



## THE INFLUENCE OF RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY PERCEPTION ON AIRPORT BRAND PROMOTION AND DESIRE TO REUSE OF AIRPORT SERVICES: THE CASE OF IRAN AIRPORTS

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Received 17 December 2017; revised 30 December 2017; accepted 5 May 2018

**Abstract.** Sustainability and resilience are important in social, economic and environmental aspects. However, inspections show that in developing countries like Iran, sustainability and resilience strategies lose their significance when economic problems and high workload come to matter. This research tries to determine what factors encourage managers to consider airport sustainability in long-term and different situations. Such investigations are essential for a developing country like Iran, which has 54 airports under a central management system, which can help deploying selected strategies. Results of this study show that if passengers perceive the sustainability activities and ethical cores of an airport, they consider it more prestigious and become willing to reuse airport services for their future travels. They also turn out as evangelists and changes of the way people travel becomes visible on a wider scale. This can help managers to understand recent travel behaviour of airport passengers and enhance the airports' performance considering different aspects equally, which are profitable for airport system, public and environment as a whole.

**Keywords:** airport reputation, brand evangelism, ethical corporate identity, resilience, sustainability, airport services.

### Introduction

Nowadays, corporate reputation and organizations' ethical core stance can be said to matter more than what the organizations offer (Karaosmanoglu *et al.* 2016). Corporate reputation makes customers prefer special corporate services when other companies' services are presented at a similar cost and quality. Strong reputation makes the corporate more competitive while weak reputation can quickly harm customer and employees loyalty and even support people's adoption of new travel behaviour (Strömberg *et al.* 2016; Wang *et al.* 2016). Airports are not an exception in this domain. Efficient and effective airports have turned out to be fruitful poles. The importance of airports as global business gateways is now completely diagnosed all over the world. Airports play a critical role in people and goods transport in regional, national, and international commerce and have an important role in shaping their travel behaviour (ACRP 2012, 2016). They also can be assumed as the key catalysts for urban growth and economic development in an era of global urbanization (Addie 2014). However, liberalization of the air transport

market all over the world has created new dynamics into the aviation. This has put the airport business in a competitive environment and arguably airports' reputation and brand management in this situation become more important than before (Jimenez *et al.* 2014; Lee, Park 2016).

Although there are various components that can bring corporate reputation to the airports, it should be mentioned that the way, which airports deal with challenges, their capabilities to preserve passengers' security and their efforts toward sustainable transportation as a whole, place them under a magnifying glass of activists and interest groups (Olfat *et al.* 2016; Piatkowski *et al.* 2015; Ryley *et al.* 2013). However, this scrutiny can change consumers' perceptions about airports performance if the promises of airports turn out to be exaggerated or empty (Karaosmanoglu *et al.* 2016). As a result, it is clear that brand management establishes a stronger voice about airports' competitive advantages and a good reputation can motivate people to advertise its performance.

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Because of this, international and national airports and all their relevant institutions have been adopting more holistic resilience and sustainability approaches. By doing so, they aim at achieving the full integration of economic viability, operational efficiency, livability, natural resource conservation and social responsibility (Oto *et al.* 2012).

The delicate point is that nowadays, most of airport managers in different countries are aware of the advantages of taking such approaches, but when the workloads are high and economic problems come to matter, these approaches and their related plans lose their priorities. This situation becomes more obvious in developing countries like Iran, which airports' income receives high importance. This shapes a study gap, since an integrated study has not been found which investigate the effect of resilience and sustainability and ethical identity on airport reputation. It should be determined that what factors encourage managers to consider airport sustainability in long-term and different situations. As a result, this study's aim was to see if passengers comprehend the efforts of managers in making airport more resilience and sustainable, and consider the ethical identity of it important and try to advertise the services. Resilience and sustainability principles can receive ongoing attention in all work situations and the whole community takes advantages in this regard. Therefore, it is worthy to investigate matters that can bring reputation to airports and help them to enhance their competitive advantages in this way. That is why it can be said that such a study is unprecedented and essential and can help airport managers to set suitable strategies in order to receive positive feedback from society. It can also encourage them to spread the airport's capabilities.

