



Exploring the CSR Influence on Brand Patronage in Nigeria

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Abstract

This work investigated the influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on brand patronage in Nigeria using an upscale bank as the study focus. This investigation became an imperative sequel to the need for current data on CSR dynamics, including the customer's place in those dynamics. Anchored on the Stakeholders Theory, a survey and in-depth interview helped gather the data from the bank's customers and a representative of its CSR and Services Initiatives Department - 300 respondents in all - responding to the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The findings debunked the widespread opinion that customers are ignorant or oblivious of Nigeria's top banks' CSR systems. CSR activities helped promote the investigated bank's image, leading to increased patronage, among other positive outcomes. Findings also demonstrated that by investing in CSR, an organization could achieve a positive outcome in terms of its financial performance. The positive outcomes notwithstanding, Nigerian banks should intensify their CSR activities still and the associated publicity. This escalation could help increase awareness that Nigerian banks are not doing badly in CSR, contrary to opinions.

Keywords: Brand image, brand patronage, corporate social responsibility (CSR), Stakeholders Theory, Nigeria.

Introduction

Researchers have made several attempts to characterize corporate social responsibility (CSR) in various climes. One of these is the assertion that organizations use it to shape their businesses advantageous to the community. Adeyanju (2012) notes that it is the procedure in which businesses are committed to acting morally and contributing to financial progress while redesigning the individual satisfaction of the workforce and their families.

CSR includes works that decisively affect its host community, condition, and the general public. Babatunde (2013) asserts that CSR includes the preparation whereby corporate elements purposely fuse social and ecological upliftment in their business thinking and assignments. In this way, organizations should be socially mindful of their host community, with the goal that they can win their support.

CSR has wide acknowledgment in business, subsequently influencing how an organization works to foster a good relationship with its publics (Sharna, Sharma & Devi, 2009). Executing reasonably incredible CSR activities could be a critical motivating force to enhance the name and status of an organization.

CSR positively affects client steadfastness, which can also be interpreted as customer loyalty, brand patronage, and positive stakeholder relationship.

A progressive image energizes client reliability and engages the organization to draw in new clients and increase partners' trust. Therefore, the organization will benefit from its humanitarian action by being considered socially capable, encouraging representatives to work for the company, and persuading customers to purchase its brands. Since CSR is used by organizations that react emphatically to increasing social needs and desires, consumers are willing to make the best of such organizations.

This study investigates the influence of corporate social responsibility on brand patronage, emphasizing Guaranty Trust Bank (GTBank), one of the biggest banks in Nigeria. The study attempts to ascertain customers' awareness of CSR activities of the bank viz-a-viz the promotion of its image and eventual patronage. The study is timely as it serves as an additional resource to CSR and public relations in general. Various studies have demonstrated the valuable role of CSR in

enhancing the image of an organization.

However, this study zeroes in on Nigeria. It is also significant to the sustainable development goals (SDG) because CSR is one vital avenue for achieving them. The SDG Goals provide a robust framework for businesses to engage in CSR. Organizations have a unique chance to utilize the SDGs to enhance CSR. Guaranty Trust Bank's CSR focuses on education, community development, the environment, and the arts. Their activities contribute to various SDGs like creating a means to end poverty, quality education, decent work, and economic growth.

Statement of the Problem

Promoters of CSR have contended that organizations should incorporate financial, social, and environmental concerns into their businesses to contribute more to human, social, and environmental capital. Although CSR has been found beneficial, questions remain. This study examines the impact of CSR on customers, the impact of CSR methodologies on consumers, the various obligations towards the public, and the influence on brand patronage - whether positively or negatively. This study attempted to uncover if the GTB's CSR activities

appealed to the customers, leading to more patronage in such areas as account opening, mobile banking, relationship management, and other related services.

Studies guarantee that CSR exercises have a higher positive effect in product-based organizations. Tian, Rui, and Wen (2011) corroborate this, adding that consumers generate a positive view of a firm or a product with an excellent CSR record and higher purchase goals. According to them, the impact may change across product classes. Research is still essential

since studies on the impact of CSR on brand patronage are limited concerning Nigeria. Therefore, the inquiry concerning the current state of the CSR procedure in the Nigerian banking category provides the means to fill this gap. Proper articulation of the reactions and attitudes of customers to a CSR system in Nigeria is what observers and researchers sequel to the dearth of data in this area.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To ascertain customers' awareness of the corporate social activities of GTBank, Nigeria.

