

Corporate Social Responsibility and Organisation Attractiveness to Jobseekers

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Empirical evidence has it that the ability of an organisation to remain competitive and to achieve other strategic goals is largely dependent on its ability to attract and retain workers with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitude. To this end, organisations use several strategies to ensure their attractiveness to jobseekers that possess needed qualification and experience. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a powerful tool that many organisations use to attract the interest of needed manpower. However there appears to be a dearth in research effort into the effects of the key dimensions of CSR on organisational attractiveness to jobseekers. Also, the CSR -organisation attractiveness relationship has not been fully understood especially in the context of a developing economy such as that of Nigeria. A major significance of this investigation is that it attempts to fill a void which hitherto existed in literature in the Nigerian context. Prior to this study, little or no attention was given to the relationship between CSR and organisational attractiveness had received little or no attention of researchers. Using Dahlsrud's five key dimensions of CSR and conceptual framework, this study modelled the relationship between CSR and organisational attractiveness to jobseekers using Nigeria's oil and gas sector as a case study. A questionnaire was designed and copies distributed to 400 jobseekers out of which 132 were found to be useful. Cronbach alpha result shows that research instruments were valid and reliable. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the five key dimensions of CSR and organisational attractiveness. Results show the existence of a significant relationship between all five dimensions of CSR and organisation attractiveness to jobseekers. The paper concludes that for organisations to continue to attract the requisite manpower, continuous investment in CSR initiatives is important.

Field of Research: Human Resources Management

1. Introduction

One of the most widely talked about concept in the management research today is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Geva, A; 2008). In spite of the large volume of literature on this subject, there is a clear absence on consensus on its definition. Some authors are even of the opinion that there exists no definition for CSR (Jackson & Hawker, 2001), an assertion with which many other authors disagree. Some author prefer to use the term 'Social Responsibility' to clarify that related issues are not restricted to profit making organisations (Heath & Ni, 2008). Others use the term 'corporate societal responsibility, corporate social responsiveness, corporate social performance, corporate citizenship, business citizenship, stakeholding company, business ethics, sustainable company etc (Valor, 2003). For the purpose of this paper we will define Corporate Social Responsibility as ways in which organisations achieve commercial success using methods that honour ethical values, respect people and communities and the natural environment (Business for Social Responsibility, 2003). This definition covers five key dimensions of

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Odumeru, Ayodeji, Asabi & Amos

CSR: stakeholders, economic, social, voluntariness and environmental dimensions thus incorporating most of the divergent views of the meaning of CSR (Dhalsrud, 2006).

The last three decades have witnessed an increase in the popularity of CSR globally (Akpinar, Jiang, Gomez-Mejia, Barrone & Walls, 2008). This perhaps is due to the perceived belief in some circles that its adoption by organisations helps in image/reputation management, brand equity, relationship management, issue management and crisis management (Heath and Ni, L, 2008). Many organisations which invest heavily in CSR do so believing that it is the right thing to do and because of its perceived positive impact on financial performance, corporate image, organisation attractiveness and in fulfilment of the organisation's moral obligations to the society which franchises its existence.

The purpose of this paper is to determine the relationship between organisational attractiveness to jobseekers and the five key dimensions of CSR as given by Dhalsrud (2006). These dimensions are Stakeholders, economic, social, environmental and voluntariness dimensions. It will also provide a model explaining this relationship in mathematical term, which distinguishes it from previous studies on this subject

This paper is divided into seven sections: section 1: introduction, section 2: statement of problem; section 3: literature review; section 4: conceptual framework and hypotheses; section 5: method; section 6: results and discussion of findings. The last section (section 7) contains conclusion and recommendation

