Corporate Social Responsibility: Challenges and Prospects of Implementation by Commercial Banks in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract

The expectations on banks to improve their mutual relationships with society in reconciling their huge profit with the need to give back to society has left the banks with serious challenges of implementing innovative measures to boost and retain the confidence of stakeholders, meet local and international expectations, and enjoy both comparative and competitive advantages. Consequently, this study was designed to explore the challenges commercial banks in the Enugu metropolis face in implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) vis-à-vis the prospects. Four research questions and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. A questionnaire validated by three experts, subjected to test re-test reliability method and which overall Chronbach Alpha result yielded 0.72 co-efficient, was used to collect data. The population comprised 140 middle-level and operational commercial bank managers spread across the three locations of the metropolitan city. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA. The findings revealed that the banks were facing many challenges ranging from corruption to low reporting of their CSR based on Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI) indicators, and were therefore not realizing the desired prospects of CSR. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of bank managers from the three locations of Enugu city on the challenges and prospects of CSR. It was, therefore, recommended, among others, that more stringent and enforceable regulatory measures should be put in place by both the relevant government agencies and the banks to check corruption; the banks should re-strategize for global reporting of their CSR activities on incremental rate until they cover all the GRI performance indicators. In-house training and sensitization exercises should also be conducted for the bank executives and other levels of managers to arm them to appreciate and take CSR more seriously to reap from the identified prospects.

1. Introduction

The banking sector has been facing many challenges and needs to implement some new measures to be able to boost and retain the confidence of stakeholders, meet local and international expectations, re-strategize for better policy frameworks, and enjoy both comparative and competitive advantages. Consequently, banks have been improving the quality and scope of their services to their customers to minimize risks and optimize their annual returns on investment. They are also, more than ever before, expected to modify and improve the mutual relationships between them and society by striking a reasonable balance between the huge profit they make and the need to give back to society by way of contributing to the preservation and protection of the environment in which they do business as this is necessary even for their continued survival [1]. Banks are therefore to increase their investment in a wider area of corporate social responsibilities. Transparency and financial disclosure are also no longer an option for businesses, particularly banks [2][3]. In other words, there is also a serious need to become more responsive to the stakeholders in the areas of adequately and honestly reporting their activities [4].

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) also commonly called corporate conscience, corporate citizenship, social performance, or sustainable responsible business differs from place to place, and from industry to industry. It is therefore difficult to precisely define the concept without placing it in a context. However, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development in Littenberg [5] defined CSR as the continuing commitment by businesses to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large. CSR can also be defined as the extent to which and how an organization is consciously responsible for and accounts for its action and non-action(s) and the impact of these on its stakeholders. It is a means by which companies integrate social and environmental concerns in business operations and their interaction with their stakeholders voluntarily [6]. It is described as a tool, a measure, or even a business strategy that requires organizations to apply a total change in attitude toward their internal and external stakeholders. One of the best-known and most widely accepted definitions of CSR is by Caroll in Lentner et al.[7], who says that CSR encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary or philanthropic expectations that society has of organizations. It aims at relating well with all interested groups and working towards sustainable development [8]. It is not only about mere philanthropy, marketing gimmicks, or just trying to go "green". It is a business model that must be worked on and developed over time [9]. CSR-oriented organizations proactively promote the public interest by contributing to societal growth and development and consciously work to avoid practices that harm the public space, and all these need not necessarily be provided by law.

Previous studies had highlighted the importance of implementing CSR. According to various sources, the importance includes that it improves the welfare of citizens; gives employees a sense of belonging; builds a positive brand image of firms; assists organizations to gain competitive advantage; makes companies more innovative; improves operational effectiveness by employees and boosts productivity thereby contributing to a more sustainable economy. CSR also creates a win-win situation in value creation; contributes to

improving education and literacy rates as well as to reducing extreme hunger and poverty [35][36][37][38].

The banking sector is one of the business sectors driving the economic and social development of nations. In Nigeria, there are different types of banks which include the Central Bank, the commercial banks, the merchant banks, the development banks, the mortgage banks, the micro-finance banks, and the non-interest banks (Islamic banks). Commercial banks exist mainly to provide financial services to corporate bodies (institutions, agencies, and companies or businesses) as well as individuals. They carry out the business of receiving money from customers in current and deposit accounts and employ such funds profitably by lending them in form of loans and overdrafts [10].

