
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BUSINESS REPUTATION OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between corporate social responsibility (dimensioned by developmental responsibilities, ethical responsibility, and environmental impact reduction) and the business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria. The research was underpinned by the Moral Responsibility Theory of Corporate Sustainability and guided by the positivist philosophical paradigm. The research design adopted a cross-sectional survey approach with a structured questionnaire based on a Likert's five-point scale. The target population comprised the entire 25 commercial banks in Nigeria. However, the elements of the accessible population were 1,400 regional/zonal managers who work in the 329 regional offices of the commercial banks in Nigeria, in charge of business, operations, and internal control, as obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria. The Krejcie and Morgan's table was utilized to determine a sample size of 302 respondents, and the snowball sampling was adopted. The partial least squares structural equation modeling was deployed to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that developmental responsibilities demonstrate a weak but statistically significant positive relationship with business reputation, while ethical responsibilities show a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with business reputation. In contrast, environmental impact reduction is found to have a very weak and statistically insignificant relationship with business reputation. The study recommended, among others, that managers of commercial banks in Nigeria should focus on enhancing their ethical practices in order to improve their reputation and foster greater customer trust and loyalty. This can be achieved by ensuring transparency, fairness in customer interactions, and adherence to ethical standards.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Business Reputation, Commercial Banks.

Introduction

The banking sector, particularly commercial banks, is crucial to Nigeria's economy as they provide essential credit for both consumers and businesses, facilitating the purchase of assets, expansion, and employment. This credit creation boosts economic growth by increasing

output, employment, and consumer spending, while also enhancing industrial investment and market liquidity (Njoku et al., 2023). Consequently, commercial banks not only support the industrial sector but also stimulate overall economic development through their financial services. Nigeria's financial services industry, primarily the banking sector, contributed N3.8 trillion to the country's GDP in 2023, up 26.5% from N3.01 trillion in 2022 (Taylor & Eshokeme, 2024). Despite this enormous contribution, the sector is bedeviled by certain challenges (such as: high level of non-performing loans, inadequate infrastructure, increased fraud and cybersecurity concerns, regulatory and compliance challenges imposed by the Central Bank of Nigeria, foreign exchange volatility, limited financial inclusion, corruption and political interference, interest rate fluctuations, poor risk management practices, currency depreciation and stiff competition from fintech companies) which have impacted negatively on their reputation (Chibueze, 2023; Adedokun, 2022; Adeola, 2022; Olawale & Garuba, 2021). Thus, the problem of this study is poor business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria.

According to Febra et al. (2023) and Hamidi et al. (2023), a company's reputation is an intangible asset that is formed by its past activities. It is uncommon, difficult to imitate, and essential for boosting profitability, creating barriers to competition, and directing stakeholders in times of crisis. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been found to have a positive and significant relationship with business reputation across multiple studies (Berber et al., 2022; Hasan & Yun, 2017; Orlova, 2019). CSR activities, including responsibility towards employees, customers, local communities, the environment, and suppliers, contribute to building and enhancing business reputation (Berber et al., 2022). Whereas several aspects of CSR abound, this study relied on developmental responsibilities, ethical responsibilities and environmental impact reduction, as dimensions (Latif et al., 2019).

Developmental responsibilities include firms spending money on R&D to improve their goods and services, guaranteeing that they satisfy industry standards and provide clients with superior offers (Latif et al., 2019). Moreso, developmental responsibility is necessary for businesses to guarantee that they constantly enhance their goods and services via process innovation in order for them to survive, prosper, and remain competitive (Guterman, 2020; Zybareva & Voroniuk, 2022). Also, fairness, honesty, and compassion are some of the ethical responsibilities in business that are essential for differentiating a brand and building customer loyalty and trust (Latif et al., 2019). These ethical business practices not only improves the reputation of a business but also has a favourable impact on its performance and relationships with stakeholders (Bag et al., 2022; Nuhu & Shehu, 2019; Oloveze et al., 2023). Scholars have argued that companies can improve their reputation by putting into practice true environmental practices and being open about their sustainability initiatives (Barroso-Méndez et al., 2024; Quintana-García et al., 2022).

Consequently, the decline in the Nigerian banking sector's reputation can be attributed to several interrelated factors. Firstly, pervasive corruption and unethical practices have significantly undermined public trust in financial institutions, leading to a perception of the sector as unreliable and untrustworthy (Akande et al., 2024). Additionally, the impact of economic instability, characterized by fluctuating exchange rates and inflation, has further

exacerbated the situation, causing customers to question the stability and reliability of banks (Omankhanlen et al., 2020). Moreover, inadequate regulatory frameworks and poor enforcement of existing regulations have allowed for malpractices to flourish, contributing to a negative image of the banking sector (Owonye & Obonofiemro, 2022). The lack of transparency in banking operations has also been highlighted as a critical issue, as it fosters an environment of suspicion among stakeholders (Kayode & Oluwole, 2023). Moreover, the rise of digital banking has introduced new challenges, including cybersecurity threats, which have further tarnished the reputation of traditional banks that struggle to adapt (Tayo-Tiwo, 2020). Collectively, these factors illustrate a complex interplay of issues that have led to the decline in the reputation of the Nigerian banking sector.