2. Statement of Problem

Challenges of the contemporary business environment has made it even more compelling for organisations to keep attracting and retaining the best hands available in the labour market (Lado & Wilson, 1994; Wright, Ferris, Hiller, & Kroll, 1995). The current labour shortage in a number of fields and projected future shortages has further brought the importance of attracting and retaining requisite human resources for competitive advantage to the fore (Rynes, 1991; Marti, 2008). However, the ever changing needs of today's worker have made employee recruitment even more challenging (Backhaus, 2011). Several authors have suggested what organisations should do to make them attractive enough for job seekers that possess the needed knowledge, skills and abilities. Such factors as reward system, work environment, congruence between organisation and jobseeker's value, diversity policies, treatment of the environment have been proven by researchers as factors that attract job seekers to organisations (Bretz et al, 1989; Cable & Judge, 1994; Lievens, Decaestecker and Coetsier, 2001; Mardsenm 2001; Lev, 2008; Yuan-Shuh, 2011). Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) has also been proven to positively influence organisation attractiveness to job seekers (Greening & Turban, 2000). However, CSR – organisation attractiveness relationship has not fully been understood (Aupperle, Carroll, & Hartfield, 1985; Mohr et al, 2001; Backhaus, 2011). More so is the dearth of research effort into this concept especially in the African context including Nigeria. This research effort will therefore answer the following question: What is the relationship between CSR and organisational attractiveness to jobseekers in the context of Nigeria's business and economic environment? The motive for this study is not only to fill existing gap in literature but also to assess whether the efforts of organisations in Nigeria's oil and gas sector in the area of CSR is yielding any result in the area of attractiveness to job seekers. This issue has become germane in view of the growing resentment against oil and gas companies in Nigeria due to pollution and environmental

Odumeru, Ayodeji, Asabi & Amos

degradation. The outcome of this study will be different from others because little or no previous study of this topic focused on the labour market of any country in Africa.

This paper takes a look at the perceived effects of key dimensions of CSR on organisation attractiveness from job seekers' perspective in the Nigerian context. It will focus on how CSR can be used as a means of attracting the candidates available in the labour market to fill vacant positions within organisations. It is anticipated that this research effort will shed more light into the CSR-organisation attractiveness relationship and therefore positively contribute to the CSR – corporate performance discourse. The choice of the Nigerian oil and gas industry as a case study is based on the role of the industry as the country's highest foreign exchange earner. Also, the outcome of this study will be valuable to researchers, management of organisations and Human resources Management practitioners in the areas of CSR practices and recruitment planning

3. Literature Review

There are three fundamental lines of CSR inquiry prevalent in academic literature (Basu & Palazzo, 2008): Stakeholder driven: which views CSR as a response to the specific demands of largely external stakeholders, such as governments, NGOs, and consumer lobby groups, with regard to a firm's operations, or with regard to generalised social concerns, such as reducing poverty. Performance driven: A line of inquiry which emphasize the link between external expectations (such as profit maximisation, expectation of jobseekers etc) and a firm's concrete CSR actions, focusing on measuring the effectiveness of such actions, as well as determining which activities might be best suited to deliver the requisite performance. Motivation driven: This line of inquiry examines either the extrinsic reasons for a firm's CSR engagement, such as enhancing corporate reputation, pre-empting legal sanctions, responding to NGO action, managing risk, and generating customer loyalty. Since the focus of this study is to investigate the CSR – Organisation attractiveness relationship, we will review some notable literatures which focus on performance driven motive for CSR.

Milton Friedman (1970) commented on the CSR – organisation attractiveness relationship. He believes that in most cases, the relationship between CSR and profitability is a negative one. According to him, firms pursuing CSR initiatives use funds that would have formed part of profit of shareholders, wages and salaries of workers and/or increase in price of their products to pursue these initiatives. The only exception to this according to him is that it is in the interest of firms that are a major employer in small communities to devote resources to providing amenities to these communities. This may make it easier to attract desirable employees, reduce the wage bill or lessen losses from pilferage and sabotage in addition to other worthwhile effects. Although Friedman admitted that CSR could have a relationship with organisational attractiveness to jobseekers, the nature of this relationship was not discussed. Also, his assertions were general ignoring the peculiarities of various labour markets.