There is a good number of commercial banks in the Enugu metropolis with multiple branches because of the strategic location of the city as the capital and administrative center of the old Eastern Region of Nigeria out of which many other states have been created. The metropolis comprises Enugu North covering Abakaliki Road, Okpara Avenue, and Ogbete axis; Enugu East covering the Emene, Abakpa, and Nkwo Nike axis; and Enugu West covering the Uwani and Awkunanaw axis. The banks, like other businesses, are expected to discharge corporate social responsibilities to their stakeholders. The banks' stakeholders, according to Lentner et al. [7], include the owners (shareholders), borrowers, depositors, managers, employees, and regulators. The banking sector is unique in comparison with other sectors because its activities affect a large number and strata of citizens. This requires them to provide adequate information on their activities such as CSR for the benefit and appreciation of all parties. The significance of this study, therefore, lies in the fact that the results are expected to expose the state-of-the-art and awaken the consciousness of banks, their stakeholders, and other sectors to appreciate more the critical place of CSR in today's competitive business environment. The study would also awaken the regulatory authorities such as the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation on their roles in getting banks to implement CSR as a win-win long-term business strategy for the ultimate benefits of the banks and society in general.

According to Mbogoh and Ogutu [11], commercial banks in particular are increasingly being held accountable for their practice of corporate social consciousness and conscience such as being fair in their dealings, protecting the environment from degradation, and providing wider socio-economic benefits. The practice of implementing CSR requires a bank's perspective to be changed towards building new relationships, new values, and new strategies. The practice, therefore, naturally comes with challenges that need to be overcome to reap the prospects. This work therefore empirically determined the challenges of corruption, reporting, industry-specific problems as well as the prospects. Based on the findings and conclusion, some relevant recommendations were also offered on how to solve the challenges and position the banks for a higher level of CSR practices.

1.1. Challenges of implementing CSR by banks

According to Kokomo [22], implementing CSR programs is challenging for many business leaders, including those in the banking sector. Jiri and Lenka [12] observed that the true situation portrays the banking sector as having the idea that the implementation of CSR and associated ethical practices are necessary corporate and marketing strategies and yet CSR is not part of the key policies of the banks possibly because of the inherent challenges. From the available literature, they face problems of corruption, poor legal framework, poor global reporting or disclosure, and industry-specific challenges [5][7][8][9][13][14][15][15][17].

Commenting on corruption as a challenge, Littenberg [5] stated that one of the key social responsibilities of business is to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits, as long as it stays with the rules of the game, by engaging in open and free competition without deception or fraud. Anti-corruption stance is therefore part of the CSR strategies. Nga [9] stated that CSR often captured under the more accessible heading of people-planet-profit has its meaning becoming crisper looking at the United Nations Global Compact which asks companies to work within their sphere of influence toward human rights, labor rights, environmental responsibility, and anti-corruption. Social responsibility spending by banks could be marred by corruption. There could be situations where, in an attempt to promote the goodwill of the business, banks spend a large amount of money, only to find out later that community or foreign leaders have lined up their pockets with the funds to the detriment of the locally intended beneficiaries [14]. On the other hand, instead of promoting the banks' well-being and success which would ultimately position them to strategically implement CSR, bank executives sometimes enmesh themselves in corruption. Unfortunately, in our history of banking corruption, the punishment for titans of the industry has never been commensurate with the crimes committed. The penalty for corruption in the industry is, mildly put, a slap on the wrist. Bank executives in Nigeria appear to be too big to indict. While unemployed youths who took to internet fraud and petty thieves who rob beer parlors get swift and severe jail terms, bank executives smile to the bank to cash their heist. Some banks even engage in manipulating their books by colluding with other banks to artificially enhance financial positions and therefore stock prices. Practices such as converting non-performing loans into commercial papers and bank acceptances and setting up off-balance sheet special purpose avenues to hide losses were prevalent.