Several studies have suggested various solutions to the problem of poor business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria, such as: improvement in customer service and communication (Akintayo, 2021); implementing advanced technologies to improve transaction speed, security, and convenience (Nwosu & Madu, 2020); ethical banking practices (Akinyele & Aluko, 2019); Effective Crisis Management (Uche, 2023); as well as branding and public relations (Eze & Okeke, 2021). Despite these suggested solutions, the problem of poor business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria is still apparent. The case of the recent withdrawal of the banking license of Heritage Bank by the Central Bank of Nigeria, is a reflection of this situation. More so, studies that have deployed Partial-Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess the relationship between CSR and business reputation are scant, thus revealing contextual and methodological gaps in literature. Consequently, this study sought to fill these contextual and methodological gaps by deploying PLS-SEM as a statistical technique to assess the relationship between CSR and business reputation. It is against this backdrop, that this study examined corporate social responsibility as a possible panacea to the decline in the business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria. The specific research objectives for this study are to:

ascertain the link between developmental responsibilities and business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria.

access the relationship between ethical responsibilities and business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria.

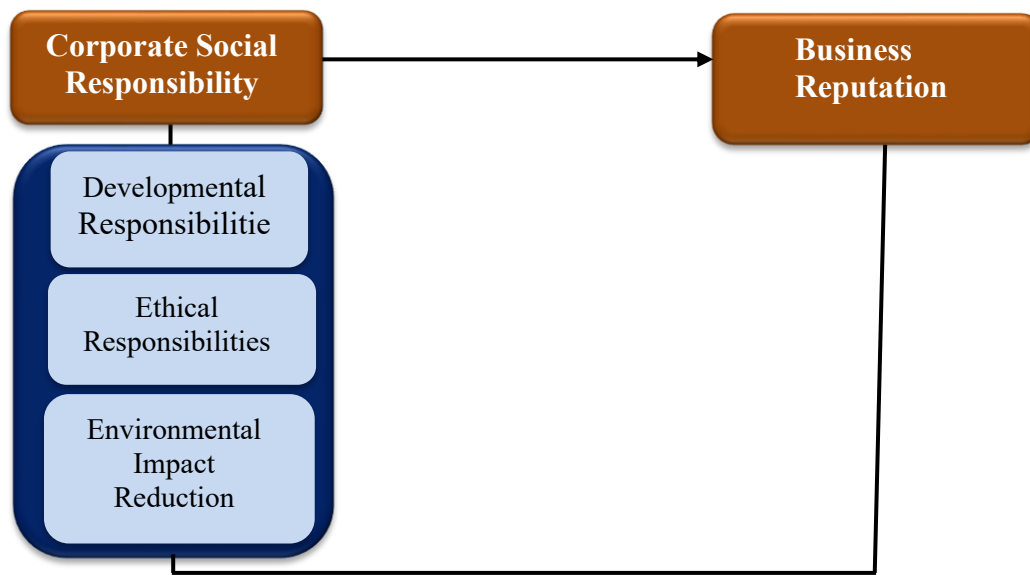
determine the nexus between environmental impact reduction and business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria.

Accordingly, the following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

H01: There is no significant relationship between developmental responsibilities and business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria.

H02: There is no significant relationship between ethical responsibilities and business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria.

H03: There is no significant relationship between environmental impact reduction and business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria.

2.0 Conceptual Framework:**2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW****2.1.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW****2.1.1.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

Beyond delivering value to shareholders and meeting other business objectives, CSR is one of the ways in which organizations engage in voluntary initiatives aimed at bringing certain benefits to stakeholders and strengthening their relationships with them (Dzage & Szabados, 2024). Often referred to as the triple bottom line, these benefits to stakeholders are largely related to the economic, social and environmental needs of society (Bahta et al., 2021; Yangailo et al., 2024). Whereas a rich debate as to what CSR means abound, Licandro et al's (2023) description of CSR as a management philosophy that behooves business managers to minimize the adverse effects of their operations as well as maximize the positive potential of their actions on stakeholders, society and the environment is closely aligned with the perspective of this study.

Developmental Responsibilities

According to Latif et al. (2019), organizations should be able to come up with actions geared towards enhancing their product and service offering by investing in research and development in order to provide top notch products/services to their customers as well as meet the required standard of the industry. They referred to this as showing developmental responsibility. For organisations to survive, thrive and stay competitive, developmental responsibility is required to ensure that, through innovation in their processes, they continuously improve on their products and services. Recent authors have corroborated Latif et al's (2019) argument by opining that organisations that wishes to stay competitive should focus on certain development responsibilities such as collecting and analyzing useful data, assessing the needs of their customers and other critical stakeholders, and coming up with strategies to meet these needs, that align with global sustainability concerns (Guttermann, 2020; Zybareva & Voroniuk, 2022). According to (Zybareva & Voroniuk, 2022),

developmental responsibilities could enhance organisations' value, boost customers' confidence, and ultimately boosting their reputation.

Ethical Responsibilities

In business, ethics are standards that guide actions which are often demonstrated through fairness, integrity, compassion, honour and responsibility (Ubabuike, 2021). Latif et al. (2019) noted that successful companies need to satisfy their customers' needs in an ethical way to create brand differentiation, which they referred to as ethical responsibility. Ethical behavior can result in more consumer loyalty and trust, better working relationships with suppliers and partners, and a better reputation in the community (Bag et al., 2022). In their study, Oloveze et al. (2023), noted that ethical values of firms in their efforts to meet the needs of customer, employees and society influence their reputation and performance. This is in tandem with Nuhu and Shehu's (2019) conclusion that ethics and corporate social responsibility are significant in influencing company's reputation.

