



CONSUMERS PERCEPTION OF THE EFFECT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON PERFORMANCE OF SOFT DRINKS FIRMS IN BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study empirically examined the relationship between consumers' perception of the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample size of 400 respondents was considered in the study on the basis of convenience sampling technique. Sampling location comprised consumers' of soft drinks brand in Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria. Copies of 400 structured questionnaire were administered to respondents. However, 367 sets of questionnaire were found to be valid and usable. Data collected through questionnaire administration were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Hypotheses were tested using Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression technique. The study used both the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 24.0) and Econometric (E-views 8.0) software for data analysis. The study found that ethical, philanthropic, economic responsibilities have statistically significant influence on consumers' perception which affects the performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City. It was also found that legal responsibilities do not significantly influence on consumers' perception which affect performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City. Therefore, on the basis of the findings, the study recommends that management of consumer soft drinks firms should be aware that today's host communities are well informed and more knowledgeable in their collation of information in other to meet-up with their demands. Managements of soft drinks firms should improve their CSR activities by displaying high level of professionalism in terms of ethical, philanthropic, economic and legal responsibilities.

Keywords: *Corporate social responsibility, Economic, Ethical, Legal, Philanthropic.*

1. Introduction

The history of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) dates back to as early as the 1950s, when businesses and academic researchers started exploring the relationship between business and society (Carroll, 1999). The concept of CSR became popular in the early 21st century. Virtually all large organization adopts CSR practices to meet societal and customer needs (Vahdati, Mousavi



& Tajik, 2015). In recent years with the increasing competition in the market, CSR has been much considered towards improving the economy (Zeinalabedinzadeh & Hashemiamin, 2017).

CSR is the benchmark on how an organization determines and fulfills its mission, governs by its norms and values, engages with its stakeholders and evaluates its performances and publicly reports on its activities. The importance CSR as an essential disseminating mechanism in almost all organizations in contemporary societies cannot be underestimated. With the development of multinational companies CSR has become a very important corporate activity (Lili & Jiaqi, 2017). Thus, the significant for CSR for the sustenance and improvement of the environment remains germane to all stakeholders (Asemah, Okpanachi, Olumuji, 2013b). Therefore, the belief that beyond making profit for the shareholders, business enterprises should also serve the interests of all other stakeholders has culminated into the CSR philosophy (Ananaba & Chukwuka, 2016). Customers are constantly demanding that organisations become socially responsible irrespective of their size or other factors. Since the societies, globally encounter various social problems, customers expect organisations to help in solving these problems using their resources effectively. Although in the contemporary era, it has gone beyond that as business organization now reason beyond profit maximization. The perceptions about CSR have evolved considerably within this decade with societal contribution of a company used as a yardstick to measure companies' success (Saunders, 2006). Kalu, Anyanwu, Maduenyoghasi and Ikechukwu (2014) stated that firms should continue to infuse fit perception of core brands on extended brands tailored to provide bundles of extra solution to demand, in order to accommodate all categories of consumers, and thus maintain corporate relevance while making profit through sustained growth rate of sales.

There are enormous expenses involved in engaging in social responsibility that may affect the performance of firms (Ishola & Ishola, 2019). It is also imperative to mention that, within the Nigerian context, there is dearth of research studies that have shed light on CSR and consumers' perception of soft drinks firms. Some of the previous studies that examined CSR are the works of (Ishola & Ishola, 2019; Kehinde & Worlu 2018; Kehinde, 2016). The study of Ishola and Ishola (2019) examined CSR and its effects on the performance of insurance sector in Nigeria. Kehinde and Worlu (2018) conducted a comparative study concerning the effect of CSR on the profitability of first bank and eco bank in Nigeria while Kehinde (2016) studied effect of ethical behaviour on the performance of three service organizations in Lagos, Nigeria. Therefore, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, none of these studies examined consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City. CSR is an important arm of the total marketing system in stimulating consumer's perception on performance of soft drink firms. Based on this there is need for an appropriate CSR approach for the successful operation of the soft drink firms. However, for soft drink firms to be at least near perfection, it must rate high in its core activities such ethical, philanthropic, legal and economic responsibilities and have the ability to organize and implement them properly. Therefore, this serve as the gaps this study sought to fill. This study will be beneficial to government as regulatory institution; corporate organizations and corporate managers; potential academic researchers and contribution to knowledge.

