

Assessing Adequacy of Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives of Telecommunications Companies for Tertiary Educational Institutions' Development in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the adequacy of corporate social responsibility initiatives of telecommunications companies for educational development in nine selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria. Questionnaire, in-depth interview and documents and records are used to collect data. Data are collected from the survey involving 270 students and 180 lecturers; and from in-depth interview with 10 Directors of Works and Services or equivalents in the tertiary institutions and Head of Directorate of CSR in MTN and Airtel Networks. The data collected from the respondents and interviewees are analysed, using descriptive method and thematic mapping respectively. The study finds that the types of CSR initiatives implemented by telecommunications companies to support the development of tertiary education in Lagos State are very scant (with the mean score of 0.12); and that there is a negative perception on the adequacy of the telecommunications companies' CSR initiatives in the selected tertiary educational institutions (with the mean score of 0.953). Also, the study found that two of the telecommunications companies had major financial setbacks in the recent times. However, considering the low involvement of telecommunications companies' CSR initiatives in the development of tertiary education in Lagos State despite the huge profits they rip from the society, this study recommends, among others, that telecommunications companies should increase their contributions to tertiary education development especially in the provision of physical and infrastructural facilities, online library services and wi-fi.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility; initiatives; tertiary education

Introduction

Education is the process an individual embarks upon formally or informally to develop his/her knowledge, attitude, belief, skill and other forms of behaviour to better his/her living condition. Education affects virtually all the aspects of a man: the way he manages his work and his health, relates with people (whom he can see) and deity (whom he cannot see), and perceives the world generally (Babajide, 2020). It is a conscious effort by which an individual impacts his or

her development to the benefit of the society. It is a deliberate and purposeful activity directed at achieving desirable ends such as acquisition of knowledge by individuals who are able to think rationally, the formation of a sustainable community and the realisation of economic goals benefiting both individuals and their communities (Ogar & Meremikwu, 2013).

While basic education may enable individuals to survive, tertiary education (TE) is necessary for society to succeed. Tertiary education institutions (TEIs) otherwise referred to as higher educational institutions (HEIs), are advance centres for human betterment for the progress of society (Babajide, 2020). Higher education is the aggregate of all processes by which an individual develops his knowledge, skill, belief and other behaviours at a stage higher than that of the secondary education and for the benefit of the individual and the society in which s/he lives (Ogunsola & Aboyade, 2015). However, for an efficient outcome to emerge, the mechanisms to achieve such must be so designed. This presupposes that if tertiary education must be improved, the process must consistently be guided by quality (Babajide, 2020).

However, it seems that the Nigerian TE system has failed to achieve its mandate. This may be due to a number of challenges facing it, including inadequate funding, inconsistent policies and lack of continuity of programmes (Molawa, 2009). Other challenges include infrastructural decay, incessant staff strikes and students' riots, insufficient budgetary allocation, obsolete equipment, old and outdated curricula and text books, lack of research grants, poor remuneration and general welfare for lecturers including the heightened level of brain drain (Akintunde, 2010). Ogunsola and Aboyade (2015) once captured the effect of all of these challenges by the incessant complaints of employers of labour that most Nigerian graduates are half-baked and need a lot of training in the world of work.

It appears that contribution of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of private sector to the development of tertiary education could make a wholesome difference in the quest for improved tertiary education in the nation. Buttressing this, Professors Olanrewaju Fagbohun (SAN), the Vice Chancellor of Lagos State University (LASU); and Akin Oyeboode, formerly of the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, and Pioneer, Vice Chancellor, Ekiti State University on 22nd November, 2018 at the opening of a 500-seater lecture theatre in LASU, called on buoyant business organisations and affluent private individuals to partner with TEIs and through CSR practices help promote TE.

