

Corporate social responsibility practice and organizational performance of Nzoia Sugar Ccompany Limited, Kenya

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Abstract

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a strategy used by organizations to achieve their Performance as well as benefit the community. Nzoia Sugar Company is one of the organizations that embrace CSR practice and therefore it is expected to have good performance. The company experiences challenges such as inadequate supply of raw materials as a result of inefficiency in payment of suppliers and limited profits as a result of less sales, among others. The purpose of the study was to examine how corporate social responsibility practice affected organizational performance. The study was guided by stakeholder theory which puts emphasis on the need for organizations to secure the interests of stakeholders and shareholders. Data collection was done by structured and semi-structured questionnaires and interviews guides. The reliability of the instruments was checked by use of Cronbach's alpha which was 0.78 that was high enough, while validity was checked by use of content validity index whose value was 0.66. Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to establish the relationship between the variables. The test was conducted at $p < 01$ and $p < 05$ significance level. The results indicated that sponsorship of sports had the highest influence on performance with correlation of $r = 0.761$, followed by educational support with $r = 0.672$. Promotion of community health and supporting income generating activities had $r = 0.488$ and $r = 0.540$ respectively. Findings provide insights about the type of CSR activities that may be important in influencing performance of companies. The company can also make their CSR practice known to the community and beyond through advertisements.

Key words: Corporate Social Responsibility, Organizational Performance and Practice.

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is one of the strategies in management of corporate organizations such as Nzoia Sugar Company limited. It is an important engagement which can help organizations to achieve their intended objectives. According to Caruana, Vella, Konietzny and Chircop (2018), corporate social responsibility deals with discretionary allocation of corporate resources towards improvement of social welfare such as enhancing relationships with the key stakeholders of the organizations. Zuraida and Sugianto (2019) define corporate social responsibility as the company's sense of responsibility to the community and its economic and social development.

Studies have been conducted on organizational performance such as Rahman and Jusoh (2018), in his study concluded that organizational performance are concepts that majorly focus on firm's economic and social position.

Gulati (2017) in his study in India also found out that most of the companies spend close to 2% of the net profit on corporate social responsibility activities such as education sponsorship, sporting activities among others. Lee, Hur and Sung (2015) in their study also highlighted the importance of companies sponsor sporting activities as a corporate social responsibility practice in order to nurture the talent of sporting among the youth.

Alharthey (2016) conducted a study in Saudi Arabia and established that organizations need to adopt best practices on corporate social responsibility in order to improve performance. Chen, Gao and Zhang (2019) in their studies found out that CSR activities are among the best practices that need to be emphasized by corporate organizations for good performance.

A study conducted by Du Plessis, Varottil and Veldman (2018) inform that CSR contributes to organizations good performance. Obeidat, Al Bakri, Farrag and Al-Esmael (2016) in their survey conducted in Qatar, provide evidence of the linkage between corporate social responsibility and organizational performance. In Greece, a study was conducted by Karaiskos, Evangelinos, Vouros and Nikolaou (2019) which provided evidence of a positive relationship that existed between engagement in corporate social responsibility activities and financial performance of firms.

Ng'eni, Bukwimba, Kwesigabo and Kaaya (2015) in an exploratory study carried out in Tanzania advocate for firms to engage in CSR as it was found to result in community development. A longitudinal study conducted in Zambia by Choongo (2017) shows how organizations' performance was influenced by CSR activities. In Kenya, Robert, Lyria and Mbgogo (2016) conducted a study on CSR and Organizational performance and the results provide evidence on how the two are positively correlated.

Sugar Industry in Kenya is among the key contributors to the gross domestic products, and companies such as Nzoia Sugar play an important role in the growth of economic sector by purchasing sugarcane from close to 67000 farmers in the region (Kenya Sugar Board, 2017). According to Nzoia Sugar Company reports (2019), the company has made efforts of giving back to the community through corporate social responsibility programs such as support for education, promoting health, providing clean water and improving road network among others. However, more needs to be done on the practice of the company's CSR to the community for them to remain loyal and have confidence in the company for good performance. Therefore, corporate social responsibility activities are associated with improved profitability in organizations (Wachuka, 2016; Mbithi, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Corporate social responsibility is a practice that has drawn a lot of interest in the organizations because it is a component of strategic management. Nzoia Sugar Company is currently facing performance challenges despite the fact that it participates in CSR activities. Elobeid, Lele and Kaifi (2016) view CSR as a practice that increases marketability which result in profitability of firms which leads to improved performance.

