The Effects of Corporate Social Responsibility (Csr) on Corporate Brand Positioning

Africa Makasi

PhD student, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and Harare Institute of Technology, Zimbabwe
africa.makasi@yahoo.com

Krishna Govender

University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and Regenesys Business School, South Africa

Tendai Munyoro

Midlands State University, Zimbabwe (MBA student).Africa Makasi. Harare Institute of Technology. Department of Technopreneurship, Zimbabwe. P.O. Box B.E 277.Belvedere, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Email: africa.makasi@yahoo.com

Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in corporate brand positioning in the printing and packaging industry in Zimbabwe. The research was conducted by reviewing various streams of literature and interviews with 10 representatives from 5 companies and 10 customers also participated in this research. A semi-structured questionnaire was used. Two representatives from each of the ten competing companies were selected while customer representatives (both industrial and ordinary) were selected using the companies' customer records as the sampling frame. These were selected on the basis of the ratio of their revenue contribution which stands at 1: 2 in favour of industrial customers. All qualitative responses were grouped into themes for coding purposes. The data gathered was coded and captured to form panel data for further analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. Results of the research indicated that15 out of the sampled respondents of 20 confirmed that indeed CSR directed towards employees through provision of health care services and education and other activities as highlighted help to improve corporate image and position. The research also concluded that communities are intertwined with companies and their perceptions matter in corporate brand positioning. Using results of the T-Tests, it was concluded that CSR programs directed towards the environment play an important role in positioning corporate brands. Future research can refine CSR input by recognizing these differences and theorizing about employees' reactions.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, corporate brand, corporate image, positioning.

1. Introduction

Zimbabwe's printing and packaging industry sector has been virtually invisible in the market despite its strategic significance in the provision of printed materials to the entire economy (Mushanyuri, 2013). Instead, it has been other sectors which continue to take center stage; mainly companies in the beverages industry, the banking sector and lately the Information Communication Technology (ICT) industry. This is despite evidence that managers need to be receptive to the evolving needs of stakeholders, and proactive in addressing these to retain a strong market position (Low and Fullerton, 1994). In contemporary society, brand managers can no longer dictate the needs of consumers. Stakeholders are increasingly demanding, and as a result corporate social responsibility is becoming an operating requirement (Joyner and Payne, 2002).While many corporate leaders recognize the need for a multiple-stakeholder focus, they have little evidence to satisfy baseline expectations associated with corporate social responsibility. This lack of knowledge about the phenomenon provoked the need for the study.

2. Literature Review

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a long and varied history (Carroll, 1999). In the early stages, CSR mainly focused on economic model as an invisible hand (Smith, 1790). He points out that every individual in society

intend to promote its goods and services through the marketplace. As the business responses to the market's demand, it is rewarded on greatest value and profitability. Thus, it is apparently that the 'invisible hand' concept transforms self-interest into societal interest. The evolution of CSR in 1950s is mainly known as the social responsibility (SR) more than as CSR because the corporate had not yet occurred (Carroll, 1999). Bowen (1953) firstly points out the emergence of social responsibility to CSR into the seminal book 'Social Responsibilities of the Businessmen. The development of CSR in 1970s, most scholars attempts to define the meaning of CSR in both academic and non-academic terms. Similar to earlier scholars, Heald (1970) proposed CSR relates to businessmen. In 1979, Carroll (1979) proposes the outstanding CSR concepts based on fours levels; economic, legal, ethical and discretionary (philanthropic) expectations. Similar to Carroll's concept, Thorne et al., (2005) assert that CSR has a basic motivation from three perspectives namely economic perspective, strategic perspective and ethical perspective. In the sense of economic and strategic motivations, most companies attempt to create the long-term profit maximization by outweighing cost and benefit of CSR activities (Friedman, 1970). There are many theories which support the economic view such as theory of the firm (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001), Stakeholder theory (Mitchell et al., 1997), whereas the strategic perspective are supported by the theories such as resource-based view of the firm and capabilities (Hart, 1995) and competitive advantage in terms of investment in social activities (Porter and Kramer, 2002) and value created (Burke and Logsdon, 1996). On the other hand, the ethical view, the companies focus on the right thing to practice toward society. The example of ethical approach such as the stakeholder normative theory which explain the reason why the managers should consider stakeholders' interests (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson and Preston, 1995) and the sustainable development which is aimed at human development (Gladwin et al., 1995). In the past, the corporate social responsibility (CSR) phenomenon has been widely explored in terms of its contributions to the success of corporations in their respective industries (Carroll, 1998; Dowling, 2004; Gomez, 2002; Gupta, 2002; Kinard, Smith, & Kinard, 2003; Mercer, 2003). Freeman (1984) however, looked at CSR as best undertaken by considering all the stakeholders relevant in conducting business. He developed the stakeholder theory. The stakeholder theory assumes that stakeholders are influential as they can either give support in terms of purchasing habits, showing loyalty and praising the company, or they can show opposition in terms of demonstrating, striking or boycotting the company (Smith 2003). Consequently, and in line with Freeman (1984), this research will adopt the stakeholder perspective by closely scrutinizing the impact of CSR on both the internal stakeholders.

