

CORPORATE IMAGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY, SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

GODSON IGWEDINMAH

**Department of Business Administration, Nnamdi Azikiwe University,
Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria
E-mail: gigwedinma@gmail.com**

PROF. FAITH ONWUCHEKWA

**Department of Business Administration, Nnamdi Azikiwe University,
Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria**

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between corporate image management strategy and performance of food and beverage industry in South East Nigeria. The specific objective is to identify the extent of relationship that exists between corporate reputation and organizational commitment. Questionnaire was used to generate data from 370 respondents. A 5-point Likert scale was utilized for data structuring while the Pearson product moment correlation was used for data analysis. The study was anchored on a theory of organizational image management by Joseph Eric Massey (2010). The theory emphasized on deployment corporate image management strategies and inculcating key stakeholders in developing and promoting corporate image management strategies for enhanced performance. The findings of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between corporate reputation and organisational commitment. This shows that corporate image management affects the performance of the food and beverage industry in South East Nigeria. The study therefore recommended that the food and beverage industry should pay close attention to the aforementioned derivatives of corporate image management in order to continually boost their performance. In conclusion, the deployment of corporate image management strategy is a necessary requirement to enhance the performance of an organization. This is because of the attendant benefits associated with its deployment, which includes according competitive edge to an organization.

Keywords: Corporate Image, corporate reputation, Organizational Commitment, Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are understandably worried about dealing with their Corporate Image (Abang and Throat 2016). This shows that there is area of strength for a connection between the way individuals see an organization and they way they are. Corporate images are seen as the mental pictures of an association (Abratt,2016). It is the whole of these apparent attributes of the organization that we allude to as the corporate image. Each business organization has its image regardless of whether the association makes any kind of difference of not. Corporate image is framed in light of the stakeholders' views of explicit organization activities as well as related industry and public issues. An organization's picture generally impacts stakeholders'

responses to explicit corporate activities and items (Tourky, Foroudi, Gupta and Shaalan 2020).

Previously, especially in the mid 80s', corporate image was fairly an obscure idea seen to be, best case scenario, of fringe worry to senior administration and associations at large (Perdana and Gunawan 2017). Regularly, it was viewed as the area of the advertising division and plan specialists. No much consideration was given to corporate image by top management. Notwithstanding, a rising number of organizations view it as a basic corporate resource straightforwardly connected to cutthroat achievement (Ologbenla, 2021). Ren and Yang (2019) contended that corporate image generally gave vital influence. In any case, the unavoidable obscuring of limits among organizations and their partners in the business world has featured the need to oversee corporate image in a calculated way. Besides, on-going discrete patterns like globalization, consolidation, liberation and privatization, and the speed increase of item life cycles has made a need to get moving for some organizations.

The universe of business has shown the significance of corporate image and the need for its implementation (Veronika and Darina, 2020). The business climate is quick changing and turning out to be more cutthroat, firms are continually confronted with severe difficulties in gathering with the consistently expanding business sector and customers limitless necessities combined with its shifting assumptions, and adapting to fast technological advances. The quest for new innovation which leads to progress and execution improvement is becoming one of the significant goals of many organizations (Younis and Hammad 2020). Implementation of effective corporate image is a strategy to improve business and remain in front of both potential and current rivals in the food and beverage industries. Building corporate image of an organization has turned into a vital element that could contribute towards building a drawn out predominant economical presentation of any business organization. A corporate image has become management plan to construct a productive and supportable situation against the powers and factors that decide industry rivalry (Zulhaimi, 2015).

It is challenging to grow hard to duplicate methodologies or strategies. The commencement of a provision/creation by one organization prompts its replication by the contenders. In this way, consistent advancement of techniques in accordance with changing climate is critical to unrivaled execution. This study tries to distinguishing the degree of relationship between corporate image management strategy and performance of food and beverage industries in South East Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The food and beverage industry globally is critical to economic development, and Nigeria is no exception. Indeed, the performance and contribution of the sector to the country's economic growth in the last three decades has been very remarkable (Simpson 2014). The World Trade Organization ranks Nigeria as the largest food market in Africa, with significant investment in the local industry and a high level of imports (Todaro 2014).