Organizations have devised ways of ensuring that they participate in corporate social responsibility activities in order to extend service to the community which later results in good performance. Gulati (2017) conducted a study in India and

the results indicate that most organizations budget close to 2% of the net profit on corporate social responsibility activities in areas such as education, sports among others. Nzoia Sugar Company has engaged in CSR activities including sponsorship for sporting activities, support for educational program, participation in income generating activities, and promotion of healthcare among members of the surrounding community (Littegate Publishing, 2019; Eloheid, Lele & Kaifi, 2016; Miragaia, Martins, Kluka & Havens, 2015).

In Kenya, studies have been conducted on CSR and the findings show that there is a positive correlation (Robert, Lyria & Mbgogo, 2016). The current study therefore used Pearson Moment correlation coefficient analysis to establish the relationship between corporate social responsibility practice and organizational performance of Nzoia Company limited and also sought to find out whether CSR has any influence on organizational performance.

Literature review

This section focuses on review of various empirical and theoretical studies relating to corporate social responsibility practice and organizational performance. The section also outlined conceptual framework of the study.

Empirical literature

CSR is a practice that is perceived to have a relationship with organizational performance. Studies have been conducted on CSR practice and performance of organizations such as Gulati (2017) who conducted a study in India and found out that most of the companies spend close to 2% of the net profit on corporate social responsibility activities such as education sponsorship and sporting activities among others. Karaiskos, Evangelinos, Vouros and Nikolaou (2019) in their study conducted in Greece, provided evidence of a positive relationship that existed between engagement in corporate social responsibility activities and financial performance of firms. Alharthey (2016), in his study in Saudi Arabia, established that organizations need to adopt best practices on corporate social responsibility in order to improve performance. Obeidat, Al Bakri, Farrag and Al-Esmael (2016) in their survey conducted in Qatar, provide evidence of the linkage between corporate social responsibility and organizational performance.

Ng'eni, Bukwimba, Kwesigabo and Kaaya (2015) in an exploratory study carried out in Tanzania advocate for firms to engage in CSR as it was found to result in community development. A longitudinal study conducted in Zambia by Choongo (2017) shows how organizations' performance was influenced by CSR activities. In Kenya, Robert, Lyria and Mbgogo (2016) conducted a study on CSR and Organizational performance and the results provide evidence that CSR contributes positively to organizational performance.

In Kenya Sugar Industry is among the key contributors to the gross domestic products, and companies such as Nzoia Sugar play an important role in the growth of economic sector by purchasing sugarcane from close to 67000 farmers in the region (Kenya Sugar Board, 2017). According to Nzoia Sugar Company reports (2019), the company has made efforts of giving back to the community through corporate social responsibility programs such as support for education, promoting health, providing clean water and improving road network among others. However, more needs to be done on the advertisement of the company's CSR to the community for them to remain loyal and have confidence in the company which will positively influence good performance. Therefore, corporate social responsibility activities are associated with improved profitability which results in good performance (Wachuka, 2016; Mbithi, 2015).

Corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility is a practice which organizations engage in extending their services and products to the community either at a subsidized rate or for free. It can be defined as an integration of companies on a voluntary basis, of social and environmental concern which reflects the internal operations and relations with the community (Delgado, 2018; Yiğit & Kirezli, 2019).

Corporate social responsibility at Nzoia Sugar Company is defined in terms of activities that the Company engages in such as support for educational programs, sponsorship of sporting activities, availability of health care facilities to the community and promoting income generating activities to the community.

Organizational performance

Organizational performance is an aspect characterized by organizational growth and development. Studies have been conducted on the concept of organizational performance such as Qayyum and Ashraf (2015) in their study, stated that organizational performance is a situation where a firm is able to achieve its market goals (Zoogah, 2018; Chouchane & Louati, 2018). Martin-Rios and Ciobanu (2019) contend that organizational performance has to do with firm's financial performance especially on sales turnover. Therefore organizational performance at Nzoia Sugar Company was viewed in terms of return on investments as well as profitability and increased market share of the company.

