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**EVALUATION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
STRATEGIES FOR REPUTATION MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIAN
BREWRIES PLC, LAGOS**

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Abstract

This study evaluated corporate social responsibility strategies for reputation management in Nigerian Breweries Plc, Lagos. Specifically, the study assessed the ways Nigerian Breweries PLC uses CSR strategies in reputation management, the extent to which Nigerian Breweries PLC uses CSR strategies in reputation management, how the use of CSR strategies influences the reputation of Nigerian Breweries Plc and the challenges in the use of CSR strategies by Nigerian Breweries PLC in reputation management. It hinged on two theoretical frameworks: stakeholder and Negotiation theory. The study adopted a mixed research method, comprising quantitative and qualitative data. The population of the study comprised the internal and external publics of Nigerian Breweries PLC, Lagos, while the sample size determined was 372. Some of the major findings were that engaging stakeholders and sponsorships are the dominant ways Nigerian Breweries PLC engages in CSR activities; Nigerian Breweries PLC uses the Smashing Underage Drinking campaign and Philanthropic Donations mostly as CSR programmes to benefit their publics. Also, Nigerian Breweries PLC engages in CSR activities aimed at influencing the reputation of the organization; moreover, resource constraints are the dominant challenge that Nigerian Breweries PLC comes across when carrying out CSR activities. From the findings, it was concluded that Nigerian Breweries PLC strategically employs stakeholder engagement, sponsorships, donations, and diverse CSR programs to strengthen its reputation. From the findings, the study recommended that, to overcome resource constraints, Nigerian Breweries should integrate CSR funding into a long-term budgeting framework.

Keywords: Media Evaluation, Corporate Social Responsibility Strategies, Reputation Management

Introduction

The concept of corporate social responsibility emerged as a response to public concerns about the detrimental effects of corporate operations, including child labour, subpar working conditions, unpaid overtime, and environmental damage (Zana, 2016). These days, a lot of people use it to describe non-commercial relationships between businesses and other social actors as well as society at large. For-profit entities, such as corporations, firms, and other social actors, are frequently mentioned in relation to society. Although it can also be applied to non-for-profit organisations like government departments, municipal organisations, non-governmental organisations, and social enterprises, it is frequently used in reference to for-profit organisations (such as commercial enterprises, businesses, corporations, firms, and companies). Nigeria Breweries is dedicated to ensuring the community's well-being through sound business practices and corporate asset pledges (Guibert & Julia, 2017). Nigeria Breweries has a responsibility to promote sustainable economic growth by collaborating with workers, their families, the community, and society in the long term to enhance work-life balance using strategies that benefit both business and development (Sybille, 2021).

Corporate social responsibility is essential for promoting long-term stability, growth, and sustainable performance in a dynamic and changing environment. Various CSR tactics can be utilised to build a positive reputation, but there isn't much actual data to support the idea that CSR tactics and reputation management are related. According to Mai, Nguyen, and Nguyen (2021), reputation was positively impacted by legal, ethical, charitable, and environmental CSR efforts. According to a recent study, adopting legal, moral, and charitable CSR actions improves one's reputation (Oladele & Mokuolu, 2020; Sanjay, 2023).

However, most of the aforementioned literature focused on multinational corporations in Western economies, with limited attention to CSR practices in African contexts such as Nigeria. Secondly, while previous works establish a theoretical or generalized correlation between CSR and corporate reputation, few have empirically examined how CSR strategies contribute to reputation management within a particular organizational setting. In an increasingly uncertain global economic climate, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become essential to attaining long-term organisational sustainability. However, there is also a large empirical gap: most of this research is focused on Western, multinational contexts, despite evidence that several CSR dimensions (legal, ethical, environmental, and charitable) favourably influence reputation. This emphasises the significance of studies conducted in African contexts, such as Nigeria, where cultural, economic, and regulatory factors may cause CSR practices to vary. Localised empirical research is therefore essential for comprehending how CSR strategies truly influence reputation management in particular organisations. Therefore, this study sought to fill this gap by investigating the extent to which CSR strategies are adopted in reputation management by Nigerian Breweries PLC, Lagos. This is why this study is imperative

Research questions

1. What are the ways Nigerian Breweries PLC uses CSR strategies in reputation management?
2. To what extent does Nigerian Breweries PLC use CSR strategies in reputation management?
3. How does the use of CSR strategies influence the reputation of Nigerian Breweries PLC?
4. What are the challenges (if any) in the use of CSR strategies by Nigerian Breweries PLC in reputation management?

Hypothesis

H0: CSR strategies have no significant impact on reputation management of Nigerian Breweries PLC, Lagos

H1: CSR strategies have a significant impact on reputation management of Nigerian Breweries PLC, Lagos.

Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate social responsibility has existed since the early 1960s. A major contribution to the early ideas of social obligation was William C. Frederick, who said social duty to suggest that commerce must oversee the function of a financial structure that meets the requirements of the public. Therefore, the economy's means of production must be employed in a way that optimises socioeconomic well-being in both production and distribution. Ultimately, social responsibility is taking a public stand on society's cash and personnel and being ready to make sure that they are used for broader social objectives rather than just the highly particular objectives of people and companies (Golrida et al., 2019).