The main objective of this study is to empirically examine consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:



- a. Determine how ethical responsibilities influence consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.
- b. Ascertain the relationship between philanthropic responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.
- c. Evaluate how economic responsibilities affect consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.
- d. Assess the effect of legal responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.

This study has the following null hypotheses.

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between ethical responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between philanthropic responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between economic responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.
- Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between legal responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.

2. Literature Review and Theory

2.1 Firm Performance

Firms in the production line of soft drinks and others that fully or in part, that belong to the same class, have obviously explored immensely from the strategies of reaching target market with new products under existing brand names (Kalu, *et al.*, 2014). A typical example is that of Coca Cola which has maintained existing market and penetrated new markets with new products using global brand names like "Coke". Today, it is common for consumers of Coca Cola soft drinks to patronize new soft drinks with extended brand name of Coke such as, diet Coke, Coke light, Vanilla Coke, Coke free and so forth within the Coke family. Success in the carbonated soft drinks is based on the establishment of an effective (good distribution across stores) portfolio of brands across most of the product attributes (Sutton, 1998). Kalu, *et al.* (2014) also indicate that firms should continue to infuse fit perception of core brands on extended brands tailored to provide bundles of extra solution to demand, to accommodate all categories of consumers, and thus maintain corporate relevance while making profit through sustained growth rate of sales. Thus, the operational definition of performance in this study is sales growth in order to a relevant profit.

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

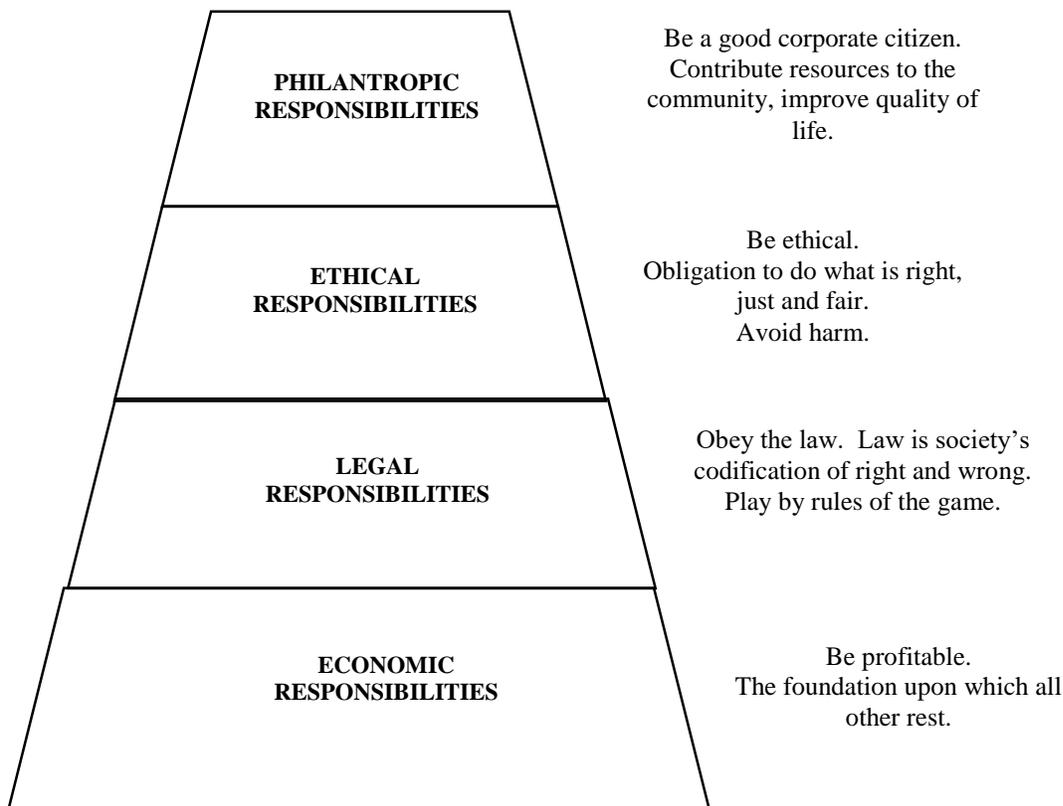
CSR is described as a collection of activities which are of direct benefit to society that a firm voluntarily or discretionally undertakes. These activities form part of the overall corporate responsibilities that the firm owes its stakeholders and the natural environment within its scope of operations (Duke & Kankpang, 2013). Nwanne (2016) describes CSR as the act of assisting and providing adequate amenities to host communities. It could be through provision of electricity, pipe-borne water, building of good roads and ensuring security in the society or environment among others. CSR are activities which focus on social responsibilities beyond profit making. This concept proposes that organisations should not only focus on profitability, but also make contributions within the society (Lin & Amin, 2016). Haryono and Iskandar (2016) opines that a corporation should be accountable for any of its actions that affect their stakeholders and their host

