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**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (UIJBA)**

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
OSUN STATE UNIVERSITY, OSOGBO.
OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

VOL. 2 No. 2

**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND MAXIMISATION OF
CONSUMERS' BENEFITS: EVIDENCE FROM NIGERIAN
MANUFACTURING COMPANIES**

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and maximisation of consumers' benefits from Nigerian manufacturing companies. The paper focused on the extent to which CSR is being practiced by selected Nigeria companies and the resultant effect on consumers' benefits. Five manufacturing companies in the Food and Beverages line were selected using purposive sampling method because of their contributions to economic development of Nigeria while the respondents were selected through purposive sampling technique. Survey research design was used in carrying out the study. Primary data as used in the study. Data were collected through the administration of questionnaire and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant levels. The results revealed that the coefficient of CSR in the estimated regression line shows .884 which implies that 88.4% significant relationship exists between the CSR and quality products of selected companies. The overall regression model is statistically significant in terms of its goodness of fit ($F= 275.783, p < 0.05$). The coefficient of CSR in the estimated regression line shows .840 which implies that 84.0% significant relationship exists between CSR and consumers' health and safety. The overall regression model is statistically significant in terms of its goodness of fit ($F=184.336, p < 0.05$). The study concluded that CRS contributes to the maximization of consumers' benefits. The study recommended that top management should be abreast of the effect of their organisations on the stakeholders especially the consumers and be committed to any social activity it wants to embark upon and allow the members of the public to associate such an activity or activities with it.

Key Words: Corporate social responsibility, business organisations, stakeholders, consumers, Nigeria.

Introduction

A firm cannot exist in isolation from the society in which it operates. Firm produces goods and services for the society through the transformation of acquired inputs (raw materials, labour and other resources) from the society itself. Thus, no management can ignore the environment in which it operates, as the success or failure of firms may depend to a large extent on their interrelationship or otherwise on the society. There must be mutual or symbiotic relationship between the organisation and the environment for the organisation to survive and thrive. In fact, society's expectations from business have increased in recent years (D'Amato, Henderson, & Florence, 2009). Over the past several years, a growing number of companies have recognised the benefits of CSR policies and practices to business (Ojo, 2015). Their experiences are encouraged by a growing body of empirical studies that CSR has a positive impact on business financial performance and is not in any way detrimental to shareholders value. In addition, many organisations were also encouraged to adopt or expand CSR efforts due to the result of pressures from customers, suppliers, employees, communities, investors, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders. The role of business in society has placed more pressure on organisations to become more accountable to stakeholders (Aras & Crowther, 2009). As a result of this, stakeholders are demanding that business should function in a responsible way. As a result, CSR has grown dramatically in recent years with many companies, irrespective of their size and ownership structures, developing innovative CSR strategies. Thus, the focus of this research is to assess the relationship between the practice of CSR and maximization of consumers benefits in selected business organisations in Nigeria.

Although, there have been substantial researches in the area of CSR and maximisation of consumers benefits (Albareda, Lozano & Ysa, 2007; Campbell, 2007; Frame, 2005 & Frynas, 2005), only few of them have actually examined it in developing economies. Besides, a review of academic literature on the subject of CSR and consumers benefits reveals that there is a dearth of literature on it in the developing countries including Nigeria (Ojo, 2008; Ojo, 2015). This means that the relationship between CSR and consumers benefits has not received adequate research attention in Nigeria. That is the gap that this research tries to fill by examining (i) the relationship between CSR and provision of quality products for consumers and (ii) the relationship between CSR and consumers' health and safety.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

CSR as a concept has been described in a number of ways by different writers. Most of these descriptions are inescapably guided by educational background, exposure, interest, as well as values embodied in the writer's frame of reference (Ojo, 2008). CSR is defined in a numerous ways and *what is particular paradoxical is that large numbers of business people have enthusiastically embraced the concept of CSR during the past three decades, but only limited consensus has emerged about what CSR really means* (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2000). There is a general lack of a clear paradigm for CSR research, which means CSR is broad, diverse and has views from many disciplines, perspectives and ideologies.

The concept of social responsibility proposes that business organisations have responsibilities to society that extend beyond profit maximisation. There are as many definitions of CSR as there are writers, leaving the concept fuzzy (Henderson, 2001; Gobbels, 2002; van Marrewijk, 2003) and open to conflicting interpretations (Windsor, 2001). Despite this surge in definitions, Luttans and Hodget (1976) note that a classic discussion of social responsibility is the obligation of the businessmen to pursue these policies, to make decisions or to follow those lines of actions, which are desirable in terms of objectives and values of the society. In the words of Jones and George (2003), the term social responsibility refer to a manager's duty or obligation to make decisions that nurture, protect, enhance, and promote the welfare and well-being of stakeholders and society as a whole. The European Commission [EC] (2001) defines CSR as a concept whereby a company integrates social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis as they are increasingly aware that responsible behaviour leads to sustainable business success.

