad, 2016). Accordingly, as measured in previous studies, social responsibility accounting practice is quantified in this study by the employee dimension, environmental dimension, community dimension and quality of product dimension. The practice of social responsibility has been measured in different studies (e.g., (Al-Tamimi, 2014; Al Ramahi, Alaboud, Owais, AlRefae, & Shahwan, 2014; Kim & Choi, 2013; Leon & Araña, 2014; Martínez & Del Bosque, 2013; Minnee, Shanka, Taylor, & Handley, 2013; Razek, 2014; Thorne, Mahoney, & Manetti, 2014)). The measurements and the questions for the questionnaire in the current study were adopted from separate prior works (Abu-Sabha & Shoubaki, 2013; Al-Moumany et al., 2014; Hemaïd, 2009). These studies were referred to due to their similar characteristics to this study, such as area (country), sample, respondents, and the similar dimensions used to measure SRA practice.

The measurements of social responsibility practice in this study were applied in the context of Jordanian companies listed on the ASE, with five questions adopted which relate to employee dimension (Al-Moumany et al., 2014; Hemaïd, 2009), five questions for the environmental dimension (Al-Moumany et al., 2014), eight questions for the community dimension (Abu-Sabha & Shoubaki, 2013; Al-Moumany et al., 2014; Hemaïd, 2009) and eight questions for the quality of product dimension (Al-Ramahi, Abuhusseïn, & Shahwan, 2021; Hemaïd, 2009). Regarding the validity and reliability of the construct of the questionnaire, it was sent to a number of professors

who reviewed the items to ensure that the variables reflected the study's objectives, after which the questionnaire was tested for reliability through a pilot study.

This study employed a five-point Likert scale to measure the respondents' answers to the questions. This scale was used for several reasons. Myburgh (2001) recommended using a five-point Likert scale because it gives the respondents the option to answer definitively or to be undecided. In fact, literature also suggests that if a point scale offers more choices, it maximizes the accuracy of the answers and the reliability (Krosnick & Presser, 2010). Bertram (2007) clarified some of the advantages of a five-point Likert scale as being simple and easy to construct and easy for participants to read. A five-point Likert scale was also used to measure the questionnaires employed in previous studies from which the items in this study were adopted. Finally, a five-point Likert scale is used more often than other scales, such as seven- or ten-point scales, because through this scale it is possible to compare the results of the reliability of the current study with other previous studies that used the same scale (Saleh & Ryan, 1991). The scale responses adopted are: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; and 5 = Strongly Agree.

The top management officers of the listed companies on the ASE were considered to be the respondents for this study and they include Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), Chief Finance Officers (CFOs) and Human Resources (HR) managers. The selection of the top management officers as the respondents was made based on the fact that they are part of the corporate boards of the companies and usually participate in decision making, including CSR decisions (see (O'Sullivan, 2006)).

2.1.2. Content Analysis of Annual Reports

Content analysis is a technique employed to measure the content of communication objectively, systematically, and qualitatively (Gray, Kouhy, & Lavers, 1995). There are two types of measurement that have been frequently used by many researchers to measure the level of companies' social disclosure, namely quantity of disclosure and quality of disclosure (Lakkanawanit, 2012). The quality of disclosure focuses on the characteristics of the information that can support the forecasting process (Beretta & Bozzolan, 2008), while the quantity of disclosure focuses on the information disclosed or otherwise.

More importantly, the choice between these methods depends on the objectives of the study. For example, some studies used the quality of social responsibility accounting disclosure (see (Cormier & Gordon, 2001; Hasseldine, Salama, & Toms, 2005)), whereas other studies used the measurement of the quantity of social responsibility accounting of the corporation, which comprises both the social responsibility practice as well as disclosure (Al-Khadash & Abhath Al-Yarmouk, 2003; Barakat et al., 2015; Guellil & Benhabib, 2022; Haniffa & Cooke, 2005; Shahwan & Jodeh, 2021; Zain, 1999).