communities and societies as a whole. Adeneye and Ahmed (2016) state that CSR is the ability of a company to be socially responsible to the growth and development of the environment in which it operates. They stated that voluntary services given by a company to the society, in turn could lead to increase purchasing behaviour, goodwill, brand image the company will have in the society. Also, the ability of a company to engage in environmental protection, charitable programmes and community relations will make them to exhibit sound and increased performance over their competitors that pay mere issue to CSR activities. Adeyanju (2012) study reveals that CSR plays a significant role in societal progressiveness in terms of environmental and economic growth.

2.3 Dimensions of Corporate Social Responsibility

Carroll (1991) pyramid of CSR which is a presentation of the dimensions of CSR. The CSR concept has four kinds of social responsibilities dimension which include; economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities.

Figure 1: Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility.



Source: Adapted from Carroll (1991).

2.3.1 Philanthropic Responsibilities

They refer to as discretionary responsibilities, which business organization voluntarily engage in such as public relations activities, good citizenship, philanthropic activities to host communities (Donwa & Odia, 2011). Examples of philanthropy include business contributions to financial resources such as contributions to education, health, social infrastructures and so forth.



Philanthropic CSR describes a company's support for a cause or activity that occurs outside of their business operations, but provides benefit to society (Kerlin & Gagnaire, 2009).

2.3.2 Ethical Responsibilities

It entails that the business organization will behave in a fair and just way (Donwa & Odia, 2011). Ethical responsibilities are responsibilities that a company puts on itself because its owners believe it is the right thing to do, not because they have an obligation to do so (Asemah, Okpanachi, & Edegoh, 2013a). Businesses are expected to willfully comply with ethical expectations rather than just obeying laws and keeping stipulated regulations (Amadi & Ndu, 2018).

2.3.3 Legal Responsibilities

Donwa and Odia (2011) state that legal responsibilities involve obligations and duties the business organization is expected to abide by the laid down laws of the land and other regulations by various agencies (authorities). Legal responsibilities relate to the expectation that organisations will comply with the laws set down by society to govern competition in the marketplace (Asemah, *et al.*, 2013b).

2.3.4 Economic Responsibilities

Donwa and Odia (2011) emphasize that economic responsibilities are considered as the most legitimate and social responsibility of business organization which are set up to provide society goods and services at reasonable cost and maximize profits. Asemah, *et al.* (2013b) stated that economic responsibilities refer to society's expectation that organisations will produce goods and services that are needed and desired by customers and sell those goods and services at a reasonable price.

2.3.5 Consumers' Perception

Consumers' perception refers to the process through which consumers selects, organises and interprets information/stimuli inputs to generate meaningful image of a brand or a product (Yadav & Jain, 2016). CSR can be perceived in two major structures. The first is the internal aspect, which is associated with the firm's workers, actors, shareholders, operations and so forth. The second is the external outlook, which takes into account the consequences of the actions of the firm on its external environment, its business associates and also the communities (Coelho, Filipe & Ferreira, 2011).

2.4 Community Involvement and Consumer Perception

Skills undertaken by community with partnership with organizations to empower individuals and groups of people, which in turn has the ability of turning the performance of the organization (Ajide & Aderemi, (2014). Eze and Victor (2013) state that society in the past, did not attach importance to the issue of CSR, as their expectations were only focused on organization efficient resources allocation as well as its profit maximization.