Corporate social responsibility and organizational performance

Organizations participate in CSR activities for a number of reasons such as improving performance. A study conducted by Mehralian, Nazari, Zarei and Reza (2016) in Iranian pharmaceutical industry revealed that organizations involved in corporate social responsibility are associated with improved performance. Studies conducted in Kenyan banking industry also established corporate social responsibility activities such as sports, leads to improvement in the marketability and profitability of companies (Wachuka, 2016; Mbithi, 2015).

It is important for organizations to participate in CSR activities such as sporting, education, health facilities among others (Damayanti, Antara & Bagiastuti, 2018; Adriana & Simon, 2017; Lins, Servaes & Tamayo, 2017; Muhammad, Khokhar & Iqbal, 2018). The study focused on the influence of CSR activities on performance by Nzoia Sugar Company limited. CSR practice was identified because it is very important in addressing the socio economic development of the areas of jurisdiction and one of the big 4 agenda, which is industrialization.

Educational support and organizational performance

Investment in education is important for any nation. Corporate organizations target sponsorship of education as one of the key corporate social responsibility activities. Gulati (2017) conducted a study in India and pointed out that companies invest heavily on corporate social responsibility such as sponsorship in education within the community. Walker and Sarkodie (2018) in their study on Canadian mining companies also highlight the importance of sponsoring education as way of giving back to the community.

Sponsorship of sports and organizational performance

Sponsorship for sporting activities has been widely practiced by organizations as a corporate social responsibility activity. Participation of company staff in sports and purchase of football kits for local teams is very important. Sponsorship of sports has been perceived to improve organizational performance. Therefore infusion of such practice would have the net effect of boosting market share and performance in organizations (Hamori, 2013; Harvard Business Review, 2011; Palmer, 2012; Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

Promotion of community health and performance

Organizations perceive promotion of community health in activities such as extension of medical benefits to the community and working in conjunction with healthcare providers to provide free medical camps to the community. Involvements in CSR activities that can boost the health of the community have resulted in organizations to be perceived positively by the community. In India, the involvement of companies such as Life Insurance Corporation in extending the health benefits to the members of the community has had positive impact on the performance (Weber, 2008; Brugmann & Prahalad, 2007).

Supporting income generating activities and performance

Activities such as support for entrepreneurial efforts for members of the community and supporting young talents,

enables the community to economically grow and develop. A linkage exists between supporting income generating activities and performance of organizations. In countries like India and Spain companies have incorporated NGOs in embracing the CSR agenda for the communities (Reverte, Melero & Navarro, 2016; Sood and Arora, 2006; Husted, 2003; Singh & Bhagat, 2004).

Theoretical review

The study identified Stakeholder Theory as a guide towards achieving its objective.

Stakeholder theory

The Theory was used in understanding the role played by corporate social responsibility in organizational performance. It was premised on the notion that any group or individual can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives (Berg, Holtbrügge, Egri, Furrer, Sinding & Dögl, 2018). Amos and Baffour Awuah (2017) emphasize the fact that stakeholder theory is one of the most important theories when discussing corporate social responsibility in organizations. Lerdkanjanaporn, Kumsuprom and Jongsureyapart (2018) posit that CSR practice is associated with good reputation of organizations which leads to improved marketability and increase in the number of clientele which ensures that both the company and customers benefit. The Theory is important in understanding the relationship between corporate social responsibility practice and organizational performance of Nzoia Sugar Company limited.

Conceptual framework

This depicted the relationship between independent and dependent variables of the study. Educational support was viewed in terms of how Nzoia Sugar Company is able to come up with programs to support the community on sponsorship of needy students, purchase of school equipment, involvement in building and construction of education facilities. Sponsorship of sporting activities in the community is viewed in terms of the company organizing for sports competition with other teams and purchase of sports kits for local teams in order to help nurture the talents of youths in the community. Promotion of health facilities in the community has been initiated through establishment of health facilities, provision of drugs and human resource. The practice of supporting income generating activities by Nzoia Sugar Company comes in form of helping the community in entrepreneurial activities by providing the human resource and extending training on the same.

On the other hand, organizational performance was viewed in terms of the company being able to achieve their objectives and have an increase on investment.

Methodology

Study design

Study design is a framework that is used for the purposes of data collection and analysis that one uses during a given study (Bryman, 2008). Descriptive case study design was used in order to establish how Corporate Social Responsibility practices as independent variables of the study, influenced organizational performance of Nzoia Sugar Company.

