Corporate Social Responsibility and Organizational Performance in Nigeria

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Abstract

Attaining organizational goals and maximum organization performance and effectiveness requires giving complete attention to corporate social responsibility (CSR). The location of a business, the society in which it thrives, is crucial in determining its corporate culture, internal structure, processes and organisational behaviour as well as its overall performance. This paper examines corporate social responsibility and organizational performance in Nigeria. The study's aim is to determine the effect of environmental issues, cost of doing business, competitive advantage, and corporate social responsibility on organizational performance. Relevant conceptual, theoretical and empirical literature were examined. Resource-Based View and Kohlberg's Model of Cognitive Moral Development were employed as the theoretical framework. This paper is a qualitative research that relied so much on documentary method. The study found out that environmental issue has a significant effect on an organization's performance, and that social initiatives and competitive advantage have significant effects on organizational performance. The study recommends that government should put in place policies that will create a good business environment for firms operating in the country and that organizations should be socially responsible in order to strengthen their legitimacy, competitive advantage, and realize their long-term goals.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, business environment, policies, organizational performance.

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Introduction

Due to globalisation, widespread internet connectivity and instant flow of information across the world, consumers are increasingly mounting pressure on businesses to demonstrate corporate social responsibility. The practice of corporate social responsibility and other issues is now a global phenomenon. There is a growing need for firms operating in various communities to be in harmony with their host communities (Ukpabi, Ikaba, Enyindah, Orji and Idatoru, 2014). This practice of ensuring that divergent needs of the host communities are reasonably addressed in order to ensure smooth and harmonious business operations is called corporate social responsibility (Amit, Gayatril, Vipul and Shraddha, 2012). Nationally and globally, there is an enhanced need for corporate managers to build new relationships between their business organisations and the physical environment of their enterprises as a means of mitigating the impact of the negative effects of their businesses on the environment (Bhattacharya, Korschun, and Sen, 2009). The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of corporate social responsibility on the performance of organizations. The paper will rely much on the documentary method of research.

Review of Concepts and Related Literature

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility is being used to establish good rapport with the public according to Nolan, Norton and Co (2009). It is a pre-emptive strategy used by corporations to save their skin from unforeseen risks and corporate scandals, possible environmental accidents, governmental rules and regulations, protect eye-catching profits, brand differentiation, and better relationship with employees. Corporations today now consciously publish their corporate social responsibility activities on their websites. They also publish sustainability reports and their advertising campaigns in order to get the sympathy of the customer

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(Nolan, Norton and Co 2009).

Corporate social responsibility is practised because customers as well as governments today are demanding more ethical behaviors from organizations. In response, corporations are volunteering themselves to incorporate corporate social responsibility as part of their business strategies, mission statement and values in multiple domains, respecting labor and environmental laws, while taking care of the contradictory interest of various stake holders (Kashyap 2006). Another justification in favor of corporate social responsibility actions by the leading corporations today is to gain competitive advantage which may not be enjoyed by the peer corporations. Corporate social responsibility actions in this respect also help corporations to attract and retain not only customers but also motivated employees, which in turn ensure long-term survival of the corporation.

Madu (2000) argued that it is the intelligent and objective concern for the welfare of the society which restrains individual and corporate behaviour from ultimate destructive activities, no matter how immediately profitable, and which leads in the direction of positive contribution to human betterment. Mgbemena (2006) noted that corporate social responsibility of business can be seen in terms of business acting in a way of being responsive to the entire social environment in which it operates. It is an attempt by a business organization to compensate as well as live up to its obligations to those who have helped it in one way or the other. Ndubisi and Ubanagu (2004) defined corporate social responsibility as the accountability for the activities through which an organization can contribute to the society's wellbeing. It means the acceptance of an obligation for proper functioning of the environment in which the organization operates. Corporate social responsibility has to do with an organization going out of his way to initiate actions that will impact positively on its host community, its environment and the people generally. It can be seen as a way of acknowledging the fact that some business fallouts have adverse effects on the citizens and society and making efforts to ensure that such negative impact are corrected.
Dirk and Jeremy (2004) believe that corporate social responsibility

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means that a corporation should be held accountable for any of its actions that affect people, communities, and its environment. It implies that negative business impacts on people and society should be acknowledged and corrected, if possible.

