Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Reputation: A Study of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study focused on corporate social responsibility and corporate reputation of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to; ascertain the effect of corporate social responsibility on corporate reputation and find out the relationship between corporate social responsibility of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd and their financial performance. The researcher adopted survey research design; primary and secondary data were used. The study population consisted of all the employees of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd in Port Harcourt. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression were used to analyse the objectives of the study with the aid of SPSS Version 20. The major findings revealed that; corporate social responsibility has a strong positive effect on corporate reputation, and corporate social responsibility executed by Dufil Prima Foods Ltd to their major stakeholders was significant and positively related to the financial performance of the organisation. Corporate social responsibility positively impacts on corporate reputation and recommends that organisations should not relegate their corporate social responsibilities because the accrued benefits are greater than the financial involvement.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Reputation, Dufil Prima Foods Ltd.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become the buzz word in recent years. CSR activities are no longer considered as charitable events, but a tool for boosting the positive image of the company, as well as ensuring employee and customer satisfaction. Studies are being conducted to explore the potential benefits of CSR across the globe and across disciplines. Increasingly corporations are committing generous financial resources to doing good CSR. They envisage that this would strengthen their relationship with all their stakeholders particularly; customers, employees, investors, government and the host community. Islam, (2012) confirmed that the concept of business has changed from profit making activities to social welfare activities where businesses are not only responsible to its shareholders but also to all of its stakeholders. Brammer and Pavellin, (2006) posit that CSR has been considered as a source of sustainable development and has become an emerging imperative. In congruence with this view, Edwards (2005) opined that in order to achieve business objectives, business organisations should look at the environmental and social impacts of their business processes as well as their products. Porter and Kramer (2006) noted that businesses have become aware of the societies expectations, and are struggling to enhance their image as socially responsible institutions. They strive contribute solutions to major social, economic and environmental issues, while projecting their corporate reputation. In the same vein, corporate reputation is regarded as a valuable asset for business firms who have invested certain portion of their profit to develop and maintain a positive corporate reputation. The main reason of corporate commitment hinges on the assumption that proper management of corporate reputation appears to have a series of positive consequences such as the increase in cash flow and profits (Sheldon, 1992). Thus, examining corporate reputation is becoming more important today than ever. This is due to many factors such as: increased public awareness about corporate actions and issues, increased requirement for transparency, higher expectations by multiple stakeholder groups, word-of-mouth and online communication, customer's personal experience with a company's products and services, effect of the influence of opinion leaders, growth in interest groups and increased attention from media have all contributed to the importance of assessing and actively managing a company's reputation. Interestingly, Dufil Prima Foods Ltd, the manufacturers of indomie instant noodles understands the language of corporate social responsibility and the impact giving back to their host communities can have on their corporate reputation. Dufil Prima Foods Ltd has been touching the lives of people in various positive ways and are contributing to the development of the environment in which they operates. Few of their notable corporate social responsibilities includes: donation of quality laboratory equipment for secondary schools, scholarship programme for Nigerian students studying Nutrition and Dietetics at postgraduate degree level, Indomie Independence Day Award, designing of school signposts among others. To that end, what has been the effect of these corporate social responsibilities on their organisation's reputation and performance? Against this backdrop the study: Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Reputation: A Study of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd Port Harcourt, Nigeria was initiated. Specifically, the study sought:

