

Understanding Corporate Social Responsibility and Its Impact on Marketing of New Products in Developing Countries; Ghana in Perspective.

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ABSTRACT: The paper is to understand corporate social responsibility and its impact on marketing of new product in developing countries; using Ghana as an example. Knowing how businesses in developing countries understand corporate social responsibility is very important as CSR is being championed and promoted by many international bodies. Qualitative research approach which involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) was used to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences of respondents as well as gathering in-depth insights into the problems as the focus of the study is to get extensive and detail understanding of the problem rather than numbers. The population of the study was drawn from Ghana which is among the developing countries in the world, the researcher select companies listed on Ghana Stock Exchange as sample because it is believe that these companies are in good financial position and are well structured with competent management that understand corporate social responsibilities and may had engaged in corporate social responsibility before. The awareness and understanding of CSR in developing countries. The awareness and understanding of CSR in developing countries, how often companies in developing countries engage in CSR, as well as impact of CSR on marketing of new products were tested, analysed and presented in a narrative form under themes.

The study revealed that, companies in developing countries are aware of CSR due to the heightened promotion undertaken by NGOs and CSR standard setting institutions but each has its own understanding even though the companies frequently undertake CSR activities in every financial year. It was also revealed that, CSR ensure brand image and brand awareness which are helpful in market promotion and marketing new products.

I. INTRODUCTION

Crafting of business plan cannot be done in isolation from marketing strategies that factor in the society where products and services of businesses are marketed and sold. Therefore Corporate Social Responsibility which is defined by the European Commission (EC) as 'a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis' need to be our concerned. In October 2011 the EC published a new policy on corporate social responsibility. The Commission defines corporate social responsibility as 'the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society'. To fully meet their social responsibility, enterprises 'should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders' (COM, 2001).

Also United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) defines CSR as 'Corporate social responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. CSR is generally understood as being the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives (Triple-Bottom-Line Approach), while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders. In this sense it is important to draw a distinction between CSR, which can be a strategic business management concept, and charity, sponsorships or philanthropy. Even though the latter can also make a valuable contribution to poverty reduction, will directly enhance the reputation of a company and strengthen its brand, the concept of CSR clearly goes beyond that'. (<https://www.unido.org/our-focus/advancing-economic-competitiveness/competitive-trade->

[capacities-and-corporate-responsibility/corporate-social-responsibility-market-integration/what-csr](https://www.ispatguru.com/corporate-social-responsibility/)). The definition of CSR as per World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) also postulated that, Corporate Social Responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the community and society at large' whiles the World Bank Group defined 'Corporate social responsibility as the commitment of businesses to contribute to sustainable economic development by working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large, to improve their lives in ways that are good for business and for development'.
(<https://www.ispatguru.com/corporate-social-responsibility/>).

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There have been many studies on corporate social responsibilities but research on their impacts on marketing of new products has been understudied. Also knowing how businesses in developing countries understand corporate social responsibility is very important as CSR is being championed and promoted by many international bodies. Most literatures focus on how CSR affects marketing performance, consumer attitudes and financial performance of companies but studies on how CSR can specifically affect entry of new products to the market is very scanty. This therefore call for the need to find out if indeed CSR can have positive or negative impact on marketing of new products in emerging economy. The question therefore arises; Is CSR helpful in companies marketing strategies? The answers this mind boggling question are not known hence it is problematic to formulate marketing strategies that factor in CSR especially when introducing new products to the market. The study therefore seeks to find solutions to fill this loophole.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main aim of the study is to find the understanding of CSR and its impact on marketing of new products in developing countries. Specifically, it was done to find out:

1. The awareness and understanding of CSR in developing countries.
2. How often companies in developing countries engage in CSR
3. Impact of CSR on marketing of new products

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the research problem and objective of the study, the following questions were stated for solutions;

- i. Are you aware of Corporate Social Responsibility? If yes how do you understand Corporate Social Responsibility?
- ii. What impact does CSR has on marketing of new products

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to Ghana only, which is not the only developing country in Africa and the world at large and even that, just five out of many companies were purposively selected making the study narrow in scope. The findings can therefore not be generalized to the rest of the

III. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RELATED STUDIES

A properly implemented CSR concept can bring along a variety of competitive advantages, such as enhanced access to capital and markets, increased sales and profits, operational cost savings, improved productivity and quality, efficient human resource base, improved brand image and reputation enhanced customer loyalty, better decision making and risk management processes. (<https://www.unido.org/our-focus/advancing-economic-competitiveness/competitive-trade-capacities-and-corporate-responsibility/corporate-social-responsibility-market-integration/what-csr>)

A strategic approach to CSR is increasingly important to the competitiveness of enterprises. It can bring benefits in terms of risk management, cost savings, access to capital, customer relationships, human resource management, and innovation capacity.² Because CSR requires engagement with internal and external stakeholders, it enables enterprises to better anticipate and take advantage of fast changing societal expectations and operating conditions. It can therefore drive the development of new markets and create opportunities for growth. By addressing their social responsibility enterprises can build long-term employee, consumer and citizen trust as a basis for sustainable business models. Higher levels of trust in turn help to create an environment in which enterprises can innovate and grow. ([https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/com/com\(2011\)0681/com\(2011\)0681en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/com/com(2011)0681/com(2011)0681en.pdf)).

Interestingly, the philanthropic practice can be a good business tool as well. The research is

plentiful. According to a presentation titled "The Power of a Values-Based Strategy" by Forrester Research, a market research company that advises corporate clients, "some 52% of U.S. consumers factor values into their purchase choices," seeking brands that proactively promote beliefs and values aligned with their own.¹

Also, engaging in CSR activities creates a reputation for the company as honest and reliable and that customers consider the products and services of such companies as more reliable and of better quality (**McWilliams and Siegel, 2001**). Engaging in CSR activities also enhances the purchase intention of potential customers (**Fagerström et al., 2015**).

Wright and Ferris (1997) discovered a negative relationship between CSR and financial performance while Posnikoff (1997) reported a positive relationship with Welch and Wazzan (1999) finding no relationship between CSR and financial performance.

According to Friedman (1970) and other neoclassical economists, socially responsible firms have a competitive disadvantage (Aupperle et al., 1985), because they incur costs that fall directly upon the bottom line and reduce profits, while these costs could be avoided or borne by individuals or the government.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This chapter looks at the methods and procedures used in conducting the research. It highlighted on research design, the population and sample size, sampling technique adopted and validity and reliability of the instruments used, data collection and analysis.

Research Design

Qualitative research approach was used. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) was used to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences of respondents as well as gathering in-depth insights into the problems in the study (Bhandari, 2020). This method was used because the focus of the study is to get extensive and detail understanding of the problem rather than numbers. In going by this, in-depth interview through zoom video was used because it helps to observe social distancing protocol as we are in COVID-19 era. In-depth interview was used because it helps to break the research questions into the simplest form for the respondents to understand and give their views. It is advantageous because it provides wealth of details to the researcher as stated by Wimmer and Dominick (2000: 121).

4.2 Target Population

The population of the study was drawn from Ghana which is a West African country and is among the developing countries in the world according to United Nation's report on World Economic Situations and Prospects, 2020. Looking at the number of developing countries in the world, the time constraints and the pains involve in gathering data from these countries, the researcher select companies listed on Ghana Stock Exchange as the study population from which sample was drawn. Companies listed on Ghana Stock Exchange were selected because it is believe that these companies are in good financial position and are well structured with competent management that understand corporate social responsibilities and may had engaged in corporate social responsibility before.

4.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The study used non probability sampling techniques where five companies were purposively selected as the study sample from the number of companies listed on Ghana Stock Exchange. The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses and does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Bernard 2002, Lewis & Sheppard 2006). Although purposive sampling is subjective and associated with biasness, the study used this sampling technique because these companies are believed to have the financial muscles to undertake CSR and the management of these companies has knowledge in the subject matter (CSR). Despite its inherent bias, purposive sampling can provide reliable and robust data. The strength of the method actually lies in its intentional bias (Bernard 2002, Lewis & Sheppard 2006).