CSR as a concept has a broad meaning. It could refer to a programme, an initiative or any cooperative relational activity between an organisation and society. It is a complex concept and has no definite definition as there seems to be no consensus on its definitions, rules, structures or procedures

(Ehigiamusoe, 2012). CSR requires that business organisations must be responsible economically, legally, ethically, and discretionarily in dealing with their stakeholders which include tertiary educational institutions. CSR programs are initiatives that business companies undertake to integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and interact with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. It is “a variety of issues revolving around companies’ interactions with society to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law” (Olatunji, 2008a, p.45). CSR could also refer to sets of actions that foster social development, beyond the interests of the firm and requirement of the law. Gupta and Lehmann (2014) added that CSR covers plant closures, employee relations, human rights, corporate ethics, community relations and the environment. CSR is a way companies manage their businesses with a view to making positive and healthy impact on the society, through their social, environmental and economic responsibilities. Olatunji (2008b, p.26) described CSR as “company’s commitment to operating in a socially, an environmentally and economically sustainable manner, while recognising the interests of its stakeholders which include investors, customers, employees, business partners, local communities, the environment, and society at large.”

While the purpose of CSR activities may be divergent, the benefits of CSR for companies are well-documented. There is a correlation between the corporate social, environmental and economic responsibilities and brand equity (Beck & Cowan, 2016). The benefits include increased profits, customer loyalty, trust, positive brand attitude and combating negative publicity (Olatunji, 2007; Scholtens, 2008). Others are increased brand value; greater access to finance; a healthier and safer workplace; stronger risk management and corporate governance; motivated people and community; customer loyalty; enhanced confidence and trust of stakeholders; an enhanced public image and economic success (European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), 2014). Recently, there has been growing interest in the CSR practice by the telecommunications companies in Nigeria to promote tertiary education. This probably points to how critical tertiary educational institutions are perceived by the telecommunications companies among the stakeholders.

Statement of the problem

Nigerian telecommunications companies have invested in several areas of the nation’s economy to contribute to the development of tertiary education system in Nigeria. However, despite the efforts of the telecommunications companies in Nigeria, there has been a public outcry that the social contribution by these companies toward the promotion of tertiary educational sector appears to be

minimal compared to the huge annual profits of these companies (Okoh&Ojoh, 2014). Other scholars such as Aid (2016, p.42) described the situation as a completely inadequate response to the “sometimes-devastating impact that telecommunications companies can have in an ever–more globalised world.” Gleaning from this development, the exact level of contribution of CSR initiatives by the telecommunications companies to tertiary education development is not clear.

In addition, internationally, the majority of CSR studies in education have been conducted at institutions of higher learning in western contexts (Naeem and Peach 2011). Also, Visser (2016, p.42) asserted that “academic institutions and researchers focusing specifically on CSR in Africa remain few and under-developed.” It appears that while the literature on CSR in Africa is heavily dominated by South Africa (Visser, 2015), the very few in Nigeria focused on industry sectors, with traditionally high impact sectors like agriculture (Amaeshi, Adi, Ogbechie & Amao, 2016); mining (Haliru, 2012); manufacturing industries (Olatunji, 2007); and petrochemicals featuring most prominently, especially on Shell and their impacts on the Ogoni people (Hashimu & Ango, 2012). The tertiary educational community as one of the stakeholders in CSR programmes, however, seems to have been neglected as a research subject. Specifically, it appears that available literature evaluating the impact of CSR of the telecommunications companies on the development of tertiary education in the country is negligible. This is the gap in knowledge that this study intends to fill by assessing the adequacy of Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives of telecommunications companies for the development of tertiary education in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

To achieve the aims and objectives of this study, the following questions were raised:

1. What are the types of CSR initiatives of the Nigerian telecommunications companies in the selected tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria?and
2. What is the perception of staff and students on adequacy of the CSR initiatives of the telecommunications companies in the selected institutions?

This study is premised on shareholder theory, stakeholder theory and social contract theory with the view to explaining the variables in this study, putting

these variables into proper perspectives and making a difference in explaining and discussing the findings of this study from a theoretical perspective.

Shareholder theory which was postulated by Milton Friedman in 1962, claimed that only and sole purpose of business is to increase profits and value returned to shareholders (owners of the company). Hired managers and CEOs are obliged to serve interests of owners and make money for them, without particular regard to welfare of society or employees.

