
BUSINESS SOCIAL RESPONSIVITY (BSR) ON PERFORMANCE OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This study is designed to examine relationship between business social responsibilities and SMEs performance. The study adopted quota sampling for sample selection. This theoretically derived research model is empirically tested using survey sample data from 341 SMEs in North eastern Nigeria. Questionnaire was used and it was subjected to a validity and reliability test. Data gathered via the questionnaire was analyzed using frequency and percentage for background information of the respondents and items on the questions, Pearson correlation to show the relationship between the predictor and outcome variable and simple linear regression to reveal the effect of all the predictors on the outcome variable. The empirical findings suggest that Business Social Responsibility (BSR) positively enhances SMEs performance relationship.

Keywords: Social Responsibility, Small Business, Performance, Medium Enterprises

1.1 Background of the Research

The continued effect of bigger organizations in the community brings about the question of social responsibility to be very important to the management of organizations. No organization will operate effectively without being socially responsible. The communities' belief is that there is this shared common relationship between businesses and community (Caroll and Shabana, 2010). For many years, profitability has been considered as the sole objective of business in both theory and business practice (Taylor, Hill and Yalcinkaya, 2011).

Environmental change, biological species disappearance, and the global economic crisis have renewed a call for effective social responsibility interventions by bigger corporations (Gorondutse and Hilman, 2013). Better conditions of conducting business necessitate a conceptual change from the view point of neo-liberal profit centred business operation toward a holistic approach, that will effectively balance economic, social and environmental corporate responsibility (David, 2012).

The practice of Business Social Responsibility (BSR) in Nigeria is ineffective and there is no clearly defined policy or practice regarding BSR (Ojo, 2007). Moreover, in Nigeria like any emerging economies the business practice is quite different from what is obtainable in most of the developed economies. Hence, investigation of the relationship between social responsibility and organizational performance in emerging nations specifically in Nigeria is needed (Adegbite and Chizu, 2011). Corporations in Nigeria may behave unfairly due to pressure to raise profits and endure competition. Though the relationship between social responsibility and business operations has been generally debated, emphasis has been commonly on multinational companies (Adegbite and Chizu, 2011; Usang, Inyang and Effiong, 2013; Inyang, 2013).

Furthermore, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria dominate economic activities in the industrial sector. Notwithstanding the significance and uniqueness of SMEs in Nigeria, many factors have been attributed to their poor performance, including poor social practices behaviors (Ogunleye, 2004). Failure to operate socially responsible could cause production stoppage (Ogunleye, 2004). These have led to public outcry and calls that businesses should give back to the society in which they operate because their activities have negative effects on societies in the form of pollution, resource depletion, waste, poor products, quality and safety roads and the rights of workers (Adegbite and Chizu, 2011). For instance, a recent report by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) said that International Court of Justices made a verdict that the Shell Company (a multinational oil company in Nigeria) has to compensate the people of Niger Delta in Nigeria for the damages to their lands. Similarly, the Daily Trust newspapers in Nigeria, on 24th September, 2011, reported that businesses should recognize the importance of social responsibility especially by SMEs. Being the most shared and interconnected business with the host community, such relations may likely have both positive and negative impact.

Consequently, the preceding studies have identified the need for more research into why ethics and social responsibility must be investigated especially in SMEs. This is because obtainable findings on ethical and social responsibility suggested a significant gap between smaller businesses and the bigger ones. To date, preceding researches on ethics and social responsibility have been mainly centred on bigger firms (Lee, 2008). Smaller firms have well-built close collaboration with the surrounding community (Gibb, 2005). Hence, the

conduct of ethics and socially responsible business is an important issue to bring satisfying business-customer relationships (Gibb, 2005).

1.2 Statement of Problems

The significant role of BSR in economic development cannot be over stressed, particularly in developing economies where the government alone cannot meet socio-economic needs of the people, and therefore, needs the involvement of the private sector. Globally BSR has acknowledged and received attention as many organizations are facing pressures from stakeholders who are demanding better value for products, addressing disparities in standard of living, increased employment opportunities and access to health care facilities. However, BSR in most developing economies are receiving little attention particularly in the area of research (Muthuri and Gilbert, 2011). In recent past, business environments are characterized by substantial demand and great correlation with diverse stakeholders. Most of these stakeholders take into consideration the business performance, which is the key argument of the Freeman Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984). Furthermore, Nigerian businessmen have also been quite insensitive or have clearly cut themselves off from the regular activities to the areas in which they survive and gather their wealth (Abiodun, 2012). For instance, oil companies are well known to have contaminated farmlands and have made no effort to pay compensation to the affected communities (Abiodun, 2012).