Above all, Nigerian banks operate in an environment of high corruption rates and poor corporate governance culture [2]. Corruption is a major problem that has a devastating human cost. In poor countries, it kills people and traps millions more in poverty. It also undermines the global economy and threatens national security. The usually undisclosed fact is that banks aid and abet corruption. Corrupt individuals in society find banks a conducive place to hide their stolen money. While laws and regulations in most countries require banks to do a range of checks to detect the proceeds of money deposits suspected to come from corruption, many banks fail to abide by this. As a result, corrupt people find banks as the gateway to launder their stolen funds [18][19][20]. Also, according to Hess [21], although the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) requires disclosure on anti-corruption matters, currently, few companies, including the banks, are providing disclosure on this issue, and those that are disclosing rarely provide useful information to stakeholders.

With respect to global reporting standards, despite campaigns for increased investment in CSR by commercial banks, many are yet to take it seriously while some that engage sparingly in it do not report these activities in line with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). Ude and Nwadialor [15] stated that the reporting techniques include assurance statements, environmental, social, and economic performance reports (also called Triple Ps – people, planet, and profit), and reporting annual accounts and financial statements. The implication of this is that even the little efforts on CSR could be under-reported or not reported at all and consequently, undervalued when subjected to international assessment parameters. It also appears that commercial banks in Nigeria are either insensitive or unaware of the global call for organizations to give back to society and to report the results in line with the GRI performance indicators to achieve economic, environmental, and social standards.

There are also other industry-specific challenges that commercial banks in developing countries like Nigeria face which constitute obstacles to CSR strategies and implementation.

They are considered industry-specific because they are most prevalent in the banking industry. These challenges identified by previous researchers include but are not limited to low knowledge and initiatives about CSR plus lack of proper engagement by the banks' stakeholders; lack of commitment, values, and vision set for the critical aspects of CSR by the bank's management and staff; the inability of the stakeholders to bargain for CSR projects; poor economic environment the banks operate in resulting in lean resources; organization politics in the banks; et cetera [7][11][12][22][23].

1.2. Prospects for implementing CSR

The interest of investors is growing in emerging markets such as Nigeria because of the global financial downturn and this is a good reason for the promotion of CSR in the banking sector to improve the overall economic growth of the nation [24]. Corporate social responsibility offers many prospects including guaranteeing the longevity of organizations and their policies, practices, and actions all of which can positively affect their businesses [25][26][27]. Corporate social responsibility increases brand image and profits because stakeholders prefer that companies they do business with believe strongly in ethical practices. Such practices increase business performance even in cases where businesses do not support investments [28]. Therefore, CSR as a by-product of profitability is a positive addition to the bottom line of a business which remotely adds to its performance margin [2].

Again, CSR is about businesses giving back to society. Advocates of CSR argue that businesses with good records of CSR will perform better in the long run than those that are not behaving responsibly. There is, therefore, a strong positive relationship between CSR and societal progress in terms of environmental and economic growth [26][29]. CSR acts as a protection of the banks' market value in times of crisis. Transparency is very important in restoring a bank's reputation, which is why financial firms should report more of their CSR than other sectors [6]. CSR assists in promoting social activities such as sports; poverty reduction and providing for the less privileged. CSR also increases the confidence of all stakeholders, including awareness and customer base [30]. CSR brings about excellent community relations and low labor turnover as it affects employees [31].

CSR has indeed become increasingly important to businesses nationally and internationally. Robust implementation of CSR is now seen as mutually beneficial for businesses, the environment, and the stakeholders. It is a veritable tool for addressing the concerns of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which have its pillars as economic, environmental, and social dimensions otherwise simply referred to as people, planet, and profits. Sustainability which is also part of the aim of CSR is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Specifically, Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 is to encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability into their reporting cycle. Commercial banks in Nigeria appear to be far from implementing CSR. Their CSR seems not only to be in its embryonic stage but also at the philanthropy level only.

Available literature revealed that research has been carried out on CSR implementation by banks in such areas as layers of CSR; expectations and achievements; levels of implementation; implementation variables; implementation strategies; extent of compliance with global reporting; the legal framework; use of CSR for community development; CSR and culture, etc. Empirical studies have also been carried out on CSR implementation in other various sectors in different countries. For instance, there were studies on areas of truth about CSR implementation in India; CSR implementation in Austrian SMEs; implementation of

CSR in Indonesia; CSR implementation in Central Europe; CSR implementation in oil companies in Nigeria; and implementation based on the triple-bottom-line concepts in India companies [36][37][38][40][41][42].