In this study, it is imperative to determine the level of social responsibility accounting disclosure of the listed companies on the ASE in Jordan, as the quantity of the companies' disclosure contributes towards explaining the SRA information disclosed by the firms (Unerman, 2000). Accordingly, the quantity of disclosures was employed rather than the quality of disclosures, similar to several prior studies (Beattie, McInnes, & Fearnley, 2004; Beretta & Bozzolan, 2008; Gray et al., 1995; Nielsen, 2008).

The use of the quantity of disclosures is usually due to the difficulty of evaluating disclosure quality in a direct way (Beattie et al., 2004; Shahwan & Almubaydeen, 2020). Testing the quality of disclosure is also important, but it is very difficult to assess (Beattie et al., 2004; Botosan, 1997). This difficulty is attributed to the large number of items that could be disclosed by firms, in which case some of the points will be missed, and this will affect the measurement of the quality of the items (Beattie et al., 2004).

To achieve the objective related to determining the level of SRA disclosure, this study developed a checklist split into four sections to collect the data. Every section included the number of items related to one of the dimensions of SRA, which were adopted from previous studies (Al-Khadash & Abhath Al-Yarmouk, 2003; Branco &

Rodrigues, 2008; Gray et al., 1995; Haniffa & Cooke, 2005; Hossain, Islam, & Andrew, 2006; Sharif & Rashid, 2014; Uwuigbe & Ben-Caleb, 2012).

In this study, the SRA disclosure by Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) was measured using elements similar to prior studies, such as employee dimension, environment dimension, community dimension and product quality dimension (e.g., in (Barakat et al., 2015; Sharif & Rashid, 2014)). These studies were deemed to be appropriate owing to their similar characteristics and methods used to measure SRA disclosure.

The 39 items on the checklist were adopted from Barakat et al. (2015) and Sharif and Rashid (2014) and included 10 items for the employee dimension, 12 items for the environment dimension, 10 items for the community dimension, and seven items for the product quality dimension. Moreover, the reviewed literature indicated that there is no commonly used theory to determine the number of items to be selected for a disclosure index (Hooks, Coy, & Davey, 2002).

In this study, the quantity of SRA disclosure was measured by a dummy variable (1 denotes the application of the item in the checklist, while 0 denotes no disclosure of the item) to assess all items related to the dimensions of SRA disclosure. This is related to the importance of the dummy variables, which play a key role in the data analysis by giving real-valued variables. The extreme situation of representing any variable (independent or dependent) as a dummy variable gives a high level of flexibility in choosing a modelling methodology (Garavaglia & Sharma, 1998). This provides the opportunity to compare between SRA practice and SRA disclosure in this study because both are examined via the quantitative method. In addition, many methods have been used to measure the disclosure of SRA including, dummy variables, words, characters, sentences, paragraphs, and photos. According to Unerman (2000), paragraph, sentence, word, or character counts ignore variances in a particular design of type size, which can be acquired by measuring size as the ratio of the page taken up via every disclosure, and measuring content analysis by sentence count would carry less weight for disclosure. Gray et al. (1995) explained that the problems related to quantifying disclosure in terms of the ratio of a page and sentences arise in the form of additional spaces of subjectivity in the process of the measurement, the involvement of blank parts of a page, and the appearance of some differences, such as font size. In addition, some involve other information related to the last pages in the annual reports (Unerman, 2000) because there is no unified system for the format and presentation of data in annual reports.

Annual reports of Jordanian companies listed on the ASE were used as the main source of information related to secondary data for many reasons. First, content analysis of the annual reports shows the narrative text for categories that is essential to reaching a conclusion for thematic content, they are widely accessible, and they are widely used by scholars and researchers (Buhr, 1998). Second, the annual reports are mostly viewed as trustworthy, official documents (Gray et al., 1995), and any information the firms disclose in their annual reports should have first been reviewed and accepted by the top management. Third, annual reports are mostly recognized as regulatory documents with a higher level of trustiness than any other ways of advertising. Therefore, the annual reports provided by companies are an effective method to manage external impressions as they are considered as a primary source of information by the government, investors, employees, creditors, and environmental groups (Neu, Warsame, & Pedwell, 1998; Unerman, 2000). Neu et al. (1998) added that the most likely way to disclose information about companies to all stakeholders and shareholders, or any other interested party, is through an annual report. Fourth, annual reports are the major sources of a company's financial and environmental performance (Deegan & Rankin, 1999). Finally, the information contained in an annual report is an image enhancer and can be used as a marketing tool (Neu et al., 1998) thus leading to companies' willingness to disclose information on a regular basis.