After this assertion of Friedman, most other researchers focused on the effects of CSR on organisational outcomes such as profitability, Return on Investment, share value, sales etc. Moskowitz (1972) investigated the effects of CSR on the prices of stocks of fourteen firms. It was discovered that high CSR firms outperform others. Bragdon and Marlin (1972) studied the effects of CSR on Return on Equity (ROE). The relationship between the two was found to be positive. Bowman and Haire (1975) conducted a similar study of selected food processing industry in the US to determine how CSR affects ROE. It was

Odumeru, Ayodeji, Asabi & Amos

discovered that both were positively related. Parket and Eilbert (1975) also made attempts to investigate how CSR affects profit. They discovered that most of the sampled CSR firms were more profitable than other non CSR firms. Heinz (1976) also tried to establish the link between CSR, ROE and profit margin. It was discovered that there is a significant positive relationship between CSR and ROE. However, Alexander & Buchholz (1978) and Abbot and Monsen (1979) found no relationship between CSR and profit including ROE. Noticing ideological bias and limited methodological procedures in previous studies, Aupperle, Carroll and Hatfield (1985) found no relationship between CSR and Profit. However, this conclusion has been disputed by many authors. Orlitzky, Schmidt and Rynes (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 52 studies to determine the effects of Corporate Social Performance (CSP) on Corporate Financial Performance (CFP). CSP was found to be more positively correlated to accounting based measures of CFP than market –based indicators. A major limitation of all these studies is their focus on the organisations in developed countries of the USA and Europe while neglecting that of emerging markets of Asia and Africa

Generally, relatively little research effort has focused on the CSR-organisation attractiveness relationship in favour of CSR – Performance relationship (Backhaus, 2011). Up until 1996, research efforts had focused mainly on the effects of CSR on performance indices such as profit, sales, share value etc (Greening & Turban, 2000). Using the Social Identity and Signalling Theories as theoretical basis, Turban & Greening (1996) discovered that Corporate Social Performance (same as CSR) relates positively to organisational reputation and therefore attractiveness to job seekers. They concluded that CSR provides competitive advantage in attracting applicants. These same authors conducted an experiment in 2000 to further understand the CSR – organisational attractiveness relationship. They found that prospective job applicants are more likely to pursue jobs from socially responsible firms than from firms with poor social responsibility records (Turban & Greening, 2000). However, a major weakness in their study is the focus on America, thus care must be taken to generalise these conclusions. Also, these studies fail to provide a model explaining these relationships

Luce, Barber and Hillman (2001) conducted a research in the US to determine the mediating effect of job applicants' familiarity with the organisation in the corporate social performance (CSP) – organisational attractiveness relationship. The study discovered that the CSP - attractiveness to job applicants' relationship is strongly mediated by applicants' familiarity with the organisation's CSP records (deeds and misdeeds). However, no clear cut mathematical model was provided by this study.

Backhaus, Stoner and Heiner (2002) investigated job seekers' perceptions of importance of CSP and explore effects of CSP dimensions on organisational attractiveness. Using signalling theory and social identity theory as conceptual basis, the authors hypothesize differences in effects of CSP data on ratings of employer attractiveness and found that environment, community relations, and diversity dimensions have the largest affect on attractiveness ratings. However, this investigation suffers the same limitations as the previous ones: lack of attention to the labour markets of emerging economies and failure to provide mathematical models explaining these relationships

A study released in 2003 revealed that companies perceived as socially responsible often have a competitive edge when it comes to attracting top recruits. Researchers at Stanford University and the University of California, Santa Barbara, surveyed 800 MBA students from 11 leading North American and European business schools and found that 94