- ii. To appraise the corporate social activities of GTBank, Nigeria viz-a-viz the promotion of the banks' image.
- iii. To examine the level of influence of CSR on customers' patronage of GTBank's products and services.

Review of Concepts

Corporate Social Responsibility

There are many definitions of CSR, each viewed as significant and intended to fit the particular organization. Most definitions incorporate the economic, environmental, and social dimensions. Horrigan (2010) notes that CSR has no across-the-board meaning because of the elevated amounts of ambiguity and debate related to the topic. One of the factors responsible for the limited appreciation of CSR is the multifaceted nature and lack of consensual meaning of the term. The lack of consensus about a concise definition notwithstanding, a common ground about CSR still exists. There is a collective opinion that CSR has to do with an organization's activities and frameworks that address social problems concerning that organization's community.

All CSR standpoints embody the concept that companies have obligations toward society beyond their economic obligations to investors (Schwartz, 2011). CSR can also be defined as operations that promote a specific social good beyond the company's interests and the law. Critical in this definition is that CSR activities are on a willful premise, going past the company's lawful and authoritative commitments. It includes a broad scope of activities. These include paying attention to the staff and the community's welfare.

The World Council for Sustainable Development characterizes CSR as a mechanism for companies to behave morally and contribute to the financial enhancement of their employees and their families and good neighborliness. Previous results show that CSR includes integrating social, environmental, and economic factors into the fundamental structures of management and company processes. It is related to innovation to discover creative and valuable solutions. Addressed answers to social and environmental issues are about organizations' additional responsibilities to local and larger populations separated from its center obligation of profit

maximization (Simpson & Taylor, 2013).

CSR has to do with an organization that makes a special effort to initiate activities that mainly affect its host community, environment, and the general population. It can be seen to recognize how some businesses affect people and society and ensure that these adverse effects are changed (Adeyanju, 2012). It is about building and maintaining good relations with everyone you are dealing with. Corporate social responsibility means that an organization should be held responsible for affecting individuals, communities, and status.

A theoretical structure for understanding CSR is "implicit" compared to "explicit" or specific social responsibilities of corporations. The direct responsibility lies with corporate strategies to ensure that the general public is responsible for what they want. Explicit can be intentional, personal responsibility-driven corporate social obligations arrangements and systems. Implicitly, CSR is qualities, standards, and principles that make it necessary for organizations to address areas that stakeholders believe are essential.

The definition chosen to guide this research is that CSR can be characterized as a practice that depends on moral qualities, consistency with legitimate demands, and consideration for people, groups, and the environment. This standpoint suggests advantages from the past; organizations are responsible for their full impact on people and the planet. In a nutshell, CSR enables an organization to positively impact society while working together with the community (Asemah, Okpanachi & Edegoh, 2013).

Brand Patronage

Ismail (2017) describes the brand as a name, word, sign, picture, or schedule, or a combination of them, designed to differentiate between a vendor's products or services or a collection of sellers and separate them from competitors' goods or services. A brand helps differentiate a product from another. Thus, the fundamental idea behind branding is differentiation. In the market today, there are countless brands, even in the same product category. Take the cola category, for example; maybe there are five, if not more, brands in that category.

Brand awareness is the ability to recall and identify a brand. Brand awareness can affect consumers'

purchasing decisions and influence brand associations. In addition, raising brand awareness is required the support of advertising and other sorts of information. A vivid corporate image can derive from the

name of a brand, logos, trademarks, products/services, and patterns. In addition, it can be affected by various attributes, such as quality, price, experiences, feelings, and reputation.

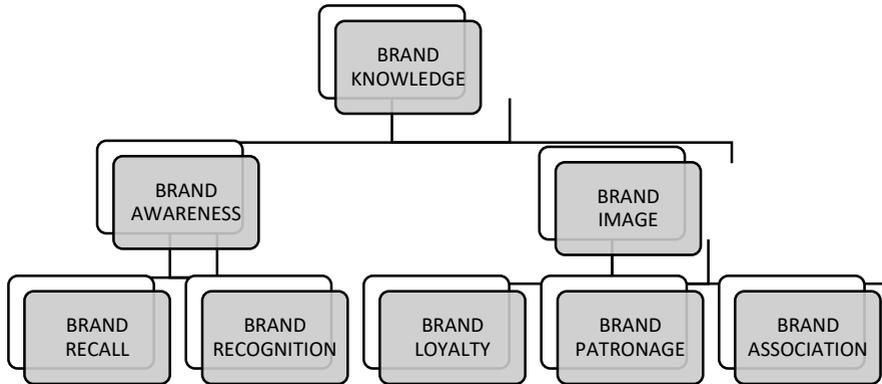


Figure 1: Dimensions of Brand Knowledge (Keller, 1993).