Based on the importance of annual reports mentioned above and the low level of disclosure on company websites, this study used annual reports from 2014 to measure the SRA disclosure which were downloaded from the website of the Amman Stock Exchange (<http://www.ase.com.jo/>) in 2015 because it's the same year that the

questionnaires were collected. Regarding the validity and reliability of the checklist, it was reviewed by a number of professors to ensure that the items accurately described the variables for the study objectives, after which the checklist reliability was tested through a pilot study. Furthermore, this study used a rescoring test (recoding or test-retest) in order to examine the reliability of the index and to check the stability of the outcome acquired from the measurement tool over time for the content analysis (Hassan & Marston, 2010). Stability of the tool can be determined when the same content is coded again through the same coder (Guthrie, Cuganesan, & Ward, 2008; Hassan & Marston, 2010; Milne & Adler, 1999).

2.2. The Population and Sampling Technique

The population for this study is the total number of companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange. Companies listed on the ASE are grouped into three categories based on their activities—the financial sector, service sector, and industrial sector. According to the Amman Stock Exchange accessed online in September 2015, there is a total of 236 companies included the above categories. There are 112 companies in the financial sector, 56 companies in the service sector, and 68 companies in the industrial sector. To determine the method of calculating the sample size, Roscoe (1975) (as cited in Sekaran (2000)) indicated that the rule of thumb when it comes to the size of the sample entails multiplying the number of constructs by 10. A similar suggestion was provided by Bollen (1989), who stated that the empirical ratio of the estimates parameter has to have at least 10 observations, and in this regard, because the study has 10 constructs (variables with their dimensions), the smallest sample size should be 100 observations. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (2010) mentioned that the minimum acceptable sample should be five times the number of variables. As the sample size of this study was derived from the total population of 236 companies, the sample size can be determined by following Sekaran and Bougie (2003), who postulated that for every 240 elements of the population under study, 148 elements will be sufficient as a sample size. Consequently, the final sample size of this study is 148 listed companies. The sample selection based on Sekaran and Bougie (2003) provides accurate results in more samples compared to other methods (Bollen, 1989; Hair et al., 2010; Roscoe, 1975).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Response Rate

Of the 148 questionnaires distributed, 33 companies did not respond or refused to share their information, thus 115 questionnaires were collected. From the 115 returned questionnaires, 11 were excluded because of the considerable amount of missing data. These 11 questionnaires had at least one unanswered page, or were missing answers to questions related to one of the dimensions of SRA. Many authors of previous research have suggested a minimum response rate; for example, Dillman (2000); Roth and Craig (1998); Rea and Parker (1997) and Babbie (1990) suggested 50% as the minimum, while Fowler (1984) suggested 60%. However, some of the previous studies in Jordan obtained a higher response percentage; for instance, Al-Moumany et al. (2014) collected questionnaires from the chief executive managers, and the heads of marketing, finance, human resources, accounting, and production departments in industrial companies, and achieved a response rate of 88%.

The present study managed to get a response rate of 70%, which may be attributed to the type of respondents in top management positions. The collection of data took place between November 2015 and the end of January 2016, during which the top management were busy with the supervision and preparation of the annual report, budgets, and annual general meeting (AGM).

3.2. Results of the Non-Response Bias Test

This study employed the t-test to test the variances through the early and late respondents; early respondents comprised 40 samples and the late respondents also comprised 40 respondents. The test took into account all study

variables. However, Table 1 indicates that there is no significant variance between early respondents and late respondents.

Table 1. T-test results for non-response bias.

