



Corporate Social Responsibility and Organizational Productivity: Evidence from Selected Telecommunications Service Provider in Ilorin, Kwara State

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Abstract

The dawn of the 21st century has witnessed increased competition in the business world as virtually every product now has an alternative. This development has made the customers the kings and the queens of the market. This implies that the success, survival and sustenance of any business depend on the ability to reach out, link up, establish and maintain mutual understanding, co-operation and healthy relationship with the customers and host communities. One of the ways this is achieved in the business world is through corporate social responsibility. This study examined the impact of corporate social responsibility on organizational productivity: Evidence from selected telecommunications service provider in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The survey research method was employed. Data collected for this study is from both primary and secondary sources, relying heavily on the relevant information available from the Nigeria telecommunication industry, the general public and other sources. Tests were conducted using chi-square analysis. The chi-square result reveals a strong and significant relationship between CSR and Social progress. The study recommends that telecoms industries in Kwara State should be encouraged to expand their CSR activities by going into other areas like health's education, charity giving, instead of focusing on one particular activity. The NCC should come up with modalities for monitoring their level of carrying out social services to their host communities, among others.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Organizational Performance, Relationship, Nigeria's Telecommunication Industry.*

1.0 Introduction

In order for organizations to survive in the competitive marketing environment, they need to note that their long term survival partly depends on their ability to confront social and environmental issues by being socially responsible (Collier & Esteban, 2007). In recent years, research has revealed the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its significant impact on organizational performance (Dixon-Ogebechi, Aiyeku, Haran and

Jarutirasarn, 2011). The concept, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), has been defined in different ways and by various scholars. For instance, Pitt (2012) defined Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) in terms of three distinct constructs: environment Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), external social Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and internal social Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Corporate social responsibility, an essential phenomenon, has



over the years become a major concern in Western Europe and other countries of the world following the western model of development. The western European Nations responded positively to the debate, accepted and even implemented some of its own far reaching conclusion. Research by various scholars has shown that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a significant impact on organization's economic and financial performance (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2008) hence organizations are incorporating it in corporate management. Also, scholars such as Micu and Susanu (2010) have identified the economic benefits of an organization's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to include greater market share, high turnover and increase in consumers' trust and loyalty. The telecommunication industry is the fastest growing sector in Nigeria. As such, corporate social responsibility is a strategy used by these companies to gain their ground and to provide sustainable development to the country and to their host community. They focus on the potential of information communication technologies to empower enterprise development, educational opportunities and the capacity to respond to emergencies. Nwana (1984) asserts that the motivating force in any research work is the existence of a problem and the urge to take care of or solve it. Without a problem situation there will be no research. Consequently, there are many problems associated with the existing literature on corporate social responsibility such as:

- a) There is lack of awareness as to the actual meaning of corporate social Responsibility
- b) Lack of audit of Corporate Social Responsibility

- c) There is no accepted standard to reporting of Corporate Social Responsibility.
- d) Poor implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility
- e) Overall, there is dearth of relevant data concerning the actual impact of CSR on the marketing performance of telecommunication companies in Plateau State.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to

- i. Investigate how consumers rank the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities embarked upon by key players in the Nigerian GSM telecommunications industry.
- ii. Determine consumer's relative importance ranking of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities performed by organizations in the Nigerian GSM telecommunications industry.
- iii. Determine the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy for organizations in the Nigerian telecommunications industry.
- iv. Ascertain the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in telecommunications brand performance.

1.2 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. How do consumers rank the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities embarked upon by key players in the Nigeria GSM telecommunications industry?
- ii. What is consumers' relative importance ranking of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities performed by organizations in the



Nigerian GSM telecommunication industry?

iii. What is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy for organizations in the Nigerian telecommunications industry?

iv. What is the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in brand performance?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₀: Corporate Social Responsibility has no significant influence on brand perception.

H₁: Corporate Social Responsibility has significant influence on brand perception.

Hypothesis II

H₀: Corporate investment on education has no significant effect on corporate profitability

H₁: Corporate investment on education has significant effect on corporate profitability

2.1 Review of the Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Modern corporate social responsibility

Modern CSR was born during 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro when United Nations sponsored recommendations on regulation were rejected in favour of a manifesto for voluntary self-regulation put forward by a coalition of companies called the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). Introducing the threat of prosecution and legal action with resulting detailed disclosure of company documents would create powerful incentives for companies to behave responsibly. At a national level, Government should:

i. Adopt new laws to make corporate social and environmental reporting and disclosure mandatory for companies including the disclosure of payments to overseas government, information on the social and environmental impact of

overseas operations and details of legal actions against companies.

ii. Frame new responsibilities for companies' directors to give them a 'duty of care' for communities and their environment, making them legally accountable for the actions of their companies overseas.

iii. Change the law to enable people harmed by British companies' overseas operations to seek redress in UK court and to provide the resources to enable them to do so.

