

**ASSESSING OFFICE MANAGERS' ROLE IN CREATING A CULTURE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IN SELECTED BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study assessed the role of Office Managers in Corporate Governance and Corporate Social Responsibilities in selected Business Organizations in Delta State of Nigeria. In going about the study, a research instrument which consisted of 51 items was designed to cover the three research questions raised for the study. This study was survey research. The data collected from 130 respondents were analyzed using the descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation. The results of the study revealed that organizations are measured on how well their objectives are achieved; that social responsibilities of business is an ethical ideology or theory that an entity has obligation to act in order to benefit its society, and that corporate social responsibilities cut across all aspects of human life. It was concluded that meeting the basic social, economic and political needs of the immediate communities will guarantee safe and healthy environment for organizations to operate their businesses. It was therefore recommended that there should be a working synergy between organizations and their host communities in order for their business objectives to be realized.*

**KEYWORDS:** Business Organizations, Environmental Issue, Corporate Governance, Office Manager, Interrelated Functions; Corporate Social Responsibilities

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Business organization is a social system that has a structural functional relationship with the society in which it is located. As a matter of fact, business organizations have the basic elements of an enterprise which include –

- social structure
- organizational structure
- goals
- participants
- technology
- environment

The role of management in an organization is to help such an organization to accomplish its goals. In doing this, the management of an organization tends to extend control over the internal factors or elements that are essential for accomplishing the goals of an organization. These internal factors are technology, participants, social structure, environment, organisational structure and goals. The external components will include customers, suppliers, intermediaries, competitors, government agencies, credit agencies, and so on.

Social responsibility is an environmental issue. The issues in business social responsibility are outside the control of business, but the business depends on the ability of management to

accomplish the objectives and also control internal organizational factors and adjust to environmental factors.

Okoh and Ojoh (2008) reported that in times past, many business organizations in less developed countries (LDCs), enjoyed the privilege of operating rationally and globally and so matters relating to their corporate public image and social responsibility did not command reasonable expediency and urgency. They therefore treated such crucial issues with levity.

However, for firms operating on the volatile side, the above corporate predisposition was construed as tending towards competitive disadvantage and catastrophe. In this light, corporate governance practitioners would consider the corporate social responsibility functions of business as indeed necessary (Aghede-Morka, 1998).

The common groups vis-a-vis their legal/legitimate demands are highlighted below.

- a. Owners of the business. In this, business organizations have primary responsibility to its owners (or shareholders in case of a company) in respect of the following:
  - reasonable dividend policy
  - growth of capital
  - security of capital
  - proper management of the business
- b. Employees: The business organization has a responsibility to its employees in respect of the following:
  - fair and reasonable remuneration policies
  - good working conditions
  - security of tenure
  - promotion prospects
  - training programmes
  - pension
- c. Customers: There are responsibilities to customers as well, in respect of the following:
  - to provide quality goods and services which meet the needs of customers
  - reasonable prices
  - quality commensurate with prices
  - product characteristics agreeing with sales promotion claims
  - after sales service
  - meeting agreed delivery dates, etc
- d. Governments: These include
  - to pay taxes regularly
  - obey the laws of the country
  - support government programmes
- e. Whole Society or Community
- f. To carry out operations with despoiling the environment e.g., through
  - pollution
  - energy conservation

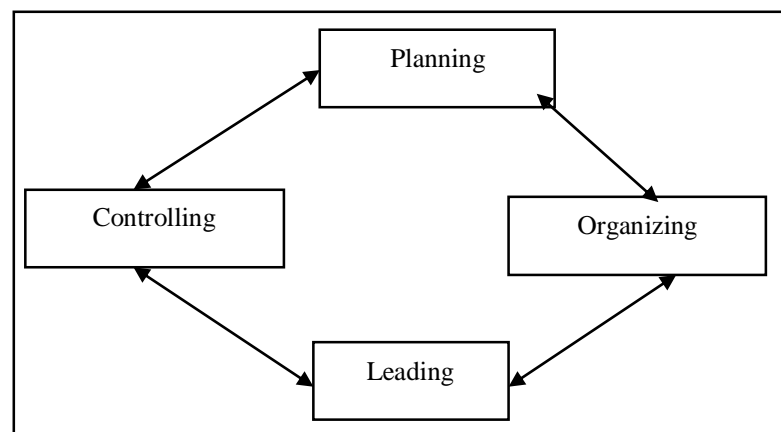
- to carry out technological development so as to improve the quality of life
- to provide social amenities to the community where the business operates, e.g., electricity, road, and providing scholarship schemes for the students of the communities, physical environment, improved and donations made to charitable organizations.