i. To determine the effect of the corporate social responsibility of Dufil Prima Foods Ltdon their corporate reputation.
ii. To describe the relationship between the corporate social responsibility of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd and their financial performance.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an ongoing commitment by business organizations to play their role in economic development of the society, improving quality of life of workforce and their families as well as the society and community at large (Holme and Watts, 2000). Nicolau (2008) defined socially responsible companies as those which in profit-making operational decisions, considers the full scope of environmental impact and balances the needs of stakeholders. McWilliams and Siegel (2000) defined CSR as an emerging social action beyond company interests. Carroll and Bocholt, (2003) viewed CSR as economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time. While, Ruggie (2002) looked at CSR as a strategy for demonstrating good faith, social legitimacy, and a commitment that goes beyond the financial bottom line. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a set of activities that should be practiced by organizations in order to cope with social and environmental problems. Corporate social responsibility is a practice that should be included as a part of the strategic preferences at the base of business organization and should be aligned with all aspects of organization's management including human resource, marketing, production, financial and more specifically the strategies of business Majid Khan *et al.*, (2013). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) generally refers to transparent business practices that are based on ethical values, compliance with legal requirements, and respect for people, communities, and the environment. Thus, beyond making profits, companies are responsible for the totality of their impact on people and the planet. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is defined as "the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to the economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large" (Holme and Watts, 2000).

Concept of Organisational Reputation

Reputation is an important means by which companies can maintain a sustainable competitive advantage and endure a long term relationship with multiple stakeholder groups (Boyd *et al.*, 2010). An organization's reputation is a reflection of how it is regarded by its multiple stakeholders. Its reputational stance can help the organization obtain trust and credibility in society, which will assist in the achievement of its objectives and goals (Baur and Schmitz, 2011, Roper and Fill, 2012). Saxton, (1998), sees corporate reputation as a reflection of stakeholder's views about an organisation over time. Gotsi and Wilson, (2001) views corporate reputation as a stakeholder's overall evaluation of a company over time. Balmer (2001) define corporate reputation as lasting perception held of an organization by an individual, group or network that forms a collective system of beliefs and opinions that influences people's actions with regards to an organization. Corporate reputation is often seen as a "general view of the company" (Bick, *et al.*, 2003). It is seen as a comprehensive concept that comprises all aspects of corporate marketing including: corporate image, corporate identity, corporate branding, corporate personality, corporate associations and corporate communications. It is the integration of all these concepts together that makes up corporate reputation. Corporate reputation is sometimes viewed as the external stakeholders' perceptions about an organization (Davies and Miles 1998; Hatch and Schultz 1997). It refers to the associations that external constituencies have about an organization. It asks the question "What do stakeholders actually think of the organization?" (Brown *et al.*, 2006).

Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Reputation

The concept of corporate social responsibility became popular in 1950s when Bowen (1953) instigated the business people to contribute towards community development all around their corporate policies. Followed by Manne (1972); Drucker (1974); Carson (1977), numerous business schools, labour leaders, consumer advocators and environmental activists, who strongly supported the conception of social accountability. The notion of social accountability holds those corporations are minting money from the society using natural resources which are scarce and diminishing; moreover mass production of corporations is also damaging environment and eco system. Therefore the corporations must pay back to the community and address the issue of environmental degradation and heal concerns of the society.

In 1990s, socially responsible interventions of corporations displayed much larger role than actually predicted by people. Corporations undertook broader social responsibilities including business ethics, labour practices, and responsibility to community at large and reducing environmental harms of their mass productions and other social actions they believed when shaping an image of companies in the society. This emphasizes the significance of the 'softer' image of corporate reputation. With the passage of time societal expectations of companies have increased of community welfare. Globally, customers suppose companies to be responsible for different actions, ranging from ensuring quality in products at the cheaper prices, to environmental protection, to treating employees fairly; to helping solve social and economic issues faced by the community. With expectations for corporate responsibility rising, the adoption of CSR as a business is becoming more inevitable, (Imran, 2011).