In the context of this study, brand patronage and loyalty might be used conversely because client support goes before client devotion. There is a solid connection between support and dependability or, in other words, patronage, and loyalty, as seen in Figure 1. A client's loyalty to an organization depends on several factors. These include such mundane things as the physical outlook of the organization. It might also depend on how the client feels that the conditions of its services align with its identity. Therefore,

the significance of continuous client support can sway the client's opinions advantageously to the organization, leading to more purchases.

Empirical Review

Kude and Watson's (2012) work on banks' CSR showed that those banks came short on the push to guarantee that customers know about their executed CSR criteria both remotely and inside. With the expanding rate of rivalry among banks, in reality, pulling in new clients is never again the sole target of financial

organizations. What concerns most banks is whether they can make customers loyal with positive impressions about them. This development is the place where CSR comes to play not just as a business technique to get people's attention but to maintain a good image in the eyes of its customers.

Asemah, Okpanachi, and Edegoh (2013) discussed CSR and business favorable circumstances of CSR practice. These authors weighed in on the fact that companies that completed CSR activities would have a lot to profit from. However, they did not show the consequences should the reverse be the case – the gap this study attempted to fill.

Asemah, Okpanachi, and Olumuji (2013) discovered that universities need to dependably take part in CSR to win the altruism of the partners/stakeholders. Babatunde (2013) used a managerial contextual study approach to test the impact of CSR on the purchaser support of a major broadcasting network organization in Nigeria. He put the connection between CSR activities and social advantage to the test. He recommended that CSR enhance customer faithfulness and backing in a specific way. Moreover, by investing in CSR, a firm could achieve a positive outcome to the extent of its financial execution.

What if the outcome is negative? How does an organization's publics navigate that? This study attempted to demystify this question.

Dapi and Phiri (2015) depicted CSR as an authoritative device used by organizations whose fruitful execution can pick up brand devotion/loyalty. The advantages of CSR to society have been reported. In any case, there is next to no data on its advantages to the actual corporations that practice it. This study hopes to fill this gap by getting information from GTBank, a prominent bank in Nigeria.

Kanu (2015) discussed the relationship between CSR and brand patronage of a telecommunication firm - MTN Nigeria. It examined its concept of CSR compared to other firms. Kanu's study also only got the views from the customers but did not get information from MTN Nigeria. This study made the organization a critical component in the investigation.

Theoretical Framework

The study's theoretical framework embraced the Stakeholder theory – a standpoint associated with the Stanford Research Institute in 1963 (Freeman, 1984). As per its first utilization, the idea "stakeholder" alludes to groups whose help the

association must always seek and embrace. The idea was transposed to a theory and propounded in the 1980s by Edward Freeman. Stakeholders are people who can significantly influence an organization in several ways. Stakeholders have included representatives, customers, providers, investors, banks, environmentalists, financial specialists or investors, government, and different groups who can help or damage the enterprise. Clarkson (1995) bifurcates them as essential and optional partners or primary and secondary stakeholders. The essential stakeholders are the individuals who significantly impact the corporation. This essentialness means they are active, and the corporation cannot survive without them. They include investors, customers, employees, suppliers, communities, and the government. Secondary stakeholders influence the corporation but do not engage in transactions and are unnecessary for survival. Stakeholders vary in their power to influence the corporation. To put it plainly, it endeavors to address the "Principle of Who or What Counts." It depends on the suspicion that associations have commitments to a

few groups that make up the general public, regardless of whether they are private or open. The organization has the ethics to secure its enthusiasm and its stakeholders. Olatunji (2013) further says that:

The stakeholder's idea empowers the organization to address the exceptional needs and interests of fundamental social gatherings, including owners of capital, laborers, customers, and suppliers, likewise the necessities of those of rising social events including governments, contenders, consumers, advocates, environmentalists, specific vested parties and the media. There is a prerequisite for the interests of these gatherings to be considered because they do expect essential occupations to accomplish the business undertaking.