Such investigation is crucial for Iran airports too. There are 54 airports in Iran that are under the management of Iran Airports Company. Many of these airports are not profitable and the non-aviation income rate is far less than global rate. Resilience and sustainability concepts and ethical cores are not fully under consideration because of this. That is why if it can be ensured that resilience and sustainability activities or airports' ethics are perceived important by passengers and can shape a positive image in their minds, their positive word of mouth will attract more passengers and enhance financial performance of airports.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. In Section 1, the literature of corporate reputation, resilience, sustainability, corporate identity and ethical corporate identity and brand evangelism is considered. The research methodology is explained in Section 2 and results of analysis are presented in Section 3. Finally, the last section concludes the paper, including suggestions for further research.

## 1. Theoretical background

### 1.1. Airport reputation

Scholars have well acknowledged that a strong brand has a critical role in bringing long-term competitive advantages to the corporation (Santos-Vijande *et al.* 2013). Cor-

porate reputation is an intangible asset, which can bring stakeholders' supports and their positive word of mouth. Actually, positive word of mouth makes corporate reputation stronger passing the time. This encourages corporations to care more about their reputations (Abimbola 2009; Hong 2008; Ingenhoff, Buhmann 2016; Korda *et al.* 2012). Reputation can make brand stronger and help the company to achieve its business goals (Fombrun, Van Riel 1997; Schaarschmidt 2016; Wang *et al.* 2016).

Airports good reputations can bring similar advantages to them too. Airports should not be just a place to wait but should be a place to present more values to stakeholders. Airports can be a place for passengers to have fun while producing non-aviation income at the same time (Castro, Lohmann 2014; Minato, Morimoto 2011). Good reputation can also enhance employees' performance. Schaarschmidt (2016) showed that if front line service employees' perceive external reputation, they will be persuaded to participate in service innovation at airport. In addition, it has been proved that social media, transparency for providing information, and social responsibility have significant influence on airport reputation and can encourage passengers to advertise services (Lee, Park 2016).

Corporations in different industries glorify their brands and reputations as well as their products and services by taking responsibility for well-being of the communities and environments in which they operate (Ozdora Aksak 2016; Pohle, Hittner 2008; Saeidi *et al.* 2015; Shim, Yang 2016). Therefore, the resilience and sustainability principles can affect the preciousness of the corporate reputation.

### 1.2. Airport resilience

Resilience is the capability of a system to observe shocks without major failures or to prevent something bad to become worse, while promoting proper knowledge management in order to learn from experiences and prevent the occurrence of similar events in the future (Woods 2015; Pettersen, Schulman 2019).

In recent years, aviation like other industries is facing with different challenges and its business continuity has been threatened in this way. Airports are not exception and their resilience should be studied in depth. Airports are seen to be vulnerable to unfavourable events such as terrorism, pandemics and climate changes (Carlisle 2015). Since airports are frequently constructed in coastal areas, critical climate change risks like rising sea levels and resonant rainfall patterns are observant (Graham 2016). In addition, rapid changes in consumer needs and technologies are creating a situation in which corporations should increasingly expect dynamics in their business models. While often perceived as an operational issue, resilience is an increasing feature of airport business management and determines how airports should evolve their functions to face new challenges (Carlisle 2015).

Airport resilience means if something unusual occurs and affects the normal operations, airports' managers and staff should be ready in advance to recover the airport in

the shortest possible time. It must be always ensured that runways, lightening and communication systems are efficient and passengers can be moved smoothly in and out of the airport. These activities can have positive impact on people if they are truly perceived (Graham 2016). Actually, organizational resilience is a key factor to make reputation more strong. Resilience helps organizations to keep trust, good stakeholder perceptions and supportive behaviour (Locke, Ziegler 2016). Clarification of resilience functions in citizens' minds even can make government reputation stronger (Crijs *et al.* 2017). Therefore, the *first hypothesis* can be set as such:

- H<sub>1</sub>: passengers' positive perceptions about airport attempts toward getting resilient increase airport reputation and their inclination to use airport services.

### 1.3. Airport sustainability

The most famous definition of sustainability goes back to the United Nations (UN) World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report called "Our Common Future". Sustainable development is known as a kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations (Banerjee 2002; UN WCED 1987). Since then the sustainable development concept has been evolved and used in various systems such as urban development, agriculture and transportation (Bolcárová, Kološta 2015).

