

Environmental Perspectives on Corporate Social Responsibility and Its Effect on Employee Empowerment and Performance

John Nkeobuna Nnah Ugoani*

Department of Management Sciences, College of Management and Social Sciences, Rhema University, Aba, Nigeria

Abstract

Corporate social responsibility provides psychological empowerment for employees leading to higher productivity. Employees are more committed when they are trained and developed on the job and have skills and ability for performance. Organizations perform better and more sustainable when they discharge their corporate social responsibility to their environment because no business operates in isolation of the internal and external environments. The exploratory research design was used for the study and the result showed positive correlation between the variables of study. The study was not exhaustive, therefore, further study could examine the relationship between corporate social responsibility and high rate of employee turnover in the banking sector. It was suggested that training and development should be seen by employers as a part of strategic plan for performance and not as a Christmas gift to employees.

Keywords

Psychological Empowerment, Corporate Social Performance, Training and Development, Quality of Work Life, Christmas Gift, Great Environmental Development, Environmental Sustainability

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1. Introduction

The concept of corporate social responsibility denotes that an enterprise is not only responsible to itself in terms of profit making, but is also responsible to its environment, customers, society and its employees. Environmental perspectives on corporate social responsibility emphasizes that empowering employees is not only necessary for performance, but it is also a critical instrument for the development of the environment of society. For example, it is the human resource of a country that is responsible for harnessing other critical environmental resources like material resources, mineral resources, agricultural resources and other related resources. Even though both human and other resources are important to the environment and society, it is only when these resources are properly managed by the human element

that their value can be fully appreciated. For example, the discovery, exploration and exploitation of mineral resources like crude oil is effectively handled by highly skilled and empowered manpower, and this brings about great environmental development, employment and wealth creation for a country. Environmental development is a major issue in society because while the physical environment affects the quality of life of the people, the economic environment influences the types of goals and services produced and consumed in a country [1]. Also, the goods or services over which a country has comparative or competitive advantage are often determined by its environmental dimensions. The physical environment influences the settlement patterns and by implication how they try to defend themselves and mode of social interactions and relationships. It is the general assumption, despite, the

* Corresponding author

E-mail address: drjohnngoani@yahoo.com, john_ugoani@rhemauniversity.edu.ng

counter argument of the capitalist school that the proper discharge of corporate socially responsible obligation is crucial towards enterprise productivity, performance, profitability, and sustainability. Corporate social responsibility is increasingly interpreted and understood along with the concepts of corporate governance, business and environmental sustainability [2]. The sustainability dimension emphasizes that the business organization cannot be only concerned with the issues of profitability, but should also have responsibility towards its environment and employees. Corporate social responsibility involves evolving positive structure and credible reputation for the organization among stakeholders, including the employees. Most organizations want to retain the best talents available to enhance growth and survival strategies. The idea of corporate social responsibility reinforces the need for employee empowerment and performance. Empowerment reflects the process of providing employees with the skills and authority to make decisions that would otherwise traditionally, be made by top management. A major aim of employee empowerment is to have an organization composed of loyal, enthusiastic and committed people who perform their work to the best of their ability, because they have the joy of doing so. Empowering employees encourages them to be more creative and to take higher risks which are pivotal elements that provide an organization a competitive advantage. Performance in this context is related to productivity. Productivity reflects a measure of how much value an individual employee contributes to the products or services which the organization produces at a given time. A great pillar of the knowledge economy involves the training and skills that the employees need to create, adapt and utilize knowledge in performing their duties. Globally, knowledge driven economies demand high-level skills among the employees if they must succeed in the ever increasing Internet-based operations. Therefore, organizations require a large number of employees with tertiary education. Today, many employees in Nigeria do not have the benefit of tertiary education partially due to acute economic reasons, and therefore, require the support of corporate organizations to improve their education so as to enhance performance in the workplace. According to Nwaogu [3] Nigeria's percentage of the citizens with secondary and tertiary level skills is comparatively small and of variable quality. The low level of skilled employees affects performance by multiple negative channels like wastages and delays in productivity. Corporate social responsibility efforts become important in financing employees education, training and development in Nigeria so that they can improve their performance and to follow the patterns in BRICS- Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa that invest substantially in education, research and development [4-10].