4.4 Procedure and Data Collection

Unstructured interview format was designed to serve as a guide in collecting data from five managers of the selected companies through zoom video. This gave flexible space to make an in-depth inquiry that unravels information that answers the research question to achieve the study objective. Before the interviews were scheduled and conducted, permissions were obtained with each manager fixing their own date and time. Managers were therefore interviewed on different

dates and time convenient to them to prevent undue pressure.

Moral, ethical, confidentiality and anonymity issues were also considered in the process of collecting data for the study. The anonymity of a person or an institution is thus protected by making it impossible to link aspects of data to a specific person or institution (LoBiondo-Wood & Harber 2002:273) and this was done by using codes rather than names to identify information obtained from the respondents hence the companies were identified as COM 1, 2,3,4 and 5.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

Collected data was analyzed and presented in a narrative form. The data was analyzed under themes (sub headings) to give meaning to the study and to put the gathered data into perspective. Themes were centered on the research objectives and questions. It was analyzed:

VI. FINDINGS

In order to ensure that the study is not skewed to just one sector, selection of companies from the stock market was based on diversified sector hence each of the companies selected engaged in different businesses. This is to help us gain deep insight in how the various sectors understand corporate social responsibilities. COM1 is into cocoa processing, COM2 is into fan milk business whiles COM3, COM4 and COM5 are into pharmaceuticals, fast food and wood processing businesses respectively. Also all the selected companies were having good financial positions and operate in different part of Ghana.

The study basically seeks to answer questions on the following:

The awareness of CSR by the companies

It was found out that, all the companies are aware of corporate social responsibilities and have involved in it in one way or the other as all the managers interviewed responded yes when asked whether they are aware of corporate social responsibilities.

Companies Understanding On Corporate Social Responsibility

As managers responded that, they are aware of CSR, it was imperative to find out how they understand it. How each of the managers interviewed understands CSR are as follow:

COM1: CSR means all the roads leading to the business as well as electricity must always be fixed by the company without waiting for the central government. Not everything is push on the government, sometimes the company donates street bulbs to community leaders to fix on their streets.

COM2: I understand CSR to be a responsibility of the company to ensure that waste products from the company are recycled and managed well to prevent it from damaging the environment. Also welfare of the people living close to the company must be prioritized, amenities like potable water, gutters and bridges must be constructed by the company.

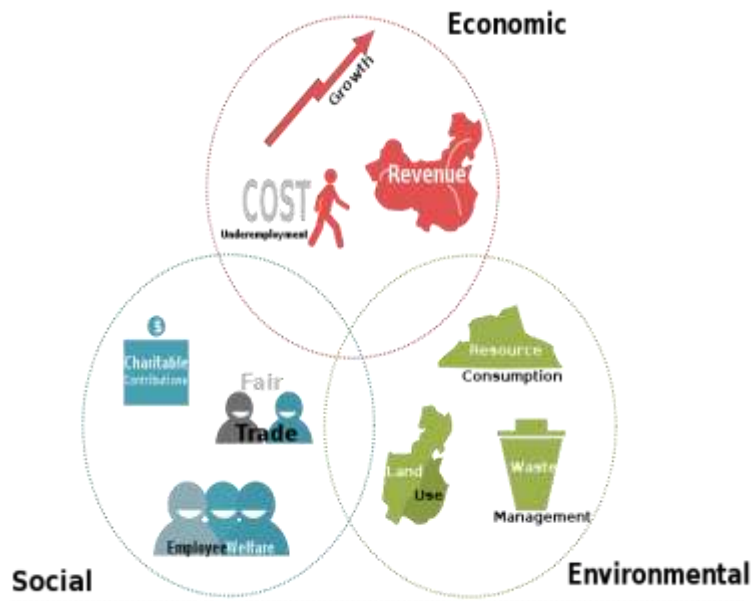
COM3: Providing medical equipments to hospitals, paying surgical operation bills for people suffering from serious sickness like brain tumor, cardiovascular diseases as well as providing anti retroviral drugs for HIV patients are CSR.

COM4: Instituting scholarship scheme for the brilliant but needy students in the society as well as recruiting the people in the society is all CSR.

COM5: CSR encompasses protecting the environment, contributing to developmental projects in the society and as well as ensuring the welfare of the employees.