2.1 Corporate Communication and its effect on consumer perceptions

Messages about corporate ethical and socially responsible initiatives are likely to evoke strong and often positive reactions among stakeholders (Maignan et al. 1999). Research has even pointed to the potential business benefits of the internal and external communication of corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts (Maignan et al. 1999). However, while CSR is generally associated with positive corporate virtues and reflects an organization's status and activities with respect to its perceived societal obligations (Brown & Dacin 1997), corporate CSR messages have also proven to attract critical attention. In fact, research suggests that the more companies expose their ethical and social ambitions, the more likely they are to attract critical stakeholder attention (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, Vallentin 2001). Other studies have triggered questions such as 'if a company focuses too intently on communicating CSR associations, is it possible that consumers may believe that the company is trying to hide something?' (Brown & Dacin 1997: 81). Furthermore, stakeholder expectations regarding CSR are a moving target and must be considered carefully on a frequent basis. The stakeholder information model assumes that stakeholders are influential as they can either give support in terms of purchasing habits, showing loyalty and praising the company, or they can show opposition in terms of demonstrating, striking or boycotting the company (Smith 2003). Therefore, the company must inform stakeholders about its good intentions, decisions and actions to ensure positive stakeholder support.

2.2 Reviewing the meaning of corporate branding

There is little agreement in the literature as to what constitutes a corporate brand. According to Balmer and Gray (2003) corporate brands are marks denoting ownership; image-building devices; symbols associated with key values; means by which to construct individual identities; and a conduit by which pleasurable experiences may be consumed. Knox and Bickerton (2003:1013) proposed the following definition of corporate brand, "A corporate brand is the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of an organization's unique business model". In an attempt to differentiate between the constructs of corporate brand and corporate reputation, Corkindale and Belder (2009) note that the focus of the corporate brand building focuses on relevancy to customers whereas reputation concentrates on legitimacy of the organization with respect to the stakeholders. Hatch and Schultz (2001) state that the corporate brand contributes not only to customer-

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based images of the organization, but to the images formed and held by all its stakeholders. Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004), note that a company engages in corporate branding when it markets the company itself as a brand. They state further that the reputation of the organization is strengthened when the corporate brand promise is kept. According to Balmer and Gray (2003), corporate brands are different to product brands in terms of disciplinary scope and management, and have a multi-stakeholder rather than customer orientation. They acknowledge that the terms corporate brands and corporate identities are used interchangeably, but argue that there are fundamental differences between them. According to Balmer and Gray (2003), corporate identity refers to the distinct attributes of an organization which addresses the questions, "who are we? And what are we?" and is relevant to all types of organizations. They go on to state that corporate brands on the other hand are not applicable to all organizations, and would not for example, be necessary for a monopoly (Balmer and Gray, 2003). Organizations seeking to build strong corporate brands must align their internal communications activities and human resource management practices with the brand values (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001). Strategies of corporate branding seek to strengthen relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders including employees, shareholders and suppliers (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Knox and Bickerton, 2003). In the quest to achieve long-lasting relationships with internal and external stakeholders the focus advances from the product to that of the corporation (Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Merrilees and Miller, 2008; Xie and Bogs, 2006). In taking centre stage, the corporation can no longer hide behind product actors; instead, as the lead actor, it must consistently deliver the brand promise to each stakeholder. Thus, as the audience for the brand reaches beyond the consumer (King, 1991; Knox and Bickerton, 2003), top management must develop and preside over a strong strategic corporate brand perspective (Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Merrilees and Miller, 2008).