Theoretical Review

Over the years, numerous theories have been brought to bear on the subject of CSR. The researcher has identified the two major theories that best frame CSR and discuss the similarities and differences within and between theories that explain the existence of CSR.

The Shareholders' Theory

This theory is otherwise known as the classical economic view. Levitt (1958) could be credited with setting the agenda for the debate about the social responsibility of business in which he cautions that government's job is not business, and business job is not governance. Another advocate of the shareholder theory is economist Milton Friedman. According to Friedman (1962, 1970) the only responsibility of business organisation is to use its resources and engage in activities designed to maximise profit through open and free competition, and without deception and fraud. This position is based on the argument that business organisation is an economic institution whose legitimate function is economic performance and not social activity.

The major strength of this theory is the efficacy of this model for creating wealth, but its narrow view of the human being lacks any measure of social issues, and its atomistic version of society is questionable (Grant, 1991; Melé, 2008). The essence of this theory is that the purpose of corporations is to make profit for their shareholders. According to this perspective, companies are profit-oriented establishments and the only exclusive social responsibility of business is to make profits by using the companies' resources in legal activities. Profits are the reward to the people that take the risk investing the capital necessary to run the company. The other important aspect of this theory is that the managers have the task to use this capital in order to increase the company's profit and share values (Smith, 2003).

The Stakeholders' Theory

Stakeholder theory is used to understand CSR in a way to highlight the concerns of other stakeholders of the organisation from those of the shareholders whose concerns have been centrally focussed most of the time (Carroll, 1979). Unlike the shareholders' theory, the stakeholders' theory emphasises that organisations should not only be accountable to their shareholders but also balance the interests of their other stakeholders, who can influence or be influenced by organisational activities (van Marrewijk, 2003). The Stakeholders theory consider stakeholders rights and their legitimate interests, and links ethical theory to managerial theory (Melé, 2008), but it cannot provide a sufficient and specific objective function for the corporation, and is primarily concerned with the distribution of final outputs.

Clarkson (1995) categorises stakeholders into primary and secondary stakeholders; a primary stakeholder is one without whose continuing participation the corporation cannot survive as a going concern, and a secondary stakeholder is one whose influence or effect, or is influenced or affected by the corporation but they are not engaged in transactions with the corporation and is not essential for its survival (Clarkson, 1995).

Berman, Wicks, Kotha and Jones (1999) suggested that managerial relationships with stakeholders are based on normative and moral commitments rather than on a desire to maximise profits. In other words, management must give equal consideration to the interests of all stakeholders and, when these interests conflict, they must manage the business so as to attain the optimal balance among them, and that only this form of stakeholders' theory could be construed to imply that business has true social responsibilities. Since business organisations' activities impact a broad range of stakeholders, it should be responsible and accountable to all stakeholders, including shareholders (Gray, Owen & Adams, 1996; Berman et al., 1999). Although the broad concept of stakeholders' theory seems ideal, it is important to acknowledge that, given the diversity of stakeholders' expectations and interests, agreeing and responding to all stakeholders' concerns is close to impossible. Despite the various classifications of stakeholders and the challenges of acceding to their various needs, a broad or normative stakeholders' theory requires organisations to treat their stakeholders as ends with the implication that moral principles should drive stakeholder relations. Powerful stakeholders need to be managed by organisations, and be responded to when the legitimacy of the organisations is in doubt.

Melé (2008) has recently identified several strengths of Stakeholders' theory. First, the theory seems ethically superior to maximising shareholders value because it takes into consideration stakeholders rights and their legitimate interests, and not only what is strictly required by law in manager-stakeholders relations. Second, Stakeholders' theory has updated the theoretical imprecision of CSR by addressing concrete interests and practices and visualising specific responsibilities to specific groups of people affected by business activity (Clarkson, 1995; Melé, 2008). Besides, Melé (2008) pointed out that stakeholders' theory is a managerial theory that is related to the organisational goals and does not come within reach of business management. He further stated that the theory ensures long-term rather than short-term success. These

theories pinpoint the significance of CSR to customers.

Corporate Social Responsibility to the Consumers

According to Drucker (1982), business involves the creation of customers. He adds that the only one valid definition for the purpose of business is to create customers who are willing to pay for the goods and services produced by companies. Social responsibility to customers is an important component for CSR. No matter in what kind of industry, customers are the important reason for long-term survival of corporation. Lost customer, lost profit. If company's products or services satisfied customer, then the customer will form a preference to company product or service which establishes their loyalty and the company will operate well.

