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Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Employee Attraction and Retention in Medium Scale Enterprises in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a set of duties and obligations by small and large organisations concerning their major stakeholders such as employees, customers and communities in which they operate. Focusing on Medium Scale Enterprises (MSEs) operating in South-West Nigeria, this study examined the impact of CSR on employee attraction and retention. The sample for the study was 235 MSEs in the manufacturing and services sectors as registered by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Association of Nigeria (SMEDAN). A structured questionnaire with five-point Likert scale was used to collect data. Simple linear regression was employed as the instrument for data analysis using SPSS 24 software. The findings of the study showed that working condition and labour policy aspects of CSR were positively and significantly related to employee attraction and retention. However, the influence of employee relation CSR was found to be negative on employee attraction and retention.

Keywords: *Corporate social responsibility, medium scale enterprises, employee attraction and retention, stakeholders.*

1. Introduction

The concept of increasing corporate wealth is now vanishing against the broader concept of organizational success (Ali, Rehman, Ali, Yousaf & Zia, 2010). Today the most important matter for corporations is sustainable growth, especially in this era of economic downturn in most countries of the world. Recent research on corporate social responsibility (CSR) has stressed that corporations must assign substantial part of their resources for the welfare of their employees, which are considered as most important assets of an organisation (Jun & Seng, 2016).

Researchers are advocating that corporation should consider the amount spent on CSR as an investment rather than expenses. The corporations have also realized the multifaceted benefits of CSR and are paying greater attention to incorporate it in all spheres of business strategies. Corporations are using CSR to strengthen their relationships with different stakeholders including customers, investors, government, suppliers, and employees. These strengthened relationships ensure corporations minimum conflicts with stakeholders and maximum loyalty from all stakeholders (Aminudin, 2013). Most previous research on CSR centers on financial performance, consumer behaviour and their effects on environment (Alexander & Buchholz, 1978; Cochran & Wood, 1984); Stanwick & Stanwick, 1998; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001); Arx & Ziegler, 2008). However, little research so far has focused on employees' perception towards CSR and its influence on their welfare. On the other hand companies are also worried about high employee turnover, employee absenteeism and employee low motivation towards work and organization (Ali *et al.*, 2010).

Researchers on employee behaviour and CSR have suggested use of CSR to build strong employee bond with corporations and to achieve better employee and organizational performance (Suher, Bir & Yapar, 2017; Raihan & Al Karim, 2017). Positive effects of employee commitment on organizational performance have also been confirmed by many previous studies. Dedicated employees are considered as significant success factor for any organization. Organizations are now using corporate social responsibility as a strategic tool to develop sound relationships with employees and other stakeholders.

Corporate social responsibility is being utilized by leading organization to establish good association not only with external stakeholders but also internal stakeholders like employees. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the influence of corporate social responsibility on employee attraction and retention.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of CSR

The concept of CSR has had multiple conceptualizations that range from purely economic to proactive endeavours (Carroll, 1999; Clarkson, 1995; Ferrell, Ferrel & Maignan, 2005; Friedman, 1970; Rugimbana & Strachan, 2004; Aguinis, 2011), such as, environmental protection, ensuring health and safety at work, producing and providing goods and services of satisfactory quality, maintaining relations with local communities, suppliers and consumers, to name a few.

In the broadest sense, CSR refers to the relationship between business and the society in which it operates (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2001; Nwoba & Michael, 2016). Many definitions of CSR have been offered which seem to suggest that there is consensus on the fact that business has a responsibility toward society (Branco & Rodrigues, 2007). On the other hand, Asongu (2007) points out that too often businesses focus on their products, while neglecting the social impact of their activities. CSR is a commonly used expression in business circle at present. It is an obligation by organizations to behave in ethical manners and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the employee and their families as well as the local community at large (Nexen, 2009; Olanipekun, Abdurraheem & Brimah, 2019).

CSR is about responsible production processes, socially responsible employee relations, community involvement, and sustainability. It is simply doing things right and centers on performance in a variety of social and environmental topic areas (Mwangangi, 2018) that usually embraces issues such as philanthropy, diversity, socially responsible investing, human rights, business ethics, environment, workplace issues, sustainability, corporate governance (Aminudin, 2013). Organisation with CSR can obtain positive view of employees, customers, societies and other stakeholders (Karma, 2004; Tizro, Khaksar & Siavooshi, 2015), though its application no doubt imposes costs (Ramdhony, 2018).