In recent years, however, the sector has been bedeviled by many challenges. There is poor corporate reputation in the aforementioned industry which considerably affects

organizational commitment. There is need to enhance the reputation of the industry for enhanced patronage. It is therefore argued that for the sector to regain its competitiveness there is need for paradigm shifts in different operational parameters (Ren & Yang 2019). One of such paradigm shifts is in the area of corporate rebranding and image building. Theoretically, a good corporate image is expected to stimulate customer patronage by simplifying decision procedures for customers. Moreover, a good corporate image should be able to build strategic value for a company by granting it a competitive advantage over rivals. Good corporate image could be leveraged upon by an organization to outdo rivals in marketing new products, hiring the best job candidates, and enhance performance. Strong customer satisfaction will naturally help to develop a positive corporate image for an organization with other positive spin offs.

Unfortunately, there is little or no studies in Nigeria that have interrogated the causal relationship between corporate image strategy and organization's performance. In other words, the apriori theoretical expectation that a good corporate image could enhance an organization's performance has not been tested using data from the food and beverage industry in Nigeria and their customers. This lacuna has also denied the sector the consensus building and policy direction that such studies could have provided. It is on these issues that the researcher endeavoured to study the relationship that exists between corporate image management and performance of food and beverage industries in South East, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to determine the relationship between corporate image management strategy and performance of food and beverage industry, South East, Nigeria. Specific objectives seek to determine the extent of relationship between corporate reputation and organizational commitment.

Research Question

What extent of relationship exists between corporate reputation and organizational commitment of food and beverage industry in the south east, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: corporate reputation has no significant relationship with organizational commitment of Food and Beverage Industry in South East, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Corporate Image Management

Al-Samman and Al-Nashmi (2016) characterized corporate image as the picture that a group of people has on an organization through the aggregation of every got message. Each organization has a corporate image, regardless of whether it needs one. At the point when appropriately planned and made due, the corporate image will precisely mirror the level of the organization's obligation to quality, greatness and associations with its different constituents including current and expected clients, representatives and future staff, contenders, accomplices, overseeing bodies and the overall population at large (Andreassen and Lindestad 2018). Thus, the corporate image is a basic worry for each organization, one meriting a similar consideration and responsibility by senior management as some other

imperative issue. This has made many organizations to contribute a lot of time and different assets with an end goal to impact the feelings that clients hold about their organizations. This course of developing positive advertising reaches out to connection with clients as well as progressing collaboration with the media, trade guilds, modern affiliation and other entities that by implication affect popular assessment (Balmer 2017). The expression "corporate image" alludes to all the social, etymological, and visual parts that make up a partnership (Okoisama, Squeeze and Anyanwu, 2017). As per Gotsi and Wilson (2000), referred to in Okoisama (2017), corporate image is an assortment of discernments that various partners have about the organization.

Corporate Reputation

Corporate reputation is a part of a general image of an organization. It is a delicate idea which characterizes the general assessment which an organization is held by its interior and outer partners in light of its past activity and likelihood of its future way of behaving (Okon, 2015). It is a blend of all assumptions, discernments and opinions of an organization grew over time by clients, workers, providers, financial backers and people in general according to the association's characteristics, attributes and conduct, in light of individual experience seen in the past activities (Bennett & Kottasz, 2013). Corporate reputation is additionally characterized as the information acquired of an organization by its public in view of corporate way of behaving and association - public relationship (Gruning and Hung, 2013). Gotsi and Wilson (2001) view it as a partner's general assessment of an organization over the long haul. Numerous organizations put the significance of a decent reputation to the rear of their psyche while they go to all the more hard-edge. Then again, numerous organizations believe their most noteworthy resources to be their great name or reputation. This is particularly evident in information based organization, for example, the lawful, clinical and monetary areas and so on. They work effectively to assemble their great reputation, to construct the "association of kindness" towards them. In spite of the fact that reputation is an immaterial idea, research generally shows that a decent reputation evidently increment corporate worth and gives supported upper hand (Ndungu, Ogutu, Yabs, Njihia and Wanjiru, 2020). A business can accomplish its targets all the more effectively on the off chance that it has a decent reputation among its partners, particularly key partners like its biggest clients, opinion pioneers in the business local area, providers and current and possible representatives. With great reputation, client will have a decent inclination in working with you when other organizations' item and administrations are accessible at a comparable expense and quality. Additionally providers will be more disposed to trust the association's capacity to pay and to give fair exchanging terms.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational Commitment is a mental expression that portrays workers' relationships with the organization (Eddy & Djoko, 2017). Workers feel supported and spurred when they see that their commitments are esteemed and their organization thinks often about their material, profound and scholarly requirements. They will be focused on their work assuming the management establishes more confidence in the functioning environment. Trust makes all the difference for individuals at all levels and enables them to do exceptional things. It additionally assists them with delivering their obstructed energies, brains, limits and innovativeness (Shankar, Sundarapandiyam and Vinoth, 2015). Organizational commitment

depicted as a complex idea embracing a representative's inclination to remain in an enterprise, readiness to apply exertion for its sake, and thought in and acknowledgment of the qualities and dreams of the organization (Zeeshan, Aisha. and Javed, (2018).