2.3   Incorporating CSR into corporate branding

Increasingly, management recognizes the need to promote socially responsible business practices to achieve a sustained strategic advantage (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Sen, Bhattacharya, and Korschun, 2006) and to enhance a corporation's reputation. Reputation, which is the perceptions of all relevant stakeholders (Miles and Govin, 2000) formed through a corporation's actions is an invaluable intangible asset. Corporations through strengthening and protecting the brand's reputation can communicate their credibility (Herbig and Milewicz, 1995) to stakeholders (Maignan, Ferrell, and Ferrell, 2005). Additionally, a plethora of academic research is devoted to corporate social responsibility, its impact, outcome and benefit (Sen et al., 2006). Corporations wanting to attract potential stakeholders are showcasing actions that further a particular social good (Castaldo et al., 2009). However, engaging in corporate social responsibility with the wrong motives can potentially undermine the corporate brand identity and adversely affect a brand's established reputation. Knowledgeable stakeholders, especially consumers (Miller, 2008), are alert to the inauthentic actions of corporations. McWilliams and Siegel (2001) argue that corporate social responsibility involves going beyond the legal requirements. By investing in corporate social responsibility, corporations can secure competitive advantages, financial benefits (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006), build brand awareness (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002) and create brand legitimacy (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Uggla, 2006; Vaaland et al., 2008; Werther Jr and Chandler, 2005), which can in turn strengthen the relationship of stakeholders with the corporate brand. However, few corporations fully leverage the brand building opportunities that corporate social responsibility offers (Blumenthal and Bergstrom, 2003). According to Firestein (2006), reputation is the strongest determinant of any organization's sustainability. While strategies can always be changed, when reputation is gravely injured, it is difficult for an organization to recover. Reputation is rooted in the aggregated perceptions of the organization's stakeholders (Fombrun, Gardberg, and Sever, 2000). Fombrun and van Riel (2003) suggest that organizations with good reputations attract positive stakeholder engagement. A favorable corporate reputation results in business survival and profitability (Roberts and Dowling, 2002), is an effective mechanism to maintain competitive advantage, and can aid in buildling customer retention and satisfaction (Caminiti, 1992) and obtaining favourable media coverage (Fombrun et. al., 2000).

2.4   What Corporate brand Positioning entails

Branding is about creating a unique position and distinguishing the corporation from its rivals. Schmidt and Ludlow (2002) defined positioning as it is normally used in marketing to denote the distinctive market position which a brand has, or wishes to have, in relation to its competition. They presented a holistic approach to positioning. Keller (2000) identified some characteristics for a successful brand which is effectively positioned. And De Chernatony and McDonald (2003) explored the two types of competitive brand advantage: cost-driven and value-added. Positioning is the differentiation of brand or product according to the target market' perception relative to similar offerings in the given markets. All elements

of a company's behavior affect the position in customers' minds. Tadevosyan et al (2008) argued that there was a lake of research about corporate brand positioning, while previous researchers had focused on product brand positioning. In general, brand positioning refers to consumers' perceptions and insights about a special brand as well as the niche the brand occupies in their mind. Chew (2009) differentiated between strategic positioning, strategic position and positioning strategy since the term 'position' has a variety of meanings in the literature. Strategic positioning is synonymous with positioning in the literature and is a process of defining and maintaining a distinctive place in the market for organization, operation, and assessing organization position relative to competitors (Zineldin and Bredenlow, 2001). Several authors suggested two approaches to strategic position: internal organization and external target audience (Reddy and Campbell, 1993; Hooley 2001; Fill 2002; Attia 2003). Strategic position of a corporation is the outcome of decisions made at the corporate level and is influenced by the external environment, such as availability of internal resources and core competences, and the expectations of various internal and external stakeholders (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2006). Strategic position also provides direction for operational positioning. However, positioning at the product/brand or operational level involves identifying how the organization's offerings are perceived by its users/consumers relative to other competing products or brands. Additionally, it develops appropriate marketing mix strategies that support their position in the marketplace (Chew, 2009). Chew (2009) noted that research should assess how investments directed towards internal as well as external stakeholders help in shaping corporate identities. Therefore, the gap in research is to find out how CSR influences corporate positioning. This is closely in line with the research objectives stated before.