However, according to Mordi et. al. [13], a review of the literature on CSR still reveals a dearth of knowledge and the absence of robust CSR policies in Nigerian organizations, including banks. Adeleke [2]also reported that there is more research on CSR in advanced nations than in developing countries like Nigeria but the need for CSR is greater in developing nations. Increased research was, therefore, required in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This has partly necessitated this study. Are there challenges the Nigerian banks are facing and prospects that can be realized from significantly implementing CSR? Only a few known works have addressed the challenges faced by banks together with the prospects of implementing CSR and those were done outside the country [5][7][11]. One of the studies determined only the challenges of global reporting initiatives [11]. This current research covered a wider spectrum by reviewing related literature to determine three challenges together with the prospects of implementing CSR by commercial banks in Enugu Metropolitan city in Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, four research questions and a hypothesis were formulated.

1.3. Research questions:

These questions were answered in this study:

1. To what extent do commercial banks face challenges of corruption in implementing CSR?

2. To what extent do commercial banks face challenges of global reporting of their CSR based on the GRI performance indicators?

3. To what extent do commercial banks face industry-specific challenges in implementing CSR?

4. To what extent do commercial banks realize the prospects of implementing CSR?

1.4. Hypothesis

This hypothesis guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of bank managers from Enugu North, Enugu West, and Enugu East on the challenges and prospects of implementing CSR by commercial banks in the Enugu Metropolis.

2. Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey is a type of research design that provides a numeric description of attitudes, opinions, or trends of a population [32]. The design is not manipulative (like experimental design) but studies and records opinions or observations by using a checklist, questionnaire, or rating scales [33]. A descriptive survey was considered appropriate for the study which was carried out to collect and analyze data on the opinions of bank managers on the challenges and prospects of implementing CSR. A 38-item researcher-constructed questionnaire was used for data collection in accordance with the research questions. The instrument was on a five-point Likert rating scale with response options: Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Fairly

High Extent (FHE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE) with corresponding values of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The mean ratings were interpreted, using a real limit of numbers as follows: 4.50 – 5.00 (VHE), 3.50 – 4.49 (HE), 2.50 – 3.49 (FHE) 1.50 – 2.49 (LE) 0.05–1.49 (VLE). The instrument was validated by three experts, one in the banking industry, one in Business Education, and another in Measurement and Evaluation. The comments and suggestions of the experts were used to modify the final instrument. The instrument was trial-tested and the internal consistency was determined using Cronbach Alpha to analyze the result which the overall co-efficient value obtained was 0.72.

The research participants consisted of 140 middle-level and operational managers purposively selected as they could easily be reached for follow-up and prompt completion of a questionnaire. However, retrieval of the instruments was more difficult than expected and took several visits spanning over six months. This was due mainly to the busy schedules of the respondents especially the marketers among them. Online administration of instruments was not an option not only because the participants needed personal touch and visits to get the instruments back but also for fear of disruptive internet networks. However, with regular phone calls and home visits to some of the managers, a good number was eventually recovered. Out of the total of 140 copies of the questionnaire administered, 116 were retrieved and 105 (75%) were found valid for analysis. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of the mean (x) and standard deviation (SD). The criterion for acceptance was 3.50 and above while rejection was any rating below. ANOVA was used to test the formulated hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. All analyses were done with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3. Results

The results of the study are presented in the following tables:

Table 1. Respondents' distribution according to the location of bank branches

S/No	Location	Frequency	Percentage
1	Enugu North: Abakaliki Road, Okpara Avenue and Ogbete axis	45	42.86
2	Enugu West: Uwani and Awkunanaw axis	33	31.43
3	Enugu East: Emene, Abakpa and Nkwo Nike axis	27	25.71
	Total	105	100