What drives corporate social responsibilities?

A. Defending public image

If companies behave improperly, they can be got at through the court of international public opinion. The first CSR initiatives were a response to public pressure and media exposure of poor company behaviour. CSR was supposed to show that companies were capable of cleaning up their act. Prof. Michael Porter of the Harvard Business School argues that CSR is all defensive effort, a PR games in which companies primarily react to deal with the critics and the pressure from activists.

B. Attracting investors

Companies that proactively engage with sustainable development agenda and its advocate in the investment world should generate support, interest and understanding among investors. This will ultimately ascribe a premium to share price. CSR makes companies attractive to both mainstream investors and to the fast growing ethical-investment sector. Many investors now believe that social and environmental risk management improves a company's market value in the long term.

C. Permission to operate

CSR has, of late become a vital component in companies' effort to gain approval for



projects carrying significant political and social risks.

D.Lobbying against regulations

"One of the key functions of CSR is to enable further deregulations by pointing to the involvement of business in ethical and sustainable activities and to indicate that multi-stakeholder dialogue with civil society obviates the need for binding regulation" (David Miller, Sterling Media Research Institute). I believe that companies' voluntary measures can help improve private-sector behaviour. But voluntary activity is no substitute for regulation and there is evidence that companies that espouse voluntary approaches to meeting social and environmental standards are also involved in resisting external regulation, especially by government.

Implementation of corporate social responsibilities in Nigeria

Annually, limited liability companies in Nigeria give reports of their social responsibility efforts. These are in four major identifiable areas; viz:

- i.The immediate environment of the company where the interests of the neighbours of the given companies are taken care of as much as is practicable (Bello, 1988).
- ii.Locating worthy national or state activities to support. In this respect, educational, sporting and cultural activities are sponsored by companies as forms of social responsibility.
- iii.Responding to major disasters. Such disasters may originate from nature or it may be accidental like the bomb explosion at the Ikeja cantonment on Sunday, January 27, 2002. In the oil industry, there had been several reported cases of oil spills damage farmlands, crops, forests and water.

iv.Diversification of activities to areas of importance in the nation's economic development. For example, Guinness plc invested funds in two major eye clinics in Nigeria, and Texaco Oil Producing and Marketing Company diversified into agricultural activities of cultivating cassava and processing Garri [Cassava flour].

There is no doubt the committee saddled with the responsibility of developing a CSR policy for Nigeria will learn from the countries (especially developing ones) that have adopted and are implementing such policies successfully. Prior to the above declaration of the Federal Government, Nigeria did not have a CSR policy. This finding confirms that CSR is a localized and socially embedded construct, as the 'waves', 'issues' and 'modes' of CSR practices identified amongst indigenous firms in Nigeria reflect the firms' responses to their socio-economic context" (Amaeshi, 2006).

Brief Historical Background of MTN

MTN Nigeria is a part of the MTN group, a South African-based company which was licensed on February 9, 2001 as a GSM operator in Nigeria and on May 16, 2001, it became the first GSM network to make a call in Nigeria following the globally lauded Nigerian GSM auction conducted by the Nigerian Communications Commission earlier in the year. Thereafter the company launched full commercial operations beginning with Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt. As of February 10, 2003 MTN had become the first mobile company to record one million active subscribers on its network and by June 30 2010, the subscriber-base of MTN had risen to 35 million. MTN has been a catalyst for Nigeria's economic growth and development especially through the MTN foundation, through which it has been



executing projects in the education, health and economic empowerment sector in Nigeria (MTN.NG.COM, 2012).

Historical Background of AIRTEL

Airtel Nigeria (Airtel Network Limited) is a member of Airtel Africa Group. ECONET later consolidated to VISAFONE and (now Airtel) was the first to be licensed as a GSM operator in Nigeria in 2001 and made history on August 5, 2001 by becoming the first telecommunications service provider to launch commercial GSM services in Nigeria. Was Awarded Digital Mobile Licence (DML) for communication service in Nigeria. The vision statement of Airtel is “being the most loved brand in the daily lives of Nigerians”. In addition to these AIRTEL also offered a portfolio of innovative products and services ranging from exciting voice solutions to inventive data packages and mobile broadband to its customers (AIRTEL Nigeria, 2015).

Historical Background of GLOBACOM

Globacom Limited is a telecommunications company and a member of Mike Adenuga group.