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance refers to the operational ability of a business to satisfy the desires of its major shareholders (Selvam, Gayathri, Vasanth, Lingaraja. & Marxiaoli (2016). According to Noel (2019), organizational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives). According to Islam (2011) performance signifies the organization's success in the market characterized by its ability to create acceptable outcomes and actions. Such outcomes may take different forms such as survival, profit; return on investment, sales growth, number of employees, happiness, reputation, and so on.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of Organizational Image management was proposed by Joseph Eric Massey (2010). The theory argues that a primary goal of image management company is the creation and maintenance of an organization's image (Massey 201). Organizations communicate strategically with stakeholders to encourage desirable images and discourage undesirable ones. Organizational image management theory is developed from theories of image management and self-presentation at the level of the individual (see, for example Goffman, 1959; Tedeschi & Riordan, 2013). Although organizations are different from individuals in important ways, organizations can be and are treated in the same way as individuals by many theorists and practitioners. The view taken here is that an organization's image is the perception that stakeholders have about the organization (Van der Merwe, & Puth, 2014), so it is aligned most closely with the "communicated image" of Gioia and Thomas (1996). This is an important distinction in that it suggests that a dialogue is necessary for the creation of an organizational image

Empirical review

Nwabueze (2021) led a concentrate on the impact of corporate image strategy on the organisational commitment on chosen commercial banks in Abia State. The review was directed by an engaging overview plan. The review had a sample size of 165 respondents and utilized Taro Yamane techniques. The information assembled for the review was dissected utilizing engaging examination. Pearson Correlation was utilized to test speculation one, speculations two and three was tried utilizing ANOVA and theory four was tried with Pearson Chi square with the guide of SPSS adaptation 23. The investigation discovered that there is critical effect of corporate image and organisational commitment in the chosen commercial banks in Abia State.

Dasmaran, Agoes and Gunawan (2020) completed a review pointed toward deciding the job of corporate image on corporate performance. They utilized descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation and linear regression. Information was gathered from 208 respondents being administrators of assembling organizations recorded on the Indonesia Stock Trade. Supervisors included were directors of money, creation, advertising and HR. The

consequences of the review demonstrated that corporate image affects organization performance.

Lords (2020) directed a concentrate on the impact of corporate image and performance. Descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation and linear regression was made use of. A contextual investigation of Nigeria Packaging Organization Plc Enugu was in this way embraced. Essential and optional information were utilized and the populace covered 114 staff and test size was 88 utilizing Burnley's recipe. The discoveries of the review showed that corporate image management strategy enhances employee performance.

Kyurova and Yaneva (2021) completed an examination on the connection between corporate image and performance. The review utilized measurable techniques (utilized descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation and linear regression) to concentrate because of corporate image on the seriousness of ventures in the field of inside plan in South Africa. A survey strategy was utilized to assemble the essential information. Inspected markers were surveyed utilizing a 7-point Likert scale. The consequences of the review show areas of strength for a between the degree of corporate image and that of performance of an organization. The determination incorporates a rundown concerning the utilization of the corporate image as a significant device for a reasonable market presence and accomplishing serious areas of strength for an edge.

Gap in Knowledge

There is a knowledge gap in the study. There are lots of studies bothering on corporate image management. They concentrated on the roles, effects, impacts, benefits derivable from adopting effective corporate image management etc. However, none of the studies, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, identified or stated the specific strategies of corporate image management such as product quality, corporate reputation, corporate identity and work ethics, in relation to performance variables (employee commitment, organizational effectiveness, job satisfaction and employee engagement) as strategic tools, which an organization can adopt to enhance performance. Strategies are the key ingredients of corporate image management for enhancing performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used survey design which involves essentially gathering data first-hand directly from the respondents through questionnaire and/or personal interviews.