Variable	Testing of equality of variance significance		Testing the equality of means		
	Mean		T-value	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)
Employee Practice	Early	3.422	0.377	0.424	0.708
	Late	3.363			
Environment Practice	Early	3.440	0.618	0.462	0.539
	Late	3.344			
Community Practice	Early	3.363	1.592	0.592	0.118
	Late	3.098			
Quality of Product Practice	Early	3.850	0.525	0.208	0.602
	Late	3.773			

According to the findings of the t-test presented in Table 1, it is obvious that the supposition of equality difference (no difference or variance) between early respondents and late respondents is established. As there was an equal difference or variance through all variables in the current study, the researcher examined the equality of means of early respondents and late respondents, and as an outcome, the information in Table 1 clarifies that every value listed under the significance column overrides the threshold of 0.05, signaling no significant variation between the early respondent and late respondent groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that the current study affirmed the lack of non-respondent bias, negating any problem preventing the continuation of testing the proposed hypotheses (Pallant, 2005).

3.3. Descriptive Statistics of SRA Practice (SRAP)

As the descriptive statistics in Table 2 show, the quality of product dimension ranked first with a total mean of 3.864 (77%), followed by the environment dimension with an average of 3.633 (73%), and the employee dimension with a total average of 3.531 (71%). Finally, the community dimension obtained a mean of 3.240 (65%), while the practice of SRA obtained a mean of 3.567 (72%). These results show that the level of SRAP in Jordanian companies listed on the ASE is considered good and the companies place high importance on the quality of product dimension but did not give the same attention to the other dimensions. This result is consistent with the results of previous studies in Jordan by (Abu-Sabha & Shoubaki, 2013; Al-Moumany et al., 2014), who obtained similar averages for SRAP.

Table 2. Descriptive profiles of SRA practice.

Dimensions of SRA	Mean	Percentage of Total Practice	SD
Employee dimension	3.531	70.615%	0.991
Environment dimension	3.633	72.654%	0.959
Community dimension	3.240	64.808%	0.979
Product quality dimension	3.864	77.284%	0.841
Total for all SRA practice	3.567	71.340%	0.942

The possible reason for this finding is that as the study's sample contained companies in one conservative Islamic country that adhere to Islamic principles consistent with the concepts and practices of SRA, Muslims are motivated and encouraged to take supportive and active roles in their societies (Abu-Baker & Naser, 2000).

More specifically, with respect to employee practices, Table 3 shows that the item "My company works to provide and increase the level of health interest for its workers" ranks in first place with a mean of 3.817 (76%), and

this indicates that the primary concern for employees is health. Conversely, the item “My company rewards creativity in its employees” ranks in fifth place with a mean of 3.154 (63%).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of employee practice.

Item	Mean	Percentage of Total Practice	SD	Min.	Max.	Rank
My company works to provide and increase the level of health interest for its workers.	3.817	76.346%	1.012	1	5	1
My company encourages its employees as much as possible.	3.721	74.423%	0.875	1	5	2
My company supports friendly relations between the employees and their bosses.	3.558	71.154%	0.974	1	5	3
My company provides opportunities for quality training courses.	3.404	68.077%	1.111	1	5	4
My company rewards creativity in its employees.	3.154	63.077%	0.983	1	5	5

Regarding the environmental practices listed in Table 4, the item ranked in first place is “The company works to limit the amount of power wasted as much as possible” with a mean of 4.087 (82%). This measure is taken with the aim decreasing the operating expenses of the company. The item ranked last is “The company usually participates in environmental conservation programs” with a mean of 2.981 (60%).

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of environment practice.

Item	Mean	Percentage of Total Practice	SD	Min.	Max.	Rank
The company works to limit the amount of power wasted as much as possible.	4.087	81.731%	0.860	1	5	1
The company usually follows the laws and regulations applied by the surrounding environment.	4.038	80.769%	1.023	1	5	2
The company tries its best to limit the amount of water wasted.	4.000	80.000%	0.903	1	5	3
My company usually takes initiative actions to fix environmental pollution caused by its processes.	3.058	61.154%	1.022	1	5	4
The company usually participates in environmental conservation programs.	2.981	59.615%	0.985	1	5	5

Meanwhile, in respect to the community-related practices in Table 5, the item “The company usually participates in donating to the local community” ranked in first place with a mean of 3.490 (70%), and this might be to improve the reputation of the company. The item “Social projects are usually executed through partnerships with civil community institutions” acquired an average of 2.962 (59%) and ranked in eighth place.