Environmental Impact Reduction

Environmental impact reduction refers to the efforts to minimize negative environmental effects through sustainable practices, green initiatives, and responsible investments. This includes adopting sustainable operations like reducing paper usage and energy consumption in bank branches, as well as offering green financing for environmentally friendly projects (Olanrewaju & Adebola, 2021; Okoye & Umeh, 2020). Additionally, many banks incorporate environmental initiatives into their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, such as tree planting and waste management campaigns (Adebayo & Aina, 2019). Furthermore, banks are integrating environmental risk assessments into their lending decisions to ensure they support sustainable projects that do not harm the environment (Nwankwo & Okafor, 2022). Collectively, these efforts contribute to environmental sustainability in the Nigerian banking sector.

2.1.1.2 Business Reputation

A reputation is an intangible asset derived from a firm's prior actions, that is rare, difficult to replicate, and plays a critical role in increasing profitability and establishing competitive barriers (Febra et al., 2023). Business reputation is also one of the essential indicators stakeholders may utilize for effective solutions when encountering a crisis (Hamidi et al., 2023). A positive reputation is likely to result in stakeholders having a more positive attitude and a greater willingness to establish relationships and interact with the evaluated entity, such as a company. Conversely, a negative reputation will result in a reduced willingness to engage and negative attitudes (Bigus et al., 2023). According to Cerda Suarez et al. (2020), understanding the influences of several aspects of a firm's reputation at the commencement of a crisis was of particular theoretical importance.

2.2 THEORETICAL REVIEW

Moral Responsibility Theory of Corporate Sustainability

The moral responsibility theory of corporate sustainability was developed by Ha-Brookshire (2015). The theory postulates that for corporations to be truly sustainable, individual members of corporations must perceive corporate sustainability as a moral duty to which all others are ascribed in any circumstances and have clear goals/procedures in place to fulfill such duties. This theory suggests that corporations, beyond merely pursuing profits, have a moral obligation to contribute to the well-being of society and the environment. Moreover, the theory posits that corporate actions should be aligned with ethical considerations and should foster long-term sustainability by addressing the social, environmental, and economic impacts of business operations. This theory is particularly relevant to the study of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria. According to the theory, banks, as key economic players, have a moral duty to operate responsibly, not only by adhering to regulations but by actively contributing to societal welfare through ethical practices and sustainable initiatives. Therefore, the relevance of the Moral Responsibility Theory to Nigerian commercial banks lies in its ability to guide these institutions in balancing profit-making with the need to address pressing societal issues. For instance, engaging in green banking, supporting community projects, and ensuring transparency in operations align with the ethical dimensions of the theory and can lead to improved public trust and reputation.

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEWS

Table 2.1: Webometrics of Empirical Reviews

S/No	Author(s)	Country	Topic/ Objectives	Methodology	Findings	Gaps
Developmental Responsibilities and Business Reputation						
1	Hadi and Indradewa (2019)	Indonesia	Effect of service quality on corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, and loyalty	Causality and quantitative analysis using SEM on data from 250 forklift rental companies	Good service quality increases corporate reputation and customer satisfaction; both enhance customer loyalty	Study focused only on forklift rental companies in Indonesia
2	Kaur and Singh (2019)	India	Relevance of R&D expenditure on corporate reputation in emerging economies	Multivariate regression analysis of cross-sectional data from top 500 Indian companies	R&D expenditure positively impacts firm reputation, as measured by market capitalisation	The relationship between R&D spending and reputation was studied in a single emerging economy (India)
3	Pacana and Siwiec (2023)	Poland	Development of a method to predict product improvement direction considering quality and environmental impact	Method based on LCA design phase, customer expectation processing, and various evaluation techniques including WSM method	The method supports product improvement by balancing environmental friendliness and customer satisfaction	Current study could evaluate the applicability of the method in larger corporations or across different industries
Ethical Responsibilities and Business Reputation						
4	Nwaonu and Ahamefule (2017)	Nigeria	Effect of CSR on corporate reputation and financial performance of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd	Survey research design with primary and secondary data analyzed using Pearson Correlation and Multiple Regression	CSR has a strong positive effect on corporate reputation and is positively related to financial performance	Study limited to a single company in Nigeria; broader generalizability not tested