A number of studies have examined the relationship between CSR implementation and consumer buying behaviour, perception, satisfaction, and willingness to pay (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Lichtenstein, Drumwright & Braig, 2004). Specifically, the responsibilities which business owes to the customers include:

- (i) Respect the right of the customers.
- (ii) Provision of required goods and/or services at affordable prices.
- (iii) Manufacturing of goods that are not harmful to the health of the customers.
- (iv) Providing all required information by the customers in consumption of goods.
- (v) Ensure constant and prompt supply of goods and/or services that guarantee the satisfaction of the needs and wants of the customers.
- (vi) Prompt responses to the complaints of the customers.
- (vii) Avoid misleading advertisement to the customers.
- (viii) Labelling products clearly and unambiguously and avoiding the urge to misrepresent the products.
- (ix) Using fair, transparent and helpful marketing and contractual processes and promoting sustainable consumption

Methods

In this study, survey research design was adopted because the sampled elements and the variables that are being studied are simply being observed as they are without making any attempt to control or manipulate them (Ojo, 2003). This approach was chosen based on the purposes, the nature and the variables that were examined. The population of the study consists of the consumers of products of selected companies in Lagos state. Lagos state was chosen because of the concentration of myriads of companies in Lagos state. However, due to the large number of companies in Lagos state and for effective coverage and lower cost, purposive sampling technique was used to select five companies that are into food and beverages production. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a total of 100 consumers of these companies' products that constituted our sample size. Primary method of data collection was used in this study. The primary data consists of a number of items in structured questionnaire that was administered to the respondents. The decision to structure the questionnaire is predicated on the need to reduce variability in the meanings possessed by the questions as a way of ensuring comparability of responses. The questionnaire was titled "Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Maximisation of Consumers Benefits." However, only 79 out of 100 respondents

returned their questionnaire and were used for final analysis in this study. This shows a respondent rate of 79%. Data collected from the questionnaire were analysed, summarised, and interpreted accordingly and formulated hypotheses were tested with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is no significant relationship between corporate social responsibility and provision of quality products for consumers

The regression model showing the relationship between quality product and Corporate Social Responsibility.

$$CSR = f(QP)$$

$$CSR = b_0 + b_1QP + U_i$$

Where;

CSR = Corporate Social Responsibility

QP = Quality Products

U_i = Error term

Statistical Analysis Showing Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Provision of Quality Products

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.884 ^a	.782	.779	.454

a. Predictors: (Constant): Corporate Social Responsibility.

b. Dependent Variable: Provision of Quality Products.

Source: SPSS 20.0 Analysis Output, 2018.

From the model summary Table 1, the value of R is .884 which is the correlation between observed and predicted values of the dependent variables (quality products), the coefficient of determination (R-squared) values of .782 shows that the explanatory variables (corporate social responsibility) accounted for over 78.2% of corporate social responsibility in the organisation, while the remaining 21.8% of quality product is explained by other exogenous variables that are excluded in the model.

In the same vein, a perusal at the adjusted R-squared value of 0.779 indicates that after removing the effect of insignificant regression (explanatory variable), about 77.9% variation in quality products is still accounted for the independence variable (strategic planning). Concerning the Standard Error of the estimate whose value is 0.454 is the root

mean squared error. There is evidence of positive serial correlation

Table 2: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.504	.162	.869	9.264	.000
	Corporate Social Responsibility	.741	.045		16.607	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate Social Responsibility.

b. Dependent Variable: Provision of Quality Product.

Source: SPSS 20.0 Analysis Output, 2018.

Table 2 shows the assessment of the statistical significance of the result. The result revealed that the calculated t. statistics for the parameter estimates of CSR ($t = 16.607$). $P < 0.05$ is greater than tabulated t. statistics (1.660) at 0.05 level of significance.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is formulated and accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and provision of quality products for consumers.

Table 3: Regression Result^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.819	1	56.819	275.783	.000 ^a
	Residual	15.864	77	.206		
	Total	72.684	78			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate social responsibility.

b. Dependent Variable: Provision of Quality Product.

Source: SPSS 20.0 Analysis Output, 2018.

Since, $P\text{-value} = 0.000$ is less than $\alpha = 0.05$, we reject null hypothesis. Thus, it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between corporate social responsibility and quality products made available to consumers. Also with the value of R^2 in the model it shows that there is significant relationship between dependent variable and independent variables (quality products and corporate social responsibility) at 0.05 level of significant ($r^2 = .782, p < 0.05$).