In every organization, office manager which is a part of management performs specialized duties. He performs the duties of planning, organizing, leading and controlling. These management functions squarely rest on legitimate decision makers. These decisions or policy making constitute the governing board where policies are taken as they affect the operations and achieving of set objectives in a dynamic environment.

### Office Management and the Manager

Management is universal in the modern industrial world. To this end, every organization requires the making of decisions, the coordination of activities, the handling of people, and the evaluation of performance directed toward group objectives. Numerous managerial activities have their own particular approach to specific types of problems hence we have such headings as farm management, management of health delivery systems, college management, government management, marketing, production or operation management, and others. As a matter of fact, all have elements in common.

Within the functions of management comes office management. The office manager performs functions which cut across all functions within the entire office. The manager does this by relating very closely with other managers. Since the time available and the capacities of managers must always be limited, it follows that he must concentrate, as far as possible, upon doing the work which stems from his unique organizational role as manager of resources for performing. Viewed in this way, Davies (2012) noted that it is possible to isolate and identify the four broad functions that characterize the work of an office manager as represented in the diagram below:



**Figure 1: The four interrelated functions of the office manager**

### The Planning Functions of Office Manager

This is the processing of preparing procedural statements which give the details of how specific objectives will be attained. By this, objectives are set and agreement on terms of reference is arrived at. A plan can therefore be on short, medium or long-term basis. A plan is the process by which the office manager anticipates the future and discovers alternative courses of action

open to him. The major goals of planning are: to programme work logically; making the best use of resources; to ensure effective communications; to ascertain that suitable budgetary procedures are made; to make the necessary workload in an organization; to estimate accurately and reliably the resources of an organization; to anticipate problems and locate sources of information and to make a flexible plan in executing or implementing projects. The summary is that the work an officer manager does is to establish work objectives.

### **Organizing Function**

This is the work an office manager does to arrange and relate work resources, so as to realize these objectives in the most effective, efficient, and economical way possible. In fact, the office manager needs to arrange and schedule the activities of the office in such a manner as to provide coherence, articulation and an orderly sequence. This is necessary for easy allocation of jobs to staff and effective performance of duties by staff (Enaohwo and Eferakeya, 2005).

### **The Leading Function of Office Manager:**

This is apparently the stage at which the office manager directly monitors the performance of the subordinates to ensure that the right staff does the right thing at the right time. Leading is the fine thread that the manager runs through the many eyes of the tasks he has to perform. He does this to ensure that the tasks are neatly connected. The thread of leading involves interrelating the many different parts of the office manager's job to foster coherence, interdependence and smoothness. This is why proper spelling out and harmonizations of essential functions are indispensable to effective performance of the office manager's role. The OM motivates, encourages, and inspires his workers, so that they will readily realize organizational objectives. It should be remembered that, for without leading, plans and objectives suffer, and the administrative machinery of the organization fails.

### **The Controlling Function of Office Manager**

This is the work an OM does to determine whether his organizing and leading functions are successfully realizing the objectives which have been set. If the objectives are not being realized, then the OM must reassess and regulate the situation – not change the organizational objectives.

Although these four managerial functions of OM are separate and disparate activities, they must be viewed as a cycle of related activities. Together, they define the specialized area of an OM's professional competence and expertise.

To achieve this, Aborode (2005) defined corporate governance as the system by which business corporate governance structure specifies the distribution of rights and responsibilities among different participants in the corporation, such as, the board, managers, shareholders and other stakeholders, and spells out the rules and procedures for making decision on corporate affairs. Esene (2014) defined corporate governance as the set up mechanisms through which outside investors are protected from expropriation by insiders. Most office, the board abandoned their corporate responsibilities for frivolities, while others lack adequate information to perform efficiently hence, they cannot sufficiently participate on in depth long term strategic planning as well as picking directors for social reasons. Osuala (2009) posited that every organization should satisfy the needs and wants of the individuals in the society.

It must be noted that social responsibility is an ethical ideology or theory that an entity, be it an organization (private or public) or individual, has an obligation to act to benefit society at large (Ohakwe, 2012). Corporate social responsibility is a concept whereby organizations integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and their interaction with their stakeholders (employees, customers, shareholders, investors, local communities, government), on a voluntary basis. CRS covers a wide range of areas, such as poverty issues, equal right in employment, ecology, transportation, full scarcity and distribution, contract awards, environmental sanitation, education, road construction and rehabilitation, markets, hospitals, award of scholarships, water, sporting equipment, instructional and infrastructural facilities, and so on. According to Olohi (2008), being socially responsible implies playing more than just an economic role in society. Organizations should play a direct role in meeting community needs in all spheres of life.