The results above indicate that, even though the managers understand CSR, their understandings are narrow as compare to the Triple Bottom Line (3BL) framework of CSR coined by John Elkington in 1994 which encompasses the social, the environmental, and the economic responsibilities. Either their understanding bothers on two of the three dimension of CSR or just one which means that their understandings are just microcosm of the broader CSR concept.

Their understanding of CSR is shown under the following 3 triple bottom line dimension as indicated in figure 1 below.



Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triple_bottom_line#/media/File:Triple_Bottom_Line_graphic.svg

SOCIAL: Under the social dimension of triple bottom line, two main contexts were extracted from their understanding of CSR, thus charity work and developmental projects in the community. Under the charity work Com1, Com2, and Com3 definition falls under it as com1 makes suggest that donation of street bulbs is classify as CSR. Also, Com3 define it as providing free drugs to HIV patients as well as paying hospital bills with Com4 describing CSR as providing scholarship package for the downtrodden in the community. Under developmental projects which fall under Social dimension per triple bottom line, Com1 see it as providing electricity and constructing roads, while, Com2 viewed it as constructing boreholes to provide potable water, and constructing bridges as well. Also Com5 defined CSR as providing developmental projects without giving the specifics. Another view which captures the meaning of CSR under the social dimension is Com5 seeing CSR as the responsibility of ensuring social welfare of people.

ENVIRONMENT: The definition by Com2 can also be view under this wing as the manager interviewed sees CSR as instituting waste management practices that includes recycling of waste products. Com 5 specifically mentioned environmental protection which falls under the environment dimension of CSR.

ECONOMIC: Surprisingly, only Com4 view which includes recruitment of people from the society falls under this wing; all the other four

managers' views on CSR exclude the economic aspect of CSR.

From the above, it can be state that, each of the managers' definitions on CSR fall under the social aspect of CSR as Com1, Com2, Com3, Com4, and Com5 talks something about social and it must be noted that their understanding of CSR differs as each has his own definition.

How often does companies in developing countries engage in CSR

Having ascertained that management are aware of CSR and they have some understanding of what CSR mean, it was important to find out how frequent they engaged in CSR activities. The results of the findings are below:

COM1: I see corporate social responsibility as communal labor and as such I make sure that every year the company budget on social activities. For the past three years the company has been fixing street lights and patching potholes on the roads leading to the company's premises meaning that every year work towards CSR is conducted.

COM2: Everyday, the company makes sure the environment is protected, waste products are treated and managed well, this suggest that, the company engage in CSR in almost every day.

COM3: The Company does not have a specific time to perform its social responsibilities, as we always budget on CSR, the company regularly provides drugs to HIV patients, also donation and

payment of hospital bills are done as and when the need arises.

COM4: Every year not less than ten brilliant but needy students are sponsored to further their education and we do that with the hope that we can recruit them to work for the company when they graduate. This has helped the company to get brilliant and competent workers to serve at various levels for the company's success.

COM5: We are conscious of ensuring corporate social responsibility and as such we imbued it in every stage of our production. This suggests that in every working day the company honors its social responsibility.

From the above findings, it is clear that, the companies frequently engage in corporate social responsibilities as Com2 and Com5 suggest that almost every working day their companies engage in CSR while Com3 did not give specifics but stated that CSR is regularly done as the need arise. Also both Com1 and Com4 indicated that CSR is done in every year.

Impact Of CSR On Marketing Of New Products

COM1: Well, CSR performed by the company has indeed promote the company's brand and has made the company well known to the populace making promotion of our new products easy as people believe that the company associate itself with them and anything brought to the market by the company is of good quality. In all, I can say that, CSR activities undertaken by the company has been helpful in terms of market promotion of our new products.

COM2: Most of our customers say that they patronize our products as they are produce in hygienic environment making the product free from harmful substances that compromise quality because of the good waste management system in place. Their testimonies therefore make marketing of our products easy.

COM3: Anytime the company makes donation it is announced to the general public through the various media (radio, tv station, facebook, instagram) and management assessment have revealed that, this concept create awareness of the existence of the company and win more customers as it sales return always increase whenever such donations are made.

COM4: Thorough assessments on the performance and sales of its new products revealed that there is no connection of the company's scholarship package and its sales volume. Management is yet to establish any relationship between its annual scholarship package and marketing of the new products.