Joseph W. McGuire was a significant contributor to the 1960s societal responsibility definition. Some people define social responsibility as the answer to confusing or coy terms like neighbourliness, rather than as a company's or firm's general obligation to play a leading part in addressing significant global problems like hate speech, pollution, public transport, or decline in cities (Iwannanda & Adiputra, 2017).

In its broadest sense, corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to a concern with societal challenges and goals that go beyond the strictly financial. The CSR movement is a broad concern about how business can support and enhance social order because today's corporate system can only flourish in a free society that functions well. CSR, according to Jones (1980), is the notion that companies have obligations to the public in addition to their stockholders, above and beyond what is mandated by law and labour agreements.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Reputation Management in Organizations

In the technical discourse, CSR and credibility have been associated. The importance of social values and norms as the foundation of business action has been emphasised in the conceptual debate on both the CSR and brand sides (Smith, Jones & Brown, 2018). Accordingly, CSR and reputation are two sides of the same coin, according to Wu, M. (2013). However, there hasn't been much agreement up until this point over how these two concepts relate to one another or if CSR should be seen as an independent factor influencing esteem or as an intrinsic aspect of it. According to Laëtitia, Pascale & Éric (2017), a company's reputation is the general opinion of its stakeholders, which is reflected in the net affective responses of consumers, investors, staff, and the public. Products and services, financial success, vision and leadership, workplace culture, social responsibility, and emotional appeal are the six characteristics that make up the concept of reputation (Park et al., 2014). This school of thinking views corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a component of reputation that is incorporated into the concept of reputation itself (Bajic & Yurtoglu, 2018).

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that CSR and reputation should not be treated as interchangeable concepts without qualification. CSR refers primarily to organisational practices and responsibilities towards society and stakeholders, whereas reputation represents stakeholders' accumulated evaluations of the organisation. CSR activities may therefore become evidence from which stakeholders construct reputational judgements, but the existence of CSR activity does not automatically guarantee a positive reputation.

Impact of CSR Strategies on Corporate Reputation

Stakeholder groups' opinions of an organization's corporate social responsibility (CSR) more specifically, how effectively the organization's CSR programs and results satisfy stakeholders' social and ecological values and expectations—are a crucial component of corporate reputation. In this

situation, CSR can affect these opinions, which helps to maximise the financial potential of a company's reputation (Asemah et al., 2017).

A survey of the literature demonstrates the positive correlation between business reputation and CSR. For instance, Nasieku, Togun & Olubunmi (2014) state that increasing stakeholder and customer knowledge of products and CSR value may have a positive impact on the organization's reputation. According to Sanjay (2023), CSR reporting improves a company's financial performance and reputation, increases staff dedication and customer happiness, and can draw in foreign investors. In fact, Mai et al. (2021) research shows that a positive company reputation is hard to duplicate and has a large potential for value development. In marketplaces where it is challenging to differentiate products, a company's reputation is a crucial competitive advantage. Freeman et al. (2020) assert that CSR strengthens this competitive advantage.

CSR initiatives have a significant impact on the goods and services that consumers decide to buy. Numerous evaluations indicate that the company's CSR initiatives have an impact on its clientele (Freeman, 2010). Furthermore, according to Park, Lee, & Kim (2014), philanthropic and ethical CSR practices may help customers believe that a company upholds high ethical standards and is concerned about the welfare of society. This, in turn, may have a beneficial effect on how consumers evaluate a company's reputation. Guibert & Julia (2017) concur that if clients are made aware of the moral ramifications of the company's actions, they guarantee that the company will uphold specific standards of quality and preserve or enhance its reputation.

Park, Lee, and Kim (2014) argue that stakeholders' evaluations of how effectively CSR programmes respond to their social and environmental expectations constitute an important component of corporate reputation. This perspective is particularly significant because it shifts attention from what organisations claim to do through CSR to how stakeholders interpret the outcomes of those activities. Therefore, CSR may create reputational value when stakeholders perceive the initiatives as relevant, credible, and consistent with their expectations.

Challenges in the Use of Corporate Social Responsibility for Reputation Management In Organizations

One of the most crucial and fundamental ideas in contemporary management is corporate social responsibility. Corporate Social Responsibility is defined by the European Commission as businesses' accountability for their social effects. Businesses should have a procedure in place to incorporate social, environmental, ethical, human rights, and consumer issues into their core strategy and business operations in close cooperation with their stakeholders to fully fulfil their social obligation (European Commission 2011). The topic of how far corporate social responsibility (CSR) can go in satisfying local communities' needs has emerged as a new and extremely significant conundrum. There are numerous well-known instances when local authorities overreact in their demands; the Sierra Gorda community is frequently cited as an example, threatening to halt copper businesses' operations if their demands are not satisfied.

The following are some of the main reasons against company social involvement, even if there are many in favour of it. The main one is that profit maximisation is the main goal of business, and any other goal is not ethically acceptable. Any objective other than maximising profits would undermine the market structure and skew how resources are distributed. Therefore, getting involved in social issues generally goes against the fundamental purpose of business. Remember that business is an economic, not a social, institution, and that its sole duty is to operate legally and effectively. If a company didn't function in an efficient market and pursue profits, it would be irresponsible.

While communities may expect businesses to contribute substantially to local development, organisations may perceive some demands as extending beyond reasonable corporate responsibilities.