This preceding quote suggests that stakeholders' theory assumes that an organization has partners who profit from its activities or are hurt if they do not. The theory of stakeholders assumes that the company is an arrangement of partners working within the host society's larger arrangement that provides community individuals with the

essential legitimate and market framework.

The stakeholder perspective claims that the organization will typically hold meetings with political and trade affiliations, community groups, financiers, vendors, staff, and clients. The organization's competitors are sometimes regarded as partners – owing to their ability to influence the company and its ethically genuine partners. The perspective also claims that a company's partners comprise those listed above, influenced by the enterprise and how they work together.

The theory is a relevant frame because of its emphasis on the presence of an organization which depends on its ability to produce appreciated and relevant results as it reaches out to its stakeholders. The theory of stakeholders is considered appropriate for this examination in this sense.

Method of Study

The study adopts the survey technique. It collected data on items that aligned with the objectives of the study. Beran (2002) notes that in so doing, "it allows mass communication researchers to measure characteristics or behaviors of a sample group whose results can be scaled to the general population.

The technique serves as the blueprint which specifies how data was collected and analyzed in this study. Thus, the questionnaire and interview items were tools of data collection.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain comprehensive data from GTBank clients on the study objectives. The decision to use the questionnaire also stemmed from the tool's efficacy in obtaining from the sampled participants different views and emotions. Similarly, an interview was used primarily to elicit information from the manager of the CSR department of GTBank. The goal was to examine their CSR activities, how CSR has influenced the bank, positively or negatively, and other necessary information.

The population for this study was GTBank customers in Lagos, Nigeria. The bank's selection resulted from its convincing documentation of its CSR activities. According to Adebowale (2016), Guaranty Trust Bank has dependably been overwhelming on CSR. The bank keeps up an unmistakably characterized CSR procedure with a focused spotlight on education, community development, the environment, and the arts.

A total of 300 randomly selected customers responded to the

questionnaire. This sample size is considered adequate following Wimmer and Dominick's (2003) proven stance that a sample size of 200 is reasonable while 300-500 is outstanding, though not as good as 1000 or above. In-depth interviews helped fill the qualitative gap, making the findings more robust. Data analysis was limited to descriptive statistics because that was enough to determine the outcome prima facie, which is what the study was out to achieve.

At the time of the investigation, GTBank had 22 branches, of which ten were selected using the random sampling system - Lagos. Ojodu, Alausa Secretariat, Ogba, CBD Alausa, Allen Avenue, Adeniyi Jones, Oba Akran, Ikeja, MMA2 Ikeja, and Yaba.

Table 1: Respondents awareness of CSR programs of GTBank

Responses	%
Yes	92
No	8
TOTAL	100% n = 300

Data Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the outcomes of the inquiry. The first part of the outcomes is based on the 300 copies of the questionnaire distributed by clients of Guaranty Trust Bank, correctly filled out and gathered. The second section of the chapter provides the debate of the quantitative data and conclusions linked to the study issues. Simple proportions and tables of frequency were used.

Demographic variables for this study show that more than half of the respondents were under 30 years of age, indicating that the study participants were mainly youths. Additionally, the male respondents were more than the female.

Table 1 shows that most respondents (92%) are aware of the CSR activities of GTBank, leaving 8% who are unaware of any Guaranty Trust bank corporate social activities. This means that most respondents know that GTBank engages incorporate social activities.

Table 2: Respondents level of awareness of the mentioned CSR programs of GTBank

GTBank Programmes	CSR	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	Never
Adopt-a-school programs		44.3	19	20.7	4.7	2.7	8.7
Remodeling of Herbert Macaulay Library		37.7	26.7	18.3	6	2.3	9
Financial Literacy Day		35	26.7	18.7	7.7	4.3	7.7
Sports Education through Football Tournament (Principal Cup)		46	23.3	15.3	5.3	3.3	6.7
Masters Cup		37.7	27	18.7	5.3	3.3	8
Players Development Program (Camp GTBank)		41	23	16.3	7.3	3.7	8.7
Infrastructure Upgrade		38.7	26.7	16.7	7.3	4	6.7
Art635 Workshops & Virtual Gallery		44.7	25.7	15.7	5.7	2.7	5.7
Orange Ribbon Initiative		44	21	18	4.7	4.3	8
Nominate a champ		34.3	21.7	20.3	9.7	4.3	9.7
Pregnant Women with HIV Project		30.3	22.3	21.3	12	4.7	9.3
Swiss Red Cross Project		36	19	21.66	10	3.66	9.7
Orange Heart Initiative		49.3	20	13.7	8	2.7	6.3
GTBank Food and Drink Fair		67.3	16	10	3.7	1.3	1.7
GTBank Fashion Weekend		71	13.3	8	2.7	2.7	2.3
Social Impact Challenge		51.3	19.3	14.3	6	3.3	5.7
Beautification and Preservation of environment		50.3	20.7	10.3	6.7	5.7	6.3