2.2. CSR and Employee

There are many areas where an organisation must give adequate consideration to the employees as a part of its business. From the perspective of the firms' responsibilities towards employees' interests, it is imperative that they provide facilities and efforts to enhance the quality of life and working conditions (Sarfraz, Qun, Abdullah & Alvi, 2018). If employees' values resonate with their company's values, and if they trust that their company genuinely cares about the same things they care about, then they are more energized and productive. A company's corporate social responsibility efforts signal what it cares about. Their co-benefit is that they seem to enhance workers engagement. Companies that improve working conditions and labour practices also experience increased productivity and reduced error rates (Bauman & Skitka, 2012). Regular controls in the production facilities throughout the world ensure that all the employees work under good conditions and earn wages. These practices might be costly but the increased productivity of the workers and improved quality of the products generates positive cash flows that cover the associated costs. Thus, organisations may actually gain from socially responsible actions in terms of employee morale and productivity (Moskowitz, 1972; Solomon & Hansen, 1985; Jun & Seng, 2016). Social responsibilities of the organisations towards their employees go beyond the terms of the contract which may include: justice in treatment; democratic operation of the firm; training in new skills and technologies; effective personnel and employment relations policies and practices; and provision of social and leisure facilities (Simpson & Aprim, 2018).

Employee rights should include the rights to enhance skills and capacity and that, companies have an obligation to provide training to help ensure future employment, be it with that company or with another. The benefits of observing cultural issues in the workplace cannot be undermined. Choice of representation through unions, issues of pay equity and fair compensation are also very critical. Good working conditions can also help attract, motivate and retain more qualified staff in the competition for skilled employees. Today, in increasing competitive markets, customers take into consideration the ethics of the employment practices exercised by a firm when evaluating alternative products (Palmer & Hartley, 2002).

2.3. Small and Medium Enterprises

Governments worldwide recognise the importance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and their contribution to economic growth, social cohesion, employment and local development (OECD 2004). SMEs form the bulk of businesses in most countries and are important for the following reasons (Nooteboom, 1988; Sen, 2011):

- The dynamic and stability of the economy;
- The scale, composition and quality of employment;
- The standard of life in general; and
- The socio-political structure of a country.

To highlight the significance of SMEs concerning the growth and development of a given economy, SMEs have been variously referred to as the 'engine of growth' (Appiah-Nimo, Boohene, Gbadayan & Agyapong, 2016). This stems from the fact that almost all countries that have focused on the SMEs sector and ensure its vibrancy have ended up succeeding in unemployment reduction and its attendant enhancement in the quality and standard of living, reduction in crime rate, increase in per capita income as well as rapid growth in GDP among other salutary effects (Ogundele, 2012).

Adisa, Issa & Mordi (2014) posit SMEs as a heterogeneous cluster of business, starting from one skilled worker engaging at home and manufacturing handicrafts to stylish software-producing corporations marketing in specialised world niches. As a result, there is no single definition of SME that is accepted globally. Meredith (1994) submits that SMEs ought to be defined from both qualitative and quantitative terms. The qualitative element should specify the mode of operation and firms procedures, while the quantitative element ought to include the tangible monetary measures. Reviewing past research studies (Cragg & King, 1993; DeLone, 1981; Kagan, Lau & Nusgart, 1990), it was obvious that a popular way of classifying businesses was by the number of workers in the firm. Other classifications include factors like

annual sales revenue or total capital, which is often proprietary and is not often disclosed by smaller, privately owned businesses (Montazemi, 1988). Governments and other organisations in different countries have adopted many approaches to the definition of SMEs due to lack of consensus among authors and scholars.

Gibson and Van der Vaart (2008) argue that there is no international consensus on what constitutes SMEs, and that it is not a scientific division based on macroeconomic indicators, but rather a statistical arbitrariness. Nigeria, based on her National Policy on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has adopted a classification based on dual criteria, employment and assets (excluding land and buildings) as shown below.

S/N	Size Category	Employment	Assets (₦ Million) (excluding land and buildings)
1.	Micro enterprises	Less than 10	Less than 10
2.	Small enterprises	10 to 49	10 to less than 100
3.	Medium enterprises	50 to 199	100 to less than 1000

Table 1

Source: SMEDAN National Policy on MSMEs, 2017

Micro Enterprises are those firms whose total assets (excluding land and buildings) are less than Ten Million Naira with a workforce not exceeding ten employees.

Small Enterprises are those firms whose total assets (excluding land and building) are above Ten Million Naira but not exceeding One Hundred Million Naira with a total workforce of above ten, but not exceeding forty-nine employees.

Medium Enterprises are those firms with total assets (excluding land and building) are above One Hundred Million Naira, but not exceeding One Thousand Million Naira with a total workforce of between 50 and 199 employees.

If there exists a conflict on classification between employment and assets criteria (for example, if an enterprise has assets worth twelve million naira (₦12M) but employs 7 persons), the employment-based classification will take precedence and the enterprise would be regarded as micro.

2.4. Data Collection, Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Data for this study were collected through a cross-sectional survey from June 2019 to November 2019 from a range of MSEs in the manufacturing and services sectors in South-West Nigeria. South West Nigeria was the choice of this study because it has a high percentage of concentration of MSEs in Nigeria (SMEDAN-NBS, 2017).

To get the sample size, the multi-stage sampling technique was adopted because of the heterogeneous nature of the two business sectors covered in the study.