[Table 1] shows the result of the distribution of the respondents according to the location of the commercial banks' branches. The respondents comprised 105 middle-level and operational managers: 45 (42.86%) from Enugu North, 33 (31.43%) from Enugu West, and 27 (25.71%) from Enugu East. The choice of the two categories of managers was because they could be easily reached with the research questionnaire and be closely followed up for retrieval of the instrument. The managers, having dealings and regular contacts with the various bank stakeholders, are also in a position to respond to the questionnaire with more confidence and less bias. The information in [Table 1] is also presented in a chart [Figure 1] below.
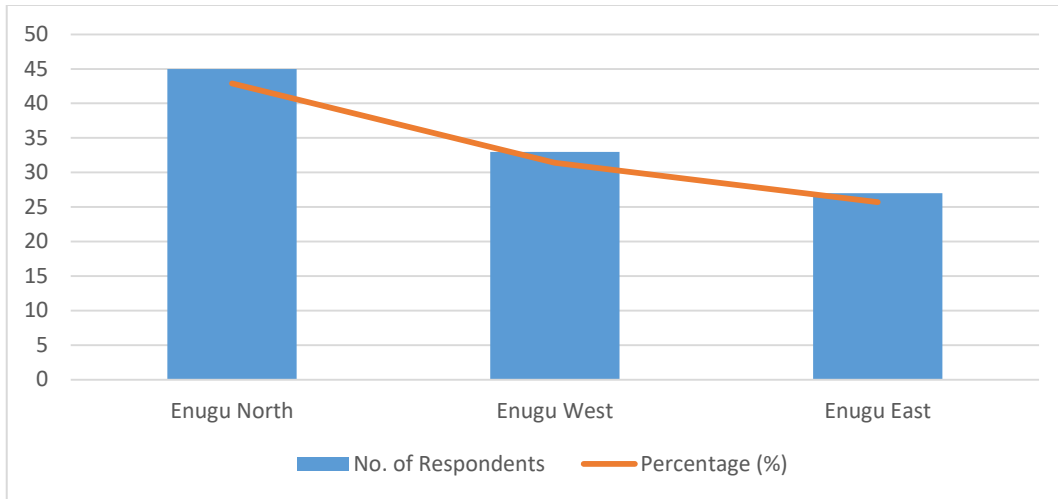
Figure 1. Number of respondents according to the location of bank branches in Enugu Metropolis

3.1. Descriptive analyses of research questions

Research Question 1: To what extent do commercial banks face challenges of corruption in implementing CSR?

Table 2. Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on corruption challenges faced by commercial banks in Enugu Metropolis

S/No	Items	Mean X	SD	Remarks
	Challenges of:			
1	The weak ethical and legal environment being exploited by the banks	4.36	0.76	HE
2	Collusion and diversion of funds meant for CSR by top management staff	4.19	0.96	HE
3	Weak anti-corruption strategies by the bank	4.21	0.64	HE
4	Lack of ethical practice and accountability on social spending by bank managers	3.68	0.85	HE
5	Collusion by community leaders	2.56	0.61	FHE
6	Collusion by foreigners	2.10	0.86	LE
7	Off-balance sheet figures used to hide profit or loss	4.18	0.70	HE
8	Collusion with government officials to hide stolen money	4.22	0.68	HE
9	Kick-backs demanded by community leaders and bank officials entrusted with CSR implementation	2.40	0.71	LE
	Cluster Mean	**3.54**		

The data presented in [Table 2] shows that the mean of the items ranged from 2.10 to 4.36. Six items had their means above 3.50 cut-off points indicating that the respondents rated them as challenges of corruption faced by commercial banks in implementing CSR. Three items bordering on collusion and kickbacks were rated below the cut-off point. The implication could be that CSR was sparingly practiced and so the existence of collusion and kickbacks might not be easily determined. The standard deviation was between 0.61 and 0.96 showing that the opinions of the respondents were not far apart. However, the cluster mean of 3.54 indicated that the banks face corruption challenges in implementing CSR.

Research Question 2: To what extent do commercial banks face challenges of global reporting of their CSR based on the GRI performance indicators?