Airport sustainability is about the insurance of the environment protection and conservation of natural resources while considering the needs of airport officials and public simultaneously, obtaining the objective of cognitions economic and employment rate of growth (ACRP 2012, 2016). Because of the importance, different agencies like Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have considered various programs such as the Noise Compatibility Program and Voluntary Airport Low Emissions Program to help airports achieve sustainability. FAA as like as other agencies believes that airport sustainability will be fulfilled only by consideration of environmental, community, economical and operational goals at the same time (FAA 2019). In long-term, airports with powerful economic structures, which can meet the social needs of stakeholders and minimize negative environmental impacts can be sustainable. In the short term, they should be competitive to sustain economic viability while preserving natural and human resources. These activities can enhance value of airports in people minds (Artiach *et al.* 2010). In other words, reputations are shaped on the perception that a company will do the right thing, treat its staff correctly, make safe products, perform its obligation and will be well governed. Sustainability drives trust, which in turn drives reputation (3P Contributor 2011). The intensified important link between sustainability and reputation is obvious more than before because of that (Panzone *et al.* 2016).

Another matter is that today's turbulent world makes it necessary to take a dynamic approach for sustainability

analysis. Sustainability performance should be considered in the face of unpredictable disruptions and organizational resilience (Fahimnia, Jabbarzadeh 2016). Resilience can be helpful in shaping sustainability. Resilience makes it possible to pass the challenges and ensures business continuity in this way and has received a lot of attentions nowadays by itself (Derissen *et al.* 2011). So, the effect of resilience activities on passengers is considered separately from the concept of sustainability because of its importance. The *second* and *third hypothesis* of this study is set as such:

- H<sub>2</sub>: passengers' comprehension of airport's resilience makes them consider airport more sustainable;
- H<sub>3</sub>: passengers' perception about airport sustainability can enhance airport reputation.

### 1.4. Ethical corporate identity

There is no single definition for the corporate identity (Balmer 2014; Hatch, Yanow 2008). However, corporate identity can be considered as a visual appearance of the brand values that are considered by senior managers to represent the discerned characteristic of the corporation (Rodrigues, Child 2008). Corporate identity is also defined as a specified general feature that could make interactions with stakeholders and structure the way they cooperate in different affairs (Cornelissen *et al.* 2007). So, corporate identity can be considered as a strategic activity, which utilizes some signs for introducing the corporate to the stakeholders. Corporate identity is not just made by corporate itself, but the way that corporate interacts with other corporations can also construct its identity (Hildebrand *et al.* 2011; Dinnie 2009). London Luton Airport for instance was designed to be a more efficient and passenger focused one, so that makes passengers experience pleasant and the staff be proud of. This positive intention can turn passengers or staff into brand ambassadors or evangelists (ICO 2015; Kim 2014).

Various components determine corporate identity. Van Riel and Van den Ban (2001) considered identity mix consisted of the employees' behaviours, symbolism, corporate social relationships and corporate self-belief. However, from the Aaker (2004) and Bartholmé, Melewar (2011) points of view, innovation is the greatest subject that should be investigated in determination of corporate identity. When the innovation is understandable and relevant, it could give the corporation a special identity. Corporate should determine where it is located in the competitiveness sphere before taking any decisions.

It is also notable that ethical principles control the relationships between the corporate and society and should be under consideration because of this. Ethical corporate identity contains informational worth and enhances stakeholders' satisfaction about the corporation performance (Said *et al.* 2013). That is why ethical corporate identity can reduce the customers' scepticism toward corporate strategies. Ethical corporate identity provides a comprehensive approach that is essential for connecting what the

company has and what outsiders perceive about parts of the corporate identity (Balmer *et al.* 2007).

Hence, it is obvious that if people see corporate as an ethical identity, they put more values on airports' efforts toward resilience and sustainability concepts. This can be helpful in making good corporate reputation (Karaosmanoglu *et al.* 2016). All of these are essential in transportation systems as like as other systems (Paliderova *et al.* 2015). That is why it can be presumed that (*fourth* and *fifth hypothesis*):

- H<sub>4</sub>: the relationship between airport resilience activities and its reputation is moderated by the ethical corporate identity in so far as passengers put more value toward the activities of an airport that clarifies its ethical stance;
- H<sub>5</sub>: the relationship between airport sustainability and its reputation is moderated by ethical corporate identity in so far as passengers consider more worth toward the activities of an airport that express its ethical position.