2.5. Measurement and Scaling

The questionnaire was structured into three sections. The first section contained the demographic profiles of the participants. The second section included employee-related CSR (independent construct) such as working condition with 3 items; employee relation with 3 items and labour policy with 3 items. The third section has 5 items for employee attraction and retention (dependent construct). All these items were scaled in a 5-point Likert scale format from Strongly agreed - 1 to Strongly disagreed - 5. Regression Analysis was employed to establish the magnitude of the relationship between variables.

2.6. Reliability Test

The reliability of the instrument was performed using Cronbach's Alpha Test to know whether the items were internally consistent. All the items were above 70% in tandem with Nunnally (1978); thus it can be concluded that the measurements used in this study were reliable.

3. Findings and Analysis

	CSR Activities	WMS	Rank
A	Working Condition		
1	The firm develops training programmes for employees regularly	4.16	1st
2	There is a sense of job security for all your workers	3.95	3rd
3	There is a commitment to the health and safety of employees	4.12	2nd
B	Employee Relation		
1	The firm takes into account employees interest in decision-making	4.03	1st
2	The firm gives adequate consideration for employee and their families	3.70	3rd
3	Employees are always consulted on important issues	3.80	2nd
C	Labour Policy		
1	There is provision for staff training and development for all employees	4.28	1st
2	There is a policy for the employment of disabled people in your firm	3.26	3rd
3	Your business ensures that adequate steps are taken against all forms of discrimination	4.14	2nd

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by the Influence of CSR on Employees' Attraction and Retention in Medium Scale Enterprises

WMS = Weighted Mean Score

Source: Field Survey, 2019

3.1. Interpretation: Working Condition

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by the influence of working condition CSR on employees' attraction and retention in medium scale enterprises. The result of the findings indicates that most of the working conditions CSR identified in this study were far above the average value of 3 which therefore implies that working condition is essential workplace CSR engendering adequate employees' attraction and retention in medium scale enterprises.

3.2. Interpretation: Employee Relation

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by the influence of employee relation CSR on employees' attraction and retention in medium scale enterprises. The result of the findings indicates that most of the employees' relations CSR identified in this study were also far above the average value of 3 which therefore implies that employees relations are essential workplace CSR engendering adequate employees' attraction and retention in medium scale enterprises.

3.3. Interpretation: Labour Policy

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by the influence of labour policy CSR on employees' attraction and retention in medium scale enterprises. The result of the findings indicates that most of the labour policies CSR identified in this study were also far above the average value of 3 which therefore implies that labour policies are an essential workplace CSR with potential for facilitating adequate employees' attraction and retention in medium scale enterprises.

		WMS	Rank
	Employee Attraction and Retention		
1	The firm has improved relative to employees' satisfaction	4.24	1st
2	The firm's employees enjoy a conducive working environment	4.09	2nd
3	The organization has enjoyed employees' loyalty and morale	4.06	3rd
4	There is a high rate of employee turnover	3.55	5th
5	The firm enjoys industrial harmony with the labour union	3.84	4th

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by Employee Attraction and Retention Construct

WMS = Weighted Mean Score

Source: Field Survey, 2019

3.4. Interpretation: Employee Attraction and Retention

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents by employee attraction and retention in medium scale enterprises. The result of the findings indicates that most of the perception about employees' attraction and retention identified in this study were above the average value of 3 which therefore implies that employees' attraction and retention was perceived to be adequate.

Variables	B-value (Coefficients)	Std. Error	T-value	Sig.
Constant	8.782	1.105	7.949	
Working condition index	0.567	0.082	6.872***	0.000
Employee relation index	-0.032	0.073	-0.443	0.658
Labour policy index	0.380	0.089	4.283***	0.000

Table 4: Result of Linear Regression Analysis Showing the Relationship between CSR on

Employees' Attraction and Retention in Medium Scale Enterprises

***Significant at 1%; Fstatistics = 36.399; $R^2 = 0.321$ (32.1%)

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Results indicate that working condition and labour policy CSR have the highest influence on employee attraction and retention, whereas employee relation CSR has a less impact on employee attraction and retention. The findings are supported by Raihan & Karim (2017).

However, Schappe (1998) and Williams & Anderson (1991) found no relationship between organizational citizenship behaviour and job satisfaction. Therefore this is a need to conduct further research on the perceived CSR relationship with organizational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, worker attraction and retention.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concluded that MSEs that put in place good working condition, positive employee relation and good labour policy could have a significant influence on employee attraction and retention. However, uncertainty about what the future holds for their workers and perceived job insecurity can lead to high labour turnover. This can be mitigated by allowing employees to participate in decision-making that improved their life. Communications should be encouraged among employees and the managers for better employee retention

5. Implications for Future Research

The study has opened room for important developments in CSR research. However, it employed only one source of information that came from business owners and managers. Future research should take into account the opinion of

other stakeholders, such as employees, customers and society itself to compare results. Sample selection consisted only of companies in the manufacturing and services sectors, future research could be extended to other types of companies.

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