Drivers and barriers to corporate social responsibility practices in nigerian construction industry

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ABSTRACT
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is increasingly valued as one factor that contributes to business sustainable development. Construction activities attract hostility among local community and the general public due to its disruptive impact arising from activities such as; excavation and demolitkion The construction industry is plagued with an inconsiderate and uncaring attitude towards environmental, economic and social sustainable issues of the society despite the apparent need to adopt a sustainable approach. This paper aims to assess the drivers and barriers to the practice of CSR in Nigerian construction industry. A quantitative research approach was adopted. A questionnaire was designed and distributeed to construction industry professionals as respondents of the study. Descriptive statistical data analysis was employed and results were presented using tables. The study identified various drivers and barriers to CSR implementation. Government legislation and the need to maintain a cordial relationship with stakeholders were found to be the major drivers of CSR, with lack of time as the highest ranked barrier in the Nigerian construction industry. The findings of this study serves as an empirical evidence to the practice of Corporate Social Responsibility of Nigerian construction firms.

Keywords: CSR, Construction, Practices, Barriers, Drivers

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There seems to be a lack of homogeneity in definitions of the concept of CSR in literature. This as noted b Aminu and Shariff (2015) could be attributed to the ever changing roles of CSR in business managemer practice. Various authors and organizations have defined CSR from divergent perspectives. The Worl Business Council for Sustainable Development, has defined CSR as the continuing commitment b businesses to behave ethically and contribute to economic development, while improving the qualit of life of the workforce and their families as well as that of the local community and society at larg (WBCSD, 2000). CSR is also defined in the ISO26000 as: "the responsibility of an organization fo the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent an ethical behaviour" (ISO, 2010). Corporate Social Responsibility entails the obligation stemming fron the implicit "social contract" between business and society for firms to be responsive to society's long run needs and wants, optimizing the positive effects and minimizing the negative effects of its action on society (Bloom and Gundlach, 2001).

As noted by Lantos (2001), large organizations are essentially social institutions as well as economic enterprises. Therefore, any business affair must be carefully weighted in terms of possible social impacts as the results of such activity, balancing carefully conflicting responsibilities to various stakeholder. One of the early advocates of CSR, Wood (1991) notes that corporate social responsibility theorists argue management should incorporate ethics into strategic goals because it is the 'right' thing to do. There is an existing debate on who the stakeholders of CSR are, based on the divergent understanding of the construct. Many believe only the external stakeholders should benefit from CSR. However, in a study by Zhao, Davidson, and Zuo (2012), the concept of "stakeholder framework" was adopted to identify the

beneficiaries of CSR. The study concluded that both internal (employees and management) and external stakeholders (host community) of organisations should benefit from CSR.

The Construction Industry is typically associated with the consumption of large amounts of resources. Construction activities have significantly adverse effects on the environment. These typically include dust and gas emission, noise pollution, misuse of water, waste generation, pollution, land misuse etc. (Zhao et al., 2012). From a social perspective, the construction industry is a critical component of the labour market, this is due to the fact that it generates high numbers of jobs, although it is associated with high-risk, where it has been reported that poor occupational safety is associated with enormous economic losses in the industry. Research shows that over fifty percent of raw materials obtained from nature were used to build various types of dwellings, and this leads to the consumption of more than 40% of global energy in construction and operation (WBCSD, 2009). Porter & Kramer (2006) stated that CSR factors in the construction industry include the following aspects: an organization's moral obligation to be a good citizen and to do the right thing; sustainability or meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; a reputation that justifies CSR initiatives toward improving the company's image.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a quantitative research approach by means of a questionnaire survey. Respondents were sampled using random sampling technique. A total of 110 questionnaires were distributed to industry professionals to elicit their respective perception to the drivers and barriers to CSR in the Nigerian construction industry. The questionnaire design comprises of two section namely A and B. Section "A" enquired about the demography of respondents, while section "B" enquired about awareness, drivers and barriers to corporate social responsibility in the Nigerian construction industry using a Likert scale of 1-5. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Response from respondents regarding each identified driver and barrier were collated and their respective mean values were calculated using the formula $\frac{\Sigma}{N}$

Where Σ = Summation of individual ratings

N = Number of responses

Furthermore, respective standard deviations were also calculated to show the deviations between individual means using the formula $\frac{\Sigma}{N}$

3.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Response Rate

A total of 110 questionnaires were administered to construction industry professionals. However, only 51 were returned and used for analysis. This represents 46.4% of the total administered questionnaires. Moser and Kalton (1971) noted that, response rate above 30-40% of sample size could be considered significant and as such the response rate for this research is adequate.