### 1.5. Brand evangelism

It is a fact that when customers are excited about a corporate product or service, they truly become evangelists of the corporation. These customers who are also called brand ambassadors willingly put ample energy into expansion of the corporate market (Huba, McConnell 2012). Their positive word-of-mouth and support of the company's brand bring many advantages such as reduction in the cost of advertising. Evangelism marketing is more commonly known as word of mouth marketing and is based on customers to transfer marketing messages to other potential customers (Marketing Schools 2019). In today's world, word of mouth provides trust in brands more effectively than any other marketing method (Wong 2013; Xiong *et al.* 2013). That is why nowadays corporations are focusing on those groups of customers that are called evangelists. These people have a great interest in the brand and actively engage in the conveyance of their positive experiences to others. Therefore, evangelism is explaining to the world how a product or service can improve people's lives (Kawasaki 2015; Rehmet, Dinnie 2013).

This matter is important in directing airports too. Social media equips anyone to not only engage with the corporate brand, but also to represent it. Therefore, airport directors should become a brand evangelist equipper and make relationships with brand friends online or offline in order to direct the general mentality in the right way (The Quotient Group 2019). Such an evangelism network produces proud and committed passengers (Rehmet, Dinnie 2013). Therefore, it is logical to presume that (*sixth hypothesis*):

- H<sub>6</sub>: when passengers consider more reputation for an airport, they will be more willing to become evangelists and share their positive experiences with others in order to encourage them to use airport services.

## 2. Research methodology

This paper's aim was to have a practical use of some important and novel concepts with the descriptive survey research method in order to figure out some of the components that can bring reputation to the airports and cause people to become evangelists. Based on mentioned studies in Section 2, this study uses resilience as independent variable, sustainability and corporate reputation as mediating variables and brand evangelism as a dependent variable while ethical corporate identity plays the role of a moderating variable. The survey was conducted from September till December 2016 and the measurement was done by use of questionnaire. The questions were developed by studying related literature.

Statistical sample in this study is constituted from passengers of 13 Iranian airports with the highest passenger traffic like Mehrabad Airport, Imam Khomeini Airport, Mashhad Airport and Tabriz Airport. By consideration of Cochran's sample size formula for unlimited population and taking 90% confidence level and 7% error level, 139 passengers from each under investigation airport are selected randomly. As for the method of filling out questionnaires, the passengers filled out the questionnaires themselves through online submissions or on paper. The total number of returned questionnaires was 1730, and after excluding 23 questionnaires with insufficient responses, 1707 questionnaires were used for final analysis. These passengers have the experience of air travel from 2014 till 2016 to the developing countries in Asia, such as Iraq and Pakistan, and the result of this study can reflex the situation in these countries of the area too.

Demographics of the sample are observable in Table 1. The gender ratio of the respondents showed that more males participated, with 1323 males (75%) and 441 females (25%) participating. Considering age of the respondents, it becomes clear that people in their 50s have

Table 1. Demographics of the sample

Variable	Group	% frequency (No)
Gender	man	0.750 (1280)
	woman	0.250 (427)
Age	20...30	0.062 (106)
	31...40	0.250 (427)
	41...50	0.062 (106)
	51...60	0.625 (1068)
Level of education	BSc	0.375 (640)
	MSc	0.375 (640)
	PhD	0.250 (427)
The use of airport	at least once a month	0.157 (269)
	at least every three months	0.263 (450)
	at least every six months	0.105 (179)
	at least once a year	0.210 (359)
	once in the past few years	0.263 (450)

most travelled by airplane. As for the level of education, the majority of the respondents have bachelor and master degrees. As for the use of airport, most passengers had travelled at least every three months or once in the past few years through the airports under consideration. As a result of examination of demographic characteristics of respondents, it is clear that they are suitable for making such investigations about airports.

To develop measurements for airport resilience, airport sustainability, ethical corporate identity, airport reputation and brand evangelism, the paper went through the following steps. At first, the previous literature was studied and the concepts were defined in order to bring clarification. In the second step, the measurement items were developed based on literature review. In the third step, the measurement items were purified by asking academic and industrial experts' opinions (three professors and 4 manager of Iranian Airport Holding Company) and questionnaire's content validity was verified in this way. In the fourth step, data was collected by use of developed questionnaire. The main survey was done by taking passengers' opinions. At last, the data collected was analysed. Therefore, the questionnaire was developed through mentioned steps with 20 items (Table 2). A 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The measurements that were used in this study can be divided into five groups of airport resilience, airport sustainability, ethical corporate identity, airport reputation and brand evangelism. As is obvious in Table 3, the reliability of each group was above  $\alpha = 0.7$ . Therefore, the developed questionnaire has a suitable reliability too. Operational definitions and measurement items can be seen in Table 2.