1.1. Research Problem

Undermining planning and managing environmental factors in fulfilling societal needs can spell tragedy for any organization. It must be recognized that environmental forces, systems and resources are critical to the degree that an organization depends on them, and the degree to which they are renewable, or threatening. It can also be observed that major environmental influences form a unique part in an organization's pursuit of its goals in society. This perspective suggests that organizations are influenced by many environmental factors such as climate, ecology, labour, consumer markets, trade, cultural values, and constellations of other organizational issues to which an individual organization may be bound by ties of ownership, supply, consumption or industry competition. To this extent, global corporations devote enormous energy towards environmental assessment and planning and discovering how understanding their environment at all levels can affect their operations and to ensure that adequate corporate social responsibility arrangements are put in place to cushion adverse effects on operations. According to Nicholson [11] within the literature on organizations, contingency theory has been widely adopted to explain organizational performance as a function of the fit between an organization's internal arrangements and environmental characteristics. Successfully dealing with environmental and societal factors in an economically competitive manner in the world of entrepreneurship requires highly motivated and empowered employees. However, the tragedy of many organizations is that they find it difficult to empower employees for better performance. This problem is particularly common among chief executive officers (CEOs) who are erroneously obsessed with the *so-called bottom-line mentality* as the only means of organizational sustainability. Even though empowerment can encourage employees to be creative and to take necessary risks which are among the key factors that can give the organization comparative advantage in a fast-changing business environment, doing so for most CEOs appears as the hardest action to take because it is often thought of as giving up some form of control. This fear of losing control hinders the chances of employee empowerment but results to employee *exit* because most high-performing and talented employees would instead like *to go* rather than remaining as employees without commensurate responsibility and submitting to unnecessary control [12-14].

1.2. Research Objective

This study was designed to explore the relationship between corporate social responsibility and employee empowerment and performance.

1.3. Research Significance

The result of this study will emphasize the need for organizations to see corporate social responsibility with regard to employee empowerment as a critical way of improving organizational performance and environmental sustainability.

1.4. Research Questions

- i. Is training and development important in employee empowerment?
- ii. Is it true that an organization has no responsibility to employees?
- iii. Do you think that motivation does not reinforce employee performance?
- iv. Do you believe that ability leads to productivity?

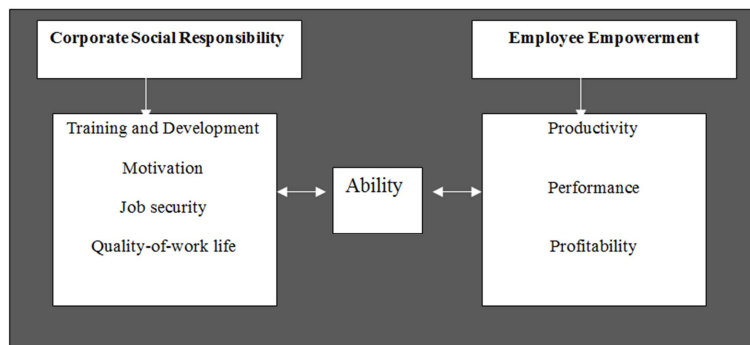
- v. Does job security lead to employee retention?

1.5. Hypothesis

To achieve the objective of this study, the following hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1.6. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is the nature of the study that shows the relationship between the variables of the study and the research problem. It is often expressed in a schematic model and used to explain, clarify, verify and relate ideas that would otherwise be buried in an excess of words. Models are important in scientific research and pave the way for theory building [15]. The model for this investigation is shown in figure 1.



Source: Author Designed (2020).

Figure 1. Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee Empowerment Model.

As shown in figure 1, training and development of employees form a good starting point of employee empowerment. Productivity is a major goal in the competitive business world and remains the spring board for enhanced organizational success. Training and development aim at increasing the efficiency of the employee so as to simultaneously increase corporate performance [16]. While training focuses typically on providing employees with specific skills and helping to correct deficiencies in their performance, development is an effort to provide employees with the abilities that the enterprise will need in the future for its sustainability. Motivated employees feel happy and perform better. Motivation refers to employees' urge to do the best possible work or to put the maximum spirit to perform any task in the organization. Motivation promotes job retention and enhances the quality-of-work life of the employees. The quality-of-work life as a measure of how safe and satisfied employees feel with their work also relates to job security and reduces brain drain. Job security is a fundamental component of corporate social responsibility because chronic job insecurity is a major source of problem that often leads to demotivation, lower performance and productivity. Job security also reduces costs

and helps in gaining advantage over competitors in the market place. Ability involves competence in performing a job. Two important factors that affect employee or individual productivity are ability and motivation [17-18]. Social corporate responsibility as a form of employee empowerment has gained global acceptance as emphasized by Johnson & Johnson Credo. Even though their final responsibility is to their shareholders they emphasize their responsibility to their employees by recognizing them, respecting them, providing job security, adequate compensation, good working conditions, equal employment opportunities, and training and development. Social corporate responsibility to employees also includes listening to their complaints and providing competent management that must be just and ethical. According to Nelson and Quick [19] ethical conduct at the individual level can translate into social responsibility at the organizational level. They opine that socially responsible actions are expected of organizations with a view to protecting the environment, promoting worker safety, supporting social issues, and investing in the community. Issues of corporate culture and leader behaviour also help to address organizational ethics and morality and promoting socially responsible behaviour that has

a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining qualified employees [20-22].