Study area

The study was conducted at Nzoia Sugar Company Limited on CSR practice and organizational performance and data was collected from employees, managers and directors of the company.

Target population

Table 1: Target Population

Company	Population	Percentage
Directors	6	1.5 %
Managers	12	3 %
Employees	104	26 %
Customers	278	69.5 %
Total	400	100%

Source: Study (2017)

Sample size

The sample size of 196 respondents was determined by use of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table from the target population of 400. Stratified simple random and purposive sampling was used to select respondents from different categories.

Study Instruments

Self-administered semi structured questionnaires were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative primary data from employees and customers, whereas interview guides were used to collect qualitative data from directors and managers respectively. The instruments were tested and checked by the experts, using Cronbach's alpha and content validity index, the values were 0.78 and 0.66 respectively, which were high enough.

Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis was carried out by use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Inferential analysis was carried out using Pearson's Product moment correlation analysis to establish the relationship between corporate social responsibility practice and organizational performance at Nzoia Sugar Company. Normality was tested using Shapiro-Wilk test statistic that was found to be statistically significant at 5% level. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis.

Ethical considerations

The study was carried out within the confines of proper ethical considerations. All the participants were properly briefed of the purpose of the study by way of letter of introduction. Anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of the respondents were assured. All the scholarly work in the review of literature was properly cited in order to avoid cases of plagiarism.

Data presentation

Findings of the quantitative analyzed data are presented in tables and figures as well as narration while qualitative analyzed data is presented in narrative form.

4.0. Findings

This section provides a summary of the findings in line with the objective of the study. The results show that majority of the respondents were customers 136(69.39%) because they were the beneficiaries of the CSR activities sponsored by Nzoia Sugar Company, followed by employees 51(26.02%) who gave the data that was used to establish the relationship between corporate social responsibility activities and organizational performance. Managers and directors were also interviewed in order to establish an in depth information about policies on CSR practice and the level of performance in the company.

Pearson moment correlation coefficient analysis

Pearson moment correlation analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between corporate social responsibility practice and organizational performance at Nzoia Sugar Company as shown in table

Table 2: Correlation of corporate social responsibility practice and organizational performance

CSR practice	Test statistic	Performance
Educational support	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.672* .0230
Sponsorship of sports	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.761* .0342
Promotion of community health	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.488** .0081
Supporting income generating activities	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.540** .0063

Source: *Research Study* (2017).

Note: $N = 196$

From the table, it can be concluded that sponsorship of sports had a value of $r = 0.761$, followed by educational support programs with a value of $r = 0.672$, supporting income generating activities had a value of $r = 0.540$ and promotion of community health had a value of $r = 0.488$. From the results, it is indicated that the values of the correlation coefficients are all positive and therefore it can be concluded that there is a strong positive relationship that exists between corporate social responsibility and organizational performance at Nzoia Sugar Company. The findings corroborates with a study conducted in India by Gulati (2017) who concluded that organizational performance can be influenced by sponsorship of sports related corporate social responsibility activities. Findings of promotion of community health had the least influence of $r = 0.488$, which shows that the CSR practice did not have much influence on organizational performance. The findings corroborate what was observed by Mbithi (2015) who pointed out that sponsorship of sports in the community is one of the most effective CSR activities that is associated with organizational performance but differ with promotion of health in the community.

Conclusions

From the study findings, it can be concluded that Nzoia Sugar Company is committed on ensuring that it puts in place the necessary measures needed to support educational efforts in the community.

It can also be concluded that sponsorship of sports and educational programs are the most important corporate social responsibility activities for the Company as they seem to have the highest influence on performance of the organization in terms of marketability and profitability.

Unlike educational support and sponsorship of sport, it can also be concluded that promotion of health in the community does not have much influence on organizational performance at Nzoia Sugar Company.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the company should support educational programs by increasing the budgetary allocation on education CSR in order to build more schools and other forms of education support in the community.

The study also recommends that the company should encourage and maintain the corporate social responsibility activities at Nzoia Sugar Company.

Despite the fact that support of income generating and promotion of health facility activities do not have significant influence on organizational performance at Nzoia Sugar Company, the study recommends that the company identifies reasons why the CSR activities are not significantly influential and come up with measures of making the activities effective and influential such as advertisements.

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