Odumeru, Ayodeji, Asabi & Amos

percent would accept a lower salary--an average of 14 percent lower--to work for a firm with a reputation for being environmentally friendly, caring about employees and caring about outside stakeholders such as the community (Weber, 2010). This research also suffers from the same limitation of not providing a clear model explaining the relationship between CSR and organisational attractiveness

Smith, Wokutch, Harrington and Dennis (2004) investigated the impact of Corporate Social orientation (CSO) on organisational attractiveness as it relates to information about organisation's handling of diversity issues. In a survey of 343 college students, it was discovered that diversity management and CSO beliefs and intention positively influence organisation attractiveness. However, no clear cut model explaining this relationship was given. Also, drawing samples from respondents already in the labour market might produce a different result from using students.

Tsai and Yeng (2010) examined both the effects of various corporate image dimensions on organisational attractiveness and the moderating effects of applicant individual difference variables on the aforementioned relationships. Using two independent studies, the investigation discovered that corporate product image, corporate citizenship image, and corporate credibility image were important antecedents to organisational attractiveness. One of the proposed applicant individual difference variables, environmental sensitivity, was found to moderate the relationship between corporate citizenship image and organisational attractiveness. A limitation of this study is that where in economies where the rate of unemployment is high such as Nigeria, results may be different

In a more recent study conducted in 2011, Evans and Davis investigated the effects of individual differences on relationship between CSR and individual reactions to CSR. Using experimental research methodology, they examined how perceptions of corporate citizenship influence job applicant attraction and work role definitions. Results indicate that perceived corporate citizenship had a greater impact on job applicant attraction for those individuals who received prior education regarding CSR and for those who were higher in other-regarding value orientation. Furthermore, perceived corporate citizenship had a positive impact on the extent to which participants defined CSR as a personal work role responsibility. However, the study did not provide models explaining this relationship. The provision of a model will help Human resources Management practitioners anticipate changes in organisational attractiveness occasioned by changes the key dimensions of CSR, which will be valuable for CSR practices and recruitment policy formulation

Hoye and Saks (2011) also studied the relationship between the perception of organisational image and attractiveness among 200 potential applicants for the Belgian defence and the person/people (e.g. friend, parents) accompanying them to job fair. Results show that social activities, structure and advancement opportunities attract potential job applicants. Also, educational opportunities was also found to attract jobseekers' companions to job fairs. Other factors which enhance organisational attractiveness include sincerity, excitement, prestige and ruggedness. A major weakness of this study is that it addressed only three dimensions of Dhalsrud's five CSR dimensions neglecting others.

Jones, Willness and Madey (2014) studied the mediating effects of three signal based mechanisms in the CSR – Organisational attractiveness to jobseekers relationship: Jobseekers pride of being affiliated with the organisation, their perceived value fit with the

organisation and expectation about how organisations treat their employees. Using both experimental (n = 180) and survey research design (n = 171), they concluded that these three signal based mechanisms mediate this relationship. However, the study did not provide a mathematical model to explain this relationship. It also did not take into the account the peculiarity that may exist between different business environments.

Prooijen and Ellemers (2014) studied how morality and competence of organisations affect its attractiveness to key stakeholders including job applicants. Using a combination of three different studies, the investigation discovered that job seekers are more attracted to organisations with higher level of morality than those with higher degree of competence. This study further supports the general belief that socially responsible organisations attract job seekers more than those that are not as socially responsible regardless of their financial performance. However, this study suffers from the same limitations as others: no clear cut mathematical model that supports this assertion

4. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conceptual framework for this paper was drawn from the work of Dahlsrud (2006) who did a frequency count of five of the most widely used dimensions of CSR from the myriad of definitions of CSR used in literature. These five dimensions, according to Dahlsrud, are the most frequently used in the definition of CSR. They are environmental, economic, social, stakeholders and voluntariness dimension. Environmental dimension addresses issues such as cleaner environment, environmental stewardship, and environmental concerns for business operations.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between an organisation's concern for the environment and its attractiveness to job seekers.