Table 2 shows the awareness level of specific CSR programs implemented by GTBank. Rehashing the figures is essential to

bring out a salient issue. The respondents had a high level of awareness (63.3%) for Adopt-a-school-program CSR activity,

20.7% medium level, 7.4% low level, and 8.7% of the respondents have never heard of the CSR activity. The level of awareness for Remodeling of Herbert Macaulay Library is high (64.4%), 18.3% medium level, 8.3% low, and 9% are not aware of this particular CSR activity. A good number of respondents (61.7%) are aware of Financial Literacy Day, 18.7% of the respondents have a medium level, 12% low level, and 7.7% have never heard of the CSR activity. The CSR activity: Sports Education through Football had a high level of awareness (69.3%) by the respondents, 15.3% medium level, 8.6% low level, and 6.7% of the respondents have never heard of the CSR activity.

These four items have something in common. They all have either education, literacy, school, library, and the like as keywords. The respondents' very high awareness could mean that educational matters are attractive to more than other items.

Masters Cup had a high level of awareness (37.7%), medium level 18.7%, low level 8.6%, and 8% of the respondents have never heard of the CSR activity. The respondents had a high level of awareness (64%) for Players Development

Programme CSR activity, 16.3% medium level, 11% low level, and 8.7% of the respondents had never heard of the CSR activity.

The level of awareness for Infrastructure Upgrade is high (65.4%), 16.7% medium level, 7.7% low, and 6.7% are not aware of this particular CSR activity. Art635 Workshops & Virtual Gallery had a 70.4% high level, 15.7% medium level, 8.4% low level, and 5.7% of the respondents were unaware of the CSR activity. Orange Ribbon Initiative had a high level of awareness (65%), medium level 18%, low level 9%, and 8% of the respondents had never heard of the CSR activity.

The respondents had a high level of awareness (56%) for Nominate a champ CSR activity, 20.3% medium level, 14% low level, and 9.7% of the respondents have never heard of the CSR activity. The CSR activity: Pregnant Women with HIV Project had a high level of awareness (52.6%) by the respondents, 21.3% medium level, 16.7% low level, and 9.3% of the respondents have never heard of the CSR activity. The Swiss Red Cross Project had a 55% high level, 21.66% medium level, 13.66% low level, and 9.7% of the respondents are unaware of the CSR activity.

GTBank Food and Drink Fair’s awareness is high (83.3%), medium level of 10%, low level of 5.0%, and 1.7% of the respondents have not heard of this CSR activity. Could this indicate the respondent’s love for food? The level of awareness for GTBank Fashion Weekend is high (84.3%), 8% medium level, 5.4% low, and 2.3% are not aware of this particular CSR activity. The CSR activity: Social Impact Challenge had a high level of awareness (70.6%), 14.3% medium level, 9.3% low level, and 5.7% of the respondents have never heard of the CSR activity. The respondents had a high level of awareness (71%) for Beautification and Preservation of environment CSR activity, 10.3% medium level, 12.4% low level, and

6.3% of the respondents have never heard of the CSR activity.

Table 2 shows that the respondents know that GTBank is CSR-oriented, though dimensioned. The CSR activities mainly known to have a high percentage of awareness are GTBank Food and Drink Fair, GTBank Fashion Weekend, and Social Impact Challenge. Despite the respondents' general interest in educational matters, the table shows that the bank’s CSR activities have the highest awareness in other areas. These are the Orange Ribbon Initiative (65%), Orange Heart Initiative (69.3%), Nominate a champ (56%), GTBank Food and Drink Fair (83.3%), and GTBank Fashion Weekend (84.3%).