Stakeholder theory, propounded by E. R. Freeman in 1984, asserted that managers must satisfy a variety of constituents (e.g., governmental bodies, competitors, customers, employees, civil society, suppliers, shareholders) who can influence firms' outcomes. According to this view, it is not sufficient for managers to focus exclusively on the needs of stockholders, or the owners of the corporation. Stakeholder theory implies that some non-financial stakeholders are perceived to be important and that neglecting such stakeholders in certain CSR activities might prompt such groups to withdraw their support for the firm (McWilliams & Siegel, 2010). TEIs appear to belong to this group because the institutions consist of enlightened minds who could easily understand the operations of devices, bundles, tariffs, or modules newly introduced by the telecommunications companies and thus sell the new ideas or innovations to the society. Furthermore, TEIs could partner with telecommunications companies to carry out quality research about the operations, services and programmes of the companies with a view to improving corporate performance. In addition, Tertiary Educational Institutions expand the frontier of knowledge to the citizens who are the customers and future employees of telecommunications companies.

Social contract theory, which has its historical precedence in Hobbes (1946), Rousseau (1968), and Locke (1986) (Waddock and Graves, 2012). According to the theory, there exists an implicit social contract between a state government or business and society and this contract implies some indirect obligations of government/business towards society. Social contract theory explains the socially accepted ways an organisation relates with the society where it operates its business.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. The population for this study was 131,068 regular undergraduate students and staff of the 27 NUC recognised tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State (www.shopinverse.com). The figure comprised 5,521 academic staff; 7,134 non-teaching staff; and 118,413 regular undergraduate students of the institutions. The time frame for the data collection for this study was set at about one month period

starting from 27th January but was later extended to 31st March, 2020 due to the global lockdown as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, to get a large range of data. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to pick the 450 participants who responded to a number of items on questionnaire; and 13 others who participated in the in-depth interviews. Foremost, nine tertiary educational institutions were purposively selected from the 27 NUC recognised tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State. Balloting technique was used to pick a faculty/school in each educational institution. The final year students were purposively selected because it was presumed that they have stayed long enough to have acquired experience and exposure. The number of students involved in each institution was 30. Therefore, a total number of 270 students were involved in this study. Selecting staff sample for this study was based on stratification and convenience sampling techniques. The 10 academic and 10 non-teaching staff who participated in this study were picked from the respective departments that produced the student sample in each tertiary institution. This means that the number of staff involved in the study was 180. Finally, purposive sampling technique was used to pick 13 participants for in-depth interviews: four from the telecommunications companies and nine from the tertiary educational institutions selected for this study. In the first category, a Senior Officer of MTN Foundation (a body that manages the CSR activities of MTN) and a similar office holder in the marketing, corporate affairs, human resources, or personnel departments in Airtel, Glo, and gmobile were selected. In the second category, nine participants consisting of a director of works and service division, public-private partnership Division or equivalent in each of the tertiary educational institutions selected for this study were picked.

Questionnaire, interview guide, and documents and records were deployed to collect data for analysis. A self-developed questionnaire tagged “Students-Staff Perception on CSR Initiatives of Telecoms Companies and Tertiary Education (SSPRITTE)” was developed to elicit responses from the staff and students of the selected tertiary educational institutions for analysis. The first section of the questionnaire was designed to collect bio-data of the respondents while the second section was divided into two parts (i&ii), designed to collect data to answer the two research questions. In addition, interview guide was used in this study to collect qualitative data. Finally, documents and records used to collect qualitative data include bulletins and annual reports of the selected tertiary educational institutions and telecommunications companies. This study was premised on content validity. A pilot test of the instruments was then conducted. Also, test-retest technique was used to determine the repeatability and consistency of constituent items and the total score of the questionnaire. The instrument was administered on participants other than

those that participated in the final study twice within an interval of two weeks. The results of the two tests were correlated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of 0.768 was obtained and relied upon to establish the reliability of the instrument for this study (Campbell, 2007); Bryman & Cramer, 2007 cited in Rattray & Jones, 2017). Administration of the copies of questionnaire for data collection was conducted by the researcher with the assistance of two research assistants. A research assistant helped in the conduct of the in-depth interview. Frequency counts, percentages, mean and thematic analyses were used based on the different purposes of this study.

Results

450 copies of questionnaire were administered on 270 students; 90 academic staff; and 90 non-teaching staff, drawn from the nine selected tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria. The total number of 450 administered questionnaire copies were filled and returned. The analysis of the bio-data of respondents revealed that more senior staff (57.8%) were involved and that most of the staff respondents (46.1%) had put in a minimum of 13 years and above. Presumably, this would help generate useful, quality and reliable information for analysis. Originally, 13 participants were picked for in-depth interview. During one of the interviews, there arose the need to interview the Pioneer Chairman of the Committee for Commercial Ventures in LASU. This brought the total number of interviewees from the selected tertiary institutions to 10. Only two interviewees from the telecommunications companies participated. Globacom Networks and gmobile Telecommunications Company declined to take part in the exercise. Nevertheless, MTN and Airtel actively took part in the in-depth interview. In total, 12 participants took part in the in-depth interview and their responses were used for analysis in this section.