Finally, regarding the quality of product practices listed in Table 6, the item “The company provides qualified employees to serve its agents” gained the top rank with a mean of 4.096 (82%). This shows that customer satisfaction is one of the main priorities of companies because it will positively influence their profitability and reputation. Conversely, the item “A professional consulatory group works to study the suitability of the company’s products and services for the markets” obtained a mean of 3.452 (69%) and ranked in eighth place.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of community practice.

Item	Mean	Percentage of Total Practice	SD	Min.	Max.	Rank
The company usually participates in donating to the local community	3.490	69.808%	1.033	2	5	1
The company cares about increasing the sense of social responsibility in the minds of its employees	3.375	67.500%	0.957	1	5	2
The company aims to elevate its status and reputation through carrying out its social responsibilities	3.356	67.115%	0.965	1	5	3
The company tries its best to provide individuals in the local community with continuous training opportunities	3.279	65.577%	0.908	2	5	4
The company usually supports poor people in the local community	3.250	65.000%	0.953	1	5	5
The company fights unemployment through employing young candidates	3.250	65.000%	0.953	1	5	5
The company usually supports educational activities and teaching centers	3.231	64.615%	1.045	1	5	6
The company is highly interested in planning for the development of important sections in the community, such as education and health	2.971	59.423%	1.028	1	5	7
Social projects are usually executed through partnerships with civil community institutions	2.962	59.231%	0.965	1	5	8

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of product quality practice.

Item	Mean	Percentage of Total Practice	SD	Min.	Max.	Rank
The company provides qualified employees to serve its agents.	4.096	81.923%	0.770	2	5	1
The company identifies the products and services recently provided to serve its agents (customers).	4.019	80.385%	0.750	2	5	2
The products and services are developed to meet the agents' needs.	3.952	79.038%	0.885	1	5	3
The products and services are developed according to the laws and regulations applied in an environment that serves to satisfy its agents (customers).	3.923	78.462%	0.832	2	5	4
The company conducts accurate diagnosis on the technical requirements of its agents.	3.865	77.308%	0.789	2	5	5
The efficiency of the company's products and services is continually increasing.	3.837	76.731%	0.883	2	5	6
The efficiency of products and services are evaluated by the company after sending them to the market.	3.769	75.385%	0.779	2	5	7
A professional consultative group works to study the suitability of the company's products and services for the market.	3.452	69.038%	1.042	1	5	8

3.4. Descriptive Statistics of SRA Disclosure (SRAD)

The descriptive statistics of SRA disclosure are shown in Table 7, with the mean of the SRA disclosures based on all dimensions. In terms of all items on the checklist, there were 4056 total responses to a total of 1200 points from all companies making an average of 28%. Also, the employee dimension collected 427 responses from a maximum of 1040 obtaining an average of 41%, the environment dimension collected 228 responses from 1248 with an average of 18%, and the community dimension had an average of 25% after collecting 261 responses from 1040.

Finally, the product quality dimension obtained an average of 39% after collecting 284 responses from 728 points. This result shows that the level of SRAD in Jordanian companies listed on the ASE is still very low, and the companies mainly focus on employees, and the quality of product dimension is more important than other dimensions.

Table 7. Descriptive profiles of SRA disclosure.