Table 3: CSR activities have promoted GTBank

Responses	%
Strongly Agree	57
Agree	34.3
Undecided	6.3
Disagree	1.7
Strongly Disagree	0.7
TOTAL	100% n = 300

Table 4: Respondents assertion of GTBank's position as a better brand with CSR

Responses	%
Strongly Agree	45.3
Agree	39.7
Undecided	10.3
Disagree	4.0
Strongly Disagree	0.7
TOTAL	100% n = 300

Table 6 indicates that a more significant percentage of the respondents (85%) agree that GTBank is a better brand because of its CSR activities, leaving a 4.7% minority who disagree. The undecided 10.3% of respondents do not make any significant difference.

Table 5: Respondents preference of GTBank as a brand viz-a-viz CSR

Responses	%
Strongly Agree	42
Agree	38.7
Undecided	15.3
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	1
TOTAL	100% n = 300

Table 5 reveals that most respondents (80.7%) agree that CSR has helped their inclination toward GTBank as a brand. Previous tables show that most respondents feel that CSR has promoted the bank and improved it.

Table 6: Respondents patronage of GTBank whether or not they engage in CSR

Responses	%
Strongly Agree	47.3
Agree	32.7
Undecided	15.3
Disagree	3.7
Strongly Disagree	1
TOTAL	100% n = 300

Table 6 shows that not less than 80% will still patronize the bank whether or not it decides to engage in corporate social activities. 15.3% of the respondents are undecided, while 4.7% disagree.

Table 7: Respondents assertion of CSR activities and its positive influence on their patronage GTBank services

Responses	%
Strongly Agree	48.7
Agree	27.3
Undecided	18
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	3
TOTAL	100% n = 300

In Table 7, the majority of the respondents agree that CSR has influenced their patronage of GTBank services, leaving 6% in disagreement and 18% undecided. This outcome means that the activities have visibly affected their support. Some 18 % was undecided.

Table 8 is important – the reason for giving it more space. From the table below, more than half of the respondents (79%) believe that GTBank’s CSR has positively influenced the brand's image, leaving a minority (15.7%) undecided and 5.3% in disagreement.

Table 8: Respondents opinion on whether or not CSR activities of GTBank has positively influenced its image

Responses	%
Strongly Agree	52
Agree	27
Undecided	15.7
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	2.3
TOTAL	100% n = 300

Table 9: Respondents opinion of CSR activities of the bank and promoting the patronage of GTBank's services

Responses	%
Strongly Agree	45
Agree	28.3
Undecided	17
Disagree	6
Strongly Disagree	3.3
TOTAL	100% n = 300

Table 9, which is also important, shows that 73.3% of respondents believe that GTBank's CSR activities have promoted the patronage of the bank services. On

the other hand, a low percentage (9.3%) disagree. This implies that CSR activities influence customers' decision to patronize GTBank services.

Table 10: Age and Extent of Awareness of Respondents

AGE	Extent of Awareness		
	Frequently (%)	Occasionally (%)	Not at all (%)
20-25	31.4	36	45.5
26-30	28.8	23.2	9.1
31- 35	20.3	21.6	22.7
36-40	13.1	13.6	9.1
41-45	3.3	3.2	13.6
46-50	3.3	2.4	0
TOTAL	100% 153	100% 125	100% 22

A cross-tabulation of the respondents' ages with the extent of awareness of GTBank's CSR is shown in Table 10. Ages 20-25 and 26-30 are primarily aware

(67.4% and 52% respectively) of the bank's CSR. Also visible in the table above is that the higher the age, the lower the percentage of awareness.

Summary of Data from In-Depth Interview

An in-depth interview was conducted with the External Affairs department in GTBank. When asked the reason for its CSR, he answered by saying that it is essential for organizations to level of client understanding is, his answer shows they have a lengthy history of investing in the society in which they reside and operate. This commitment motivates creating value and building a company that makes the world a better place. He added that this explains why the bank has fully incorporated CSR into its business model, which focuses on promoting causes and projects that transform lives and elevate their communities. He also said that the level of awareness of their customers about their CSR programs could be said to be moderate/okay. The bank tries its best to inform its customers of CSR activities. Emails are sent, posts are uploaded on their social media page when a CSR activity has commenced, and updates are given. The bank also uploads a yearly report that contains detailed information on the CSR activities done in that year.