Macmillan (2005) sees corporate social responsibility as a term describing a company's obligation to be accountable to all its stakeholders in all its operations and activities. Socially responsible companies will consider the full scope of their impact on communities and the environment when making decisions, balancing the need of stakeholders with their need to make a profit. "Corporate social responsibility is concerned with treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a socially responsible manner. Since stakeholders exist both within a firm and outside a firm, hence, behaving socially and responsibly will increase the human development of stakeholders both within and outside the corporation" (Clarkson, 1995).

Carrol (2003) defines corporate social responsibility, corporate responsibility, corporate citizenship, responsible business, sustainable responsible business or corporate social performance as a sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates. Companies express this citizenship through their waste and pollution reduction processes, by contributing educational and social programs, and by earning adequate returns on the employed resources. The triple bottom line approach to CSR emphasizes a company's commitment to operating in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner. The emerging concept of CSR advocates moving away from a 'shareholder alone' focus to a 'multi-stakeholder' focus. This would include investors, employees, business partners, customers, regulators, supply chain, local communities, the environment and society at large.

Organizational Performance

Organisation performance has been the most important issues for every organisation be it profit or non-profit one. It has been very important for managers to know which factors influence an organisation's performance in order for them to take appropriate

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steps to initiate them. However, defining, conceptualising and measuring performance have not been easy task. Researchers among themselves have different opinions and definitions of performance, which remains to be a contentious issue among organisational researchers (Barney, 2008).

Organizational performance as a concept suffers from problems of conceptual clarifications. The term performance is often used indiscriminately to describe everything from efficiency, effectiveness to improvement. McCloy, Campbell and Cudeck (1994) ascertain that performance has to do with those behaviours or actions which are regarded relevant to those goals of the organization in question. They further argued that performance itself cannot be said to be the outcome itself, consequences or the result of behaviors or action but rather performance can be said to be the action itself. Thus they argued that performance tends to be multidimensional, a situation whereby for any specific-type of job, there tends to be a number of substantive performance components that are distinguished in terms of their inter correlations and patterns on co-variation with other variables. However, there is no one definition of organizational performance. The primary reason for this is that researches from different fields of study such as psychology, human resource management, public administration and organizational behaviour have dealt with the concept based on their field of study. Hence, it is no surprise that the literature accommodates a variety of different definitions related to organizational performance.

Organizational performance is an important construct in leadership that determines how to manage organizations. Previous literature reviews reveal that organizational performance is a multidimensional concept that reflects the heterogeneous nature, circumstances and objectives of organizations at a given period. This compelled Kirby (2005) to comment that the .definition and meaning of organizational performance is an open subject for further inquiry.

Lebans and Euske (2006) say that defining organizational performance requires sound judgment and interpretation of how current actions will affect future results. The writers also contend

that depending on the background of the assessor, performance may be understood indifferent ways. Corvellec (1995) maintained that the concept of performance is relative to period, organizational goals and type of instruments used to measure performance.

In spite of the difficulty in defining the concept of organizational performance and identifying the accompanying measurement parameters, Lebans and Euske (2006) mentioned that performance of establishments and businesses is made up of economic and non-economic factors. Similarly, Choi and Mueller (1992) considered financial and non-financial indices as the composite variables for evaluating organizational performance. In a landmark research, Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) concluded that business, financial and organizational effectiveness are important elements for assessing organizational performance. Researches and scholars have acknowledged the importance of fiscal and non-fiscal factors in assessing the operations of organizations.