For analysing the data and testing the study's hypotheses, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is used. PLS-SEM, which has been determined as a semi-standard statistical method in social sciences determines coefficients in a way that the model can predict the final dependent variables with high degree of reliability and validity. Furthermore, PLS-SEM method estimates all the existing relations in the model, namely the interactions between each of the latent variables and also the weight of all measurable indicators related to these variables (coefficients out of the measuring model) (Ratzmann *et al.* 2016; Schubring *et al.* 2016).

The first step for analysing the Structural Equations Model (SEM) is to define a model, which is in fact a combination of structural model and reference model. To investigate direct and indirect causal relationships among these variables, the following reflective conceptual research model is designed that is shown in Figure 1.

### 3. Analysis and discussion

A dimensionality test was performed to investigate sampling adequacy. To measure sampling adequacy, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) index was used with 0.7 reference value (Lee, Park 2016). Calculated KMO index was 0.746, which proves that the sample size is adequate.

Smart-PLS software v.3.20 (<https://www.smartpls.com>) was applied to explore the hypotheses of this study. Before that, measures for checking reliability and validity of the model have been determined and the related results are shown in Table 3. Internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were evaluated. For these, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), Composite Reliability (CR), correlations, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were calculated and analysed (Tables 3 and 4).

Cronbach's alpha was considered to evaluate internal consistency. Results of the analysis showed high internal consistency, since all Cronbach's alpha values were more than 0.7. The results showed Cronbach's alpha value 0.73 – for airport resilient, 0.86 – for airport sustainability, 0.75 – for ethical corporate identity, 0.77 – for airport reputation, and 0.75 – for brand evangelism. After that, convergent validity was evaluated by considering CR. The values of CR for all the components in Table 3 were more than the base level – 0.7 (Lee, Park 2016).

Goodness of Fit (GOF) was determined with the value of 0.665. Wetzels *et al.* (2009) considered GOF values above 0.36 as a sign for a strong goodness of the model fit. Therefore, it can be said that the goodness of current study model fit is strong too.

Factor Loadings (FLs) show the correlations of items with their components. As is shown in Table 3, FL values are high enough and this means that each measurement model is reliable.

Since it is confirmed that the model of this study is reliable and valid and also its GOF is strong, the hypotheses of this study can be investigated.  $\beta$ ,  $t$ -value and  $R^2$  values are shown in Table 5 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Path coefficients, which are based on  $\beta$  coefficients, were determined by use of Maximum Likelihood Estimator (MLE) to understand the relationship between variables. Table 5 shows overall results. First-of-all, testing results showed that the path coefficient between perceived airport resilience and airport reputation was 1.196. Second, the path coefficient between perceived airport resilience and perceived airport sustainability was 0.976. Third, the path coefficient between perceived airport sustainability and airport reputation was 0.36. Fourth, the path coefficient between airport sustainability and brand evangelism was 0.575. However, path coefficients between ethical corporate identity as a moderator variable and airport reputation from each path related to perceived airport resilience and perceived airport sustainability were negative.

To test the moderation effect of ethical corporate identity in this research model, a significance test was performed using Bootstrapping. Considering  $t$ -value in Table 5, it is clear that although ethical corporate identity was hypothesized to have a positive moderating effect on the relationship between perceived airport resilience and airport reputation and also between perceived airport sustainability and airport reputation, it was statistically insignificant ( $H_4$  and  $H_5$ ). Besides, the direct effect of perceived airport resilience on airport reputation was statistically insignificant too ( $H_1$ ). However, other hypotheses were statistically confirmed.