Table 3. Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on global reporting challenges faced by commercial banks in Enugu Metropolis

S/No	Item Challenges faced in reporting:	Mean x	SD	Remarks
10	Materials procured and recycled	4.23	0.42	HE
11	Energy Use	4.75	0.43	HE
12	Landed property owned in areas of high biodiversity	4.01	0.70	HE
13	Weight of waste by type and disposal method	4.22	0.61	HE
14	Rates of injury, occupational health hazards, and absenteeism	3.64	0.69	HE
15	Diversity and equal employment opportunity	3.50	0.67	HE
16	Security practices	3.51	0.61	HE
17	Compliance with environmental laws	4.62	0.48	HE
18	Education, training, and counseling for employees	4.72	0.45	HE
19	Supplier's compliance with environmental, economic, and social responsibilities	3.94	0.80	HE
20	Risk control programs for workers, their families, and host communities	4.28	0.62	HE
21	Violation of rights of indigenous people and remedial action taken	4.07	0.74	HE
22	Bank's defined compensation/benefit plans	3.56	0.60	HE
	Cluster mean	**4.08**		

[Table 3] shows that all the 13 items of global reporting initiative (GRI) indicators were rated 3.50 and above which means that they all pose challenges to commercial banks. Similarly, the standard deviation which ranges from 0.42 to 0.80 indicated closeness in the opinions of the respondents. The cluster mean of 4.08 indicated that the commercial banks are to a high extent finding it difficult to report their CSR activities based on those 13 GRI indicators.

Research Question 3: To what extent do commercial banks face industry-specific challenges in implementing CSR?

Table 4. Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on industry-specific challenges faced by the commercial banks in Enugu Metropolis

S/No	Item Industry-specific Challenges	Mean X	SD	
23	Low knowledge, initiative, and emphasis on CSR by middle-level and operational managers	3.60	0.53	HE
24	Absence of proper engagement by stakeholders	3.58	0.70	HE
25	Lack of commitment by the bank executives (i.e. top-level management)	3.51	0.62	HE
26	Absence of values and vision set for CSR	4.60	0.57	HE
27	The inability of the host communities and staff to bargain for CSR	4.32	0.66	HE
28	Weak and unviable economic environment leading to inadequate resources to embark on CSR	3.73	0.72	HE
29	Organizational politics, e.g. where to site the projects	2.26	0.64	LE
30	Absence of a robust and specific regulatory framework for the industry on CSR	3.99	0.82	HE
	Cluster mean	**3.69**		

[Table 4] shows that 7 items of industry-specific challenges are rated as being faced to a high extent by commercial banks in implementing CSR. The least score (item 29) had 2.26 which is below the cut-off point of 3.50. The item is on "organization politics" and the managers could have rated it low since CSR had to be very much on the ground before "politics" of location could come in. The standard deviation which ranges from 0.53 to 0.82 equally indicated non-distant dispersion in the opinions of respondents. However, the cluster means of 3.69 obtained indicated more clearly that the banks face many (7 out of the 8 identified) industry-specific challenges.

Research Question 4: To what extent do commercial banks realize the prospects of implementing CSR?

Table 5. Mean rating and standard deviation of respondents on the realization of the prospects of CSR by the commercial banks in Enugu Metropolis

S/No	Item	Mean X	SD	
	Prospects of CSR			
31	Better performance of the banks both in the short and long run	2.30	0.87	LE
32	Being rated as employers of choice	2.21	0.74	LE
33	Being seen as a responsible corporate citizen by stakeholders in terms of ethical and legal conduct	2.26	0.66	LE
34	Increasing confidence of stakeholders in the banks and the entire banking industry	1.73	0.44	LE
35	CSR acts to protect the banks' market value in times of economic crisis	1.32	0.39	VLE
36	Enjoying low labor turnover	1.61	0.50	LE
37	Being rated high in excellent bank-community relations and environmental friendliness	2.16	0.64	LE
38	Increasing awareness of the public thereby expanding the customer base of the bank	1.75	0.43	LE
	Cluster mean	**1.92**		

[Table 5] shows that 7 items of prospects expected from CSR are being realized to a low extent (LE) while one (protecting the banks' market value in times of crisis) is to a very low extent (VLE) with a cut-off point of 1.32. The standard deviation equally indicated non-distant dispersion in the opinions of respondents. The cluster mean of 1.92 showed more clearly that the banks are not realizing the prospects of CSR because of the challenges they are facing.

3.2. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of bank managers from Enugu North, Enugu West, and Enugu East on the challenges and prospects of implementing CSR by commercial banks in the Enugu Metropolis.