According to Daft (2000), organizational performance is defined as an organization's ability to attain its goals by using resources in an efficient and effective manner. Consequently, it is an evidence of the output of members of an organization measured in terms of revenue, profit, growth, development and expansion of the organization. In the same vein, organizational performance refers to the ability of an enterprise to achieve such objectives as high profit, quality product, large market share, good financial results, and survival at pre-determined time using relevant strategy for action (Koontz and Donnell, 1993). Organizational performance can be used to view how an enterprise is doing in terms of level of profit, market share and product quality in relation to other enterprises in the same industry. Accordingly, it is a reflection of productivity of members of an enterprise measured in terms of revenue, profit, growth, development and expansion of the organization (Kehinde, Jegede, and Akinlabi, 2012).

The Study's Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on the theory of the Kohlberg's Model of Cognitive Moral Development. The Model of Cognitive Moral

Development proposed by Kohlberg (1969) focuses on the aspect of cognition during the process of making ethical-oriented decisions within a firm. It is a tried and tested instrument applicable in examining inquiries concerning how firms deal with concerns and decisions related to ethics, primarily pointing towards the things that are ethical or unethical. In that regard, this model can be utilized in the study for determining whether the employee's perception of the value of ethics is dependent on the employee's age, position, and gender. Furthermore, if there is indeed a relationship, the framework can help determine the degree of ethics as it varies among different age groups, genders, and job positions held. This model has been chosen by the researcher as it focuses on the cognitive aspect of making decisions based on the perception on ethics, while addressing the complexity and the sophistication of each situation. In that light, this framework would delve closely on the underlying reasons that people utilize in the justification of an ethical decision, as opposed to the choice taken or the results (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985).

It is important to note that one's moral judgement exhibits one's evaluation based on what is perceived as what is right or wrong. Judging moral inhibitions is based on value, which involves the stakeholders involved, as well as concerned with the consideration of responsibilities and rights. The chosen model's validity relies on the correlation between people's capacity to make ethical decisions and their behaviour (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985).

Elements of Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility consists of transparent business practices that are based on ethical values, compliance with legal requirements and respect for people, communities and the environment (Chandler, 2001). Contemporarily, CSR is a concept whereby business organisations consider the interest of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities and other shareholders as well as the environment (Bhattacharya, Korschun, and Sen, 2009). Because CSR is practised by corporate bodies, it is imperative to evaluate its contributions to the attainment of

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organizational effectiveness.

Cierna (2015) maintained that corporate social responsibility allows companies to show that they acknowledge their part in the state and and in the functionality of a society. Based on the basic concept of corporate social responsibility, companies enlarge their traditional economic goals by adding goals that focus on environmental, social and ethical issues. As explained by Fernando (2022), "The key idea behind CSR is for corporations to pursue other pro-social objectives, in addition to maximizing profits. Examples of common CSR objectives include minimizing environmental externalities, promoting volunteerism among company employees, and donating to charity." He goes further to clarify that CSR should be incorporated into all aspects of a company's operations:

> Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public. By practicing corporate social responsibility, also called corporate citizenship, companies can be conscious of the kind of impact they are having on all aspects of society, including economic, social, and environmental.
>
> To engage in CSR means that, in the ordinary course of business, a company is operating in ways that enhance society and the environment instead of contributing negatively to them (Fernando 2022).

The process of corporate social responsibility tries to identify what it means for a corporation to be ethical and to understand and report productivity in in terms of its inbuilt ethical framework (Cierna, 2015). Most companies today, particularly large ones, have in place some sort of formal or systematic mechanisms designed to promote communal understanding and goodwill towards the business establishment and its products and services. These efforts, known as corporate ethics programs, are designed to create organizational cultures that both make people sensitive to potentially unethical behavior and discourage them from engaging in them. Omeje (2006) lays emphasis on what contributions organisations can make to reduce the effect of environmental degradation and to minimize racial or social discrimination. In striving to satisfy its corporate goals and achieve its objectives the organization cannot operate in isolation from its environment. The

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performance of corporate social responsibility is not undertaken to boost profit in the short run but to meet some social needs and aspirations in order to secure the company's profit in the long run. Organisations who hold this view of corporate social responsibility believe that once they do what is expected of them by law and are friendly towards their host communities, their future business stability and long-term interests are guaranteed.