- Research Question 1: What are the types of CSR initiatives of the Nigerian telecommunications companies in the selected tertiary educational institutions in Lagos state, Nigeria?

The data collected for identifying the types of the CSR initiatives of the telecommunications companies in the selected tertiary educational institutions in Lagos state, Nigeria were analysed in simple percentages and mean as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: CSR initiatives of Nigerian telecommunications companies in selected tertiary institutions in Lagos

| | CSR Initiatives | How many | Name | Purpose | Service providers | | | | Re-spondents | F | % | Mean | Institution |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------|--------|-----|-----|--------------|-----------|--------------|--------|-------------|
| | | | | | MTN | Airtel | Glo | 9 | | | | | |
| 1 | Cash donations | 2x | *Best Student Award | *Drive EDU-TECH in schools | nil | Airtel | nil | nil | 450 | 423 27 | 94 6 | 1.0978 | AOCOED |
| 2 | Organizing ICT training | 1x | *ICT-EDU | *To enhance ICT skill in students and staff in tertiary institutions | MTN | nil | nil | nil | 450 | 403 47 | 89.6 10.4 | 1.3200 | UNILAG |
| 3 | Supplies of E-book/E-journals | 1x | *MTN e-book/e-journal Package | *To expose students/ staff to electronic materials in their area of discipline | MTN | nil | nil | nil | 450 | 407 43 | 90.4 9.6 | 1.2867 | UNILAG |
| 4 | Supplies of online database | 1x | *MTN Online data base package | *Educate staff/students on data related information online | MTN | nil | nil | nil | 450 | 406 44 | 90.2 9.8 | 1.2933 | UNILAG |
| 5 | Provision of online library service | 1x | *MTN digital library | | MTN | nil | nil | nil | 450 | 400 50 | 88.9 11.1 | 1.3689 | UNILAG |

Criterion mean = ***0.12. Source: Field Survey Data (2020)

Out of the 19 items listed as CSR initiatives of telecommunications companies in tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria in the questionnaire, respondents identified only five (5) areas of CSR interventions as shown in Table 1. These include: cash donations; organising ICT training; supplies of E-book/E-journals; supplies of online database; and provision of online library service. Table 1 shows that 6% of the respondents claimed that on two occasions, cash

donation was offered to the “OverAll Best Student” in 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 academic sessions by Airtel for the purpose of driving Edu-Tech in one of the institutions. Also, 10.4% respondents admitted that ICT training was organised for members of staff tagged “MTN ICT-Edu” which was carried out once by MTN with the purpose of promoting ICT driven academic environment. About, 89.6% said MTN once provided their institution with E-book/E-journals with the name “MTN E-book/E-journal Package” for the purpose of exposing staff/students to electronic related materials in their respective disciplines. Finally, 9.8% respondents affirmed that they enjoyed online library services once and it was provided by MTN and named “MTN Digital Library” with the purpose to enhance teaching and learning experience.

Fourteen other areas like construction/renovation of lecture halls, supplies of desktop computers/laptops, ipads/tablets/palmtops to school/staff etc were obviously neglected. From the responses in Table 1, and with criterion mean of 0.12 (lesser than 2.5, test value), the number of the CSR initiatives of telecommunications companies existing in tertiary institutions in Lagos state, Nigeria is low. To further authenticate the veracity or otherwise of this finding, the annual financial reports of the telecommunications companies in the last three years were summarised and analysed in the next segment.