5	Ukeme, Nwuche, and Anyanwu (2018)	Nigeria	Relationship between ethical practices and organizational sustainability in tertiary institutions	Survey of 445 employees in Rivers State tertiary institutions, analyzed with Spearman Rank Order Correlation and Partial Correlation.	Significant positive relationship between ethical practices and organizational sustainability	The study focuses solely on educational institutions, limiting its scope to academia
6	Sharma (2023)	India	Impact of CSR on brand reputation of Indian companies under the 2013 Indian Companies Act	Critical appraisal of CSR dimensions (ethical, legal, economic, charitable) and their impact on brand reputation	Ethical responsibility has more impact on brand reputation, before legal, philanthropic, & economic responsibilities	The study is specific to Indian companies under a specific legal framework
Environmental Impact Reduction and Business Reputation						
7	Lin et al. (2016)	Taiwan	Influence of environmental irresponsibility on corporate reputation, with CSR as a moderator	Secondary data analysis and three experiments focused on consumer perceptions	Environmental irresponsibility negatively affects corporate reputation; CSR can moderate the negative effects	The study relies on consumer perception; other stakeholder groups' views may differ
8	Gangi et al. (2020)	Italy	Relationship between corporate environmental policy, reputation, and financial performance	Comprehensive framework analyzing the link between corporate environmental engagement, green innovation, and reputation with financial outcomes	Corporate environmental responsibility and green practices enhance corporate reputation, which positively influences risk-adjusted profitability	Study focuses on financial outcomes; the impact on non-financial performance measures could be further explored
9	Vuong and Bui (2023)	Vietnam	Role of CSR dimensions in enhancing brand reputation through brand equity	Questionnaire survey of 417 Vietnamese enterprises engaged in CSR activities	Internal and external CSR activities positively influence employee satisfaction, brand reputation, and brand equity	Study focused on CSR's role in brand equity; other factors influencing brand reputation were not considered

3.0 METHODOLOGY:

The study was underpinned by the positivist philosophical paradigm. The research design adopted a cross-sectional survey approach, with a structured questionnaire based on a Likert's five-point scale. The target population comprised the entire 25 Commercial Banks in Nigeria with international, national and regional authorisations. However, the elements of the accessible population were 1,400 Regional/Zonal Managers who work in the 329 regional offices of the Commercial Banks in Nigeria, with designations such as Regional/Zonal Business Managers, Regional/Zonal Operations Managers and Regional/Zonal Internal Control Managers, as obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria. The Krejcie and Morgan's table was utilised to determine a sample size of 302 respondents, and the snowball sampling was adopted. The Partial least squares-structural equation modeling was deployed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level via SmartPLS 4.1.0.5 software. 302 copies of the questionnaire administered, however, only 260 (86.09%) copies of the research instrument were retrieved, while 230 copies were found to be adequately completed and usable, representing 76.16% questionnaire usage rate. A minimum Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability coefficients of 0.7 was adopted as reliability cut-off point for this study. From

literature review, Hulland (1999) recommends Path coefficients (outer loadings) β threshold of 0.70. Similarly, when the factor loadings are squared the resultant statistic is indicator reliability (β^2). Hulland (1999) argued that indicator reliability (β^2) ≥ 0.50 mean that the construct explains more than 50% of the indicator's variance. Moreso, an average variance extracted (AVE) of 0.5 and above indicated sufficient convergent validity, while discriminant validity was confirmed when the square root of a construct's AVE is greater than its correlation with all other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Also, t-values >1.96 and p-values <0.05 were significant cut-off points, while R² values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 were described as substantial, moderate or weak levels of predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 3.1: LIST OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN NIGERIA

	Name of Bank	Type of Banking Authorisation	Number of Regional/Zonal Offices	Number of Regional/Zonal Managers	Bowley's Proportional Sample Allocation
	<u>Access Bank Plc</u>	International	19	114	25
	<u>Fidelity Bank Plc</u>	International	19	95	20
	<u>First City Monument Bank Limited</u>	International	19	76	16
	<u>First Bank of Nigeria Limited</u>	International	19	133	29
	<u>Guaranty Trust Bank Plc</u>	International	19	76	16
	<u>Union Bank of Nigeria Plc</u>	International	19	95	20
	<u>United Bank for Africa Plc</u>	International	19	114	25
	<u>Zenith Bank Plc</u>	International	19	95	20
	<u>Citibank Nigeria Limited</u>	International	7	21	5
	<u>Ecobank Nigeria</u>	International	19	76	16
	<u>Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc</u>	International	12	44	9
	<u>Standard Chartered</u>	International	10	36	8
	<u>Keystone Bank Limited</u>	National	19	76	16
	<u>Polaris Bank Limited</u>	National	19	57	12
	<u>Sterling Bank Plc</u>	National	19	76	16
	<u>Unity Bank Plc</u>	National	19	57	12
	<u>Wema Bank Plc</u>	National	19	57	12
	<u>Globus Bank Limited</u>	National	6	18	4
	<u>Parallex Bank Limited</u>	Regional	4	12	3
	<u>PremiumTrust Bank Limited</u>	Regional	4	12	3
	<u>Providus Bank Limited</u>	Regional	4	12	3
	<u>SunTrust Bank Nigeria Limited</u>	Regional	4	12	3
	<u>Signature Bank Limited</u>	Regional	4	12	3
	<u>Optimus Bank Limited</u>	Regional	4	12	3
	<u>Titan Trust Bank Limited</u>	Regional	4	12	3
	<i>Source: https://www.cbn.gov.ng/; Research field work (2024)</i>		Total = 329	Accessible Population = 1,400	Sample Size = 302

Table 4.0: Descriptive Statistics (Univariate Analysis)