2.5   Stakeholder theory and its relevance in brand positioning

While the stakeholder model was introduced to management theory many years ago by Freeman (1984), stakeholder management has developed into one of current management theory's most encompassing concepts (e.g. Donaldson & Preston 1995, Mitchell et al. 1997, Stoney & Winstanley 2001). Freeman's (1984: 25) 'stakeholder view of the firm' instrumentally defines a stakeholder as 'Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives' and he suggests that there is a need for 'integrated approaches for dealing with multiple stakeholders on multiple issues' (1984: 26). While Freeman (1984) framed and demarcated stakeholders as elements of corporate strategic planning, he most importantly demonstrated the urgency of stakeholders for the mission and purpose of the company, and in doing so, also suggested the positive financial implications of better relationships with stakeholders. In line with Freeman's thinking, many other scholars have pursued exploration of the link between corporate social performance and financial performance (Wood 1991, Pava & Krausz 1996), but the conclusions so far paint an unclear picture (Margolis & Walsh 2003).

In recent years, stakeholder theory has developed a focus on the importance of engaging stakeholders in long-term value creation (Andriof et al. 2002). This is a process whose perspective focuses on developing a long-term mutual relationship rather than simply focusing on immediate profit. The emphasis is moved from a focus on stakeholders being managed by companies to a focus on the interaction that companies have with their stakeholders based on a relational and process-oriented view (Andriof & Waddock 2002: 19). This implies an increased interest in understanding how managers can manage not the stakeholders themselves, but relationships with stakeholders. Stakeholder relationships have even been suggested as a source of competitive advantage (Andriof & Waddock 2002, Post et al. 2002, Johnson-Cramer et al. 2003) as those companies with strong relations to other organizations, institutions and partners are in a better position to develop relational rents through relation specific assets, knowledge-sharing routines, complementary resource endowments and effective governance (Dyer & Singh 1998). As argued by Johnson-Cramer et al. (2003: 149) 'The essence of stakeholder dialogue is the co-creation of shared understanding by company and stakeholder'. Therefore with close guidance from available literature, this research extends current research by exploring how internal and external stakeholders evaluate a company's image and positioning.

2.6   The role of CSR and its stakeholders

The employee is one of the most significant stakeholders (Redington 2005). However, the notion of the importance of the employee as a stakeholder is conspicuously absent from management discussion (De Cieri et al. 2005; Pinnington et al. 2007). Employee motivation is usually discussed based on the notion that workers are not motivated only by the need for money and that non-financial elements are also important for employee motivation (Frey 1997). CSR in marketing initiatives have a significant impact on the employees' mind-set. CSR in marketing is compelling and fosters a positive implication of the overall corporate brand on the minds of the aspiring candidates. Thus more people desire to be associated with it. Existing employees take pride in their employer's brand and feel more committed towards their work

and thus tend to have elongated service tenure (Bhattacharya, Sen and Korschun, 2007). Post et al. (2002) argue that the relationship between firms and stakeholders is the sources of a firm's wealth and long-term success since stakeholders are critical resources that have power to impact on firms' achievement. Employees as a unit of analysis have received limited attention in past CSR literature (Aguilera et al., 2007: 839; Rupp et al., 2006; Swanson & Niehoff, 2001). Past CSR and HRM research has mainly focused on relationships between leadership and corporate social behavior (Swanson, 2008; Waldman, Siegel & Javidan, 2006), or defined socially responsible leadership (Waldman & Siegel, 2008).

External stakeholders are equaly important (Smidts, Pruyn, & Riel, 2001; Pratt, 1998). Researchers have studied the process by which Individuals identify their selves with an organization (Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004). Dutton et al. (1994) define "organizational identification" as a perceptual link between the identification of the organization and the individual's self. In this event, the term of identification has moved from the employee prospective to the consumer or external stakeholder (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004). Considering this movement, consumers are key stakeholders who play a significant role in establishing the company reputation and identification (Ferrell, 2004).Identification with a company results in a commitment to it, this commitment play a significant role by enhancing positive attitude toward the company, loyal behavior, and repeat buying (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Brown et al. 2005). Recent studies show that consumer behaviors are positively influenced by customer-company identification (Ahearne et al., 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). Based on Bhattacharya and Sen (2003), consumers who identify their selves with the company behave in a way that supports the corporation's goals. This research will thus consider employees as a group which perceives, evaluates and reacts to CSR and also external stakeholders' mediating roles by explaining how CSR-trigger attitudes and behaviors which may affect organizational image and positioning in society.