3.2 Demography of Respondents

Table 1 shows the demography of respondents with regards to professional background and years of experience. Majority of the respondents were Engineers (civil, mechanical and electrical) representing 25.5% of the total sample. Managers, Safety officers, site managers amongst other professional roles represent 27.4%. Whereas, Architect, Builders and Quantity surveyors represent 15.7% of the sample respectively. Furthermore, with regards to years of experience in the construction industry, respondents with 1-5 years constitute 19.6%, 6-10 years 37.3%, 11-15 years 21.6%, 16-20 years 11.8%, and also respondents with experience of 20 years and above represent 9.8%.

peers and clients was reported to rank 5th with a mean score of 1.86 and standard deviation of 0.72 Factors that relate to corporate strategy and need to gain competitive advantage ranked 6th and 7th whic were the least ranked with mean scores of 1.84 and 1.67 respectively.

Table 3: Drivers of corporate social responsibility in Nigerian construction firms

S/N	Drivers of CSR		N	Mean	SD	Rank
1.	Government legislation		51	2.75	0.997	1
2.	The need to maintain cordial relationship with stakeholders		51	2.45	1.026	2
3.	The need to attract more workforce		51	2.26	1.214	3
4.	The need to mitigate stakeholders risk at work site		51	2.00	0.872	4
5.	Need for sustainable reputation and goodwill		51	1.86	0.722	5
6.	New market penetration strategy		51	1.84	0.809	6
7.	The need to gain competitive advantage		51	1.67	0.817	7

3.6 Barriers to CSR implementation in Nigerian construction firms

Generally, various factors could limit an effective CSR practice across industries. However, not a of these factors are applicable to the Nigerian construction industry. A number of barriers to CS implementation were identified from literature. Respondents were requested to the rate the extent which they agree to the identified factors as barriers to CSR in the Nigerian construction industry usin a Likert scale of 1-5, where; 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongl disagree. Results in Table 4 shows majority of the respondents believe Lack of time and Financi considerations were the top barriers to effective CSR in Nigerian construction industry. Lack of time practice CSR was ranked 1st with mean value 2.92, while high cost of implementing CSR and financi constraints ranked 2nd and 3rd with respective mean values of 2.51 and 2.47. Lack of specific legislatio and also lack of awareness on CSR were ranked as the least barriers with respective mean values of 1.7 and 1.71.

Table 4: Barriers to CSR implementation in Nigerian construction firms

S/N	Barriers	N	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Lack of time	51	2.92	1.246	1
2	High cost of CSR implementation	51	2.51	1.046	2
3	Financial constraint	51	2.47	1.102	3
4	Business benefit not immediate	51	2.24	0.885	4
5	No support from top-management	51	2.22	1.154	5
6	Lack of specific legislation	51	1.75	0.845	6
7	Lack of knowledge on CSR	51	1.71	0.879	7

4.0 CONCLUSION

This paper assessed the practice of CSR in the Nigerian construction industry with regards to its drivers and barriers. The paper found a significantly high level of CSR awareness amongst industry professionals. The demography of the study respondents presents a sample population with relatively balance experience in the construction industry. This provides a pallet of perceptions from different level of experience amongst professionals in the construction industry regarding CSR. Government legislation as well as the need to uphold an effective stakeholder management were found to be the major drivers of CSR in the Nigerian construction industry. Whereas, lack of time and financial considerations were reported to be the most ranked barriers to CSR in Nigerian construction industry. Corporate strategy and need to gain competitive advantage were found to be the least drivers to CSR. This could be attributed to the fact that CSR is majorly practiced with the objective of "giving back to the people and community as social justice" as opposed to profit making. Lack of legislation and knowledge on CSR ranked as the least barriers to CSR. This is consistent with the results presented on the drivers of CSR in the industry and the reported high level of awareness of the construct. It is recommended, construction firms and professionals should invest more time and financial resources into CSR with a view to engaging more sustainable construction approach.

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