He noted that the bank is a friendly brand that cares and permeates every sphere of its business, adding that it has a value system predicated on professionalism, ethics, integrity, and superior customer service. His words:

impact their societies positively. Organizations worldwide understand they have a responsibility to the indigenes in the communities they operate.

Asked what CSR programs banks '

Our commitment to a well-defined CSR strategy illustrates our social pact with our stakeholders and can be in the inclusive and supportive workplace we create for our employees, the responsible products and services we offer our customers and clients, and the impact we make worldwide in helping local economies thrive.

The bank believes, according to him, that it can grow and sustain its business value only by what it gives to host communities. It is widely recognized as a responsible corporate citizen, pace-setters, and leader because of its CSR activities.

Concerning the influence of the bank's CSR programs on patronage, he responded, saying: "We believe good corporate governance practices enhance the confidence placed in the bank by our shareholders, customers, business partners, all stakeholders. Due to our renowned and different approach towards CSR. We have a large customer base because the bank

practices CSR. Feedback is also gotten from the customers concerning the CSR programs/activities, and ideas were gotten on improving the programs."

On the effect of the bank's CSR on subscription to its various services, his answer was in the affirmative. However, he was unsure if the increase was due to the previously conducted CSR program or referrals from the bank's well-wishers. The respondent also said that the bank had not recorded any adverse reaction to its CSR systems. He added that much planning goes into their CSR programs before they are actualized.

Discussion of Findings

The study sought to ascertain customers' awareness of the GTBank's CSR, appraise the CSR in terms of the bank's image, and its level of influence on customers' patronage. The bank's customers and officials were instrumental in data gathering and providing insight into their knowledge of CSR and their corporate social activities awareness level.

As illustrated in Table 1, most respondents (92.0%) are aware of the bank's CSR activities, leaving 8.0% oblivious of them. The high awareness frequency can be proof of the regularity of the bank's commitment to CSR issues and

actions. The cross-tabulation of the respondents' ages with the extent of awareness of the CSR activity of Guaranty Trust Bank corroborates this outcome.

The youthful population (20-25 and 26-30) is impressive. It means that the youth are not just concerned with the bank's businesses and transactions; they are also aware of its social responsibility. It also proves the efficient use of the appropriate transmission channels of the CSR programs. Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) aver that high consumer awareness is not on the table if CSR activities are poorly communicated.

The bank's Food and Drink Fair, GTBank Fashion Weekend, and Social Impact Challenge were pre-eminent. The statistics from the survey conducted by Kude and Watson (2012) with banks who had similar programs align with this outcome are in close consonance with this present study. Further, the CSR's positive impact on a brand as the outcome of this study also aligns with Pomeroy and Dolnicar's (2009) study, whose findings support this outcome.

The theoretical framework that anchored this study - Stakeholder theory - asserts that those whose life is affected by a corporation have the right and obligation to participate in

directing it. The theory of stakeholders argues that companies must create value for all stakeholders. It appears that the positive response from these stakeholders to GTBank's CSR systems corroborates this theoretical standpoint. This development aligns with the outcome of Dapi and Phiri's (2015) investigation on the same propositions. Akinboboye and Babatunde (2013) found in their study that knowledge of the CSR initiatives of a company could lead to improved corporate image and brand loyalty, arising from the stakeholders' interest in that corporation. Findings from Omojola, Odiboh, and Amodu (2018); Amodu, Omojola, Okorie, Adeyeye, and Adesina (2019); Omojola (2021) suggest that CSR practice enhances consumer loyalty and patronage towards a particular company.

The findings of this study are an eye-opener. They help expose the incorrectness of the age-long assertion that Nigerian banks are bereft of CSR activities. Even if they engage in these activities, they are largely unknown, the pessimist claim. The GTBank case is particularly striking because it has millions of customers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Most respondents had their brand patronage decisions about GTBank influenced by its CSR programs. Findings also show that the bank's CSR activities did promote the banks' image added value to its businesses. They influenced brand patronage and loyalty. Despite the positive outcomes exhibited by the findings, the following still exist as recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

- i. Nigerian banks should maintain a positive CSR culture and improve on it. The positive outcomes do not imply that what the customers got was the best.
- ii. Nigerian banks should buoy up their CSR publicity profile beyond their customer base since they can enlarge this base with the current potential.
- iii. A suitable reporting strategy for CSR should be used to communicate CSR initiatives appropriately.

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