Economic dimension takes care of the socio-economic and financial aspects of CSR including describing CSR in terms of business operation (Friedman, 1970; Dhalsrud, 2006; Marsden, 2001).

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant relationship between an organisation's pursuits of its economic goals and its attractiveness to job seekers.

The social dimension deals with the relationship between the organisation and the society. It covers issues bordering on its contribution to the society, the integration of social concerns with business operations, and the impact of an organisation's operations on communities (Dhalsrud, 2006).

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between the social dimension of CSR and organisation attractiveness to job seekers

The stakeholders dimension takes care of issues affecting key stakeholders and stakeholder groups such as employees, suppliers, customers, members of host communities etc. It covers all issues bothering on the interaction between organisations and stakeholders including the full scope of impact on their communities

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between stakeholders dimension of CSR and organisation attractiveness to job seekers

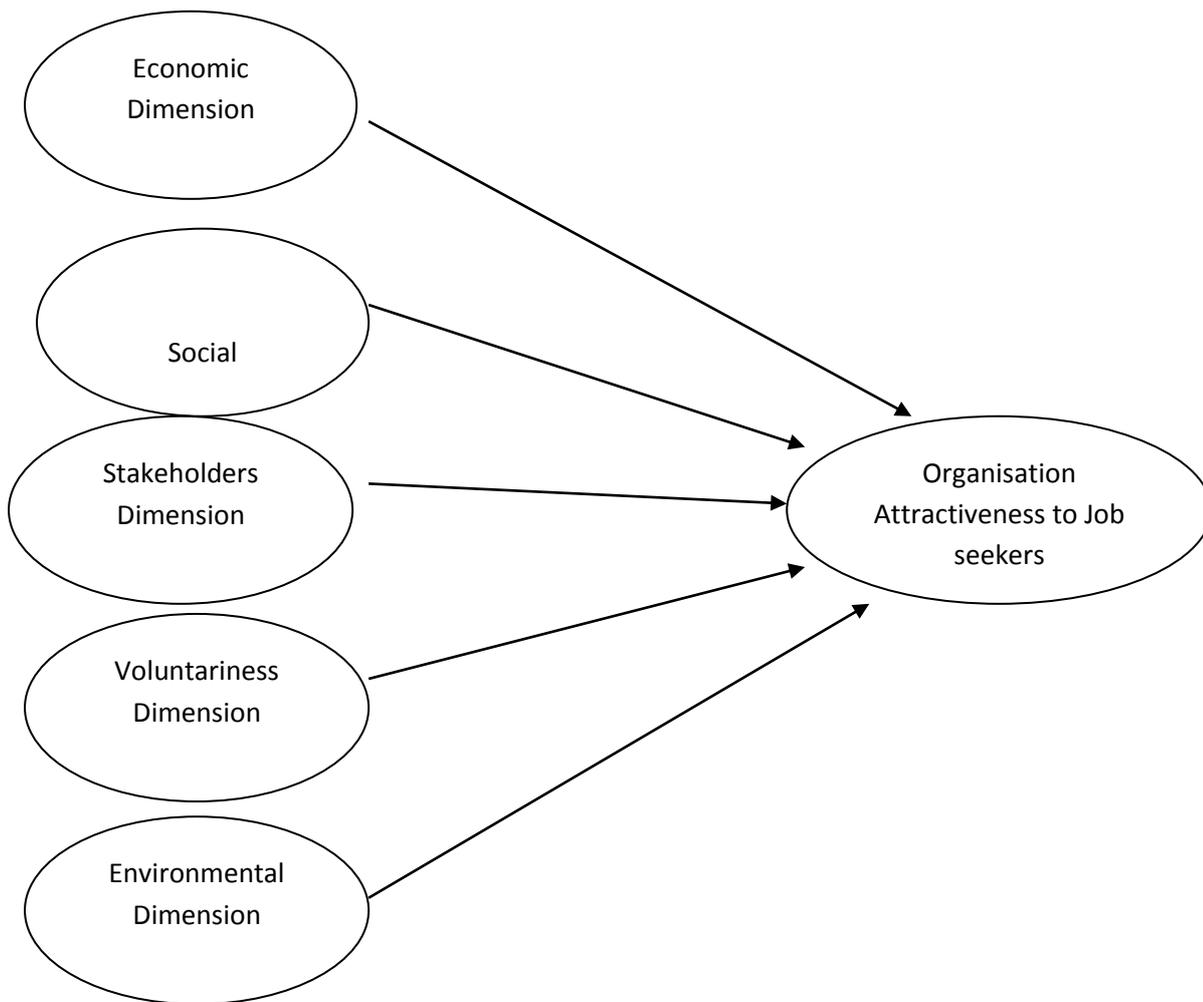
Odumeru, Ayodeji, Asabi & Amos

The voluntariness dimension captures all actions of an organisation that are beyond their legal obligations. It covers issues bordering on the organisation's ethical values

Hypothesis 5: *There is no significant relationship between voluntariness dimension of CSR and organisation attractiveness to job seekers*

The conceptual framework is captured in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



5. Method

This study adopts the exploratory cross sectional survey research design where total of four hundred copies of a questionnaire were distributed to jobseekers in the Lagos area to elicit information on how each of these five key dimensions of CSR will affect their preference for working an organisation with specific reference to the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry using convenience sampling method. The choice of the use of Dhalsrud's five key dimensions of CSR is due to its wide acceptance and popularity among scholars (Akpinar, 2008; Basu & Palazzo, 2008; Evans & Davis, 2011). Also, the rationale for using convenience sampling method was based on the fact that a main objective of this investigation is to draw attention of researchers to this hitherto unpopular area of research in the Nigerian and African context. The choice of Lagos is based on the fact that majority