2.5 Environmental Protection and Consumer Perception:

One of the activities in environmental protection and sustainability includes elements like ensuring environmental sustainability, ecological balance, protection of vegetation and wildlife, animal welfare, agro forestry, conservation of natural resources, maintaining quality of soil, air and water (Marak & Singh, 2014). Zaccheaus, oluwagbemiga and Olugbenga (2014) opine that corporate



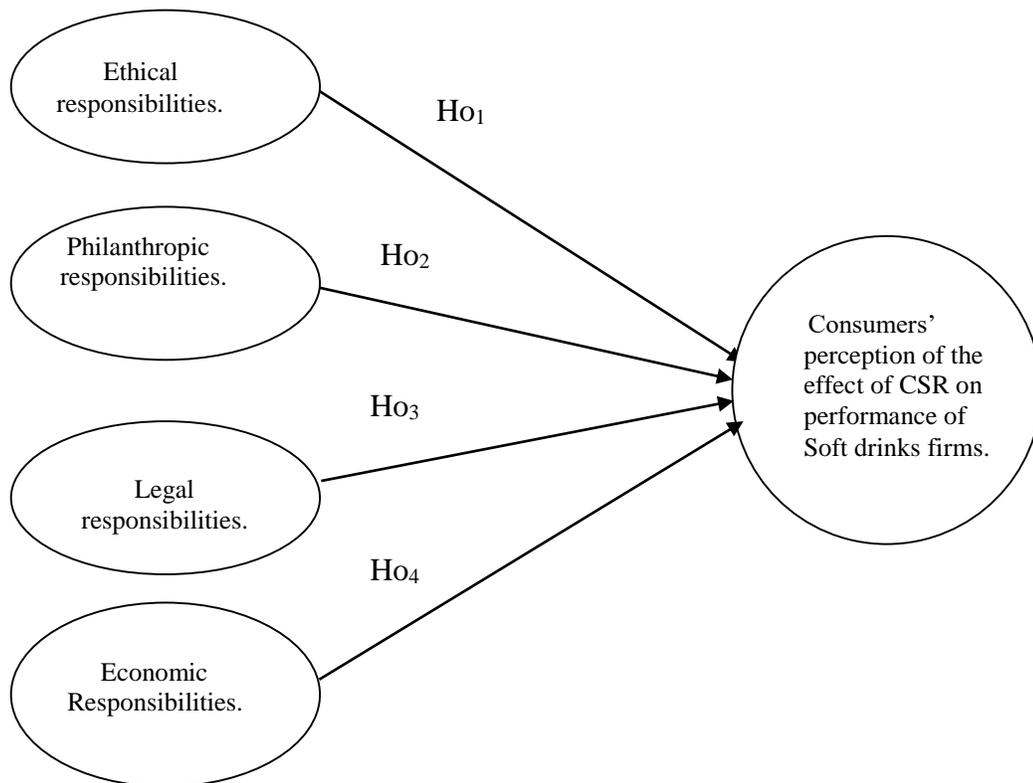
business activities create interactions between the corporation and the environments within which they operate.

2.6 Responsible Business Practices and Consumer Perception: Pollak (2010) indicated that the term ‘responsible business practices’ refers to the practice of conducting business with deliberation for ethical, environmental and community goals in addition to being a good employer and attempting to make a profit. Planken, Nickerson and Sahu (2013) noted that environmental projects and initiatives that aim to improve employees’ working conditions, relate to the legal and ethical platforms work place.

2.7 Working Conditions and Consumer Perception:

Wuyah, Ranta and Akpan (2016) argue that CSR is an organisation’s initiatives to assess and take responsibility for the organization effects on environmental employees working conditions. It is something that organisations must take part in to function in this modern business world. Bediko (2017) argues organizations should be aware that employment relationships involve rights and obligations related to providing good conditions of work and social protection, such as decent working conditions of work in wages, hours, health and safety, maternity protection and work-life balance.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework



Source: Researchers’ Conceptualization (2021).



2.8 Empirical Review

Uadiale and Fagbemi (2012) assessed the relationship between corporate social responsibility and financial performance in developing economies: The Nigerian Experience. The study was therefore focuses on developing economies and on Nigeria specifically. Using a sample of forty audited financial statements of quoted companies in Nigeria. The results show that CSR has a positive and significant relationship with the financial performance measures. Asemah, *et al.* (2013a) conducted a study on business advantages of corporate social responsibility practice: a critical review. The paper examined the effect of business advantages of CSR practice. The paper was anchored on two theories; stakeholder's theory, and iron law of CSR. Previous studies were reviewed and it was discovered that several benefits abound to organisations that practice CSR. It recommends that organisations should endeavour to pay due attention to CSR and this practice should be a continuous one. Asemah, *et al.* (2013b) carried out a study at examining universities and corporate social responsibility performance: an implosion of the reality. The aim of their study was to examine the need for universities to carry out CSR programmes. The qualitative research method was used as the research method while personal interview was used to gather data from the respondents. Findings also show that there are various areas of CSR universities can pay attention to. The study recommends that universities should endeavour to be social responsible, if they want to win the goodwill of their stakeholders.