3. Methodology

The general design of the research was quantitative in nature which demanded searching the strategic factors of CSR approaches that influence the conduct of business by companies in printing and packaging industry. Participants willing to take part in the survey were contacted via an e-mail invitation. The interview sessions were semi-structured and the key-topics were addressed with closed ended questions. The research took aim at all the 25 Confederation of Zimbabwe (CZI) registered companies in the printing and packaging industry. However, since the list contains many small an upcoming companies, the research sample was streamlined accordingly. With respect to customers, all industrial and ordinary consumers of printing and packaging products were targeted. This entailed grouping these consumers into their respective clusters from which sample representatives will be selected.

Considering the nature of the research, a purposive sampling method was selected as the most appropriate. The sample size was determined largely through the use of Krejcie and Morgan's model of sample size determination. The population size of industry companies is 25 and according to the model, the sample should be 24. However, since some companies did not respond, the final sample size was 10 companies. The questionnaire was designed in a semi-structured nature around the stated research objectives. This was deliberately done to ensure that only relevant questions which help in providing answers to research questions were asked. The semi-structured nature of the questionnaire allowed the use of both closed ended as well as open –ended questions. The use of open and closed questions was deliberately designed in order to be able to obtain both quantitative as well as qualitative data. This way, the researcher was able to triangulate the research results. The open questions were useful in exploring new areas or ones in which the researcher had limited knowledge since the respondents could answer however they wish. Conversely, closed questions enhanced comparability of answer since they are presented with a set of fixed alternatives from which they had to choose an appropriate answer. The draft questionnaire was initially be given to colleagues for scrutiny before it is presented to a few selected customers for further pilot testing. Amendments to the questionnaire were made accordingly resulting in designing of the final questionnaire to be used in this research.

3.1 Validity and reliability of findings

Reliability is defined as the *extent* to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study. If the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. Consistent with the above, reliability of research was achieved through instrument pilot testing. Further, in order to test instrument reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated using the Statistical Package

for Social Sciences (SPSS). Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. For this reason, data triangulation was in order to control bias and establishing valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology. As a result, the researcher combined both quantitative and qualitative techniques in gathering and analyzing research through the use of a semi-structured questionnaire as mentioned. By so doing, triangulation strengthened the study and thus increased its validity. The collected data was analyzed through the use of charts, tables, graphs, diagrams and also content analysis. This entailed a critical analysis of the responses given on order to extract meaning. This process used inductive reasoning, by which themes and categories emerged from the data through the researcher's careful examination and constant comparison.

4. Findings

While twenty questionnaires were sent to the sampled companies, five did not complete them at all. Of the remaining 15 questionnaires returned, 5 were not completed in full and were discarded as unusable leaving only 10 usable questionnaires drawn form 5 company representatives as shown on the table below. With respect to consumers, of the 15 expected, only 10 completed and returned the questionnaires. Therefore, the overall response rate was calculated as 57%.

Table 1a: Univariate Analysis of Variance

Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
Increases corporate image and positioning	1	Strongly agree	15
	2	Agree	5

Table 1b: Tests of between subjects effects

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects
Dependent Variable's through employees tuition fees

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	.067a	1	.067	.692	.416
Intercept	19.267	1	19.267	200.077	.000
Benefits5b	.067	1	.067	.692	.416
Error	1.733	18	.096		
Total	26.000	20			
Corrected Total	1.800	19			

a. R Squared = .037 (Adjusted R Squared = -.016)

In order to strengthen the above results, further analysis of between subject factors revealed a strong correlation with the prediction that by providing schools fees to employees, the company's image and positioning is enhanced. This was confirmed at a significance value of 0.416 and R^2 =0.37. The results as shown on Table 1a and 1b above.