With respect to the corporate structure of a company, it is safe to state that there are three groups that comprise the corporate structure: the shareholders or stakeholders, the board of directors and the officers of the company. The shareholders, it is often said, are known as the owners of the company. This may not be exactly true as a company has existed before an individual subscribes to it. Shareholders are individuals who bought shares of stock that show proof of ownership. Shareholders do not own property in the same legal sense that the proprietor or partners do in the other forms of ownership. Similarly, the shareholders do not possess title to the property although in the event of liquidation, they would have direct claim on the property, after creditors, bondholders, and preferred shareholders (Esene, 2008).

In the past, the majority of shareholders were generally lukewarm towards the governance of the business in which they held shares. Even today, with the growing and increased awareness among all categories of shareholders and the growing number of institutional shareholders, many shareholders do not still take a sufficient amount of interest in corporate governance.

In a company, the directors are individuals appointed, or selected, or elected by a shareholder or a number of shareholders to represent their interests in a company in which they hold shares. Thus, a director may be a shareholder or a professional appointed by other shareholders to represent their interests. There are usually two types of directors: executive directors and non-executive directors. Executive directors function as part of the top management of the company and as members of the board of directors, while the non-executive directors, on the other hand, are not expected to be involved in the day-to-day running of the company. The third category of the administration and management of a company is known "the Management Team". The management team occupies a strategic position in the governance of the business organizations. The members of the management team will be professional people who are hired on the basis of possessing the competence and skills needed for the performance of the organization.

Gignan and Lowry (2010) have to say:

...corporate governance is the set of processes, customers, policies, laws and institutions affecting the way a corporation is directed, administered or controlled. It also includes the relationship amongst the many players involved (the stakeholders) and the goods for which the corporation is governed. The principal players are the shareholders, management and the board of directors. Other stakeholders include employers, suppliers, customers, banks and other lenders, regulators, the environment and the community at large...

Top management responsibilities, especially those of the Chief Executive, involve getting things accomplished through and with others in order to meet the corporate objectives. Top management's job is thus multidimensional and is oriented towards the welfare of the total organization. Specific top management tasks vary from company to company and are developed from an analysis of the mission, objectives, strategies and key activities of the corporation. Tasks are typically divided among the members of the top management team. A diversity of skills can thus be very important. Research indicates that top management teams with a diversity of functional and educational backgrounds and length of time with the company tend to be significantly related to improvements in corporate market share and profitability (Hambrick, Cho and Chen, 1996).

According to Wheelen and Hunder (2004), top management level handle two primary responsibilities which are:

- a. To provide executive leadership and a strategic vision. Executive leadership is the directing of activities towards the accomplishment of corporate objectives. They said that executive leadership is important because it sets the tone for the entire corporation.
- b. To set a strategic vision. The strategic vision is a description of what the company is becoming. It is often communicated in the mission statement. And it is only top management that is in position to communicate the strategic vision to the work force.

### **Problem of the Study**

Decree No 1 of 1990 of the Companies and Allied Matters established Corporate Affairs Commission whose major duty is to register business organizations in line with its mandate. Corporations/Companies aspiring to be incorporated set the ball rolling by submitting the basic documents to CAC before such companies can be duly registered. However, there have been a lot of controversies over the inability of most organizations to carry out social responsibilities to the host communities. Some of the problems assumed to be confronting corporations are: inability to identify the immediate needs of the communities, scarcity of funds, inability to maximize profits, and so on. This is the basis for which this study is undertaken.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of this study was to assess the role of the Office Manager in creating a culture of CSR through corporate governance in selected business organizations. Specifically, the study:

- a. determined the purpose of setting up corporations;
- b. identified those organizations engaged in CSR;
- c. determined the areas covered in CSR.

The study will be useful to the corporations, the society and the host communities in that its results will help to foster peaceful co-existence between companies and communities. Also, the frequent shut down by companies as a result of incessant protests and riots by host communities will be greatly minimized to a large extent.

## Research Questions

The study seeks answers to the following questions.

1. What are the purposes for which corporations are set up?
2. Which are the organizations involved in corporate social responsibilities?
3. What are the areas covered by CSR?