Odumeru, Ayodeji, Asabi & Amos

of oil and gas companies in Nigeria have their various headquarters located in Lagos. One hundred and thirty two copies of these questionnaires that were returned were found to be useful. Copies of questionnaires were distributed and responses received between 1st April and 1st May 2013. The choice for the Nigerian oil and gas is due to the controversies surrounding their CSR recording and the effect of their activities on host communities against the backdrop of huge profits made by them annually and their role as the highest foreign exchange earner for the country. Samples were selected using convenient sampling method. The questionnaire was designed using the Likert Scale with polar anchors 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: section one elicited information on demographic features of respondents and section 2 deals with questions on their perception of the dimensions of CSR prevalent in Nigeria's oil and gas industry and their preference to work in the industry. Data was analysed using Cronbach's alpha to test for consistency and reliability of measuring instruments and multiple regression analysis to model the relationship between dependent and independent variables. This paper explores the design and use of a simple model to explain how each key dimension of CSR affects organisational attractiveness in clear terms such that changes in the dependent variable can be determined in clear terms, when any changes in these dimensions occur. Thus the model has a high predictive value. This is an improvement over models provided in previous studies

6. Discussion of Results

The table below shows the results of Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

Table 1: Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha

Constructs	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Economic Dimension	5	0.70
Social Dimension	4	0.83
Environmental Dimension	6	0.70
Stakeholders Dimension	6	0.73
Voluntarism Dimension	4	0.70

Table 1 show the result of Cronbach's alpha. From the above, all constructs show a result of 0.7 and above meaning that the measuring instrument is both valid and reliable (Nunnally, 1978).

Tables 2 and 3 below show results of multiple regression analysis.