According to Fombrun, (1996) business organizations strive to develop positive reputation by projecting and creating a set of skills which is recognized as unique by their stakeholders, through operational excellence, innovation and close relationships with consumers. Corporate reputation contains attributes that distinguish one business from other *i.e.*, good or bad. According to Jones (1995) corporate reputation reflects an organization's morality and therefore is a reliable indicator of tendency towards opportunism, such that a reputation for trustworthiness is actually a reputation for not being opportunistic. Dowling, (2004) argued that good reputation builds confidence and trust whereas bad reputation do not. Most of the business organizations are driven by corporate reputation because this directly or indirectly sells their products to the public. According to Reich (1998) any indefinite thing that maculates an organization's image can resultantly drop its sales. Reputation is very important for the success of business organizations and a valuable asset to have particularly in today's competitive marketplace (Roberts, *et al.*, 2002; Martin, 2009). According to the resource based theory of the organization, corporate reputation is an important resource which leads to competitive advantage indicating different stakeholders about the attractiveness of the organization (Deephouse, 2000).

According to Brammer and Millington (2005) there is a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility and reputation of an organization. Roberts (2003) argued that good image increases the value to how an organization acts and states. Similarly a bad image depreciates the value of products and services of an organization, which can be used as signals to draw further contempt. In large organizations particularly in consumer sector there is a tendency to depend much upon corporate image and brand name for long term success (Murray, 2003). Business organizations with good reputation are also good at sustaining huge profits over the period (Roberts and Dowling, 2002). According to Whooley (2005) there is not anything flossy regarding the significance of reputation. Reputation will enhance profitability and long run survival of the business if it is used appropriately.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Organisational Financial Performance

Several studies have tried to explain the relationship between CSR and financial performance of firm. Among the list, Mittal *et al*., (2008) investigated the relationship between CSR and organizational profitability in terms of economic value added (EVA) and market value added (MVA). The authors found that there exists a positive relationship between CSR and company's reputation and that there is little evidence that companies with a code of ethics would generate significantly more economic value added (EVA) and market value added (MVA) than those without codes. Also Hossein, *et al.*, (2012) examined the link between CSR and economic performance by examining different impacts of positive and negative CSR activities on financial performance of hotel, restaurant and airline companies, theoretically based on positivity and negativity effects. Findings suggest mixed results across different industries contributing to companies' appropriate strategic decision-making for CSR activities by providing more precise information regarding the impacts of each directional CSR activity on financial performance.

Similarly Emilson, (2012) researched into the correlation between CSR and profitability using economic value added (EVA). The study shows a low positive correlation between profitability and CSR. But previous research and the practical examples from the selected companies show a strong positive correlation between CSR and profitability. In the same vein, Skare and Golja (2012) investigated the relationship between CSR and financial performance. The authors confirmed that CSR firms in the average enjoy better financial performance that non-CSR firms.

Theoretical Review

The study review three theories of corporate social responsibility namely: the Stakeholder's Theory, the Iron Law of Social Responsibility, and Relational Theory.

i. Stakeholder's Theory

Stakeholder's theory is a theory of organisational management and business ethics that addresses morals and values in managing an organisation. The stakeholder theory of CSR is based on the assumption that organisations, whether private or public, have obligations to several groups that make up the society. These constituents are referred to as stakeholders-individuals and groups that are critical to the existence of the organisation; they influence what the organisation does or they are being influenced by organisational actions (Asemah, *et al.,* 2013). As an integral part of the normative CSR theories, the stakeholder theory stipulates that management has a moral duty to protect not only the corporation, but also the legitimate interest of all stakeholders. Thus, all stakeholders' interests must be maximised at all times. In this way, when an organization invests in the society, it is expected to reap this in form of improved reputation and understanding when things go wrong; and to equally maximise even the profit motive of the owners in the process (Asemah, *et al,* 2013). The theory is relevant to the study because it explains the constituent groups that an organisation should be responsible to; thus, organisations that are socially responsible to the constituent groups will win their goodwill and this will in turn impact on the operations of the organisation positively.

ii. Iron Law of Social Responsibility Theory

The Iron law of social responsibility says that in the long run, those organisations that do not use power in ways that society considers responsible will tend to lose it. Organisations are tied to the environment based on the Iron law of social responsibility. Thus, organisations must be socially responsible to the communities where they operate. This theory is also relevant to the study because it lays emphasis on organisations being socially responsible in their operations so that they will be able to win the goodwill of stakeholders.

iii. Relational Theory

Relational theory has a root from the complex firm-environment relationships. As the term implies, interrelations between the two are the focus of the analysis of CSR. Relational theory is further divided into four sub-groups of theories:

a) Business and Society;
b) Stakeholder Approach;
c) Corporate Citizenship;
d) Social Contract.