Table 6. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of respondents' ratings of challenges and prospects of commercial banks in implementing CSR in the three locations of Enugu Metropolis

Source of difference	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	P-Value (Sig)	Remarks
Between Groups	.924	2	.462	.278	.758	
Within Groups	169.705	102	1.664			NS
Total	170.629	104				

The result of [Table 6] showed ANOVA statistical analysis of the respondents' opinions on the challenges and prospects of implementing CSR by commercial banks. The table showed an ANOVA P-value of 0.758 and F-ratio of 0.278, signifying that there was no significant difference in the ratings of bank managers from Enugu North, West, and East on the challenges and prospects of implementing CSR by commercial banks in Enugu metropolitan city. The means plot is also shown in [Figure 2] below.
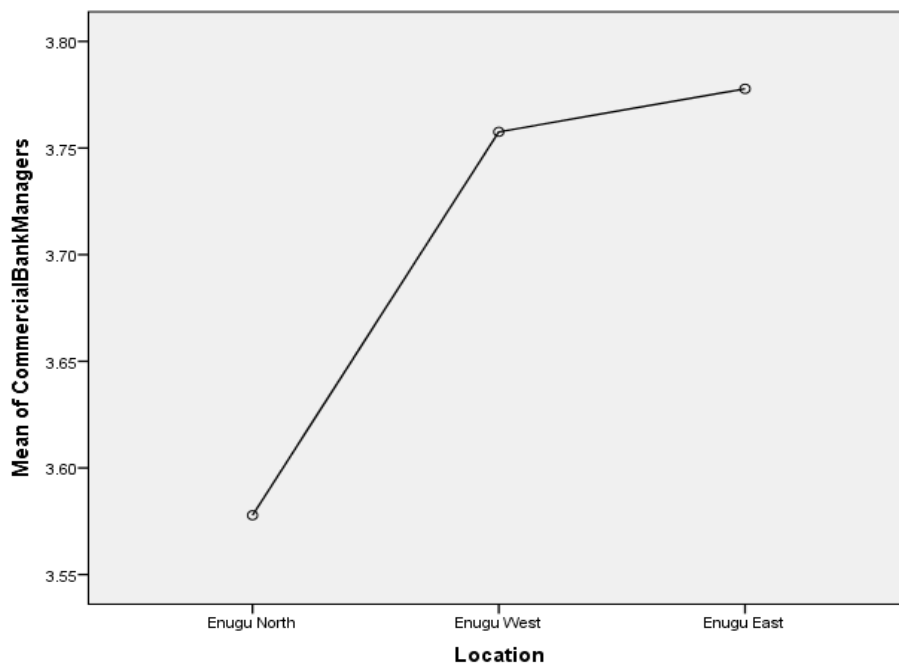

Figure 2. Means plot of ANOVA result

Based on the results from the analyses, the following principal discovering were made:

1. commercial banks to a high extent face corruption challenges in implementing CSR;

2. commercial banks to a high extent find it difficult to report their CSR activities based on those 13 GRI indicators;

3. commercial banks to a high extent are faced with many industry-specific challenges;

4. commercial banks to a low extent are realizing the prospects of CSR because of the challenges they are facing; and

5. no significant difference existed in the ratings of bank managers from Enugu North, West, and East on the challenges and prospects of implementing CSR by commercial banks in Enugu metropolitan city.

4. Discussion of the findings

This study was conducted to determine the challenges and prospects of commercial banks in the Enugu metropolis in implementing their corporate social responsibility. Six out of 9 corruption challenges were rated as being faced to a high extent. The cluster means in Table 1 showed a high extent of the corruption challenges and the standard deviation showed no significant gap in the opinions of respondents. This agrees with the view of [14] that social responsibilities spending by banks could be marred by corruption and there could be situations where, in an attempt to promote the goodwill of the business, banks spend a large amount of money, only to find out later that some other people have lined up their pockets with the funds to the detriment of the intended beneficiaries. Nga [9] also added that an anti-corruption stance is part of CSR strategies. In other words, corruption could be gulping up the resources the banks could have been spending on CSR.