The coefficient of CSR in the estimated regression line shows .884 which implies that 88.4% significant relationship exists between the CSR and quality products of selected companies. The overall regression model is statistically significant in terms of its goodness of fit ($F=275.783, p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 2

Ho: There is no significant relationship between CSR and consumers health and safety
 The regression model showing the relationship between participation in corporate social responsibility and consumers' health and safety.

$$CSR = f(CHS)$$

$$CSR = b_0 + b_1CHS + U_i$$

Where;

CSR = Corporate Social Responsibility

CHS = Consumers Health and Safety

U_i = Error term

Statistical Analysis Showing Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Consumers' Health and Safety.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.840 ^a	.705	.702	.372

a. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate Social Responsibility

b. Dependent Variable: Consumers' Health and Safety

Source: SPSS 20.0 Analysis Output, 2018.

From Table 4, the value of R is 0.840 which is the correlation between observed and predicted values of the dependent variables (consumers' health and safety), the coefficient of determination (R-squared) value of 0.705 shows that the explanatory variables (corporate social responsibility) accounted for over 70.5% of CSR in the organisation, while the remaining 29.5% firm's profitability is explained by other exogenous variables that are excluded in the model.

Also, a quick perusal at the adjusted R-squared value of 0.702 indicates that after removing the effect of insignificant regression (explanatory variable), about 70.2% variation in consumers' health and safety is still accounted for the independence variable (corporate social responsibility). Concerning the Standard Error of the estimate whose value is 0.372 is the root mean squared error. There is evidence of positive serial correlation.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.366	.212		6.439	.000
Corporate Social Responsibility	.848	.062	.840	13.577	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate Social Responsibility.
 b. Dependent Variable: Consumers' Health and Safety.

Source: SPSS 20.0 Analysis Output, 2018.

The result revealed that the calculated t. statistics for the parameter estimates of CSR (t = 13.577) P < 0.05 is greater than tabulated t. statistics (1.660) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is formulated and accepted. Thus, there is significant relationship between CSR and consumers' health and safety.

Table 6: Regression Result^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.500	1	25.500	184.336	.000 ^a
	Residual	10.652	77	.138		
	Total	36.152	78			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate Social Responsibility.
 b. Dependent Variable: Consumers' Health and Safety

Source: SPSS 20.0 Analysis Output, 2018.

Table 6 shows the assessment of the statistical significance of the result. The F-value is 184.336 at .000 significant levels. This shows that the null hypothesis should be rejected and alternative hypothesis is formulated and accepted. Thus, there is significant relationship between CSR and consumers' health and safety. The coefficient of CSR in the estimated regression line above shows .840 which implies that 84.0% significant relationship exists between CSR and consumers' health and safety. The overall regression model is statistically significant in terms of its goodness of fit (F=184.336, p < 0.05).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was conducted to examine the impact of social responsibility on maximization of consumers' benefits. From the data collected and analyzed, it was evident that there is a significant relationship between corporate social responsibility and provision of quality products for the consumers. The coefficient of CSR in the estimated regression line shows .884 which implies that 88.4% significant relationship exists between the CSR and quality products of selected companies. The overall regression model is statistically significant in terms of its goodness of fit (F= 275.783, p

<0.05).

The second hypothesis is like the first one. It tested that there is significant relationship between corporate social responsibility and consumers' health and safety. The coefficient of CSR in the estimated regression line shows .840 which implies that 84.0% significant relationship exists between CSR and consumers' health and safety. The overall regression model is statistically significant in terms of its goodness of fit ($F=184.336, p < 0.05$).

It is noteworthy to emphasise that the success of business organisations in contemporary dynamic and competitive environment depends on their ability to identify with the needs and aspirations of their stakeholders, especially the consumers, by converting the social problems to business opportunities. In conclusion, the findings revealed a lot of positive results; these findings have overt and covert implications on the operational efficiencies of Nigerian companies and the positive and beneficial effect of corporate social responsibility on consumers.

Based on the above conclusion, the following recommendations are offered. First, top management should be abreast of the effect of their organisations on the stakeholders especially the consumers and be committed to any social activity it wants to embark upon and allow the members of the public to associate such an activity or activities with it. The organisation must ensure that it has a focus on that particular or those particular areas of social issues it want to direct its tentacles on so that the public can identify such activities with it.

Second, business organisations should regularly audit its spending on social responsibility for proper accountability and see if it is a worthwhile exercise. If it is worthwhile, it should device room for more improvement and also embark on other activities which may be more recognisable by the public.

Finally, all organisations should ensure that they do something appreciable to their immediate environment. The community in their locality must see CSR initiatives of the organisations which must be identifiable with the organisation than its main activities. This will give it a sustainable or conducive environment for its operations as well as its license to operate.

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