	N	Mean	Std.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Deviation Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	230	83.00	20.818	.279	.244	-.668	.483
DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY	230	17.53	4.732	.243	.244	-.076	.483
1. We invest in innovations which provide advantage to our customers.	230	2.82	1.115	-.037	.244	-.461	.483
2. We use customers' satisfaction as an indicator to improve our services.	230	2.91	.898	.183	.244	.277	.483
3. We take particular concern to offer high quality services to our customers.	230	2.87	1.042	-.064	.244	-.449	.483
4. We use our resources and talent for our own growth to ensure better service.	230	2.91	1.194	.180	.244	-.767	.483
5. Our services satisfy national and international quality standards (i.e., ISO standards).	230	2.86	1.175	.206	.244	-.649	.483
ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES	230	15.88	4.147	.077	.244	-.695	.483
1. We believe that fairness toward customers is an integral part of our business.	230	2.98	1.184	-.074	.244	-.936	.483
2. We are committed to well-established ethical principles.	230	3.05	1.078	.401	.244	-.712	.483
3. We are concerned with fulfilling our obligations towards our customers.	230	3.37	1.161	-.235	.244	-.611	.483
4. We do not discriminate on any basis and we offer equal quality of service to all customers.	230	3.48	1.177	-.124	.244	-1.090	.483
5. We have a comprehensive code of conduct.	230	3.65	1.026	-.365	.244	-.737	.483
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REDUCTION	230	21.35	6.380	.177	.244	-.401	.483
1. We use expendables and processes and/or transformation with low environmental impacts.	230	3.43	1.520	-.419	.244	-1.311	.483
2. We participate in activities linked to protecting and improving our natural environment.	230	3.76	1.301	-.593	.244	-.976	.483
3. We know that companies must plan investments to reduce their environmental impact.	230	3.40	1.412	-.382	.244	-1.129	.483
4. We agree with reducing greenhouse gas emissions and waste by recycling materials.	230	3.64	1.318	-.496	.244	-.986	.483
5. We are predisposed to using, buying, and/or manufacturing eco-friendly products.	230	3.66	1.331	-.560	.244	-.903	.483
BUSINESS REPUTATION	230	20.21	4.832	.278	.244	-.417	.483
1. Our company contributes actively and voluntarily to the social improvement, economic and the environmental of society.	230	3.04	1.235	.122	.244	-.947	.483
2. Our company stands behind its products and services with good price and good quality that meet consumer.	230	3.24	1.167	-.017	.244	-.987	.483
3. Our company treats customers courteously, communicates with them and takes care of their safety and health.	230	3.35	1.159	.138	.244	-1.158	.483
4. Our company generates respect, admiration esteem and confidence.	230	3.12	1.115	.255	.244	-.632	.483
5. Our company is recognized, has excellent leadership, is innovative, and seeks constant overcoming.	230	3.05	1.078	.401	.244	-.712	.483
6. Our company is a good company to work, by its infrastructure such as its working environment, benefits and good treats with its employees.	230	2.91	1.194	.180	.244	-.767	.483
7. Our company is a company with values that obeys the laws, transparent and respects people and the environment.	230	3.15	1.170	.051	.244	-.824	.483
8. Our company supports good causes that benefits society and environment.	230	2.90	1.180	-.068	.244	-.970	.483
Valid N (listwise)	230						

Source: SPSS output of Research Data (2024)

The descriptive statistics for the study on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Business Reputation in commercial banks in Nigeria reveal that the mean scores for CSR (83.00), Developmental Responsibility (17.53), Ethical Responsibilities (15.88), Environmental Impact Reduction (21.35), and Business Reputation (20.21) are generally moderate, indicating a balanced perception among respondents. Standard deviations range from 4.147 to 20.818, suggesting a reasonable spread in responses. Skewness values are

mostly low, ranging from -0.074 to 0.401, implying relatively symmetric distributions, while kurtosis values, ranging from -1.311 to 0.277, are slightly negative, indicating flatter than normal distributions. This implies that continuous assessment and targeted improvements in CSR activities are essential for aligning with stakeholder expectations and maximizing the impact of these initiatives. Overall, these statistics provide a solid foundation for further analysis.