Ananaba and Chukwuka (2016) studied corporate social responsibility and its implementation in Nigeria: problems and prospects. The paper aims at studying the commitment of foreign as well as local businesses in achievement of CSR in Nigeria. The research adopted the qualitative research, as it reviews the literature relating to the problems of implementing CSR in Nigeria. They found out that some factors such as inability of Nigeria government to enforce CSR into law, corruption and selfishness poses as a serious obstacle to companies to implement CSR effectively and efficiently in Nigeria. Finally the study recommended among other things that the government of Nigeria should put into law, which is providing a legal framework for companies on CSR. Ohiokha, Odion and Akhalumeh (2016) in their study corporate social responsibility and corporate financial performance: the Nigerian experience. The aim of their paper was to demonstrate empirically the impact of CSR on firm's financial performance. The paper adopted a pooled panel survey research design method. The result indicated that CSR has little impact on the sample firms' Earning per Share (EPS). The paper recommends amongst others that corporate organizations should be involved in CSR by spending reasonable amount of their revenues on social responsibility.

Another study was conducted by Botsian (2019) on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and corporate financial performance: relationships in different countries. The study examined the literature about relationship between CSR and Corporate Financial Performance (CFP) in different countries. The finding show that results in one country can differ in another. Firstly, the study enhances understanding of the relationship between CSR and CFP. Secondly, the study expands information about CSR in different countries to scholars and researchers.

2.9 Stakeholder Theory

The discussion and definition of stakeholder theory began with (Freeman, 1984). According to Freeman, a stakeholder is an individual or a group which gets affected or can have an effect on the accomplishments of an organization's objectives (Freeman, 1999). Freeman's stakeholder theory



points out that a company is not only responsible to its stakeholders, but also to all sorts of stakeholders in society. Consumers are given certain attention, since their reactions have an important relationship with corporation's managerial decision-making (Brown & Dacin, 1997). In other words, stakeholders' interest in the customer is a key factor which is taken into consideration when operating corporations. When studying CSR, it is essential to identify responsibilities and the parties who are going to assume those responsibilities (Clarkson, 1995). In stakeholder theory, CSR is further expanded, but includes enterprise social responsibility assessment, making measurement possible. As consumers are important business-related stakeholder group, their preferences and behaviour can directly influence the development of an enterprise. As defined earlier, CSR is a corporate behaviour that aims to positively influence consumers as stakeholders. Important stakeholders also impact the corporation's CSR. For instance, consumers who buy products create pressure leading the corporation to pay attention to social issues (Gilbert & Rasche, 2007). Hence, stakeholder theory is logically connected with CSR (Friedman, 1970). The stakeholder theory asserts that organizations are not only obligated to their shareholders but also to their global constituency of governments, local communities, customers and the general public (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988).

3. Methodology

Geographically, this study is limited to Benin City, capital of Edo State, Nigeria. Respondents comprised consumers of soft drinks brand in the metropolis. The study was largely descriptive in nature and for that purpose; a survey research design was adopted. A quantitative instrument was used to elicit data on variables of the study and was administered to the respondents within Benin City. The population was based on the ease of accessibility and proximity of the researchers to the respondents. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling was used to select the sample and was also adopted as data collection method to this study. Questionnaire was administered on a sample size of 400 respondents. Primary data collection was used in the study. The data for the study was collected by means of a questionnaire. The items for operationalization and measurement of variable were sub-sectionalized along identified dimensions of dependent and independent variables of this study. The variables were measured accordingly with the use of Likert-type five point scale. According to Kothari and Garg (2016:81), "Likert-type scale is considered more reliable because under it respondents answer each statement included in the instrument".