GLOBACOM was launched in Nigeria in 2003, with the vision to be the telecommunication market leading service provider in Nigeria and also with a dream of building Africa’s biggest and best telecommunications network. GLO mobile, a subsidiary of GLO, is GLO’s Mobile network Unit which, in the first year of operation, had one million subscribers in over 87 towns of Nigeria and over 120 billion Naira in revenues. This has risen to over 25 million subscribers in a few years of operations (IT Realm, 2009; Wikipedia, 2012).

Brief Historical Background of (Etisalat) now 9mobile

The Emerging markets Telecommunication Services (EMTS), trading as Etisalat, is a

Nigerian company duly incorporated in January 2007 as a primary company under the laws of Nigeria in partnership with Mubadala Development Company and Etisalat of the United Arab Emirates. In Nigeria, Etisalat made the first official call on its network on 13 March 2008 and in September of the same year, it kicked off commercial operations with the innovative 0809choose campaign which enabled Nigerians choose numbers special to them as their mobile numbers.

Theoretical explanation for CSR reporting

In spite of the widespread academic and business interest on the issue of CSR reporting, a comprehensive theoretical framework for explaining the underlining determinants of corporate social and environmental disclosure is still elusive (Reverte, 2008). Consequently, varied theories have been used to elucidate CSR reporting. Prior studies in social disclosure literature have used a single theory or a combination of theories to explain CSR reporting. For example, legitimacy and stakeholder theories by (Hinson et al., 2010; Dineshwar, 2013; Golob & Bartlett, 2006); legitimacy theory and political cost theories (Ghazale, 2007); institutional theory (Amran & Susela, 2008; Ali and Rizwan, 2013) and agenda-setting theory (Pollach, 2013). The legitimacy theory provides significant insights into how CSR disclosure is done by firms operating in society. Evidence exists in corporate social disclosure literature that corporations engage in voluntary disclosure in their annual reports as a means to manage legitimacy (Campbell, 2000). “Businesses under the legitimacy theory therefore, disclose their CSR activities to show a socially responsible image, so as to legitimate their behaviors to their stakeholders” (Hinson et al., 2010: 500).



Once reporting on social causes elicits legitimacy, firms will continue to report on their CSR as that is the surest way to ensure their continual existence, profitability and good image. The purpose of legitimacy theory is to align the company's practices with the expectations of society as a whole.

Empirical Review Analysis

Amaeshi (2006), revealed that Nigerian firms see and practice CSR as corporate philanthropy. The research found that this construct of CSR was a reaction of indigenous firms to the peculiar socio-economic realities of Nigeria. They also opined that this conception of CSR could be connected to the traditional socio-cultural heritage of Nigerian firms and prevalent religious influences in the country. The socio-cultural belief in Nigeria promotes the philosophy of being one's brother's keeper; the haves are expected to impact positively on the have-nots. Waves, issues, and modes of CSR engaged in by the indigenous firms also mirrored Nigeria's peculiar socio-economic conditions. Multinationals, on the other hand, based their perception and practice of CSR on the mandates from their home countries, or on those areas that directly impact on their business activities. However, some multinationals and local firms now have separate Foundations that have taken CSR beyond plain philanthropy. This is especially so for indigenous firms which were found to be lagging behind their multinational counterparts. A major beneficiary of CSR in Nigeria is the agriculture and rural development sector. An overview of the contributions of CSR to this sector is provide herewith with emphasis on participants, partnerships and objectives, scope of coverage, mode of delivery and level of contributions. CSR is the concept that an organization needs to consider the impact of their operations and business

practices on not just the shareholders, but also its customers, suppliers, employees, members of the community it operates in, and even the environment. It is a way of saying thank you and expressing appreciation to all stakeholders in the business. It is a conscious effort to give back to the society in which the corporation has benefitted immensely.

3.Methodology

The quantitative approach emphasizes on measuring a phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Blumberg et al, 2011). For that reason, most quantitative research use questionnaires or surveys as the method of data collection and it commonly involves a numerical analysis of data, as is the case in our study. The research design used in this study is called cross-sectional research design or a social survey design (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The population samples of Ilorin west, in Kwara State, according to the 2006 National housing and population census exercise was 176, 350. Out of this figure 300 respondents were purposefully selected and were administered with the questionnaire instrument. Eventually, 260 copies representing 75% were correctly filled and returned. The purposive sampling technique was used to choose the sample size from the population without bias. Purposive sampling is a process of choosing non-randomly and deliberately from the population to have a representative and meaningful sampling. In analysing the data collected using questionnaire, the researcher used descriptive simple percentage tables and chi-square statistical tools which are used in testing the relationship between two random samples.