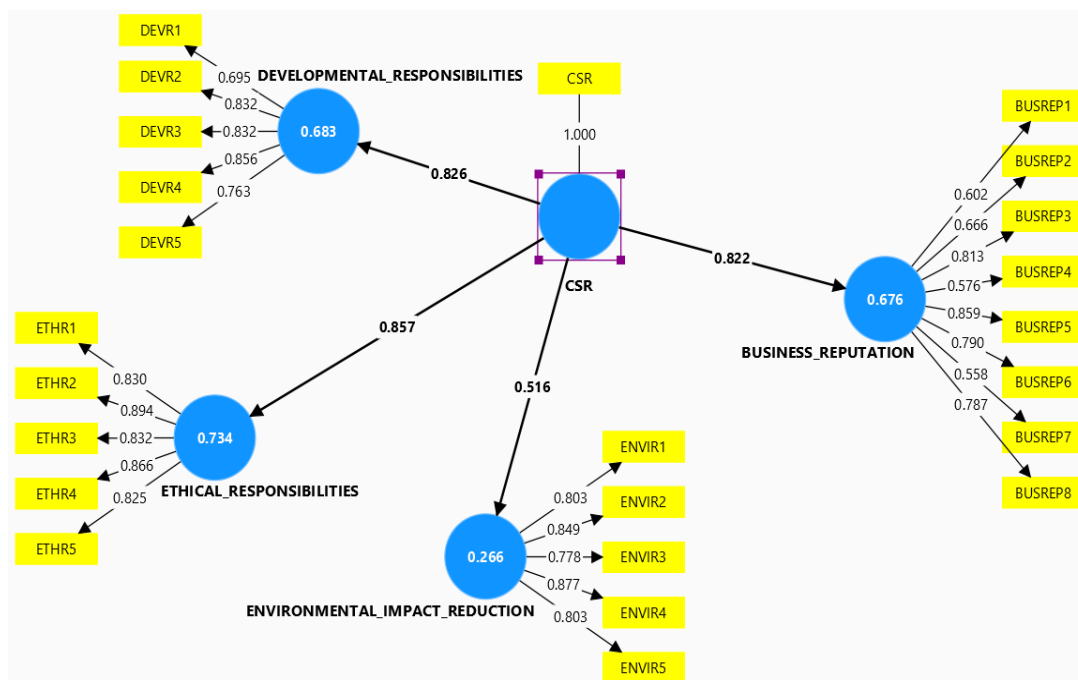


Figure 4. 1: Measurement (Outer) Models

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.0.5 output of Research Data, 2024

Table 4.1: Result for Reflective Measurement Models

Constructs	Items	Convergent Validity			Internal Consistency Reliability			
		Path coefficient (β)	Indicator Reliability (I_k^2)	AVE	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	Effect sizes (f^2)	Predictive Accuracy (R^2)	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Developmental Responsibilities	1. We invest in innovations which provide advantage to our customers.	0.695	0.483	0.636	0.897	2.154	0.683	0.856
	2. We use customers' satisfaction as an indicator to improve our services.	0.832	0.692					
	3. We take particular concern to offer high quality services to our customers.	0.832	0.692					
	4. We use our resources and talent for our own growth to ensure better service.	0.856	0.733					
	5. Our services satisfy national and international quality standards (i.e., ISO standards).	0.763	0.582					
Ethical Responsibilities	1. We believe that fairness toward customers is an integral part of our business.	0.83	0.689	0.7	0.928	2.76	0.734	0.904
	2. We are committed to well-established ethical	0.894	0.799					

	principles.			22		0		
	3. We are concerned with fulfilling our obligations towards our customers.	0.832	0.692					
	4. We do not discriminate on any basis and we offer equal quality of service to all customers.	0.866	0.750					
	5. We believe that fairness toward customers is an integral part of our business.	0.825	0.681					
Environment al Impact Reduction	1. We use expendables and processes and/or transformation with low environmental impacts.	0.803	0.645	0.6 77	0.913	0.36 3	0.266	0.881
	2. We participate in activities linked to protecting and improving our natural environment.	0.849	0.721					
	3. We know that companies must plan investments to reduce their environmental impact.	0.778	0.605					
	4. We agree with reducing greenhouse gas emissions and waste by recycling materials.	0.877	0.769					
	5. We are predisposed to using, buying, and/or manufacturing eco-friendly products.	0.803	0.645					
Business Reputation	1. Our company contributes actively and voluntarily to the social improvement, economic and the environmental of society.	0.602	0.362	0.5 11	0.891	2.08 5	0.676	0.875
	2. Our company stands behind its products and services with good price and good quality that meet consumer.	0.666	0.444					
	3. Our company treats customers courteously, communicates with them and takes care of their safety and health.	0.813	0.661					
	4. Our company generates respect, admiration esteem and confidence.	0.576	0.332					
	5. Our company is recognized, has excellent leadership, is innovative, and seeks constant overcoming.	0.859	0.738					
	6. Our company is a good company to work, by its infrastructure such as its working environment, benefits and good treats with its employees.	0.79	0.624					
	7. Our company is a company with values that obeys the laws, transparent and respects people and the environment.	0.558	0.311					
	8. Our company supports good causes that benefits society and environment.	0.787	0.619					

Source: SmartPLS4.1.0.5 Output of Research Data, 2024

Figure 4.1, and table 4.1 reveals the reflective measurement model of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Business Reputation in Nigerian banks. The analysis suggests most measures adequately capture their intended constructs (high indicator reliability). All the constructs show good internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability above 0.7). Moreso, all constructs demonstrate good convergent validity ($AVE > 0.5$), meaning they explain most of the variance in their indicators. The influence of CSR on Business Reputation is moderate (f^2), and the models explain a moderate portion of the variance in Business Reputation (R^2).

	Developmental Responsibilities	Ethical Responsibilities	Environmental Impact Reduction	Business Reputation
Developmental Responsibilities	0.813			
Ethical Responsibilities	0.429	0.719		
Environmental Impact Reduction	0.422	0.515	0.819	
Business Reputation	0.569	0.419	0.527	0.708

Notably, Table 4.2 shows that all constructs in the table exhibit good discriminant validity according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, as the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with any other construct. This indicates that each construct is distinct and measures different aspects of the overall concept being studied. The shaded diagonal values are the square roots of the AVEs. This implies that the model has evidence of discriminant validity.