Table 2. Questionnaire items

Component	Operational definition	Code	Measurement items*	Some related studies
Airport resilience	Being ready to get the airport to the normal operation again in the shortest time possible if something unusual occurs and affect the normal operations	RE1	There is a way such as notifications on the website to understand that airport management cares about possible crises and has predicted them.	Suárez-Alemán, Jiménez (2016); Lopez (2016); Mattsson, Jenelius (2015); ACRP (2012, 2016)
		RE2	I can understand from airport website or any other way of gaining information that this airport has set plans in order to prevent any probable crises to happen (crises because of bad weather, terrorism or any other matter)	
		RE3	The airport has made it clear that how it has learned from previous crises and how it wants to prevent their recurrence	
		RE4	I can see the infrastructures needed for the fastest possible retrieval when crises happen (infrastructures such as communication routes to the city, power systems and accessories)	
Airport sustainability	Insurance of the environment protection and conservation of natural resources while considering the needs of airport officials and public and also economic objectives	SU1	Necessary information about airport services or ceremonies and special activities at airport are announced through means such as websites or bulletin boards	ACRP (2012, 2016); SAGA (2017); Lee, Park (2016); Ferrulli (2016)
		SU2	The low income people of society have been considered in projects such as the construction of the dining and setting transportation systems from the airport to other parts of the system	
		SU3	Stalls and businesses operating at the airport show that the airport management is eager to gain non-aviation income and employment opportunities creation in the region	
		SU4	Played ceremony, billboards or announcements on the airport's website show that the airport management cares about the environment and sustainable development and try to transfer this culture to others	
		SU5	Billboards or announcements on the airport's website show that the airport management pays attention to the areas of humanitarian activity (such as helping people in times of natural disasters) importance and tries to promote this culture among the public	
Ethical corporate identity	Generation of ethical culture within the organization and consideration of it in the way that managers cooperate in different affairs	EI1	Airport ethical statement is accessible from its website or any other similar way	Karaosmanoglu et al. (2016); Akdoğan et al. (2016); Saliiani, Eslami (2016)
		EI2	Airport ethical statement is transparent and comprehensible.	
		EI3	I myself see the ethical cores of the airport valuable and in process	
Airport reputation	Collective judgments of stakeholders about an airport considering its financial, social and environmental impacts over time	AR1	The airport has a good reputation among airports of the country	Kim et al. (2017); Fracarolli Nunes Park (2017); Raj, Babu (2017); Romano et al. (2017)
		AR2	The airport serving process is done decently and in order (services such as customs, inspection equipment and security guards)	
		AR3	I believe that airport's managers and staff always look to improve the serving process	
		AR4	I believe that airport's staff always seeks to meet the needs of passengers (the ones such as the need for taking rest and food or the need to obtain information about the timing of the trip)	
		AR5	In the airport services planning, how to overcome the needs that arise in the future (such as increasing the number of passengers, air traffic in the future and gangs for wide-body aircraft) has been considered	
Brand evangelism	The customers who are willingly put ample energy into expansion of the corporate market	BE1	For the future trips, I will use this airport services again	Cambra Fierro et al. (2014); Islam, Rahman (2017); Swimberghe et al. (2014); Koll, Wallpach (2014)
		BE2	I am willing to advertise this airport services to others	
		BE3	I encourage others to use this way of trip instead of other ways such as travelling by train	

Note: \* – a 5-point Likert scale.