In today's competitive world, companies and organisations have realized that maximizing profits at any cost is no longer the most beneficial way to operate their business or to maintain and improve their competitive advantage (Welford, 1998). Supported by the instrumental stakeholder theory, which says that "companies with superior social performance tend to perform better financially than their competitors" (Jones, 1995), a greater percentage of companies believe the development of a corporate social responsibility strategy can deliver real business benefits.

Waddock (2004) has noted that many firms and organizations are faced with increasing pressure for corporate accountability from their stakeholders (managers, employees, customer, government, shareholders). In the light of this, Baruch (2013) and Andabai (2010) have observed that every company or organization focusing mainly on profit making should also be ready to include environmental issues, social issues, adherence to corporate governance rules, shareholders' value, competitive advantage, financial crisis, the firm's long-term value and capital/structure factors that affect the performance of the organization. Other problems are spillages, pollutions, degradation, and essential needs/demands of their host communities. Ikuli (2006) opined that if these societal problems are not met, the outcome will be social crises. Nwanna (2008) points out the social impacts of such crises may include used-up resources and inability to secure raw materials, all of which will frustrate management's efforts.

While several empirical evidence has supported this proposition, critics of the same have shown that corporate social responsibility is a business cost and hence its development reduces business overall profitability levels. While supporting development in corporate social responsibility, Baron (2001), Ortlitzki, Chmidt

and Rynes (2003), Bagnoli and Watts (2003), Lev, Petrovits, and Radhakrishnan (2008), Mutasim and Salah (2012), Amole, Adebiyi, and Awolaja (2012) have shown that socially responsible firms are focused not only on increasing current profits but also on fostering future relationships with stakeholders. However, critics of the same argue that trying to satisfy the conflicting objectives of different stakeholders might result in inefficient use of resources and eventual deterioration of financial performance, and that the costs incurred from socially responsible actions may put firms at an economic disadvantage (Aupperle, Carroll (1985); Ullmann (1985); Barnea and Rubin (2005); Lopez, Garcia and Rodriguez (2007); and Babalola (2013)).

Despite those conflicting views, on whether an organization should involve itself in corporate social responsibility or not, further evidence shows it is not possible to determine the relation between corporate social responsibility and organizational performance objectively (McWilliams and Siegel, (2000); Mittal, Sinha, and Singh, (2008); Iqbal, Ahmad, Basheer, and Nadeem, (2012)). This is because there are so many intervening variables between corporate social responsibility and corporate performance that are hard to control. This paper tries to evaluate corporate social responsibility activities on organizational performance.

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. That environmental issue has a significant effect on organizations performance in Nigeria.

2. Social initiatives competitive advantage has significant effect on organizational performance in Nigeria.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The following recommendations would result in a movement towards a greater acknowledgment of corporate social responsibility which could lead to increased organizational performance in Nigeria.

1. Since environmental issues have significant effect on

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organizational performance, government as part of their responsibility should put in place policies that will create a good business environment for firms operating in the country.

2. Organizations should engage in corporate social responsibility policies and strategies not only to improve their performance but also to strengthen their legitimacy and long-term business interests.

The aim of this study was to empirically examine the effect of corporate social responsibility on organizational performance in Nigeria. In pursuing this aim, the study obtained data on variables which were believed to have relationship with corporate social responsibility and organizational performance. These variables included environmental issue, cost structure/capital, competitive advantage and shareholders' values. From the analysis it was discovered that environmental issue has significant effect on organizations performance in South –South zone of Nigeria. Most manufacturing firms in the south-south are performing under the pressure of environmental issues. The study also found out that cost structure/capital extracts significant effect on organizational performance, which means that cost structure/capital affect corporate social responsibility which in turn reduces organizational performance in manufacturing firms in the south-south zone. The study also observed that generally there is a significant relationship between competitive advantage and organizational performance vis-à-vis corporate social responsibility.

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