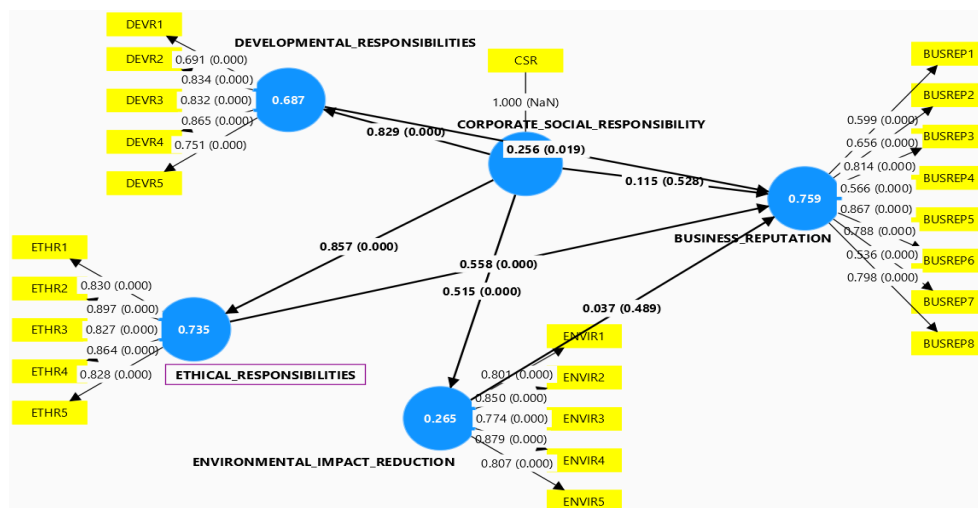


Figure 4. 2: Structural Model showing the beta values and p-values

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.0.5 Research Data, 2024

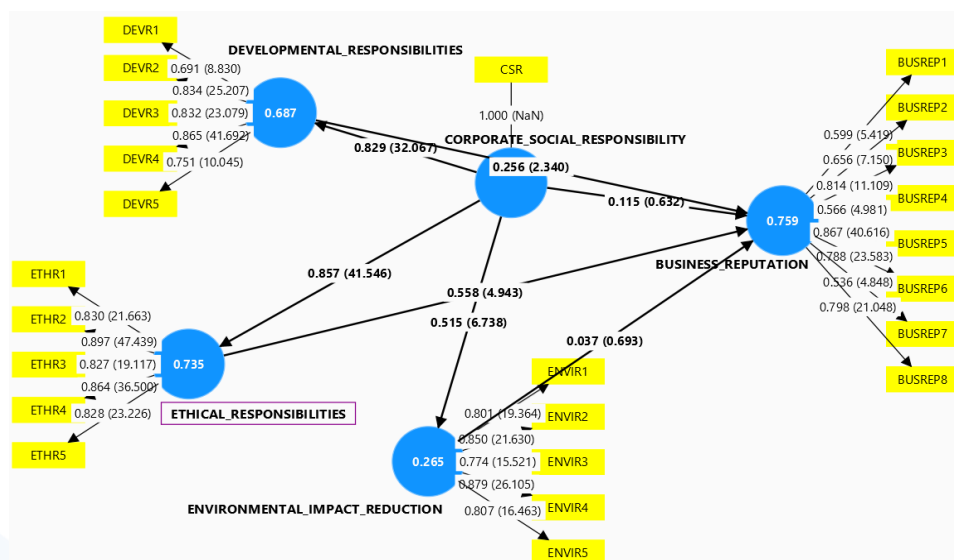


Figure 4. 3: Structural Model showing the beta values and t-values.

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.0.5 Research Data, 2024

Table 4. 2: Results of Hypotheses Testing

Null Hypo.	Stages	Path Coefficients (β)	R^2	T Statistics ($t \geq 1.96$)	P Values ($p < 0.05$)	Decision on Null Hypotheses
H ₀₁	DEV _R →BUS _{REP}	0.256	0.683	2.340	0.019	Not Supported
H ₀₂	ETH _R →BUS _{REP}	(Weak) 0.558	Moderate 0.734	(Significant) 4.943	(Significant) 0.000	Not Supported
		(Moderate)	Strong	(Significant)	(Significant)	
H ₀₃	ENV _R →BUS _{REP}	0.037	0.266	0.693	0.489	Supported
		(Weak)	Weak	(Not Significant)	(Not Significant)	

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.0.5 Output of Research Data, 2024

4.1 DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

1) 1. Relationship between Development Responsibilities and Business Reputation

The relationship between developmental responsibilities and business reputation in the context of commercial banks in Nigeria was significant, though the strength of this relationship was weak. According to the findings, a β value of 0.256 and a t -value of 2.340 indicate a positive but moderate impact, with an R^2 value of 0.683 suggesting that developmental responsibilities explain 68.3% of the variance in business reputation. This underscored the importance of banks engaging in activities that contribute to societal development as a means to enhance their reputation.

Comparing these findings to those of Hadi and Indradewa (2019), who explored the impact of service quality on corporate reputation, there are similarities in the positive relationship between a firm's actions and its reputation. In both cases, activities that are beneficial to the customer or society—whether in the form of service quality or developmental responsibilities—positively influence corporate reputation. However, while Hadi and Indradewa found a direct and strong link between service quality and reputation, the link between developmental responsibilities and reputation in the Nigerian banking sector is weaker, indicating that other factors might also play significant roles. Similarly, Kaur and Singh's (2019) study on R&D expenditure and reputation supports the idea that investment in developmental activities can be seen as a strategic move that enhances a firm's reputation. In the context of the Nigerian banks, developmental responsibilities may include financial inclusion programs, community development projects, or contributions to infrastructure development, which collectively contribute to the banks' reputation. Pacana and Siwec (2023) also emphasize the importance of balancing business activities with customer satisfaction and environmental concerns, which aligns with the broader scope of developmental responsibilities.