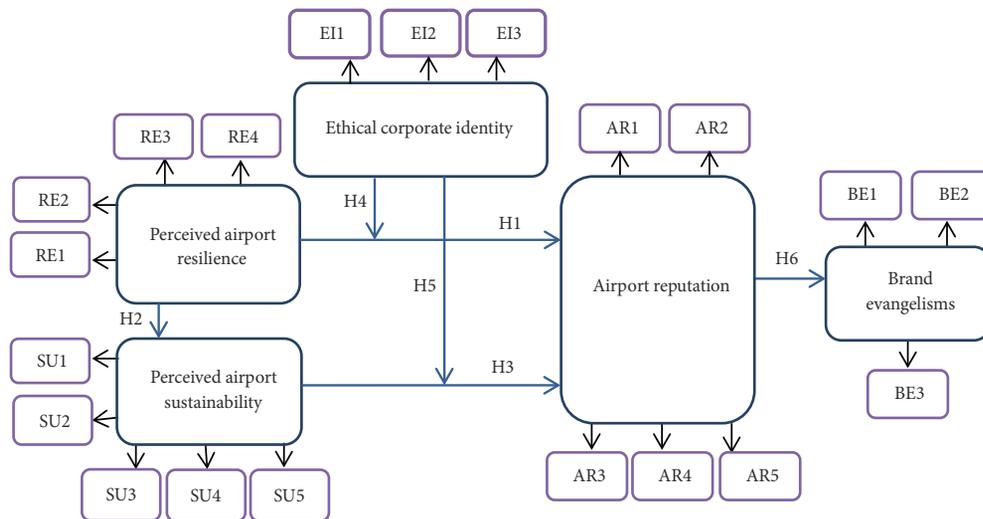


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual model

Table 3. Measures for checking reliability and validity

Component	Item code	FL ≥ 0.4	α ≥ 0.7	CR ≥ 0.7	AVE ≥ 0.5
Perceived airport resilience	RE1	0.82	0.73	0.83	0.56
	RE2	0.75			
	RE3	0.84			
	RE4	0.73			
Perceived airport sustainability	SU1	0.91	0.86	0.90	0.66
	SU2	0.72			
	SU3	0.92			
	SU4	0.80			
	SU5	0.67			
Ethical corporate identity	EI1	0.87	0.75	0.89	0.80
	EI2	0.85			
	EI3	0.91			
Airport reputation	AR1	0.75	0.77	0.85	0.54
	AR2	0.73			
	AR3	0.81			
	AR4	0.91			
	AR5	0.70			
Brand evangelism	BE1	0.85	0.75	0.75	0.60
	BE2	0.41			
	BE3	0.68			

In addition,  $R^2$  values indicated that 0.953 of the variance in perceived airport sustainability was predictable from perceived airport resilience. 0.84 of the variance in airport reputation was predictable from its independent variables while 0.331 of variance in brand evangelism was predictable from airport reputation. Although the hypothesis related to the effect of airport reputation on brand evangelism was conformed, this relationship should be interpreted more cautious since  $R^2$  value of path between airport reputation and brand evangelism is not strong.

Table 4. Discriminant validity: AVE values versus cross-construct squared correlations

Construct	Airport Resilience	Airport sustainability	Ethical corporate identity	Airport reputation	Brand evangelism
Airport resilience	<b>0.560</b>				
Airport sustainability	0.472	<b>0.660</b>			
Ethical corporate identity	0.232	0.251	<b>0.800</b>		
Airport reputation	0.442	0.439	0.244	<b>0.540</b>	
Brand evangelism	0.017	0.016	0.023	0.029	<b>0.600</b>

It is clear that based on passengers’ opinions, efforts of airports management in making it resilient can be helpful in preserving its sustainability and is valuable in this regard. It should also be noted that making efforts in making airports more sustainable will bring more reputation and this reputation can encourage passengers to advertise airport services. The travel behaviour of people can be modified in larger scale because of this.

However, regarding to the  $t$ -values, it can’t be said that ethical corporate identity moderates the relationship between airport resilience and its reputation or the relationship between airport sustainability and its reputation while it is clear that ethical corporate identity can itself affect airport reputation independently. That is why *seventh hypothesis* ( $H_7$ ) is added to the Table 5.

Another point is that airport resilience and sustainability level in this study is measured based on passengers’ preciseness. Passengers consider more reputation for an entity when they perceive its values. So airport managers should try to transfer their values and show efforts toward airport resilience and sustainability to their passengers

Table 5. Results of hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	$\beta$	t-value	Test result
H <sub>1</sub> : passengers' positive perceptions about airport attempts toward getting resilient increase airport reputation and their inclination to use airport services	1.196	-0.420	not accepted
H <sub>2</sub> : passengers' comprehension of airport's resilience makes them to consider airport more sustainable	0.976	13.810	not rejected
H <sub>3</sub> : passengers' perception about airport sustainability can enhance airport reputation	0.360	2.460	not rejected
H <sub>4</sub> : the relationship between airport resilience activities and its reputation is moderated by the ethical corporate identity in so far as passengers put more value toward the activities of an airport that clarifies its ethical stance	-0.187	0.021	not accepted
H <sub>5</sub> : the relationship between airport sustainability and its reputation is moderated by ethical corporate identity in so far as passengers consider more worth toward the activities of an airport that express its ethical position	-0.127	0.304	not accepted
H <sub>6</sub> : when passengers consider more reputation for an airport, they will be more willing to become evangelists and share their positive experiences with others in order to encourage them to use airport services	0.575	7.510	not rejected
H <sub>7</sub> : when passengers consider an ethical identity for the airport they see it more reputable as a whole	0.145	2.065	not rejected