Population of the Study

The population of study comprises employees of food and beverage firms in the south east, Nigeria with total population of 4,560. They include Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. There are 100 beverage firms in the south east (see appendix). However, all the firms are not used for the study in order to make for adequate coverage. 30 firms are used for the study as shown below:

Table 3.1: Food and Beverage Firms

S/No	NAME	STATE	POPULATION
1	Aqua Rapha Investment Ltd	Enugu	250
2	Nigeria Breweries	Enugu	260
3	Aquafield Water	Enugu	190
4	Nigerian Bottling Company	Enugu	230
5	Diamond Breweries Ltd	Enugu	180
6	7up bottling company Enugu	Enugu	240
7	Nigerian Mineral Waters Industries Ltd	Anambra	190
8	Life Breweries Co Ltd.	Anambra	140
9	Premier Breweries Ltd	Anambra	150
10	Eastern Distilleries and Food Industries Ltd	Anambra	160
11	Plaza Distilleries and Bottling Company Ltd	Anambra	150
12	Chigin Industries Nigeria Ltd	Anambra	150
13	Jaypee Enterprises Nigeria	Ebonyi	140
14	Eunob Global Resources Limited	Ebonyi	130
15	Emma Food Company	Ebonyi	80
16	Golden Meal Bakery	Ebonyi	140
17	Good Treasure International Limited	Ebonyi	95
18	Denis Bakery Works	Ebonyi	80
19	Dubic Breweries Limited	Imo	160
20	Eastern Breweries Limited	Imo	180
21	Canon Distilleries International Ltd	Imo	140
22	Daico Beverages Nigeria Ltd	Imo	135
23	Emerald Food and Beverage Company Ltd	Imo	180
24	Naxson Switz Co. Nigeria Ltd	Imo	130
25	Gabson Bakery Industry Limited	Abia	140
26	Luvit and Lumoa	Abia	120
27	Fix Bolingo International Nigeria Ltd	Abia	80
28	GOUI Enterprises	Abia	140
29	Gelaz Distilleries Nig Ltd	Abia	120
30	New Life Products Nigeria Ltd.	Abia	80
	Total		4,560

Source: <https://www.directory.org.ng>

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

There are 100 beverage firms in the Southeastern part of Nigeria. However, in order to ensure adequate coverage, 30 beverage firms are selected for the study. The selection is purposively done on the basis of organizations that have annual turnover of N50,000,000 and above in the last fiscal year. The study utilizes the stratified sampling technique by selecting employees within certain designated departments such as Human Resources, Production, Advertising, Admin, Accounting, Marketing, Sales, Research and Development.

The sample size of study is determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Formula. The formula is given as:

$$S = \frac{x^2 NP(1 - P)}{d^2 (N - 1) + x^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where S = Sample size

X^2 = table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom @ 0.05% confidence level

N = population size (4,560)

P = population proportion

D = degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion

$$S = \frac{3.84 (4,560) (0.5) (1-0.5)}{0.05 (4,560-1) + 3.84 (0.5) (1-0.5)}$$

$$S = \frac{4,377.5}{114.94}$$

$$S = 380$$

The sample size is 380

Methods of Data Collection

Primary sources are adopted. The primary data is sourced through a structured questionnaire. Data are collected from junior and middle management staff of food and beverage industries using questionnaire instruments. The questions are structured on a 5-point Likert scale. The researcher appointed two research assistants to aid in data collection.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument of data collection is subjected to content and face validity which is conducted by experts in management who made inputs by correcting, expunging and editing as necessary. They ensured that the questions are relevant, straight to the point, easy to understand and explicit.

Reliability of the Instrument

To test for the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach's Alpha is used. This essentially involves examining the correlation between the responses of the respondents from a pilot study from two groups of respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is used in analyzing the data which is to explore the relationship between corporate image management strategies and performance of food and beverage industries in south east, Nigeria. The level of significance is 5% and the confidence interval 95%. The correlation coefficient is carried out with the aid of SPSS Statistical Software Package Version 10.

Decision Rule

The study adopts 5% level of significant, which will be used to interpret the result obtained in testing the hypotheses. Therefore, if the probability (p-value) is less than the significant level of (p-value<0.05), the research hypothesis is accepted and if otherwise (p-value>0.05), the research hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data. The level of significance was 5% while a 95% confidence interval reliability was adopted.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Three hundred and eighty (380) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents comprising of employees of the selected food and beverage firms operating in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. However, 10 copies of the questionnaire representing about 2.7% of the total number was lost during the course of the exercise. The results presented below were obtained from 370 questionnaires that were returned by the respondents.

Demographic Data of Respondents

The tables below show the demographic data of the respondents with specific focus on gender distribution and educational qualifications.