Chi-square is given as:

$$X^2 = \sum (o - e)^2$$

Where X^2 = Chi-square

o = Observed frequency



e = Expected frequency

Σ = Summation of the frequency.

4>Data Presentation and Analysis

This focuses on presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected through the use of

Questionnaire that was distributed to both the staff and the customers of all the major

telecommunication networks (MTN, Glo, Airtel, and 9mobile). This analysis of data is necessary to bring out the result of the research work done and to be able to comment on data collected and draw conclusion based on it.

Presentation and Data Analysis

Table 1: Questionnaire Return Rate

Options	Number Distributed	Number Returned	Percentage of Return	Not Returned	Percentage of not Returned
Staff	100	90	35%	10	25%
Customers	200	170	65%	30	75%
Total	300	260	100	40	100%

Source: Research Analytical Survey, 2021

The above table indicates that out of 300 questionnaires distributed 100 were distributed to the staff of the entire telecommunication network. 90 representing 35% were duly completed and returned

while 10 representing 25% were not returned. 200 questionnaires were also distributed to all the customers. 170 representing 65% were returned while 30, representing 75% were not returned.

Table 2: Is Social Responsibility activity part of the organization’s policy?

Options	Number of Respondent	Percentage %
Yes	156	60%
No	104	40%
Total	260	100%

Source: Research Analytical Survey, 2021

From the table, 156 respondents (60%) said that social responsibility activities are incorporated into the organization’s policy while 104 representing 40% disagreed with it.

From the table above, it can be concluded that social responsibility activities are incorporated into the organization’s policy.

Table 3: Does the Organization’s involvement in Social Responsibility have any effect on the Company

Options	Number of Respondent	Percentage %
Yes	156	60%
No	104	40%
Total	260	100%

Source: Research Analytical Survey, 2021

From the table above, 62% which represents 162 respondents indicates that organizations involvement in social responsibility has no

effect on the company, while 38% representing 98 respondents disagreed.



Table 4: What factors motivate the company in carrying out their Social Responsibility activities?

Options	Number of Respondent	Percentage %
Public pressure	120	46%
Voluntary action	80	31%
No idea	60	23%
Total	260	100%

Source: Research Analytical Survey, 2021.

From the above, 120 respondents representing 46% are of the opinion that public pressure motivated the company in carrying out their social responsibility activities. 80 respondents representing 31% indicate the company's voluntary action

while 60 respondents representing 23% indicate no idea. It can be concluded that public pressure more than voluntary action motivate organizations to carry out their social responsibility activities.

Table 5: Does your Organization involve host community members in matters relating to corporate social responsibility

Options	Number of Respondent	Percentage %
Yes	160	62%
No	100	38%
Total	260	100%

Source: Research Analytical Survey, 2021.

From the table above, 160 respondents constituting 62% agreed that their organizations involve host community in

matters relating to corporate social responsibility.

Table 6: Does MTN's Corporate Social Responsibilities on Education affect you?

Options	Number of Respondent	Percentage %
Yes	140	54%
No	120	46%
Total	260	100%

Source: Research Analytical Survey, 2021.

In the table above 140 respondents (54%) were of the opinion that MTN's corporate social responsibility affects them while 120

respondents (46%) were in disagreement. In conclusion, the MTN's corporate social responsibilities have affected the people.

Table 7: Does your Corporate Social Responsibility project come up as a result of pressure from government or immediate environment where your Organization operates?

Options	Number of Respondent	Percentage %
Yes	220	85%
No	40	15%
Total	260	100%

Source: Research Analytical Survey, 2021.

From the table above, 20 respondents were in support that corporate social responsibility project comes up as a result of

pressure group from government or immediate environment where the



organization operates while 40 respondents (15%) disagreed.

Hypotheses Testing

This deals with the testing of the hypothesis associated with the research work. Hypotheses can either be Null hypothesis (H₀) or Alternative (H₁). The hypothesis shall be based on 5% level of significance where the table value of 1 from degree of freedom = (n-1) is 3.841

Table 8: Effect of CSR on Brand Perception by Host Community

Options	Number of Respondent	Percentage %
Yes	145	56%
No	115	44%
Total	260	100%

Source: Research Analytical Survey, 2021.