There are two main sections in the questionnaires, the first section- demographic characteristics of the respondents. These characteristics are: gender, marital status, age group, career and educational qualification. The second section of the questionnaire is the dependent variable; consumers' perception and the independent variables; ethical, philanthropic, economic and legal responsibilities. There are twenty five questions in this section. Measures for dependent and independent variables used a five-point Likert-type response format, "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree" as the anchors. The respondents recorded their assessment of the items on five-point Likert-type scales (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree). To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument constructed by the researchers. The research instrument, the questionnaire, was given to some experts in the field to confirm its validity, taking due cognizance of the research objectives. To ensure reliability of the instrument, 20 copies of the questionnaire were administered to some of the sampled respondents in a pilot study to pre-test the research instrument. The data collected from the retrieved



questionnaires were tested with a construct composite reliability co-efficient (Cronbach’s alpha) to determine the internal consistency of the instrument items. The result of the Cronbach’s Alpha (α) values for each latent variable are; ethical responsibilities 0.822, philanthropic responsibilities 0.838, economic responsibilities 0.830, legal responsibilities 0.839 and consumers’ perception 0.874. Sekaran (2003) asserts that the closer the reliability coefficient gets to 1.0, the better it is, and those values over 0.80 are considered as good. Those values in the 0.70 are considered as acceptable and those reliability values less than 0.60 are considered to be poor. In this study the cut-off (benchmark) used for acceptable results in terms of reliability was 0.70 value of Cronbach’s statistic. Data collected through questionnaire administration for the achievement of the research objectives were analyzed using both the descriptive and inferential statistics. The study used both the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 24) and Econometric (E-views 8.0) software for data analysis.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

This section presents and analyzes the data generated for the study in tables. A total of 400 copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents but 367, that is, 91.75% copies of questionnaire were duly returned and usable and subsequently analyzed. This figure satisfied the attrition rate allowed for the research to be deemed acceptable.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Characteristic	Categories	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	147	55.1
	Female	120	44.9
	Total	367	100
Marital Status	Single	129	48.3
	Married	138	51.7
	Total	367	100
Age	Less than 20years	37	13.9
	21 – 30years	51	19.1
	31 – 40years	91	34
	41 – 50years	68	25.5
	Above 51years	20	7.5
	Total	367	100
Career	Government sector	39	10.6
	Self-employed	200	54.5
	Student	128	34.9
	Total	367	100
Educational Qualification	SSCE/GCE	29	10.9
	ND/NCE	45	16.9
	HND/First degree	110	41.2
	Masters	69	25.8
	Ph.D	14	5.2
	Total	367	100

Source: Field Survey, (2021)



4.2 Inferential Statistics

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Correlation t-Statistic Probability	Consumers' perception	Ethical	Philanthropic	Economic	Legal
Consumers' perception	1.000000 ----- -----				
Ethical	0.346321 54.69213 0.0000	1.000000 ----- -----			
Philanthropic	0.482612 30.34218 0.0000	0.467313 52.54566 0.0000	1.000000 ----- -----		
Economic	0.553274 22.84321 0.0000	0.542789 37.54750 0.0000	0.543227 65.54644 0.0000	1.000000 ----- -----	
Legal	0.338465 38.21102 0.0000	0.630556 27.26578 0.0000	0.631178 25.72941 0.0000	0.641300 36.53538 0.0000	1.000000 ----- -----

Source: E-views, 8.0 Output

Table 2 presents the correlation matrix of variables adopted in the study. Statistically, a correlation coefficient of 0.90 and above indicates the presence of multicollinearity between exogenous latent constructs (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham 2010). The correlation coefficient between the dependent variable of consumers' perception and the independents variables of ethical, philanthropic, economic and legal responsibilities are all positively and moderately correlated with values of 0.346321, 0.482612, 0.553274, 0.338465. The highest value of correlation coefficient is between consumers' perception economic responsibilities with a correlation coefficient of, 0.553274 which is below the cut-off of 0.90 for the multicollinearity problem. Since none of the independent variables was perfectly correlated or up to 0.90 and above; hence there is no multicollinearity problem in the model.

Table 3: Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Estimation Results

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Ethical	0.568349	0.045358	4.437168	0.0001
Philanthropic	0.346575	0.072993	5.053852	0.0000
Economic	0.937456	0.070881	3.862016	0.0004
Legal	-0.000987	0.085459	-0.575553	0.6571
(Constant)	4.360967	0.412533	10.57119	0.0000

Source: E-views, 8.0 Output

4.3 Test of Research Hypotheses

The results in Table 3 were used to test hypotheses one to four. The decision rule was to accept the hypothesis formulated if it is statistically significant at 5%, otherwise we reject the hypothesis.