Documentary Evidence

Table 2: Summary of profit/loss statements of Nigerian telecommunications companies: 2017, 2018 and 2019

| Year | MTN | | | Airtel | | | Globacom | | | 9mobile | | |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------|--------|-------|
| | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
| Amount in | N'000 | N'000 | N'000 | N'000 | N'000 | N'000 | N'000 | N'000 | N'000 | N'000 | N'000 | N'000 |
| Revenue | 1,167,418,643 | 1,037,067,731 | 885,807,704 | 449,713,875 | 399,500,000 | 341,231,500 | 43,242,420 | 165,900,000 | 125,940,080 | 52,186 | 52,388 | |
| Operating profit | 399,815,253 | 270,954,079 | 199,364,526 | 154,017,128 | 104,377,131 | 76,799,350 | 9,007,770 | 34,558,405 | 26,234,408 | 18,871 | 18,994 | |
| Profit before tax | 294,695,439 | 225,524,876 | 111,325,657 | 56,518,692 | 50,207,963 | 42,884,952 | 6,793,660 | 26,063,948 | 19,785,990 | 11,340 | 11,384 | |
| Income tax expenses | (89,385,210) | (76,894,322) | (27,813,601) | (17,142902) | (17,070707) | 10,721,238 | 2,193,680 | 8,861,742 | 4,946,498 | 2,647 | 2,769 | |
| Profit for the Year | 205,310,229 | 148,630,554 | 83,512,056 | 39,375,790 | 33,137,256 | 32,163714 | 4,599,980 | 17,202,206 | 14,839493 | 8,693 | 8,615 | |

Source: Field Survey Data (2020) by researcher

Table 2 reveals that in 2019, 2018 and 2017 respectively: the revenues of MTN were N1,167,418,643, N1,037,067,731, and N885,807,704; the revenues of Aitel were N449,713,875, N399,500,000, N341,231,500, the revenues of Globacom were N43,242,420, N165,900,000, N125,940,080, while the revenues of gmobile were N52,186, N52,388 and N1,098. Similarly, in 2019, 2018 and 2017, MTN's profits after tax were N205,310,229, N148,630,554 and N83,512,056, those of Airtel were N39,375,790, N33,137,256 and N32,163,714, and Globacom's profits after tax were N4,599,980, N17,202,206 and N14,839,493 respectively while gmobile made profit after tax of N8,693 in 2019, N8,615 in 2018 and recorded loss in 2017. From the summary in Table 2, the low level of profit after tax of Globacom and gmobile telecommunications companies could be partly responsible for the sparsity of the CSR initiatives of telecommunications companies in the tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria.

As regards the types of CSR initiatives of the telecommunications companies in the selected tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria, the in-depth interviews conducted revealed that only a few number of facilities were provided by the telecommunications companies in a few number of tertiary educational institutions. Two interviewees mentioned that MTN Digital Library was provided by MTN in 2015 to enhance teaching and learning in the University of Lagos. The first interviewee, the Director of Works and Physical Planning, University of Lagos said: "Yes, MTN has done that. They provided the MTN e-library for us" (pers. comm., 10th March, 2020, Akoka, Lagos). Confirming the MTN Digital Library type, another interviewee, Secretary, MTN Foundation Nigeria Limited said:

We also have the Universities Connect project; a digital library built in tertiary institutions for students to have access to ICT based resources. These include MTN Digital Library in University of Lagos (UNILAG) [...] which were provided in 2015. (pers. comm., 31st March, 2020, Lagos)

Other types of the CSR initiatives implemented by telecommunications companies to promote tertiary education include "Science and Technology Scholarship" and "Scholarship Scheme for Blind Students" (pers. comm., 31st March, 2020, Lagos); "one year scholarship program to two LASU students" (pers. comm., 13th March, 2020, Ojo, Lagos); "Anti-Substance Abuse Programme (ASAP)" (pers. comm., 31st March, 2020, Lagos); "Academic Research Development and Innovation Challenge (ARDIC)" (pers. comm., 31st March, 2020, Lagos); "Airtel Inspirational Scheme" (pers. comm., 10th March, 2020, Lagos); "Airtel Library for the Blind"(pers. comm., 10th March, 2020, Lagos); "cash donation" (pers. comm., 3rd March, 2020, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos) and (pers.

comm., 10th March, 2020, Lagos). From the above analysis, it can be summarised that the only few types of CSR initiatives executed by telecommunications companies in tertiary institutions in Lagos state, Nigeria are MTN Digital Library, Science and Technology Scholarship, Scholarship Scheme for Blind Students, Anti-Substance Abuse Programme (ASAP, Academic Research Development and Innovation Challenge (ARDIC), Airtel Inspirational Scheme, Airtel library for the blind and Cash donation. Also, only MTN and Airtel were identified as the dominant telecommunications companies providing CSR support to tertiary institutions. In addition, implementation of the CSR programmes by the two telecommunications companies were predominantly limited to a few of the government owned universities in Lagos State. They are less visible in private tertiary institutions.