## METHODS OF STUDY

The design for the study was the survey design. It is a design in which an instrument is administered face-to-face on the respondents by either the researcher or his assistants to collect data on public opinions (Yomere and Agbonifoh, 1999). The population of this study comprised of 130 (one hundred and thirty Office Managers/Directors) which served as policy initiators in their organizations in Delta State. Table 1 presents the population distribution.

**Table 1 – Population Distribution by Organizations**

Names of Organization	No Selected	%
Delta Steel Company, Ovwian Aladja	22	16.92
Delta Insurance Company, Asaba	10	7.69
Asaba Textile Mills, Asaba	11	8.46
Beta Glass Company, Ughelli	9	6.92
First Bank of Nigeria Plc, Abraka	10	7.69
Union Bank of Nigeria, Plc, Agbor	15	11.54
Diamond Bank Plc, Warri	10	7.69
Ecobank Plc, Kwale	25	19.23
Unity Bank Plc, Ozoro	18	13.85
	130	

*Source: Field Studies, 2014*

There was no sample and sampling since the population was manageable and the respondents were adequately reached. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire based on the three (3) questions raised to guide the study. The instrument was designed to elicit the ratings of respondents on the assessment of the office managers/directors in creating a culture of CSR through corporate governance. The instrument was a 5-point rating scale designed to attract the following ratings:

SA	–	Strongly agree	5 points
A	–	Agree	4 ”
D	–	Disagree	3 ”
SD	–	Strongly Disagree	2 ”
Und	–	Undecided	1 point

The instrument was validated by three experts in Office Technology and Management, one of which is in Measurement and Evaluation from the Delta State University, Abraka. A test-retest reliability method was used to determine the stability of the questionnaire items. A reliability co-efficient of stability of the items for the questions yielded a correlation of 0.83 which was

considered high. The data collected were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation statistical methods. A decision rule for accepting any factor as accepted was set at mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) equal to or above 3.50 was accepted while those with 3.49 and below were rejected.

## PRESENTATION OF DATA, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presented and analyzed the data collected in the study. See Tables 2-4

Question One.

What are the purposes for which corporations are set up? The data in Table 2 answered this question.

**Table 2: Purposes of Setting up Corporations**

Q/I	Purposes of Setting up Corporations	( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Remarks
1	To produce goods and/or services efficiently and effectively to meet the needs and desires of customers.	3.71	0.48	Agree
2	To do so at a profit	3.94	0.45	=ditto=
3	To protect the health and well-being of employees.	3.55	0.50	”
4	To protect and safeguard people around	3.63	0.49	”
5	To exercise good community citizenship in relation with neighbours and community.	3.82	0.46	”
6	To provide desired sound growth for the corporation and its profits.	3.62	0.49	”
	Grand Mean	3.66		

Source: Field Survey, 2014

With reference to questionnaire items 1 – 6 in table 2, all the items received 3.50 and above. The implication here is that the successful operation of any business is measured by how well its products or services really satisfy the needs and wants of the individuals in the society at a price they can and are willing to pay.

Question Two

Which are the organizations involved in Corporate Social Responsibilities?

To answer this question, the data in Table 3 were used.

**Table 3: Organizations involved in Corporate Social Responsibilities.**

Q/I	Organizations concerned in CSR	( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Remarks
7	Banking Organizations	4.02	0.33	Agree
8	Industrial Sectors	3.95	0.42	”
9	Educational Institutions	3.46	0.69	Agree
10	Small and Medium Enterprises	3.70	0.54	Agree
11	Large Scale Organizations	4.01	0.31	=ditto=
12	Health Workers	3.64	0.54	”
13	Cottage Industries	3.70	0.53	”
14	Local Government Councils	3.84	0.45	”



15	Manufacturing Sector	3.94	0.43	”
16	NURTW	4.00	0.34	”
17	Charitable Organizations	3.56	0.60	”
18	Philanthropists	4.32	0.30	”
19	NULGE	3.96	0.42	”
20	Association of Senior Civil Servants	3.33	0.73	Disagree
21	NACCIMA	3.74	0.52	Agree
22	NLC	3.80	0.47	=ditto=
23	TUC	4.03	0.32	”
24	CBN	4.03	0.32	”
25	SUG	3.94	0.44	”
26	ASUU	3.84	0.45	”
27	ASUP	3.74	0.53	”
28	COEASU	3.96	0.43	”
29	SSANIP	3.98	0.42”	”
30	NASU	3.54	0.61	”

Source: *Field Studies, 2014*

Regarding items 7 – 30, all the items, except items 9 and 20 received mean scores of 3.50 and above. By this result, it does appear that a good number of organizations established are concerned with the promotion of corporate social responsibilities.