COM5: Mostly, when we launch new product, the community leaders mostly promote it due to our cordial relationship with them as we always assist them in their developmental needs. Mostly, whenever we are handing over development project to the community, the chiefs, assembly members, municipal chief executives and the various stakeholders who get chance to speak appeal to the populace to patronize our product. Yes, they mostly talk about the product whenever there is public gathering creating awareness of our product and this really help in the sales of our new product.

From the above, it is clear that CSR has impact on the marketing of the companies' new products as it help in promotion and advertisement of new products this was achieved through brand awareness and brand image.

Brand awareness as way of marketing promotion and advertisement

Brand awareness is strongly related to the power with which the presence and traces of a brand in customers' minds result in their capacity to recognize (identify) the brand under various market conditions (O'Guinn, Allen, & Semenik, 2009). From the excerpts above it is clear that, Com1, Com3 appreciates that CSR ensures brand awareness as Com1 intimated that, CSR help promote the company brand and made it known to the lager population. Also Com3 postulated that, their involvement in CSR create brand awareness which is similar to what Com5 manager stated. According to Com5 manager, opinion leaders always create awareness by appealing to the populace to patronize any product they bring to the market.

Brand image as a way of marketing promotion and advertisement

Brand image refers to consumer's general perception and feeling about a brand and has an influence on consumer behavior. For marketers, whatever their companies' marketing strategies are, the main purpose of their marketing activities is to influence consumers' perception and attitude toward a brand, establish the brand image in consumers' mind, and stimulate consumers' actual purchasing behavior of the brand, therefore increasing sales, maximizing the market share and developing brand equity (Zhang, 2015).

It was found out that, due to the good waste management system put in place by Com2, it has good hygienic environment and as such, people perceive the products of Com2 as quality. This means that, the brand image of Com2 is rated as

good because people perceive their product as quality hence they patronize it.

CSR has no impact on marketing of new products

The extract from Com4, indicated that, their annual CSR (scholarship package) do not have any connection with the marketing of the new products. This suggests that, per Com4, assessment they do not think there is any substantial impact of CSR on marketing of the company's new product.

VII. DISCUSSION

On the awareness of Corporate Social Responsibility, it was established in the study that, managers are aware of Corporate Social Responsibility which contradict a study by Dobers & Halme 2009, which stated that little is known of its practice in developing countries. The awareness of CSR among managers in developing countries is not a surprise because CSR is now a global phenomenon, (Moure, 2019; Fatma et al, 2016; Xia et al, 2018).Jamali, 2010 stated that, interest in CSR in developing countries is recently increasing, and can in part be attributed to the globalization in which many companies have expanded the scope of their reach (Jamali 2010).

UNDERSTANDING OF CSR IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The finding of the study revealed that, there were divergent views on CSR which corroborate World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) findings, which state that, despite awareness of CSR, there were differences on its meaning and emphasis in different parts of the world (Idemudia, 2011).Another study according to (Ite, 2004; Idemudia, 2014) also confirm this finding as both study underscored that, meanings attached to CSR differs from country to country and even within countries.

In this study, the social dimension of CSR which include charity work (philanthropic activities) and social development projects dominate in their understanding because in Ghana CSR is framed by socio-cultural influences such as religious faith, charitable belief and communism (Idemudia, 2014). This again supports a study by Katamba et al. (2012), which found that strategic philanthropic activities are the most common CSR practices in Uganda which is a developing country in an African. Their study also concluded that, the majority of CSR practices in Uganda take the form

of cash donations and sponsorships to some groups of stakeholders like schools and hospitals and this explain how Com3, and Com4 defined CSR in this study because Com 3 understood CSR to be among other things; the provision of medical equipments to hospitals, paying surgical bills for people suffering from serious sickness as well as providing anti retroviral drugs for HIV patients whiles Com4 defined CSR as providing scholarship scheme for the brilliant but needy students in the society.