- Research Question 2: What is the perception of staff and students on the adequacy of the CSR initiatives sponsored by the Telecommunications companies in the selected institutions?

The data captured to examine the perception of staff and students on adequacy of CSR initiatives sponsored by the telecommunications companies in the selected institutions were analysed in simple percentages and mean and presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Perception of staff and students on the adequacy of the CSR initiatives sponsored by the Telecommunications companies in the selected institutions

| | CSR Initiatives | VMA | A | RA | NA | Total | % | Mean |
|----|--|----------|---------|---------|---------------|-------|-----|--------|
| 1 | Construction/renovation of lecture hall | – | – | – | 450 (100%) | 450 | 100 | 0.0533 |
| 2 | Supplies of desktop computers to ICT centre | – | – | – | 450(100%) | 450 | 100 | 0.0800 |
| 3 | Supplies of desktop computers/laptops to staff | – | – | 4(0.9%) | 446(99.1%) | 450 | 100 | 0.0311 |
| 4 | Supplies of iPads/palmtops to staff | – | 4(0.9%) | 2(0.2%) | 444(98.7%) | 450 | 100 | 1.000 |
| 5 | Supplies of laboratory equipment to school | – | 2(0.2%) | 2(0.2%) | 446(99.1%) | 450 | 100 | 1.000 |
| 6 | Construction/erection and painting of iron or alumni school gate | – | – | – | 450(100%) | 450 | 100 | 1.000 |
| 7 | Donation of vehicles to schools | – | 6(1.3%) | 2(0.4%) | 442(98.2%) | 450 | 100 | 1.0800 |
| 8 | Donation of generators to schools | – | – | – | 450(100%) | 450 | 100 | 1.0222 |
| 9 | Production of electricity powered by solar energy | – | – | – | 450(100%) | 450 | 100 | 1.000 |
| 10 | Cash donations | 14(3.1%) | 8(1.8%) | 2(0.4%) | 426(94.7%) | 450 | 100 | 1.0978 |

| | CSR Initiatives | VMA | A | RA | NA | Total | % | Mean |
|----|--|-----------|----------|---------|------------|-------|-----|--------|
| 11 | Organizing ICT training | 41(9.1%) | 6(1.3%) | 2(0.4%) | 401(89.1%) | 450 | 100 | 1.3200 |
| 12 | Construction of roads within school | – | – | – | 450(100%) | 450 | 100 | 1.0222 |
| 13 | Scholarship | – | – | 8(1.8%) | 442(98.2%) | 450 | 100 | 1.0933 |
| 14 | Supplies of e-book/e-journals | 41(9.1%) | 6(1.3%) | 2(0.4%) | 401(89.1%) | 450 | 100 | 1.2867 |
| 15 | Supplies of online database | 44(9.8%) | 4(0.9%) | 2(0.4%) | 400(88.9%) | 450 | 100 | 1.2933 |
| 16 | Provision of online library service | 50(11.1%) | – | – | 400(88.9%) | 450 | 100 | 1.3689 |
| 17 | Supplies of first-aid materials to schools | – | – | – | 450(100%) | 450 | 100 | 1.044 |
| 18 | Sponsorship of inter-school educational co-curricular activities | – | 12(2.7%) | 2(0.4%) | 436(96.9%) | 450 | 100 | 1.0933 |
| 19 | Sponsorship of extra curricular activities | – | 10(2.2%) | 2(0.4%) | 438(87.3%) | 450 | 100 | 1.1067 |

*Criterion mean= ***0.953. Scale: Very Much Adequate (VMA) = 4, Adequate (A) = 3, Rarely Adequate (RA) = 2, or Not Adequate (NA) =1. Source: Field Survey Data (2020)*