Using $X^2 = \sum \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe}$

Fe

Where

E = Summation

Fo = Observed frequency

Fe = Expected frequency

X² = Measurement of discrepancy between observed and Expected frequencies

Computing the above table to test for hypothesis 1

$$X^2 = \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} + \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe}$$

fefe

$$= \frac{(115-145)^2}{130} + \frac{(15-15)^2}{130}$$

130 130

$$= \frac{(-30)^2}{130} + \frac{(0)^2}{130}$$

130 130

$$= 6.92 + 0 = 6.92$$

Table 9: Influence of CSR on Corporate Profitability

Options	Number of Respondent	Percentage %
Yes	170	65%
No	90	35%
Total	260	100%

Source: Research Analytical Survey, 2021.

$$X^2 = \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} + \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe}$$

fefe

$$= \frac{(170-90)^2}{130} + \frac{(40-40)^2}{130}$$

130 130

$$= \frac{(80)^2}{130} + \frac{(0)^2}{130}$$

Hypothesis I

H₀: Corporate Social Responsibility has no significant influence on brand perception.

H₁: Corporate Social Responsibility has significant influence on brand perception.

To test this hypothesis, the researcher employed the statistical (x²) chi-square test base on the reaction of respondents.

Decision Rule

The calculated value of x² = 6.92 is greater than the tabulated critical value of 3.841 required for 5% level of significance of 1 degree. We therefore accept that organization's involvement in social responsibility has a significant influence on the way the brand is being perceived by the host community.

Hypothesis II

H₀: Corporate investment on education has no significant effect on corporate profitability

H₁: Corporate investment on education has significant effect on corporate profitability

$$130 130$$

$$= 49.2 + 0 = 49.2$$

Decision rule

From the chi-square table above, the critical region is 3.841 for a level of significance



0.05 and a degree of freedom. Since calculated value $x^2 = 49.2$ is greater than the tabulated critical value 3.841 required for 5% level of significance of 1 degree. We therefore accept that organization's involvements in social responsibility have a significant effect on the company and its community.

5. Results and Discussion of Findings

Based on above analysis, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. We therefore conclude that the organizations' involvement in social responsibility has a significant effect on the companies and the host community.

It was also discovered and revealed that social responsibility is a legitimate action of the firm and that the firm involvement in social responsibility has a great positive impact on the firm and that the assessment of the community to the company's social activities has been satisfactory. The research also revealed that the quality of the company's service is perfect which gives value to the sum of money spent for it and that the company's social responsibility activities have enhanced organization community relationship.

Social responsibility has been a hot topic in every business area, from corporate boardroom to the door of the classroom as to whether or not organizations should be socially responsible to its immediate environment. Taking a critical look into the context of this research work, it is easy to say that an enlightened business is one that recognizes that it is in its own interest to be socially responsible, since an enhanced public image is more likely to be attractive to investors, employees, customers, suppliers, consumers and its host community and government.

It was discovered from the research conducted that the telecommunication companies in Kwara State have been involved in corporate social responsibility activities to their host communities. But as beautiful as it may sound, a lot of factors are standing against a business performing what it owes its immediate environment.

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

The survival of any organization is dependent upon series of exchange between the organization and its host environment. The involvement of telecommunication system in Ilorin area of Kwara State conform that, social responsibility practices shows that the companies are socially responsible to their (host communities), immediate environment. In conclusion, corporate social responsibility can therefore be best described as a total approach to business. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) creeps into all aspects of operations. Like quality it is something that you know when you see it. It is something that business today should genuinely and wholeheartedly be committed to. Ignoring social responsibility is too dangerous when it is remembered how important brands are to the overall company's value. Corporate social responsibility is therefore something that a company should try and get right in implementing. The idea that the only function of business organization is profit maximization for the shareholders has become obsolete and should be erased. Thus they should shift emphasis to a new term "social responsibility". To this effect Nigeria businessmen and women would protect their long term interest by redefining their objectives to include those of the communities where they carry out their business operations. In view of the above, the following recommendations are made.



- i. The companies should expand their CSR activities by going into other areas like health, education, charity giving, instead of focusing on a particular activity.
- ii. The organizations should provide adequate amenities to their immediate environment.
- iii. The companies should improve on their services; most times the network reception is very poor.
- iv. Despite the fact that telecommunication system does not cover many rural areas in Nigeria, their social responsibility programme should not centre on the urban areas. Alone. Their social responsibility project should also be shifted to rural areas where there is no network coverage.
- v. A committee should be established to oversee their social responsibility activities. The companies should partner with the government to ensure effectiveness in running their social responsibility programmes. Without endangering corporate survival, business should realize the advantages of giving grants to universities and other institutions and to its community, to mention a few.
- vi. Businessmen or organizations should realize that an increase in the entrepreneur spirit of the populace can only be beneficial to the business sector and that the government cannot do this all alone.

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