Table 2: One sample T-test

One-Sample Test

				Test Value = 0		
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Builds schools for community	21.877	19	.000	2.300	2.08	2.52
Builds hospitals for community	14.038	19	.000	1.150	.98	1.32
Helps the disadvantaged	12.583	19	.000	1.250	1.04	1.46

A one sample T-Test was conducted to assess the effects of three variables namely building schools for the community, building hospitals for community and helping the disadvantaged in society and their relative contribution towards the creation of brand positioning. These test were done at 95% level of significance. Results showed that while all the three variables are crucial in the building of a strong corporate position, the building of hospitals contributes more with standard deviation of 0.366. This is followed by the assisted rendered to the disadvantage in society and lastly building schools for the community with a standard deviation of 0.470 abut the mean. This is shown on table 2 above. The significant values of 0.001 on Table 2 show a strong prediction proposed by the analyzed variables.

Table 3a: T-Test for Environmental CSR

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Using clean energy sources	20	2.30	.470	.105
Not polluting the environment	20	1.15	.366	.082
Not destroying the environment by cutting down trees	20	1.10	.308	.069

Table 3b: One sample T-test for Environmental CSR

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Using clean energy sources	21.877	19	.000	2.300	2.08	2.52
Not polluting the environment	14.038	19	.000	1.150	.98	1.32
Not destroying the environment by cutting down trees	15.983	19	.000	1.100	.96	1.24

Results relating to the above objective are shown below. A one sample T-Test was conducted to assess the effects of three variables namely using clean energy sources as a way of corporate positioning, not polluting the environment and not destroying the environment through cutting down trees. These test were done at 95% level of significance. Results showed that while all the three variables are crucial in the building of a strong corporate position, companies which do not pollute the environment and pollute it are better positioned in society. This is reflected by the standard deviations of 0.366 and 0.308 respectively. This is shown on tables 3a and 3b above. The significant values of 0.001 on Table 3b all show a strong prediction proposed by the analyzed variables.

Table 4: Correlation analysis

Correlations

		Not polluting the environment	Good corporate image and positioning
Not polluting the environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.898
	N	20	20
Good corporate image and positioning	Pearson Correlation	.031	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.898	
	N	20	20

Using Person's correlation analysis, research results revealed a strong association between not pollution the environment and the company's benefit through the creation of a favourable position in the minds of the community. The strong relationship is reflected by index of 0.31 as shown on Table 4 above.

5. Discussions

The research sought to find out if internally directed CSR support programs by a company helps to improve corporate

brand positioning. 15 out of the sampled respondents of 20 confirmed that indeed CSR directed towards employees through provision of health care services and education and other activities as highlighted in the questionnaire help to improve corporate image and position. It therefore can be concluded that indeed providing such services to employees is good for the corporate positioning. Only 25% disagreed with this assertion. These results are further strengthened by literature which confirmed that CSR's effect on organizational attractiveness is stronger (Albinger & Freeman, 2000), and are directly concerned with the issues addressed by CSR (Blackhaus et al., 2002). CSR can, therefore, be seen as a useful marketing tool for attracting and motivating employees and is an important component of corporate reputation (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). CSR is a form of corporate investment characterized by a dual orientation towards the improvement of social welfare and of stakeholder relations. This focus on stakeholder relations explains why employees, as a stakeholder group, impact CSR policy. Firstly, employees can act as agents for social change when they push corporations to adopt socially responsible behavior (Aguilera et al., 2007). In addition, results of this research revealed that employee morale is enhanced when a company engages in CSR programmes directed towards the employee. This was reflected by the mean score of 1.2 and a standard deviation of 0.410. This small deviation revealed a strong confirmation of the tests.

Various streams of literature revealed that employees as a unit of analysis have received limited attention in past CSR researches (Aguilera et al., 2007: 839; Rupp et al., 2006; Swanson & Niehoff, 2001). It further revealed that past CSR research has mainly focused on relationships between leadership and corporate social behavior (Swanson, 2008; Waldman, Siegel & Javidan, 2006), or defined socially responsible leadership (Waldman & Siegel, 2008). Because of the existence of this gap in literature, the above objective was formulated and can safely conclude that indeed CSR has a strong influence on actual employees and how they evaluate and position corporate brands. Therefore, through this research, this gap in literature has finally been closed.