In the same vein, 13 items of global reporting initiative performance indicators were rated 3.50 and above showing that they all pose difficulties to a high extent to the banks in implementing CSR. That in essence means that the banks were not able to put up strategies for reporting according to the global reporting standards, that is if they ever have anything to report at all. Abanyam et. al [34] posited that reporting techniques should include environmental, social, and economic performance (also called Triple Ps – people, planet, and profit) and banks are expected not to either over-report or under-report their activities.

Similarly, 7 out of 8 industry-specific challenges of the banks in implementing CSR were rated as posing problems to a high extent while only 1 item (organization politics) was rated as doing so to a low extent. The standard deviation showed a close range in the opinions of respondents. This has re-confirmed the position of previous researchers who had earlier identified such industry-specific challenges in implementing CSR by banks in different countries [8][11][12][22].

Seven out of eight prospects expected from CSR were being realized to a low extent (LE) while one (protecting the banks' market value in times of crisis) is even being realized to a Very Low Extent (VLE). The standard deviation equally indicated no wide dispersion in the opinions of respondents. This means that the commercial banks are missing out on the prospects of CSR which, according to Ibelegbu and Abanyam [1], include but are not limited to guaranteeing the longevity of organizations and their policies, practices, and actions which all combine to positively affect their business performances.

As further proof of the respondents' agreement, the hypothesis tested indicated no significant difference in the mean responses of the bank managers in the three locations of the bank branches in the Enugu metropolis on the identified challenges and prospects of implementing CSR by commercial banks.

There are implications arising from the import and findings of this study. They include that the high extent of the challenges faced by commercial banks in implementing CSR compounds the problems of non-implementation which deprives the stakeholders, the society, and the bank's huge benefits as they concern people, the planet, and profit. The low extent of realizing the prospects by the banks equally dispose them to underperformance in the areas of winning the confidence of stakeholders as well as hampering their business growth and sustainability. On the other hand, this research had limitations for not covering wider areas such as the entire bank branches in Enugu State or even the South East Zone of the country. It could have also covered the opinion of other stakeholders such as the customers, bank chief executives, and board members (policymakers). Inadequate time, money, and technology resources (robust internet network environment) contributed to these limitations. However,

the research achieved its purpose of finding the levels of challenges and prospects of CSR from the perspectives of bank managers in the Enugu metropolis.

5. Conclusion

The study empirically determined three challenges and the prospects of implementing CSR by commercial banks in the Enugu metropolis, Nigeria, and all the respondents were closely unanimous in their opinions. The results showed that commercial banks in Enugu Metropolis actually face the three challenges to a great extent and consequently miss out on the prospects of implementing CSR. Nevertheless, in this era, the place of CSR has been acknowledged globally but more importantly in developing countries like Nigeria. More than ever before, businesses cannot afford to play with their social responsibility to host communities, other stakeholders, and society in general. In particular, commercial banks, because of their unique roles as institutions entrusted with keeping money and other valuables while extending credit to other players in the economy, should further earn the trust of their stakeholders by leading by example in matters of CSR. A reasonable level of implementation of CSR even if not to a high extent will equally dispose of the banks to realize the inherent prospects, perform better overall, enjoy the sustainable confidence of all stakeholders and positively affect the entire society and, by extension, the economy of the country. All stakeholders and regulatory authorities should therefore play their roles in ensuring that CSR occupies its proper place in the business strategies of organizations, particularly commercial banks.

6.   Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations were made:

1. Given the critical position of commercial banks in the economy, lawmakers should step up its regulatory provisions and measures by making corruption in the banking sector attract double the punishment of what was obtained for similar offenses in other sectors.

2. Communities and other stakeholders should be sensitized by the media and human rights organizations to wake up and hold banks accountable on the issue of CSR.

3. Commercial banks should be made by a regulatory body (Central Bank of Nigeria) to set and launch a vision and values for CSR based on global reporting initiatives.

4. The banks on their own should re-strategize for global reporting standards on incremental rate until they cover all the performance indicators (GRI) over time.

5. Special training and sensitization should be conducted intermittently and in turns by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) for bank board members, executives, and other levels of managers for them to appreciate and take CSR more seriously to reap from the prospects obtainable and in the overall interest of all stakeholders.

6. The authors suggest that similar studies be carried out in other megacities or clusters of cities in Nigeria as well as in other sectors such as ubiquitous telecommunication.

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