Preceding findings on the relationship between BSR and performance focus on bigger companies and little is known on SMEs. Similarly, those studies were mostly done in developed economies (Chapple and Moon, 2005; Dennis, Haskert, Tokle and Vokurka, 2012; Taneja and Gupta, 2011). Absence of organizational culture variable is also another issue that affects performance which has led to lack of commitment for the practices of BSR. Findings suggested that cultural differences need to be captured in subsequent research (Fang, Huang, and Stephanie, 2010; Beneke, Wanke, Pelteret and Gordon, 2012). The previous research that related BSR and Performance that is re-active strategy (Fang et al., 2010); ownership size (Benedik et al., 2010); awareness and trust of BSR (Tian et al., 2011); and ethical practices (Ahmad and Ramayah, 2012) reveal inconsistent findings. Being committed to BSR usually enhances organizational performance, and trust and cooperation are beneficial for business performance (Fang *et al.*, 2010; Pelozza and Papania, 2008). These inconsistent results have led to many demands for having a mediating mechanism to explain the relationship between BSR and organizational performance (Berrone, Surroca and Tribo, 2007; Pivato, Misani and Tencati, 2008).

Despite increased knowledge on the issues of ethics and social responsibility in developing nations, there is a big disparity between large firms and smaller businesses (Rettab, Brik and Mellahi, 2009). This research attempts to bridge this gap by, examining the relationship between BSR (predictors of commitments, trust, perceived ethics, organizational culture) and SMEs Performance.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The study is primarily designed to examine the behaviour of BSR with on small business performance among Nigerian small businesses, with a view to decreasing the perceived gaps. To achieve the objective of the study, the following specific objectives were advanced:

1. To examine the relationship between BSR ethics and small business performance in Nigeria.
2. To examine the correlation between BSR and small business performance in Nigeria.
3. To examine effect of trust of BSR on the relationship between Perceived ethics to BSR and SMEs performance.

2.0 Brief Literature Review

2.1 Business Social Responsibility (BSR).

The concept of social responsibility (CSR) has been a matter of extreme ideologically subjective debates and theory building globally (Freeman, 1984; Mark *et al.* 2011). Ethical issues and social responsibility are often similar (Gorondutse and Hilman, 2013). Similarly, those two terms CSR and BSR are identical and interchangeable (Beneke *et al.*, 2012). Even though more understanding on CSR/BSR in literature has become available, no clear definition for CSR/BSR has been commonly recognized (Torugsa, Donohue and Hecker, 2012). This may be because CSR/ BSR is a sunshade term overlapping with some, and undistinguishable to other conceptions of business–community relationships (Torugsa, *et al.*, 2012).

There is no globally acceptable definition of CSR by scholars. Some scholar refers CSR as corporate citizenship, BSR, corporate philanthropy, community relations, community affairs, business ethics and community development (Torugsa, *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, BSR is an ethical philosophy that as a body be it a business or individual has a commitment to act and help society at large (Dewan, 2009). This research will adopt BSR not CSR since they are interchangeable and synonymous with other concepts. Furthermore, this research emphasized on smaller firms rather than corporate businesses (Beneke *et al.*, 2012; Dewan, 2009).

2.2 Approaches to Social Responsibility

There have been several methods to social responsibility that are aimed at describing and justifying the debate against and for social responsibility. Generally, Glautier and Underdown (2000) categorise three perspectives of management sciences to social responsibility. The initial approach stems from the conventional economic theory, which suggests that a business has single purpose, which is profitability. A business is said to be behaving in the interest of the community if it does business within the boundaries of relevant regulations. This classical explanation of the initiative of BSR was advanced by Friedman (1962) in the following terms; that there is one social responsibility of the firms, which is to use resources and involve in ventures intended to increase its profit within the legal provision of competition, that is to say, involve in free and fair struggle, without deception.

The second method was advanced in the 1970s, and recognizes the significance of social arguments in relation to the key objective of a firm of profit maximization. This suggests, that firms should implement decisions that will strike a practical balance among stakeholders right. Therefore, for a firm to maintain its objectives of profitability and long-term survival, it has to provide greater attention to the need of its stakeholders (Glautier and Underdown, 2000).

The third approach was adapted from the second; though it assumes profitability as an alternative mechanism for firm success rather than the only way to firm survival. Here the business tries to make decision that will overcome the conflicting need of its stakeholders. For example, workers' request for more pay and better benefit policies; shareholders' demand for improve dividend and better capital gain; prompt tax payment for government and business operations within the boundaries of stated laws, the community 's interest in social issues and maintenance of healthy environment, within the acceptable social framework (Shrader, 1987). The argument is that the organization should assume profit as a means to an end. Therefore, alternative of observing profit maximization usually, the outcome should be an appropriate percentage of revenue which is well-matched with the accomplishment of a wide-range of social benefit (Shrader, 1987).