Dimensions of SRA	Total items per dimension	Sum	Average	Min.	Max.
Employee dimension	1040	427	0.41	0.01	0.84
Environment dimension	1248	228	0.18	0.11	0.22
Community dimension	1040	261	0.25	0.08	0.43
Product quality dimension	728	284	0.39	0.17	0.88
Total for all SRA disclosure	4056	1200	0.28	0.09	0.59

Based on the results in [Table 7](#), the level of social responsibility accounting disclosure in Jordanian companies is still low, and this is consistent with the results of previous studies in Jordan. [Abu-Baker and Naser \(2000\)](#); [Barakat et al. \(2015\)](#) found a low level of disclosure of social responsibility in Jordan. This is also similar to the cases in developing countries ([Barakat et al., 2015](#)), but completely different from those in developed countries; for example, [Gamerschlag, Möller, and Verbeeten \(2011\)](#) found that Germany's companies have a high level of compliance in regard to CSR disclosure with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

[Table 8](#) shows that the number of employees is the highest at 87 from 104 companies, obtaining an average of 84%. Meanwhile, the lowest frequency is for the minorities in the workforce, which obtained six points from a total of 104, and obtained an average of 6%. This result shows that the companies did not give as much attention to the minorities in the workforce as they gave to other elements under the employee disclosure information. The companies gave the most attention to the disclosure of the number of employees.

Table 8. Descriptive of employee disclosure.

Item	Sum	Average	Rank
Staff engagement programs	20	0.19	7
Education and training	56	0.54	4
Employee (benefits) health and safety	48	0.46	5
Number of employees	87	0.84	1
Amount of budget allocated to employee training	18	0.17	8
Provident and pension funds; compensation	68	0.65	3
Employee salaries	72	0.69	2
Minorities in the workforce	6	0.06	10
Employee satisfaction	10	0.10	9
Employees' categories by function	42	0.40	6

With regard to environment-related disclosure, [Table 9](#) presents that environmentally friendly equipment and facilities are used in 25 of the 104 companies, constituting 24%, which is the highest frequency. This shows that companies want to be seen as being environmentally friendly. Further, the implementation of goals and targets for the environment ranked in last with 11 points from a total of 104, an average of 11%. This means that the companies placed little importance on making any future plans to benefit the environment.

In terms of community disclosure, charitable donations and activities took the highest rank with an average of 43% and 45 points out of 104. The lowest rank was occupied by "establishing or fixing of educational institutions", with 8 points out of 104, an average of 8%, as presented in [Table 10](#).

Table 9. Descriptive of environment disclosure.

Item	Sum	Average	Rank
Environmentally friendly equipment and facilities	25	0.24	1
Water discharge information	19	0.18	6
Planting of trees to make the country green	18	0.17	7
Conservation of natural resources	16	0.15	8
Pollution control in the conduct of business operations	24	0.23	2
Prevention or repair of damage to the environment	14	0.13	9
Support for public/private actions designed to protect the environment	20	0.19	5
Anti-litter and conservation campaigns	18	0.17	7
Involvement in environmental organizations	22	0.21	4
Reduction or elimination of pollutants, irritants or hazards in the work environment	23	0.22	3
Recycling plants for waste products	18	0.17	7
Goals and targets for the environment	11	0.11	10

Table 10. Descriptive of community disclosure.

Item	Sum	Average	Rank
Charitable donations and activities	45	0.43	1
Support for education	26	0.25	5
Social welfare	41	0.39	2
Scholarships or training for students	19	0.18	8
Support for the arts and culture	23	0.22	6
Support for public health (medical establishments)	28	0.27	4
Seminars and conferences	19	0.18	8
Sponsoring sporting or recreational projects, and gifts	20	0.19	7
Establishing or fixing educational institutions	8	0.08	9
Relations with the local population	32	0.31	3

With regard to the product quality disclosure, Table 11 shows that the highest frequency obtained was for the explanation of major kinds of product/services by 91 out of 104 companies with an average of 88%. This shows that companies place high importance on the disclosure of the identity of their products. The lowest rank was for the consumer complaints/satisfaction (improvement in customer service), with a frequency of 20 and an average of 2%.

Table 11. Descriptive of product quality disclosure.