From the responses in Table 3 and with criterion mean of 0.953, it could be summarised that there is a negative perception on the adequacy of CSR initiatives sponsored by the telecommunications companies in the selected institutions. Concerning the perception of staff and students on adequacy of CSR initiatives sponsored by the telecommunications companies in the selected institutions, a majority of the interviewees confirmed that the CSR initiatives of the telecommunications companies were absent in their schools not to talk of being adequate. Even in the tertiary institutions where the CSR initiatives were implemented by telecommunications companies, it was observed that the initiatives were considered inadequate. Director of Works and Physical Planning, University of Lagos, although appreciated the provision of digital library for his institution by MTN, but also expressed his dissatisfaction about the inadequacy of the facility. According to the interviewee:

We appreciate MTN. We really appreciate them, but you see, we are looking at a population of about 30,000 students in the full-time programme on the internet at the same time. How many of them can access it? How many of them have the access? The last time I was there, some of the equipment were not functioning, some not all. (pers. comm., 10th March, 2020, Akoka, Lagos).

One interviewee from LASU said: “In my opinion, there is no need talking about adequacy when the facilities are not put in place in the first instance (pers.

comm., 13th March, 2020, Ojo, Lagos). Other responses are: ‘So, since their presence is not felt here at all, I will rate the adequacy of the facilities zero percent’ (pers. comm., 3rd March, 2020, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos); ‘I am not aware of any CSR initiatives to my knowledge, so I cannot talk of adequacy’ (pers. comm., 20th February, 2020, Akoka, Lagos); ‘Without mincing words, I will rate them zero percent. Yes, zero percent’ (pers. comm., 18th February, 2020, Imota, Lagos). ‘Well, it will be difficult for me to rate them because I’m not aware of anyone at all so I can say zero percent but it is possible that they are doing it in other institutions that I don’t have such information’ (pers. comm., 26th February, 2020, Ojo, Lagos). From the above analysis, it is obvious that the CSR initiatives of the telecommunications companies in the selected institutions were not adequate.

Discussions

Types of CSR initiatives of the Nigerian telecommunications companies in the selected tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria

The study found that the contribution of CSR initiatives of the telecommunications companies to the development of tertiary education in Lagos State is sparse. About 14 years before this study was conducted, cash was donated twice to the ‘Overall Best Student’ in just Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education by Airtel for the purpose of driving Edu-Tech in schools. Also, ICT training tagged ‘MTN ICT-Edu’ was organised for members of staff of the University of Lagos only once by MTN with the purpose of promoting ICT driven academic environment. E-book/E-journals tagged ‘MTN E-book/E-journal Package’ was equally provided once by MTN for just the University of Lagos for the purpose of exposing staff/students to electronic related materials in their respective disciplines. Finally, only the University of Lagos was provided with online library services called ‘MTN Digital Library’ by MTN to enhance teaching and learning experience. Another CSR initiative implemented by telecoms companies is 9,743 scholarships given by MTN to 3,829 students in public tertiary institutions across Nigeria with each recipient receiving the sum of two hundred thousand naira (N200,000.00) every session till graduation as long as they maintain the required CGPA (pers. comm., 31st March, 2020, Lagos). Academic Research Development and Innovation Challenge (ARDIC) programme is another initiative sponsored by MTN in which young researchers in TEIs are given one million naira (N1,000,000.00) each (pers. comm., 31st March, 2020, Lagos). Also, Anti-Substance Abuse Programme (ASAP) is an

initiative of MTN for tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Through the initiative, undergraduate students are dissuaded from abusing harmful substances (pers. comm., 31st March, 2020, Lagos). Airtel Networks pioneered Airtel Library for the Blind Project in tertiary institutions across the country (pers. comm., 10th March, 2020, Lagos). Airtel Networks (formerly called Celtel) gave a million dollar each to University of Ibadan and Lagos Business School for building of an auditorium and other critical infrastructures (pers. comm., 10th March, 2020, Lagos). Airtel Inspirational Scheme is an Airtel Networks project where senior managers and directors were encouraged to go back to the school and departments where they studied and inspire students in those schools to prepare future workers in business organisations psychologically and make them ready so that they can put their education to use (pers. comm., 10th March, 2020, Lagos). Finally, Zain Africa Challenge (ZAC), another CSR intervention of Airtel (then Zain) Networks in tertiary education development was a fast paced televised quiz show involving universities from countries across East, West and Southern Africa to motivate and create an enabling environment for universities' students to achieve academic excellence. The top prize was over US\$ 1,000,000 of cash prizes and grants made possible by Zain (<http://www.zainafriacchallenge.com>. Retrieved on 14th June, 2020).