The second objective of this research was to find out the relationship between community CSR and its role in corporate brand positioning. Results produced by the T-Tests through assessing the effects of three variables namely building schools for the community, building hospitals for community and helping the disadvantaged in society and their relative contribution towards the creation of brand positioning showed that while all the three variables are crucial in the building of a strong corporate position, the building of hospitals contributes more with standard deviation of 0.366. It can be concluded that communities value and appreciate companies which provide services designed to change and improve their lives. This is well supported by literature; for example (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig, 2004).

The results showed the importance of external stakeholders in shaping corporate images and their positions society's mind. The stakeholder theory has developed a focus on the importance of engaging stakeholders in long-term value creation .This is a process whose perspective focuses on developing a long-term mutual relationship rather than simply focusing on immediate profit. The emphasis is moved from a focus on stakeholders being managed by companies to a focus on the interaction that companies have with their stakeholders based on a relational and process-oriented view. This implies an increased interest in understanding how managers can manage not the stakeholders themselves, but relationships with stakeholders. If the consumer perception about a company become self-referential or self-definition for, he or she is said to identify with the entity and position it favorably. Although identification develops and grows over time, a person can identify himself/herself with a company or organization that is yet unknown to him or her, if the consumer believed that, the company share the same values.

Available literature did not explicitly expose the role played by external stakeholders in shaping corporate brands and their position in society. Therefore, a research gap existed and had to be closed. The research thus considered external stakeholders' mediating roles by explaining how CSR-trigger attitudes and behaviors which may affect organizational image and positioning in society. Basing on the results of this research, it is concluded that people are more attached and concern about the organization when they identify their self with that organization and that consumer behaviors are positively influenced by company-customer (c-c) identification. Consumers who identify their selves with the company behave in a way that supports the corporation's goals. The range of identification-driven behaviors includes the actions of company promotion, building of hospitals, schools and other amenities as shown by research results. While building on existing literature, the current research has managed to close the gap and conclude that indeed communities are intertwined with companies and their perceptions matter in corporate brand positioning.

Using the results of the T-Test was conducted to assess the effects of three variables namely use of clean energy sources as a way of corporate positioning, not polluting the environment and not destroying the environment through cutting down trees, it was concluded that all the three variables are crucial in the building of a strong corporate position. Companies which do not pollute the environment and destroy it through cutting down trees are better positioned in society. This was reflected by the standard deviations of 0.366 and 0.308 respectively. Further, using the results from

Pearson's correlation analysis, a strong association between not pollution the environment and the company's benefit through the creation of a favourable position in the minds of the community was established. This implies that the triple bottom line concept (TBL) calls for companies to go beyond profit making motive to environment and society is indeed an important consideration. Evidence suggests proactive environment management enhances firm's market value, reputation, and financial performance. The impact of firms' proactive environmental practices on market share, profitability, and return on investment is better in environmentally conscious companies compared to not-so conscious companies (Ahmed et al., 1998). Business is fundamentally dependent upon society and the environment in which it operates. There is a growing global shift in awareness toward the opportunities that sustainable business practices present corporations.

The gap identified from literature needed to address how environmental programs driven by CSR help corporate brand positioning. For example, while there is an acknowledgement that that businesses depend on the environments in which they operate (Joyner and Payne, 2002; York, 2009), it remained silent on positioning issues hence the need for this research. Strategic positioning is synonymous with positioning in the literature and is a process of defining and maintaining a distinctive place in the market for organization, operation, and assessing organization position relative to competitors. Therefore corporate brand positioning is the outcome of decisions made at the corporate level and is influenced by the external environment, such as availability of internal resources and core competences, and the expectations of various internal and external stakeholders; including the relationship with the environment. This research has managed to close the gap in literature and now conclude that CSR programs directed towards the environment play an important role in positioning corporate brands.

6. Conclusions

On the strengths of the research results, it is thus concluded that CSR not only enhances a corporation's reputation for prospective employees by increasing organizational attractiveness and firm familiarity, but also influences incumbent employees. CSR therefore acts as an external marketing and communication function and suggests that it can be a powerful marketing tool for corporations' internal customers – i.e. their employees. Indeed, by enhancing corporate image and organizational prestige in the eyes of external audiences, CSR also affect employees' identification with their corporation. CSR can directly reinforce employees' self-definition and subsequently their identification and subsequently how they position corporate brands. It is therefore recommended that management commit resources to the improvement of employee welfare as this has an implication on corporate positioning. Poor reputation breeds distrust and thus affect organizational performance.

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