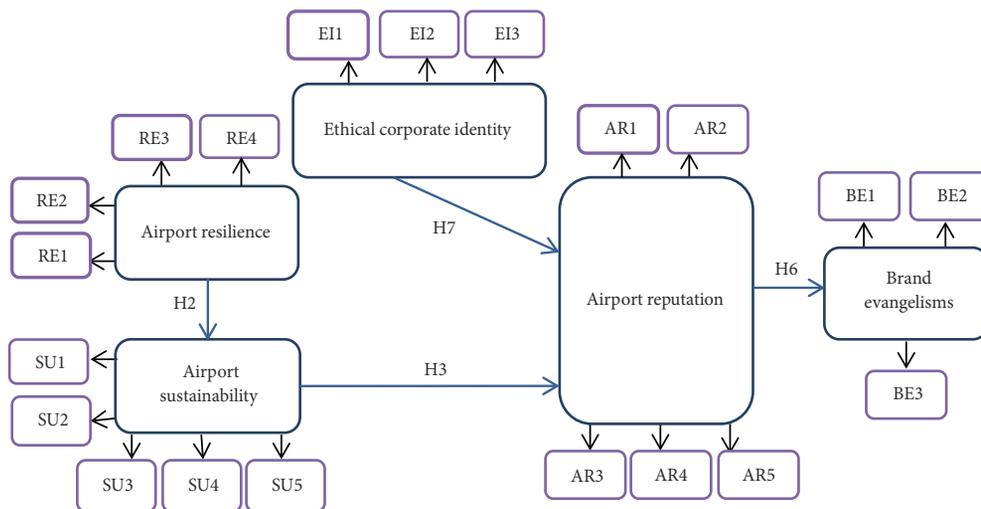


Figure 2. Final conceptual model of this study

and community as a whole. If they do not succeed in encouraging passengers to look at the airport website or do not find a suitable way for information transferring, their efforts will not shape reputation and will not persuade passengers to turn out as brand evangelists. The important matter is what passengers perceive.

According to obtained results, final conceptual model of study is shown in Figure 2.

**Conclusions**

Over the past decade, airports role in aviation system has become irrefutable and competition is surely increased in this industry. Airports have to become resilient and sustainable in order to attract social attentions and make significant airline consolidation to be continued. Although the advantages of resilient and sustainable airport for the whole society and also environment have been proved, in

many countries especially developing ones like Iran, resilience and sustainability strategies lose their significance when financial matters take place. Because of this, the purpose of this study was to empirically investigate influential relationships between perceived airport resilience, perceived airport sustainability, airport reputation and brand evangelism considering moderating effect of ethical corporate identity. The findings of this study can be summarized as follows. First, perceived airport resilience has been found to have a strong impact on perceived airport sustainability. Second, it became clear that perceived airport sustainability bring more reputation to the airport and as a result, passengers would be more eager to turn out as brand ambassadors. The moderating effect of ethical corporate identity was not statistically confirmed. However, the direct affection of ethical corporate identity on airport reputation has been approved. Third, it has been found that these effects have very high explanatory power

for airport reputation. The model has explained 84% of variance in airport reputation. In this regard, this study sets important contributions:

- this study sets a novel bridge between resilience, sustainability and corporate reputation concepts. The results show that airport resilience helps it to become more sustainable and the sustainability of airports brings more reputation to them;
- on the other hand, it became clear that ethical corporate identity can help airports be considered more reputable. This relationship determines the importance of ethics in airports' activities more than before and specifies why ethics should be under consideration by managers in setting plans;
- as is proven, airport reputation can encourage passengers to advertise its services and this can change people travel behaviour as a whole. As previous studies have shown, these self-imposed activities by passengers can bring cost savings and other financial and non-financial advantages. It seems that there is no logical reason to put resilience and sustainability programs away even for a while. This way of thinking about these concepts is unprecedented and essential, since it can help airport managers set proper strategies and develop airports equally considering different economic, social and environmental aspects even in turbulent situations.

That is why it is recommended to the airports' managers to set special plans with determined milestones for pursuing resilience and sustainability programs simultaneously. Besides, responsible staff with specified office must be authorized at airports in order to make it possible to perform resilience and sustainability programs in all the situations.

For the next studies, it is proposed to determine the sustainability efficiency of airports by using techniques such as Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA). Besides, it would be useful to set a conceptual framework for airport resilience or airport sustainability and prioritize the factors. Strategies can be determined based on the importance of airport resilience and sustainability factors in this regard. Probing how to make online airport identity and reputation can be interesting and necessary too. It is clear that social online communication systems and airport website in the simplest possible form can transfer the airport values and its directions considering different social and environmental aspects. Therefore, these ways of communication and the way of transferring the corporate values must be under investigation.

The limitations of this study specify some suggestions for future research too. International airports with different operational characteristics can be an interesting research domain. Comparison of their functions can shape new benchmarking. It was focused on only some of the factors influencing airport sustainability and resilience, considering a variety of factors in next research can be interesting.

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