2.3 Perspectives of Researches on BSR

The literature reviewed suggested different perspectives to BSR; some observed firm size and BSR, others examined BSR and industry. A third approach studied BSR practices and their connections and distinctions among economies (Dennis, Hackert, Tokle, and Vokurka, 2012). For example, Bronn and Vidave-Choen (2009) investigated Norwegian business practices of BSR revealed that ethical consideration, internal and external values are significant forces in influencing social responsibility actions. In addition, the outcome of the study suggested that being familiar with ethical issues and continued existence, are among the main reasons why businesses are involved in social responsibility (Bronn and Vidave-Choen, 2009). The study also demonstrated significant differences; businesses observe that environmental creativity is precious and reduced firm's competitiveness. Ambec and Lanoie (2008) measured different methods that can produce cost benefit through activities such as enhancement, by adopting environmental related practice, which include improvement of access to particular markets, segmentation of products selling toxic waste, management environmental, risk management and relations with external stakeholders.

Equally, Adam and Valerie (2010) reviewed scholars on BSR have shifted emphasis from obviously normative and moral-oriented points of view to complete normative and performance-oriented managerial findings. This is in line with Fang, Huag, and Stephanie, (2010) who review literature of certain Taiwanese firms. The objective of their study was to know the strategies adopted in organization and benefit made by dynamic ability. Their findings suggested that majority of the firms that met customer needs were committed to BSR and have improved performance in terms of revenue (Fang Huag, and Stephanie, 2010).

Similarly, Russo and Perrini, (2010) extensively reviewed literature on BSR of bigger firms. The outcome suggested that bigger companies and smaller businesses might have different motivations for investments in CSR, and this outcome supported the findings of Perrini (2010). The authors argued that SMEs and larger firms may need two different constructs to study their individual CSR operations. It is likely for bigger firms to attain stakeholder approach while SMEs may pursue the social capital philosophy. Furthermore, Loannou and Serafeim (2010) findings on the impact of CSR on investment suggested that higher involvement of firms in CSR create more recognition and value for the firm.

2.4 BSR Practices from Nigerian Perspective

Businesses in Nigeria confuse their BSR activities with those related to branding or marketing, which can place them to high-quality and enhanced corporate operation (Abiodun,

2012; Okoye, 2009). In Nigeria BSR are designed in addressing social economic improvement, (poverty eradication, health facilities provision, expansion of infrastructures), and might possibly improve for instance by collectivism and contributions (Abiodun, 2012; David, 2012). However, BSR goes further than the ordinary donation of funds to charitable events at the end of each fiscal year (David, 2012). Moreover, trends have begun to change with more firms engaged in BSR practices in a much organized and official way (Abiodun, 2012). Many can show in their records the amount exhausted for philanthropic contributions (Phillips, 2006). The Nigerian government on its part through the NEEDS policy (National Planning Commission 2004) describes the role that private sector is likely to play, to become more positive in delivering job prospects, and refining the standard of living (Abiodun, 2012; David, 2012).

Furthermore, preceding studies has established that the larger the revenue earned by firms in Nigeria, the lesser the amount they spend on BSR activities (Abioudun, 2012). This suggests that Nigerian businesses continued existence and capability to create revenue in the future may be in risk as different stakeholders press for discontinuation their commitments on BSR. However, Nigerian social responsibility is focused on supporting improved business performances, but organizations in the nation have not actually engaged in BSR which has an implication for the continued existence of these businesses. Besides, some suggestion has been offered to regulatory authorities in Nigeria to design a better approach for greater priority to BSR (Amaeshi *et al.*, 2006, Okoro, 2012). Most of the Nigerian businesses have recognize their BSR effort only to reveal the thoughts of those who perceived it as being interested in defending their private gains at the expense of the community.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The objective of the survey is to obtain essential information and insight into Corporate Social Responsibility on business performance. In research design, you identify the variables and their relationships. Therefore, the research design serves as a guide for data generation, especially primary data. The research design adopted in this study is the survey method using a questionnaire to elicit information to examine the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on performance. A well-articulated design is desirable for the objective of data collection that will assist in addressing the research questions and testing the stated hypotheses. Therefore, the research design serves as a veritable guide for data generation, especially primary data. The population was drawn from this area for more accessible and better representation; however, the study population are large in number. The source of data collection used in the research is mainly primary data using a closed structured questionnaire as the research instrument.

Method of Data Analysis: The procedure or process that will be used for the processing, analysing and interpreting of this data will be through the use of mathematical analysis. For the data, the simple percentage was adopted by the researcher to study the response of the respondent, and it was also used to show various analyses of the relevant question and the answer of the respondent; for the effective use of the simple percentage, the researcher runs the regression on the raw score data which show the summary of the response of the respondent. To test the hypothesis of the research work by the researcher, the researcher runs a regression through the raw score by using the statistic processing for social science (SPSS) to know the hypotheses to be accepted and rejected.