Business and society is proposed to mean 'business in society' in which CSR emerges as a matter of interaction between the two entities. One of the measures of CSR is the development of economic values in a society. Another is a person's obligation to consider the effects of his decision and action on the whole social system. Stated in the form of a general relationship, social responsibilities of businessmen need to reflect the amount of social power they have. Stakeholder approach has been developed as one of the strategies in improving the management of the firm. It is also said as a way to understand reality in order to manage the socially responsible behavior of a firm. The stakeholder approach further considers a firm as an interconnected web of different interests where self-creation and community creation happen interdependently; and individuals behave altruistically.

Based on Garriga and Mele's (2004) analysis, stakeholder approach is both within the integrative and ethical theories, where the former emphasizes the integration of social demands and the latter focuses on the right thing to achieve a good society. These are supported by the work of Mitchel, Agle and Wood (1997) where balances among the interests of the stakeholders are the emphases; and the work of Freeman and Phillips (2002) that considers fiduciary duties towards stakeholders of the firms, respectively. Corporate citizenship of the relational theory strongly depends on the type of community to which it is referred. It is a path that a corporation may take to behave responsibly. Fundamentally, it is about the relationship that a corporation develops with its stakeholders, and therefore, the former has to continuously search for engagement and commitment with the latter. Corporate citizenship based on Garriga and Mele's (2004) analysis is an approach used under the integrative and political theories and this is supported by Swanson (1995) and Wood and Lodgson (2002), respectively.

Finally, the social contract theory of the relational group refers to the fundamental issue of justifying the morality of economic activities in order to have a theoretical basis for analyzing social relations between corporation and society. Hence, CSR is derived from the moral legitimacy the corporation achieves in the society and understanding about CSR is contained in the justification of social actions that legitimize the behaviour of the corporation. Garriga and Mele's (2004) analysis puts the social contract theory under the group of ethical theories, the approaches of which include universal rights (UN Global Compact, 1999) and sustainable development (WCED, 1987; Korhonen, 2003). Both approaches of CSR are based on human rights, labour rights and respect for the environment.

With the review of these theories, the researcher adopted Stakeholder Theory as the leading theory of the study. Stakeholder Theory was adopted because the central thesis of the theory are incongruence with the position espouse by the researcher. Stakeholder Theory is based on the assumption that organisations have obligations to several groups that make up the society. Stakeholder theory stipulates that management has a moral duty to protect not only the corporation, but also the legitimate interest of all stakeholders. Thus, all stakeholders' interests must be maximised at all times. In this way, when an organization invests in the society, it is expected to reap this in form of improved reputation and understanding when things go wrong; and to equally maximise even the profit motive of the owners in the process (Asemah, *et al*, 2013). Based on these ideas espouse by Stakeholder Theory, if the management of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd integrates the theory into their corporate social responsibility policy, it will enable the organisation to create and maintain favourable corporate reputation that will increase their market share profitably. Thus, the study analysis results were discussed adopting this view.

Empirical Review

Imran (2011), examines the influence of CSR on the development of corporate reputation and purchase intentions in the cellular industry of Pakistan. The data was collected from the respondents regarding their perceptions about CSR actions and its influence on their reputation and customer purchase intentions. Structural equation modeling technique is used to analyze data and test hypotheses. The study found significantly positive influence of CSR on building corporate reputation of doing good and developing customer purchase intentions.