Item	Sum	Average	Rank
Product/service safety	25	0.24	4
Product/service quality	36	0.3	6
Explanation of major kinds of products/services	91	0.88	1
Consumer complaints/satisfaction (improvement in customer service)	20	0.2	7
Product/service development	36	0.35	3
Disclosure of consumer safety practices	18	0.17	5
Information on research projects set up by the company to improve its products	58	0.56	2

3.5. A Comparison between the Levels of SRAP and SRAD

This section of the study focuses on the gap between social responsibility accounting practice (SRAP) and social responsibility accounting disclosure (SRAD). These variables were measured in different ways. The data for SRAP was collected using items listed in a questionnaire measured via a five-point Likert scale, while the data for SRAD was collected using a content analysis of the annual reports, where the dummy variable was used to measure its level. Table 12 shows the means for both SRAP and SRAD dimensions. The results of the means of the five-point Likert scale was converted to a percentage by dividing the results of the mean of every dimension by five, then the results were multiplied by 100% to compare the SRAP results with the SRAD results.

Table 12. Comparison between the SRAP and SRAD dimensions.

Dimensions	Mean of SRAP	Mean of SRAD
Employee dimension	0.70	0.37
Environment dimension	0.73	0.17
Community dimension	0.65	0.25
Product quality dimension	0.77	0.39
Total for all SRA dimension	0.71	0.28

Consequently, in comparing the results of SRA disclosure with SRA practice in Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange, Table 12 shows that there is a gap between SRAP and SRAD, with a total means 0.71 for SRAP and 0.28 for SRAD. Additionally, by comparing the dimensions of both, Table 12 presents that the averages for employee, environment, community, and product quality dimensions for SRAP are 0.70, 0.73, 0.65, and 0.77, respectively, and the SRAD means were calculated to be 0.37 for the employee dimension, 0.17 for the environment dimension, 0.25 for the community dimension, and 0.39 for the product quality dimension, indicating that the overall SRA disclosure is still very low. These results present that the level of SRAP is higher than the level of SRAD in the companies listed on the ASE, and there is a big gap between the disclosure and the real practices in all dimensions of SRA.

The low level of disclosure related to the social responsibility of the companies could be attributed to many reasons, as clarified in the study conducted by Haider (2010) regarding the Social and Environmental Reporting of companies in developing countries. The study found that the social responsibility in developing countries is still in the nascent stage owing to societal awareness, the effectiveness of pressure groups, increased legislation, media interest, and ethical investors.

In addition, there is a low level of awareness among Jordanian companies' managers of the culture of social and environmental responsibility and related issues (Awad, 2014). Also, this result is consistent with some previous studies (e.g., (Aerts, Cormier, Gordon, & Magnan, 2006; Cormier, Gordon, & Magnan, 2004)). Specifically, the study conducted by Cormier et al. (2004) aimed to assess how perceptions of the management regarding certain aspects of environmental reporting relate to a company's actual reporting. By employing a survey questionnaire, they found that a positive relation exists between corporate environmental disclosure and management's awareness.

A related study conducted by Aerts et al. (2006) discovered that the executive managers' perceptions of the importance of their stakeholders within their firms affects the firms' social and environmental disclosure practices.

The studies of Cormier et al. (2004) and Aerts et al. (2006) found a positive relationship between social disclosure of the companies and the managers' perceptions, indicating that if the level of awareness of the managers' increases, the level of social disclosure will also increase. Conversely, if the level of awareness of the managers decreases, the level of social disclosure will also decrease.

Furthermore, a study in the context of Jordan by Awad (2014) revealed that high costs relating to the disclosure of social responsibility is one of the reasons that limit disclosure. With regard to the cost of disclosure of CSR and voluntary disclosure. Cost is also one of the reasons behind the reduced level of disclosure of social responsibility as it means that managers should maintain the same style of disclosure in the future, although this might be difficult (Graham, Harvey, & Rajgopal, 2005). Shehata (2014) and Graham et al. (2005) clarified some of the costs related to CSR and voluntary disclosure, such as litigation costs. They also mentioned that the litigation costs could be one of the reasons that limit and restrict disclosure. Additionally, the managers do not want to raise the level of disclosure in relation to voluntary activities such as social responsibility because this information might be used against the company.