2. Literature Review

Kanj and Chopra [23] state that a good measure of corporate social responsibility in organizations is the responsibility to employees, because human resource is one of the main stakeholders and forms a major source of realizing competitive advantage. This trend has emerged over the years so as to achieve organizational social performance and reinforcing organizational reputation, attractiveness and loyalty. Among the corporate social responsibility strategies necessary for employee empowerment would include job-specific training and development, hiring employees with the necessary technical qualifications and skills, paying employees on the basis of qualifications and job held and also relying on performance appraisals as control tool for promotion, and where necessary, weeding out poor performers on the job. As a factor of corporate social responsibility, training is needed to enhance the knowledge of the employees. Training is a systematic procedure for acquiring necessary skills, advancing knowledge, causing behavioural or attitudinal change needed by current employees to enable them performs effectively in order to achieve desired corporate results. It implies preparation for an occupation or for specific skills. The basic objective of training is to establish a match between man and his job, and it is often designed to equip the employees to be more effective in their present job or prepare them for a future assignment. Employee empowerment in organizations through effective corporate social responsibility or corporate performance is essential in the global economy and cannot be overemphasized today because if organizations refuse to provide employment, it will be difficult for people to find job security and to be able to provide for themselves and make any meaningful contributions to society. This makes the case for human resource management and the pivotal role of corporate bodies to improve job prospects in the economic system. Corporate social responsibility is a powerful force in employee empowerment as it ensures that everyone in the workforce is carried along into his or her own power source as well as being part of a larger community of effort and partnership. The concept of corporate social responsibility implies that possible relationship exists between business enterprises and other organizations which are able to exert influence on its policies. Therefore, the management of any company is likely to communicate with customers, trade unions, financial institutions, and employees. According to Okenwa [24] this obligation of business to its environment is called corporate social responsibility. It refers to a liability, social consciousness, charitable contributions to society and

employees. The responsibility of the business to employees provides a kind of psychological empowerment for them to perform better. Psychological empowerment is described as increased intrinsic task motivation that is manifested in cognitions that reflect on positive behaviour and performance. Corporate social responsibility is today a major plank of employee empowerment and performance because where employees are not happy and see their pay as insufficient; they will not be effective and efficient in contributing to enterprise activities, and this may result to operational inefficiencies, fraudulent activities, high employee turnover that may ultimately undermine business objectives. Therefore, Kasum, et al [25] emphasize that the business in the quest of profit should always recognize its important responsibility to employees. For example, research conducted by Lazaar [26] shows that employee pay level has direct impact on employee empowerment and performance, and also suggests that overall employee compensation influences performance. This proposition reveals also that there is significant positive relationship between human resource management practices and organizational performance. Human resource management practices like recruitment, selection, compensation, training and development and mentoring, are elements of employee empowerment that promote performance. Performance management in terms of appraisals, management development and motivation, are key to employee empowerment. Sometimes motivation factor demands that employees who perform better are paid more than the average performing employees to encourage organizational citizenship behaviour. Organizational citizenship behaviour on the other hand is the discretionary and not directly or explicitly recognized formal duty of the employee which he or she decides to carry out. It is also important to state that corporate social responsibility is related to organizational ethics and corporate governance but they are not exactly the same. Organizational ethics and corporate governance are the policies, procedures and culture of doing the right things while also aiming at achieving corporate profitability and environmental sustainability, and ethics and corporate governance issues that face organizations include but are not limited to discrimination, fiduciary and ethical issues. These are important in determining how an organization will perform successfully in the environment. Corporate governance keeps an organization honest and out of trouble. It can be defined as an act of controlling, directing and evaluating the activities of an organization through the board of directors. It includes principles such as trust, integrity, responsibility, accountability and commitment of the organization to its environment, stakeholders and employees. It also includes rights and equitable treatment of shareholders, and minorities. Corporate governance