Liliana and Ștefan (2006), worked on corporate social responsibility and corporate performance: empirical evidence from a panel of the Bucharest stock exchange listed companies" aimed at empirically investigating the relationship between CSR and corporate performance by using both accounting-based performance measures (e.g. ROA, ROE, and ROS), as well as market-based firm performance measures (e.g. PER, EPS, and PBV), for a sample of companies listed on the BSE during the period 2008-2011. In addition, there were considered several control variables that cover firm's characteristics including size, indebtedness, as well as the company's tenure. By employing panel data regression models without cross-section effects, we found a negative relationship between CSR and ROS, as well as a positive association between CSR and EPS. Furthermore, by estimating fixed-effects panel data regression models, the positive relationship between CSR and EPS was reinforced. In addition, they performed several robustness checks such as the presence of autocorrelation in the residuals, as well as the variance inflation factors towards multicollinearity. The novelty of their study was consideration of a multifarious set of performance ratios.

Ezekiel (2013) embarked on an examination of the business advantages of corporate social responsibility practice. It discovered that several benefits abound to organisations that practice corporate social responsibility; several advantages were identified; these among others include: enhanced brand and reputation, reduction in operation costs, attracting new customers, balances power with responsibility, discourages government regulation, improves a company's public image, promotes long run profit, improved relations with the investment community and better access to capital, enhanced employee relations, productivity and innovation and stronger relations within communities through stakeholder engagement. The study concluded that organisations that carry out corporate social responsibility activities have a lot to benefit, and recommends that organisations should endeavour to pay due attention to corporate social responsibility and this practice should be a continuous one.

Tuongdung (2011) in the study; "impact of corporate social responsibility programs on a company's image and reputation: a case study" presented some empirical evidence that aims to answer the following question: does CSR practice influence a company's image and reputation? Questionnaires were used and personal interviews conducted to survey 400 stakeholders of the case company – Siam Cement Group (SCG) Thailand, considered a CSR pioneer in the CSR movement. The author reports that CSR programs, which pertain to economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic concerns, have been found to have a low to medium influence on SCG's image and reputation. The researcher concluded that because of its prominent practice, SCG has built a good corporate image and reputation in the community, and recommends that SCG should further integrate CSR programs into its business strategies, broaden its CSR network to its various stakeholders, put more emphasis on environmental issues, and employ an efficient measurement mechanism for evaluating the impacts and benefits of its CSR programs.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Dufil Prima Foods Ltd Port Harcourt. Survey research design was adopted in carrying out the research. Survey research design makes use of questionnaire and oral interview as it tools, which was adopted by the researcher in eliciting information from the respondents. Primary and secondary data were used, primary data was elicited through well-structured questionnaires of closed ended type designed in 5 point Likert Scale (SA= Strongly Agreed, A= Agreed, N= Neutral, D= Disagreed and SD= Strongly Disagreed). The close ended questionnaire was administrated to the employees of the organisation including their management staff, oral interview with pre-determined questions was also used in eliciting information from the respondents. Secondary data were obtained through; textbooks, journals, magazines, brochures, internet materials and other relevant documents. Population of the study consist of all the employees of the organisation in Port Harcourt, which was about **two hundred and fourteen (214) employees**, according to the personnel department of the organisation as at February 2017 when the survey was done. Based on this population, a normal confidence level of 95% and error tolerance of 5% was used to deduce the actual sample size of the study using Taro Yamane's formula. One hundred and forty three (143) respondents were computed as the sample size of the study and equal number of questionnaire was randomly distributed to the employees in organisation. Content validity was used to validate the research instrument, while Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the research instrument and the result obtained was 0.874, signifying that the research instrument were reliable. Data collected from field work was analysed using: Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression. One hundred and twenty five (125) questionnaires were completed and returned which form the basis for the data analysis.

4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis result of the relationship between the CSR activities of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd Industry on their corporate reputation.

Table 1: Relationship between CSR and Corporate reputation

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	p- value
Corporate Social Responsibility	0.899	0.002**
N	**125**	

Source: Field Survey 2017
** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The correlation result in **Table 1**, indicates that the corporate social responsibility activities of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd Industry have a strong and positive effect on their corporate reputation with correlation coefficient of (r) 0.899.