Test of Hypothesis One

Ethical responsibilities result stood at t-statistic value of 4.437168 and p -value of 0.0001 is significant at 0.05 while the critical p -value was 5% level of significance (95% confidence). The result indicated that ethical responsibilities are statistically significant and the coefficient was a positive value of 0.568349. With reference to the decision rule stated earlier, we therefore reject the null hypothesis formulated. This implies that there is a significant relationship between ethical responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Philanthropic responsibilities calculated t-statistics value stood at 5.053852 and p -value of 0.0000 is significant at 0.05 compared to the critical p -value at 5% level of significance (95% confidence). The outcome indicated that philanthropic responsibilities are statistically significant and its coefficient of 0.346575 was positive. Following the decision rule, it showed that we reject the null hypothesis formulated. This denotes that there is a significant relationship between philanthropic responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.

Test of Hypothesis Three

Economic responsibilities stood at calculated t-statistics value of 3.862016 and p -value of 0.0004 is significant at 0.05 while the critical p -value was 5% level of significance (95% confidence). The result showed that economic responsibilities are statistically significant and the coefficient was at a positive value of 0.937456. Based on the decision rule, we therefore reject the null hypothesis suggesting that there is significant relationship between economic responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.

Test of Hypothesis Four

Legal responsibilities indicated t-statistic calculated value of -0.575553 and p -value of 0.6571 is insignificant at 0.05 compared to the critical p -value at 5% level of significance (95% confidence). The result is statistically insignificant and at a negative coefficient value of -0.000987. From the decision rule perspective, the outcome showed that we accept the null hypothesis formulated meaning that there is no significant relationship between legal responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis tested show that ethical responsibility is statistically significant meaning that ethical responsibilities has significant relationship with consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City. The finding is in tandem with Amadi and Ndu (2018) who state that businesses are expected to willfully comply with ethical expectations rather than just obeying laws and keeping stipulated regulations.

The OLS multiple regression estimation showed that philanthropic responsibilities was statistically significant and the hypothesis tested showed that there is significant relationship between philanthropic responsibilities and consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City. The finding buttressed the findings of Kerlin and Gagnaire (2009)



who argued that philanthropic responsibilities describes a company's support for a cause or activity that occurs outside of their business operations, but provides benefit to society.

Also, economic responsibilities t-statistic was statistically significant and outcome of hypothesis tested revealed that economic responsibilities has significant relationship with consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City. The finding concurred with Donwa and Odia (2011) who posit that, it should be an institution whose orientation is to produce goods and services that society wants and to sell them at fair prices.

Lastly, the hypothesis tested showed that legal responsibilities is statistically insignificant meaning that legal responsibilities has no significant relationship with consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City. The finding is in contradiction with Asemah, *et al.* (2013b) who state that legal responsibilities relate to the expectation that organisations will comply with the laws set down by society to govern competition in the marketplace.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study examines consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms in Benin City. The *p*-value for dimensions of CSR was between 0.0000 and 0.6571. All the dimensions of CSR were statistically significant except legal responsibilities since it indicated a t-statistic calculated value of -0.575553 and *p*-value of 0.6571 which is insignificant at 0.05 while the critical *p*-value was 5% level of significance (95% confidence). The study confirmed that the scale was valid for measuring CSR and consumers' perception of soft drinks firms in Benin City. Following outcomes of various extant reviews, analyzed questionnaires and the various hypotheses tested, findings from the study concludes that ethical, philanthropic, economic and legal philanthropic responsibilities have implications on consumers' perception of the effect of CSR on performance of soft drinks firms. The study therefore concludes that an appropriate CSR approach for the successful operation of the soft drink firms can increase sustainable growth and profitability.

Therefore, on the basis of the findings and conclusions of the study, the study recommends that management of consumer soft drinks firms should be aware that today's host communities are well informed and more knowledgeable in their collation of information in other to meet-up with their demands. Managements of soft drinks firms should improve their CSR activities by displaying high level of professionalism in terms of ethical, philanthropic, economic and legal responsibilities. Adequate feedback machinery should be put in place that will address complaints from, consumers, government, host communities, employees, stakeholders and so forth. Special attention should be given by management of soft drinks firms to the physical environment and technological infrastructure which have direct relationship with their customers and host communities in which they operate.

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