encompasses practices and procedures to ensure that an organization is managed in such a way that it achieves its aims and objectives, including responsibility to employees. An organization devoting resources to developing human resource management policies try to encourage ethical actions that help to build positive corporate culture. These include anti-discriminatory rules and regulations to protect employees and open door policies as well as equal growth and development opportunities. To this extent, the organization performs within its environmental guidelines and constraints in an ethical or moral acceptable manner and in compliance with the regulations and in the spirit of corporate social responsibility. According to Zaid and Al-Manasra [27] describe corporate social responsibility as an implicit contract between business and society, where organizations work towards creating positive impression for stakeholders, and relates to a situation where organizational roles focus at obtaining and retaining competent labour to ensure uninterrupted organizational performance excellence. The organizational attractiveness literature on corporate social responsibility suggests that it has positive effect on retention of quality employees and performance. It is so a win-win situation, where employers and employees share benefits in terms of reputation and organizational culture excellence. Therefore, it is correct to state that corporate social responsibility and performance of employees are *inextricably* tied. It is believed that the employee in the early stages of socialization starts to develop perceptions about organizational attractiveness that can influence his or her commitment and performance. To support organizational attractiveness and performance, training plays an important role in organizational commitment. A significant objective of training is to prevent the obsolescence of the employees by upgrading their skills and knowledge because the jobs that employees have been doing are not static. They change, sometimes, without their necessary awareness. Some of the changes require skills that may not be available to existing employees. Training therefore, becomes necessary to update them, to teach newer skills so that their efficiency does not suffer because of lack of understanding of new technologies. The impact of technology in business demands increase in technological training of employees to be very continuous, because an organization's effectiveness depends on its ability to achieve its goals, to maintain itself internally, and to adapt to its environment. Therefore, the corporate social performance of the enterprise composing of corporate governance architecture, and corporate social responsibility aim to encourage continuous employees' empowerment or training that would help them to cope with changes, enhance organizational performance, sustainability and visibility [28-31]. Corporate social responsibility embraces business ethical standards and unique corporate governance systems which

are the policies, procedures and culture of doing the right things even in the face of difficult and often controversial circumstances. A value-based code of corporate ethics addresses an organization's core value system. It may outline standards of corporate responsible performance as they relate to the greater public and the environment. Value-based ethical codes may also require a greater degree of self-corporate governance than compliance-based codes. Corporate ethics and responsibility are important key elements for employee performance and overall organizational productivity [32, 35].

3. Research Methodology

This is the pattern of the investigation.

3.1. Research Design

The exploratory research design was adopted for the study. This design is historical in nature and does not often require a large sample or a structured questionnaire. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques can be used in exploratory study to achieve the desired goals [36].

3.2. Population, Sample and Size

The population composed of all banks listed on the floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE). The Sample was selected through the purposive technique while the size was determined by the sample ratio concept [37].

3.3. Sources of Data

Data for the study were generated through primary and secondary sources such as: personal interviews, observations, books, government reports, newspaper reports, magazines, literature reviews, Internet, journal articles, among other sources. Literature reviews aim at summarizing existing research and identifying patterns, themes and issues which help to identify the conceptual content of the study [38]. Two methods of data collection were used so as to complement, supplement, and validate data through each other.

3.4. Treatment of Data

Data were organized, filtered, and coded before they were classified in readiness for analysis.

3.5. Decision Rule

The decision rule for the cut-off point for the analysis of frequency and mean was set at 3.00 [39].

3.6. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through the descriptive and regression statistical techniques and result presented in a figure and tables.

4. Presentation of Result

Table 1. Profile of Respondents (n=165).

S/N	Description	Category	Total	Percentage
i	Sex	a) Female	95	57.58
		b) Male	70	42.42
ii	Education	a) Diplomas	40	24.24
		b) Degrees	80	48.48
		c) Others	45	27.28
iii	Age	a) 18-30 years	50	30.30
		b) 31-50 years	75	45.46
		c) 51-70 years	40	24.24
iv	Experience	a) 5- 10 years	62	32.58
		b) 11-35 years	103	62.42
v	Status	a) Low	30	18.19
		b) Middle	70	42.42
		c) High	65	39.39

Source: Fieldwork (2020).

Table 2. Analysis of Frequencies, Mean, Decision Mean and Grand Mean (n=165).