Table 2: Model Summary for the Construct

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²
1	.541	.292	.251

Predictors: (Constant), Perception of economic dimension of CSR, Perception of social dimension of CSR, Perception of environment dimension of CSR, Perception of stakeholders dimension of CSR, Perception of voluntariness dimension of CSR
 Dependent Variable: Preference to work in Oil and Gas Industry

Table 3: Coefficient of the constructs

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	
	B	Beta	Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.101		.432
	Economic Dimension	.275	.363	.000
	Social Dimension	.125	.259	.000
	Environment Dimension	.213	.483	.000
	Stakeholders Dimension	.07	.285	.004
	Voluntariness Dimension	.249	.654	.000

Predictors: (Constant), Perception of economic dimension of CSR, Perception of social dimension of CSR, Perception of environment dimension of CSR, Perception of stakeholders dimension of CSR, Perception of voluntariness dimension of CSR
 Dependent Variable: Preference to work in Oil and Gas Industry

Table 2 above shows a coefficient of determinant (R^2) of 0.29 or 29% showing the existence of a relationship between organisation attractiveness to job seekers and all the 5 dimensions of CSR. Table 3 show a significant positive relationship between each of the dimensions and organisation attractiveness to jobseekers (at $p < 5\%$). The table also shows that organisation attractiveness is more sensitive to the economic dimension of CSR than others with a beta coefficient of 0.275 followed by voluntariness dimension with a beta coefficient of 0.249. The social dimension accounts for the least with a beta coefficient of 0.125. These results support the position of earlier findings which found the existence of a strong relationship between CSR and organisational attractiveness (Prooijen & Ellemers, 2014; Jones Willness & Madey, 2014; Hoyer and Saks, 2011; Tsai & Yang, 2010; Backhaus et al, 2002; Greening and Turban, 2000; Turban and Greening, 1996). However, this study has provided a clear cut model explain how each CSR dimension influence organisational attractiveness; an improvement over previous studies. Also, with the exception of Prooijen and Ellemers (2014) other previous studies studied the influence of social dimension of CSR on organisational attractiveness

The results above is summarised in the mathematical model given below:

$$PW = 0.101 + 0.275E + 0.125S + 0.213Ev + 0.07St + 0.249V$$

Where PW = Preference to work in the oil & gas industry; E = Economic Dimension; S = Social Dimension; En = Environment Dimension; St = Stakeholders Dimension and V= Voluntariness Dimension

The table below shows a summary of hypotheses test results.

Table 4: Hypotheses Test Results

S/N	Hypotheses	Results
1	There is no significant relationship between an organisation's concern for the environment and its attractiveness to job seekers	Reject
2	There is no significant relationship between an organisation's pursuit for its economic goals and its attractiveness to job seekers.	Reject
3	There is no significant relationship between the social dimension of CSR and organisation attractiveness to job seekers	Reject
4	There is no significant relationship between stakeholders dimension of CSR and organisation attractiveness to job seekers	Reject
5	There is no significant relationship between voluntariness dimension of CSR and organisation attractiveness to job seekers	Reject

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

The test results show the existence of a significant relationship between each of the 5 dimensions of CSR and the ability to attract needed human resources to pursue the organisation's goals, thus supporting the findings of previous studies most of which were conducted in Europe and North America. In other words, job applicants prefer socially responsible organisations to others. This further justifies the continuous investment of resources into CSR not only in the interest of the society that franchises the organisation's existence but in the interest of the organisation itself. However, the study shows economic dimension as the dominant factor which attract job applicants. This perhaps is attributable to the high rate of unemployment and economic downturn in the nation. In spite of this fact, organisations should invest more into the five key dimensions of CSR to improve their attractiveness in the labour market. This is because the study also shows a positive relationship between these CSR dimensions and organisation attractiveness. However, a major limitation of this study is the use of convenience sampling method. Further studies should consider using a more scientific sampling method in determining the number and choice of respondents. Also, there is a possibility of common methods bias in the methodology that was adopted. Further studies should also consider the use of more complex statistical data analysis method such as Structural Equations Modelling (SEM).

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Odumeru, Ayodeji, Asabi & Amos

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Odumeru, Ayodeji, Asabi & Amos

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