Data Analysis

A total number 341 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents, divided into sections: A and B. Section A consists of the analysis of the respondents. In contrast, section B consists of the study of questions on Corporate Social Responsibility and their effect on business performance. The entire questionnaires that were administered were returned.

3.2 Presentation of Results.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to test whether there is a significant linear relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and business performance. The F test is used to test the overall significance of a model by comparing the F calculated with the F tabulated.

Table 1. Model summary

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>	<i>R square Change</i>	<i>F change</i>	<i>Df1</i>	<i>Df2</i>	<i>Sig. F Change</i>
1	.821	.267	228	1.076	.267	6.400	3	57	.001

Table 2. Regression residual statistics

<i>Model</i>	<i>Sum of Square</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>99% level of Confidence</i>
<i>Regression</i>	24.269	4	7.420	6.500	0.01
<i>Residua</i>	65.935	58	1.142		

Table 3. The F calculated with the F tabulated ratio

<i>F calculated</i>	<i>F tabulated</i>	<i>H₀</i>	<i>H_A</i>	<i>Remark</i>
6.400	5.230	Reject	Accept	significance

Analysis of the Estimated Coefficients: The regression result in Table 3 disclosed a constant value of 7.630 which shows the value of BSR ethics and small business performance in Nigeria, if all the explanatory variables in the model are held constant. The result further revealed a positive relationship with BSR ethics and small business performance in Nigeria. This result further implies that a 1% increase in value of BSR ethics will increase the rate of Consumer significantly. This result conforms to the earlier stated expectation of this research work.

Table 4. Model summary

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>	<i>R square Change</i>	<i>F change</i>	<i>Df1</i>	<i>Df2</i>	<i>Sig. F Change</i>
1	.821	.267	228	1.076	.267	6.400	3	57	.001

Table 5. Regression residual statistics

<i>Model</i>	<i>Sum of Square</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>99% level of Confidence</i>
<i>Regression</i>	24.234	4	7.420	6.500	0.01
<i>Residua</i>	67.678	58	1.142		

Table 6. The *F* calculated with the *F* tabulated ratio

<i>F</i> calculated	<i>F</i> tabulated	<i>H</i> ₀	<i>H</i> _A	Remark
6.300	5.560	Reject	Accept	significance

Analysis of the Estimated Coefficients: The regression result in Table 6 disclosed a constant value of 7.420 which shows the value of BSR and small business performance in Nigeria, if all the explanatory variables in the model are held constant. The result further revealed a positive relationship with BSR and small business performance in Nigeria. This result further implies that there is increase in value of BSR and small business performance which will increase the rate of consumer significantly. This result conforms to the earlier stated expectation of this research work.

Table 7. Model summary

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	<i>R</i> square Change	<i>F</i> change	<i>Df</i> ₁	<i>Df</i> ₂	Sig. <i>F</i> Change
1	.821	.267	.228	1.076	.267	6.400	3	57	.001

Table 8. Regression residual statistics

Model	Sum of Square	<i>Df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	99% level of Confidence
Regression	24.269	4	7.420	6.500	0.01
Residua	65.935	58	1.142		

Table 9. The *F* calculated with the *F* tabulated ratio

<i>F</i> calculated	<i>F</i> tabulated	<i>H</i> ₀	<i>H</i> _A	Remark
6.600	5.340	Reject	Accept	significance

Analysis of the Estimated Coefficients: The regression result in Table 9 disclosed a constant value of 7.420 which shows the value of trust of BSR on the relationship between Perceived ethics to BSR and SMEs performance in Nigeria, if all the explanatory variables in the model are held constant. The result further revealed a positive relationship with BSR ethics and small business performance in Nigeria. This result further implies that trust of BSR and SMEs performance has positive influence on performance SMEs.

4.0 Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations

Finally, the study has concluded that the SMEs of Nigeria have implemented effective CSR practices in the organization along with the effective management of working capital, that is, the reason for effective performance of SMEs in the country. In addition, SMEs has also played a positive role in the performance of SMEs in accordance with effective CSR practices. The results show that SMEs have variations in their account maintenance. SMEs have less use of computer for their record keeping. On average, SMEs have stock review strategies along with stock insurance. This study has provided the guidelines to the policymakers that they should focus on developing the regulation related to CSR that could increase the performance of SMEs. The present study has also provided the guidelines to the upcoming researcher while examining this area in future. This study contributes to the literature of SMEs' performance in accordance with CSR.

Besides, the current study has also examined the SMEs of Nigeria, ignored the other sector and countries, and suggested that future studies should add more sectors and countries in their studies. Finally, the present study has ignored the cross-country analysis and suggested to the upcoming studies that they should incorporate this point in their studies.

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