The effort of the telecommunications companies notwithstanding, with the mean score of 0.12, which is far less than 2.5 (test value), it was found that the involvement of the telecoms companies in terms of implementing CSR initiatives in support of tertiary institutions in Nigeria is too low; that only MTN and Airtel Networks implemented a few CSR initiative types to support tertiary institutions; and that the few CSR programmes were predominantly limited to a few of the government owned universities in Lagos State and less visible in private tertiary institutions. The study found that other critical needs of tertiary educational institutions left unattended to by major telecommunications operators in Nigeria include construction/renovation of lecture halls; supplies of desktop computers to ICT centres; supplies of desktop computers/laptops/ipads/tablets/palmtops to staff/students; production of electricity/solar energy, and so on were. For instance, one interviewee said: “[...] As far as I know, their presence is not felt in this campus at all. We have not even seen anything from them” (pers. comm., 10th February, 2020, Yaba, Lagos).

It can be observed that there are 170 universities; 132 polytechnics; and 156 colleges of education in Nigeria (www.myschoolgist.com. Retrieved on September 15, 2019). It was noted that MTN made profit after tax of N202.1B in 2019 up from N145.68B recorded for the corresponding period for 2018. Similarly, Airtel (Nigeria) Networks had profit after tax of N139.8B and N89.6B in 2019 and 2018 respectively (NCC, 2019; MTN Financial Statement (December),

2019; Airtel Africa Financial Statement (December), 2019). In addition, it was revealed that Nigerian phone subscribers spend N242bn monthly (Omolayo, 2020). Despite all of these, the involvement of telecommunications companies in the development of tertiary education was discovered in this study to be very minimal. This finding corroborates that of Okoh and Ojoh (2014) that the social contribution by telecommunications companies toward the promotion of tertiary educational sector is minimal compared to the huge annual profits of these companies. The finding is also analogous to Aid (2016) who described the situation as a completely inadequate response to the sometimes-devastating impact that telecommunications companies can have in an ever-more globalised world. There are a total of four telecommunications companies currently operating in Nigeria. It is appalling that MTN and Airtel are the two most frequently named telecommunications companies identified with CSR initiatives in tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State. Against this background, it is no longer surprising that telecommunications companies such as Glo and gmobile declined to participate in this study.

The finding in this study proved that, contrary to the claims of stakeholder's theory, the interests between the firm and the stakeholders seem to be conflicting. The firm's primary purpose is to make profit while the stakeholders' interests are to redistribute the wealth created by the firm to other constituencies, particularly to themselves. Furthermore, the finding affirmed the efficacy of the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities of CSR pyramid in stakeholder's theory. Validating these four CSR aspects, this study observed that CSR initiatives of telecommunications companies for tertiary institutions were implemented based on economic and philanthropic responsibilities while the perception of tertiary institutions was based on ethical responsibility.

Perception of staff and students on adequacy of CSR initiatives of the telecommunications companies in the selected institutions

The analysis of quantitative data (Table 3) and qualitative data collected established that there is a negative perception on the adequacy of CSR initiatives implemented by the telecommunications companies in the selected institutions. With the mean score of 0.953, which is far less than 2.5 (test value), there is a negative perception on the adequacy of CSR initiatives sponsored by the telecommunications companies in the selected institutions. This suffices the explanation why the existing CSR initiatives could not impact development of any sort in the selected tertiary institutions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Contribution of telecommunications companies to the development of tertiary education in Lagos State is very low. It is baffling that the low contribution by the telecommunications companies is limited to government owned tertiary educational institutions. In addition, such interventions are in limited areas of cash donation, ICT training, supplies of e-book/e-journals, supplies of online database service, provision of online library services, award of scholarships, and advisory/inspirational scheme. There were no visible capital development projects. Based on the paucity of telecommunications companies' intervention in the tertiary institutions, the initiatives are inadequate to aid development in the tertiary institutions.

Based on the findings in this study, it was recommended that telecommunications companies should increase their contributions to tertiary education development especially in the provision of physical and infrastructural facilities, online library services and WI-FI. In addition, while designing and implementing CSR initiatives, telecommunications companies' attention should focus on both government and privately owned tertiary institutions. This is because the products of these institutions are eventually integrated into all segments of the economy including telecommunications companies.

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