Table 2: Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd and their financial performance

Variables	Linear	Exponential	Semi Log	Double Log
Constant	-464.314	-483.132	4.002	4.002
	(0.002)***	(0.003)***	(0.000)***	(0.000)***
Customers	192.856	471.172	0.979	0.413
	(0.001)***	(0.006)***	(0.016)***	(0.005)***
Employees	2.086	57.728	0.136	0.005
	(0.000)***	(0.001)***	(0.001)***	(0.001)***
Host Communities	137.302	326.026	0.814	0.347
	(0.000)***	(0.000)***	(0.000)***	(0.000)***
Suppliers	0.275	3.797	0.003	0.000
	(0.616)	(0.820)	(0.937)	(0.726)
R^2	65.3	66	65.5	64
R	64.2	64.9	64.3	62.8
F	56.514	58.266	56.893	53.296

Source: Field Survey 2017
*** = Significant at 1% level.

The Result in **Table 2**, showed the relationship between corporate social responsibility of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd and their financial performance. The Exponential functional form is the lead equation, because Exponential has the best good fit in the model among the other equations. The corporate social responsibility executed by the organisation to their customers, employees, and host communities respectively was significant and positively related to the financial performance of Dufil Prima Food Ltd at 1% level. The result portrayed that there is a positive and significant relationship between corporate social responsibilities embarked by the organisation to their major stakeholders (customers, employees, and host communities) and the financial performance of the organisation. The coefficient of determinant (**R^2**) was 66. This implies that according to the model, 66% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables.

Discussion of Findings

This study established that corporate social responsibility of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd have a strong positive effect on their corporate reputation. Our findings signify that there is a correlation between the corporate social responsibility activities performed by organisations and their corporate reputation. This implies that the more often the organisation embarks on corporate social responsibility the more their corporate reputation soars. This assertion is in concordance with the findings of a study by McWilliams and Siegel, (2000), which opined that a corporate social responsibility initiative positively contributes to the reputational advantages of a company, and enriches its brand value. Similarly, Park *et al.* (2014) also found that the firm's accomplishment of economic and legal corporate social responsibility initiatives showed a direct positive influence on corporate reputation. According to Brammer and Millington (2005) there is a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility and reputation of an organisation. Also, Curran, (2005) and Wang, (2008) also found that there is a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility activities and corporate reputation.

Furthermore, we found that corporate social responsibility activities executed by the Dufil Prima Foods Ltd to their customers, employees, and host communities was significantly and positively related to the financial performance of the organisation. On the basis of this finding, we posit that an increase in corporate social responsibilities embarked on by organisations and targeted towards their major stakeholders (customers, employees, and host communities) will lead to an increase to the financial performance of the organization. This position is in tandem with the Stakeholder Theory which posits that when an organisation invests in the society, it is expected to reap this in form of improved reputation and understanding when things go wrong; and equally maximise the profit motive of the owners in the process. The findings also agree with the position of Mittal *et al*., (2008), who posited that a significant relationship exists between corporate social responsibility and organisational profitability. Also, the study of Emilson, (2012) revealed a positive correlation between corporate social responsibility and profitability. Skare and Golja (2012) confirmed that CSR compliant firms on the average enjoy better financial performance that non-CSR firms, while Rapti and Medda, (2012) maintained that the main force that drives companies to adopt corporate social responsibility is CSR's financial benefits**.**

5. CONCLUSION

Corporate social responsibility positively impacts on corporate reputation and financial performance of organisations. Therefore, Dufil Prima Foods Ltd Industry and other organisations should not relegate their corporate social responsibilities because the accrued benefits are greater than the financial involvement. Hence organisations should always look for opportunities to reinvest part of their profit to the society they operate to protect and improve the welfare of society. This will enhance their corporate reputation and contribute significantly towards maximizing their profitability.

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