Table 4.1. Gender Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	196	53
2	Female	174	47
	Total	370	100

Source: field survey 2023

Table 4.1. above shows the gender distribution of the respondents. Based on the data presented, 196(53%) of the respondents are male while 174(47%) are female.

Table 4.2: Educational Qualification of the Respondents

S/N	Education level	Frequency	Percentage
1	Secondary	112	30.3
2	Graduate	236	63.8
3	Postgraduate	22	5.9
	Total	370	100

Source: field survey 2023

Table 4.2 above shows the distribution of the respondents based on their educational qualifications. The table shows that 112(30.3%) of the respondents only have a secondary school education, 236(63.8%) were graduates from tertiary institutions while 22(5.9%) have postgraduate degrees.

Table 4.3 Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Product quality	0.932	5
Corporate reputation	0.947	5
Work ethics	0.918	5
Corporate identity	0.951	5

Source: field survey 2023

The instrument for data collection was subjected to the reliability test to ensure that the instrument measures consistently as required. Alpha Cronbach value of 0.932, 0.947, 0.918 and 0.951 was obtained for product quality, corporate reputation, work ethics and corporate identity respectively. These values indicate an excellent reliability, and the instrument of data collection for this study, measures consistently what it intends to measure.

Table 4.4: Good Corporate Reputation and Employee Commitment to Work

Options	Frequency	Likert points
Strongly Agree	160	800
Agree	88	352
Strongly Disagree	72	216
Disagree	39	78
Undecided	11	11
Total	370	1457

Source: field survey 2023

In Table 4.4, the respondents were asked if the F&B industry has good corporate reputation that makes employees to be committed to their jobs. A majority of the respondents agreed (248), some disagreed (111) while some were not sure (11). This therefore implies that the F&B industry has good corporate reputation that makes employees to be committed to their jobs.

Table 4.5: Commitment to Achieving Organizational Objectives

Options	Frequency	Likert points
Strongly Agree	148	740
Agree	137	548
Strongly Disagree	45	135
Disagree	26	52
Undecided	14	14
Total	370	1489

Source: field survey 2023

In Table 4.5, the respondents were asked if employees of F&B industry are committed to achieving organizational objectives. A majority of the respondents agreed (285), some disagreed (71) while some were not sure (14). This therefore implies that employees of F&B industry are committed to achieving organisational objectives.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀₁: corporate reputation has no significant relationship with organizational commitment of Food and Beverage Industry in South East, Nigeria.

Table 4.6: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis of corporate reputation and organizational commitment of Food and beverage industry

Options	Corporate Reputation X	Organizational Commitment Y	X ²	Y ²	XY
Strongly agree	160	148	25,600	21,904	23,680
Agree	88	137	7,744	18,769	12,056
Strongly disagree	72	45	5,184	2,025	3,240
Disagree	39	26	1,521	676	1,014
Undecided	11	14	121	196	154
Total	Σ370	Σ370	Σ40,170	Σ43,570	Σ40,144

r calculated value=0.832, alpha level=0.05, r critical=113, degree of freedom=365

The data in table 4.6 emanated from tables 4.4 and 4.5. As shown in table 4.2.2, the calculated r of 0.832 is greater than the table value of 0.113 at 0.05 alpha level with 365 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that corporate reputation has no significant relationship with organizational commitment, is rejected. Hence, the alternate hypothesis, which states that corporate reputation has a significant relationship with organizational commitment of Food and Beverage Industry in South East, Nigeria is accepted. This means that corporate reputation affects organizational commitment of employees in food and beverage firms operating in Southeast Nigeria.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

There is a positive relationship between corporate reputation and organization commitment of food and beverage industry in the Southeast.

Conclusion

The view that perception is stronger than reality has been proven to be true based on the findings of this study. Several studies conducted in the recent times have highlighted the effect of emerging business factors like supply chain management, 5G technology, inventory management in driving business performance. This study focused on the role of corporate image management in the performance race. The sub variables of both corporate image management and performance were analyzed simultaneously to evaluate the nature of the relationship between them using appropriate analytical tools and techniques. The findings of the study led to the conclusion that corporate image management has a significant positive effect on the performance of food and beverage firms operating in the South-eastern part of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Firms should have effective public relations units that can build and enhance corporate reputation on continuous basis. Corporate reputation is built and destroyed based on public perception. Having an effective public relations unit will enable firms to quickly respond to emerging issues that have the potential to cause damages to their corporate reputations and easily rebuild public trust. By so doing organizational commitment is strengthened.

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