2) 2. *Relationship between Ethical Responsibilities and Business Reputation*

Ethical responsibilities had a strong positive relationship with the business reputation of commercial banks in Nigeria, as indicated by the study's findings. With a β value of 0.558, a t -value of 4.943, and an R^2 value of 0.734, ethical practices appeared to be a key determinant of reputation in this context. This implies that adherence to ethical standards, transparency, and fairness significantly enhance the reputation of banks, fostering trust among stakeholders.

This finding aligns with the study by Nwaonu and Ahametula (2017), which examined the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on corporate reputation in the context of Dufil Prima Foods Ltd in Nigeria. Their study found a strong positive relationship between CSR and corporate reputation, highlighting the importance of ethical behavior in shaping how a company is perceived. Both studies suggest that ethical responsibilities are not just peripheral activities but central to a company's reputation management strategy. Similarly, Ukeme et al. (2018) found a significant relationship between ethical practices and organizational sustainability in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria. Although their study focused on educational institutions, the findings underscore the broader relevance of ethical practices across different sectors. Ethical practices are foundational to building a sustainable and reputable organization, as they engender trust, reduce the risk of scandals, and ensure long-term success. Likewise, Sharma's (2023) study on the impact of CSR on brand reputation further supports this by showing that ethical responsibility is the most impactful dimension of CSR on brand reputation, followed by legal, philanthropic, and economic responsibilities.

3) 3. *Relationship between Environmental Impact Reduction and Business Reputation*

The relationship between environmental impact reduction and business reputation in Nigerian commercial banks appeared to be weak and statistically insignificant, as indicated by a β value of 0.037, a t -value of 0.693, and an R^2 value of 0.266. This suggests that environmental initiatives are currently not a major driver of reputation for these banks, with only 26.6% of the variance in reputation being explained by environmental practices.

This finding contrasts with studies like those of Gangi et al. (2020) and Vuong and Bui (2023), which highlight the importance of environmental responsibility in enhancing corporate reputation. Gangi et al. found that corporate environmental responsibility and green practices significantly enhance corporate reputation, which in turn positively influences financial performance. The weak relationship observed in the Nigerian banking sector could be due to lower awareness or emphasis on environmental issues among customers or a perception that environmental impact is less critical in the financial services sector compared to manufacturing or production industries. Vuong and Bui (2023) also found that CSR activities, including environmental initiatives, positively influence brand reputation and equity. Their study, conducted in Vietnam, suggests that stakeholders increasingly value environmental responsibility as part of a company's overall reputation. However, the weak impact found in the present study suggests that environmental concerns may not yet be as prominent in the minds of Nigerian banking customers, or that these initiatives are not effectively communicated. Notwithstanding, Lin et al. (2016) found that environmental

irresponsibility negatively affects corporate reputation, but CSR activities can moderate this effect. This indicates that while environmental initiatives might not strongly enhance reputation, failing to address environmental issues could harm a bank's reputation. The lack of a strong positive relationship in the Nigerian context might therefore reflect a situation where environmental impact reduction is not yet a differentiator in the market, but neglecting it could still have negative consequences.

5.0 Conclusion: In conclusion, the study on link between corporate social responsibility and business reputation of Commercial Banks in Nigeria revealed that developmental responsibilities demonstrate a weak but statistically significant positive relationship with business reputation, suggesting that while these activities contribute to reputation, their impact is relatively modest. Ethical responsibilities, on the other hand, show a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with business reputation, indicating that adherence to ethical practices is crucial for enhancing the reputation of Commercial Banks. In contrast, environmental impact reduction is found to have a very weak and statistically insignificant relationship with business reputation, implying that, in the current context, environmental practices are less influential in shaping reputation compared to other CSR activities.

5.1 Recommendations:

Prioritize Ethical Responsibilities: Managers of Commercial Banks in Nigeria should focus on enhancing their ethical practices in order to improve their reputation and foster greater customer trust and loyalty. This can be achieved by ensuring transparency, fairness in customer interactions, and adherence to ethical standards.

Enhance Developmental Responsibilities: Management of Commercial Banks in Nigeria should continue to invest in developmental initiatives such as community development projects and employee training programs. Improving these areas can complement their ethical efforts and further enhance their reputation.

Reevaluate and Strengthen Environmental Initiatives: The minimal impact of environmental impact reduction on business reputation suggests a need for banks to reassess their environmental strategies. Thus, Management of Commercial Banks in Nigeria should develop more impactful and visible environmental initiatives, such as innovative sustainability projects and effective communication of environmental efforts. By integrating environmental practices more effectively into their CSR strategies, Banks can improve their overall CSR profile and potentially increase their influence on business reputation.

5.2 Suggestions for Further Research: Further research could conduct longitudinal studies to examine the dynamic interplay between corporate social responsibility and business reputation of Commercial Banks in Nigeria. More so, investigating stakeholder perceptions through qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, would provide more valuable insights on how these perceptions affect their views on a Bank's reputation.

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