### Question Three

What are the areas covered by Corporate Social Responsibilities. The data in table 4 provided answers to this question.

**Table 4: Areas covered by Corporate Social Responsibilities.**

Q/I	Corporate Social Responsibilities	( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Remarks
20	Empowerment	3.56	0.74	Agree
21	Employment	3.74	0.55	=ditto=
22	Ecology	3.83	0.51	”
23	Transportation	3.62	0.70	”
24	Fuel Distribution	3.22	0.91	Disagree
25	Contract Awards	3.72	0.56	Agree
26	Environmental Sanitation	3.91	0.49	=ditto=
27	Award of Scholarship	4.15	0.46	”
28	Road Construction	4.17	0.45	”
29	Road Rehabilitation	4.20	0.42	”
30	Road Reconstruction	4.16	0.45	”
31	Provision of Market Stalls	3.81	0.52	”
32	Market Renovation	3.63	0.70	”
33	Water Supply	4.10	0.48	”
34	Sporting Equipment	3.92	0.48	”
35	Instructional Materials	3.94	0.47	”
36	Infrastructural Facilities	3.80	0.53	”
37	Donation of Text Materials	3.62	0.72	”
38	Award to Best Farmer	3.43	0.84	”
39	Award to Best Reporter	3.75	0.54	”

40	Award to Best Journalist	3.63	0.71	”
41	Award to Best Newscaster	3.74	0.53	”
42	Award to Best School Administrator	3.32	0.90	”
43	Award to Best Civil Servant	3.17	0.95	”
44	Award to Best Politician	3.18	0.94	”
45	Award to Community Developer	3.41	0.85	”
46	Adult Empowerment	3.52	0.74	”
47	Youth Empowerment	3.74	0.55	”
48	Sportsman of the year	3.96	0.47	”
49	Sportswomen of the year	3.84	0.50	”
50	Well Behaved Student	3.16	0.96	”
51	Award to Best Crime fighter	3.22	0.91	”
	Grand Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	3.64		

Source: *Field Studies*, 2014

Regarding items 20 – 51 in table 4, items 25, 39, 43, 44, 45, 46, and 51, received below the benchmark of 3.50. All other items received 3.50 and above. From the result of the study, it seems that Corporate Social Responsibilities covered many areas in which a good number of organizations had shown interest.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of Office Managers towards creating a culture of corporate social responsibilities through corporate governance. It was found out that organizations are measured by how well their products and services satisfy the populace and how well they exercise good community relationship. This finding was supported by the earlier studies by Osuala (2009) which noted that most business organizations attempt to satisfy the particular economic needs of people. The result also revealed that organizations involved in CRS are industrial, commercial, educational and unions and they are concerned with the promotion of Corporate Social Responsibilities. This study was supported by Ohakwe (2012) who noted that social responsibility is an ethical ideology or theory that an entity, be it an organization or individual, has an obligation to act to benefit society at large.

Finally, it was discovered that Corporate Social Responsibility covered many areas that cut across human life. This finding was supported by the studies by Olohi (2008) which noted that being socially responsible meant that organizations should play direct role in meeting community needs in such areas as Arts and Education, in Health and Environmental matters, and in social welfare, in addition to their roles as employers and producers.

## CONCLUSION

Organizations are set up by people. Corporations are registered under the Corporate Affairs Commission Act to regulate their activities. Every organization has some basic purposes for which they are set up, and these objectives, to a large extent govern the ability and attitudes of the members of the organizations. It is therefore concluded that these organizations must exercise good community citizenship in relation with neighbours and community. Additionally,

the establishment of corporations guarantee these organizations to embark in social responsibilities in return of their services to the host communities.

Finally, corporate social responsibilities cover every aspects of human life. To this end, it is expected that meeting the basic social, economic and political needs of the immediate communities will lead to profit maximization and crises free environment for business operations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of the study and the conclusion drawn, it is recommended that:

- the purpose for which corporations is set up should be unequivocally and expressly stated in order to guide office managers in initiating policies that will lead to un-interruption of business operations.
- all organizations, in respective of their objectives should carry out corporate social responsibilities as a way of promoting a healthy and comfortable environment for business operations and effective service delivery.
- the corporate social responsibilities of each corporation should cover all spheres of human endeavours. This is to ensure a peaceful co-existence between the host communities and the organizations concerned.

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