Also the economic and environmental dimension which was not common in how the companies defined CSR is supported by a study conducted by (Lucie et al, 2020) on the topic: Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Media: Comparison between Developing and Developed Countries which revealed that, in developing countries, the economic aspect of CSR of businesses was not communicated on Instagram at all, and their role in environmental responsibility was only marginally communicated. Even though this study support the conceptualization of CSR on philanthropic, it failure to view CSR on economic aspect is in some part contradictory to a study by (Visser,2007) that revealed that, the economic and philanthropic aspects of CSR (rather than the legal and ethical responsibilities) will continue to dominate CSR conceptualization and practice in Africa (Visser,2007).

On the issue of how frequent companies practice CSR, it was ascertained that, in every year, the companies engaged in CSR, some even stated that, everyday they touched on CSR. This is because; CSR is being promoted by CSR Standard Setting Institutions such as; SA 8000 for employee relations, ISO 14000 for environmental management OHSAS 18001 for health and safety which encourage companies to improve their social and environmental performance (Fombrun, 2005).

Impact Of CSR On Marketing Of New Products

Indeed the study suggests that, CSR promotes, brand image and brand awareness which technically help in promoting and advertising of products of companies. The contribution of brand image and brand awareness in the promotion of new products cannot be underestimated, hence, it can be said that, CSR has positive impact in the marketing of new products as the managers interviewed confirmed, for example, Com1, Com3 an Com 5 appreciates that CSR ensures brand awareness which makes their products popular and well patronized whenever it enter market. Practically, brand awareness indicates the effectiveness of marketing activities of each company (Farris, Bendle, Pfeifer, & Reibstein,

2010; Liu, Liston- Heyes, & Ko, 2010) .The reason why the consequence of CSR in promoting brand awareness is seen as important is that, brand awareness is one of the most important factors determining the brand strength and as a consequence leading to its competitive advantage (Urbanek, 2002). It should be emphasized that shaping brand awareness involves consolidating its existence in customers' minds, which translates into decisions related to the development of the offer, selection of specific activities and cost analysis of marketing activities, which should be undertaken.

Also, CSR activities results in promoting brand image which consequently facilitate the marketing of new products. For example the good waste management system put in place by Com2 create hygienic environment which makes people believe that, products from Com2 are of good quality devoid of harmful substances and this is important to the company because, brand image in consumers mind, stimulate consumers' actual purchasing behavior of the brand, thereby increasing sales, maximizing the market share and developing brand equity (Zhang, 2015). Also Quazi and O'Brien (2000) mentioned that consumers would prefer companies that are responsible for the society that cares about the environment and maintain good citizenship behavior. These companies would be more likely to build a good and healthier reputation that is advantageous.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that, companies in developing countries are aware of CSR due to the heightened promotion undertaken by NGOs and CSR standard setting institutions.

It was also evident that, there were differences in the understanding of CSR among the managers of companies as each one has his or her own view about the meaning of CSR. It must be stated that, the social dimension of CSR was common in almost all the definition given by the managers and under this, social responsibility of companies were viewed as charity work (philanthropic activities), social infrastructural development as well as ensuring social welfare. Economic as well as environmental activities were not adequately captured by the companies as only two companies definition talked about the environment with only one talking about the economic aspect in defining CSR.

The study also ascertained that, the companies frequently undertake CSR activities in every financial year; even some intimated that, they undertake CSR activity in every working day.

It was also revealed that, CSR ensure brand image and brand awareness which are helpful in promoting and advertising of products. It can therefore be concluded that, CSR help in marketing new products.

Limitation of the study

The study is limited to Ghana only, which is not the only developing country in Africa and the world at large and even that, just five out of many companies were purposively selected making the study narrow in scope. The findings can therefore not be generalized to the rest of the developing country. Another limitation of the study had to do with the methodology; the research design and the sampling technique used. The study used a purposive sampling technique which is based on the researcher's which is subjective. The study collected data through in-depth interview. This methodology is open to bias.

Notwithstanding the limitation which could be the reason for further study on the topic, the results ascertained are valid.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results, it is recommended that, the scope of future study must be widening to make the generalization of the findings scientifically reasonable.

It is also suggested that, companies must understand and see CSR in a wider scope comprising social, economic, and environmental aspect and any definition as well as policies they initiate must seek to integrate all these aspects.

Companies trying to promote their product must not only view advertisement on media as the only way but CSR can also play a vital role in promoting a product hence companies must invest in CSR.

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