Aside from the above, managers tend to avoid the responsibility when it comes to disclosing more information, especially if it is bad news, to limit the impending litigation. Such information could be inclusive of any information

that may limit customers' demand for a company's products or services, which may include the quality of these products/services and any adverse environmental impacts (Shehata, 2014).

On the other hand, the market, stakeholders, and shareholders can expect firms to commit to maintaining a new kind of disclosure, regardless of whether the news is good or bad. This will motivate managers to reduce voluntary disclosure (Graham et al., 2005) as well as CSR disclosure. Finally, Barakat et al. (2015) and Abu-Baker and Naser (2000) found that the level of disclosure in Jordanian companies listed on the ASE is low, which may be due to a number of reasons, including the lack of legislation and regulations in Jordan and related weaknesses (Abu-Sabha & Shoubaki, 2013; Barakat et al., 2015).

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The participation and the engagement of the private sector in social responsibility activities are different from country to country, which could indicate the impulse and the lack of such engagement. Accordingly, the current study is one of the first studies in Jordan that sought to determine the level of social responsibility accounting practice and disclosure in the companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange in order to fill the knowledge gap.

In addition, the current study identified the factors that affect the level of SRA practice and disclosure. The results show that the level of SRA practice is good. However, the level of SRA disclosure for the same companies in their annual reports is still low. The results offer an inclusive picture of SRA in Jordan that might be helpful for the Jordanian government to encourage Jordanian companies to practice SRA and disclose more of their SRA-related information.

These recommendations involve making social responsibility practices and disclosure common conditions for tenders and bidding in Jordan. The Jordanian government should also work to decrease the taxes imposed on companies to motivate them to practice social responsibility or introduce an award for the best companies that contribute more to society. In addition, the government should increase the regulations, instructions, and monitor the companies' disclosures in their annual reports in an effective way. The Jordanian government or other NGOs should offer workshops to raise awareness among companies' managers about the importance of the disclosure of social responsibility activities. The board of directors in a company should encourage the CEO to contribute to society and improve methods of social responsibility disclosure because this will improve the company image and reputation and reduce the related risks. The board of directors should not just be responsible for monitoring the performance of CEOs or the company's financial performance, they should also be involved in the decisions related to non-financial performance (e.g., SRA) because they are at the top of the management chain.

Finally, this study suggests that more efforts are needed to encourage companies to engage in society as part of the community (as a citizenship), improve working conditions for employees, and work to improve product quality. However, this will be impossible without sensitizing the shareholders and stakeholders in Jordan to SRA. In other words, the different stakeholders should work together to create a strong group to enhance SRA through increased demands and pressure on companies and the government.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results obtained from this study should be considered while taking its limitations into account to justify a fair explanation. The limitations not only decrease the assertions when explaining the results but also reveal possible opportunities for future research. Therefore, in the following point, each limitation is presented followed by a suggestion towards addressing the limitation.

First, the sample of companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) was selected for the current study because they are supervised by many government sectors including the Central Bank, Jordanian Companies Law, and Securities Law. This ensures that companies operate in accordance with the legislation, are monitored, and their level of disclosure is ensured. However, the results from these listed companies might not represent all of the

companies operating in Jordan because the characteristics of the companies listed on the ASE differ from other companies, such as small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Second, the data in this study was obtained by a questionnaire survey conducted in the later months of 2015 and content analysis of annual reports from 2014. This indicates that the current study was a snapshot of one year's worth of commercial operations. Furthermore, as mentioned, data was collected via a questionnaire survey in the later part of 2015, and this is bound have affected the response rate because the top management officials are often busy at the end of the year and in the first month of the new year preparing the annual report for the previous year and preparing for the annual general meeting (AGM).

6. FUTURE RESEARCH

The results and the impediments of the study lead to various research opportunities linked with SRA practice and disclosure in Jordan. The suggested areas for future research include the following:

First, future studies should expand the sample size to include national coverage and not limit the sample to companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange in order to raise the generalizability of the results in the context of Jordan.

Second, future research should consider SRA practices and disclosure from managers' perspectives because there are no previous studies that have focused on these perceptions in the case of Jordan.

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