S/N	Restatement of Research Questions	Scores					Row score	No of resps	Mean	Decision mean	Grand mean
		SA	A	N	D	SD					
		5	4	3	2	1					
i	Training and development is important in employee empowerment.	70	50	1	4	40	601	165	3.64	Accepted	3.02
ii	An organization has no responsibility to employees	10	20	2	13	120	282	165	1.70	Rejected	
iii	Motivation reinforces employee performance	65	70	3	7	20	648	165	3.93	Accepted	
iv	Ability does not lead to productivity.	15	10	-	30	110	285	165	1.73	Rejected	
v	Job security influences employee retention	95	40	2	8	20	599	165	4.10	Accepted	

Source: Fieldwork (2020).

Table 3. Regression Analysis.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	2.458921	0.354580	12.15871	0.0000
SBM	0.056285	0.030798	1.660181	0.0785
R. squared	0.946520	mean dependent	6.284640	
Adjusted R-squared	0.910346	S.D. dependent var.	0.342118	
S.E. of regression criterion -4.218231	0.052174	Akaike info		
Sum squared resid.	0.046650	Schwazz criterion	-3.063346	
Log likelihood	181.4075	Hannan-Quimcrd	-2.350612	
F-Statistic Stat.	0.000000	Durbin-Watson	1.807708	
Prob (F-Statistic)				

Source: E-View Statistical Package.

4.1. Discussion

The psychometric model in figure 1 was used to demonstrate that corporate social responsibility has direct relationship with employee empowerment [40]. As in table 1, the respondents composed of 95 males and 70 females, ranging in age from 18 to 70 years with various levels of qualifications and industrial work experiences and also within the low, middle and high income levels. Their responses to the research questions were found useful for analysis to enhance the quality of the study. In table 2 (i), the respondents agreed that training and development contribute to employee empowerment. In table 2 (ii), they denied that an

organization has no responsibility to employees. This does not support Okenwa [24] that the employer has responsibility to employees. The respondents in table 2 (iii) supported that motivation reinforces performance Gomez-Mejia, et al, [41]. But in table 2 (iv), they did not agree that ability does not lead to productivity. However, they accepted in table 2 (v) that job security influences employee retention. With a grand mean score of 3.02 over the decision mean score of 3.00, it was found that corporate social responsibility has positive effect on employee empowerment and performance. In regression analysis there is an important measure R^2 , which is the coefficient of determination which calculates the

highest percentage value that the independent variable(s) explain(s) in the dependent variable. In this study, the R^2 value of 0.95 showed that the independent variable(s) explain(s) about 95 percent variation in the dependent variable of interest. The goodness-of-fit test of the model is also splendid as the adjusted R^2 , value is 0.91. The value of Durbin-Watson is 1.80 that is within the range between 1.5 and 2.5. Therefore, it can easily be stated that there is no autocorrelation among the independent variables of interest. The F-test and t-test were used to confirm the adequacy of the model. Consequently, H_0 : was rejected and H_1 : accepted to confirm that corporate social responsibility explains employee empowerment and performance. This is the objective of this study.

4.2. Scope for Further Study

Because of the high rate of employee turnover in the banking industry further study should examine the role of corporate social responsibility over this phenomenon.

4.3. Recommendations

- i. Employers in the banking industry should find a way of improving motivation of employees so as to reduce the spate of dissatisfaction and fraud.
- ii. Training and development should be seen by employers as part of strategic plan for performance and not as *Christmas gift* to employees.
- iii. Good working environment must always be sustained by employers to enhance the quality-of-work life of employees as an important measure of increasing organizational citizenship behaviour and performance.
- iv. Corporate social performance must be pursued to logical ends by employers to promote the sustainability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- v. Employers should encourage psychological empowerment of employees in this Internet age to provide the incentive for higher productivity.

5. Conclusion

Corporate social responsibility is a critical measure in effective psychological empowerment of employees to drive performance. Employees perform better when their needs are recognized and this reinforces the case for corporate social responsibility as a measure of employee empowerment and environmental sustainability. The exploratory research design was adopted in the study. Data generated provided the basis of analysis and the result showed strong positive correlation between the variables of the study. This is the objective of the study.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Biography



John Nkeobuna Nnah Ugoani is Associate Professor of Management at Rhema University, Nigeria. His research interest focuses on business, management, governance, leadership, and emotional intelligence. John is recognized for presenting the first best PhD Thesis in Management at the Faculty of Business

Administration, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria. He has over 100 scholarly publications with full paper readership downloads and abstract views of over 5000 and 20000 respectively and ranked among Top Ten Authors by SSRN. Before entering academia, he was a senior manager at First Bank of Nigeria Plc.