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Igwe, PA, Icha-Ituma, A and Madichie, NO

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The Evaluation of CSR and Social Value Practices Among UK Commercial and Social Enterprises

Paul Agu Igwe, Afam Icha-Ituma, Nnamdi O. Madichie

ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this article is to evaluate the scope of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and 'Social Value Initiatives' (SVIs) among corporations. Nowadays, CSR provides firms with an opportunity to provide community social need through discretionary corporate practices. This article contributes to knowledge on how firms approach social and environmental sustainability while maintaining economic responsibility.

Research Design & Methods: This article adopts analysis based on secondary data from UK based companies. Fifty companies' websites and policy documents (30 commercial enterprises and 20 social enterprises) were researched to identify the patterns of practices of SVIs and factors that influence the practices among companies.

Findings: The findings suggest that both social and commercial enterprises focus on the adoption of the 'CSR' practices based on the 'Triple Bottom Line' (TBL) as defined in the 'Elkington, 1997 framework' of economic, environmental and social sustainability. The difference is that while the 'SVIs' of commercial enterprises develop as an operational strategy at the later stages of the business, the 'SVIs' of social enterprises are embedded during the enterprise creation stage.

Implications & Recommendations: Based on the findings, this article develops a conceptual 'Social Value Initiatives' framework which forms the domain of social value practices. We suggest that future studies should focus on adopting qualitative-oriented primary research to explore CSR approaches, which will capture the views of management, customers, employees and shareholders.

Contribution & Value Added: Despite its limitations, this article contributes to the knowledge on CSR and social value practices among social and commercial enterprises.

Article type: research paper

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JEL codes: C33, F21

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INTRODUCTION

This article explores the scope of social value practices among commercial and social enterprises. To be profitable, businesses create many positive externalities, such as providing goods and services, which people want, providing employment, paying taxes and contributing to economic growth. Some scholars (e.g., Friedman, 1970) have argued that pursuing economic value is the sole aim of most firms given that commitment to solving social problems at the expense of profitability could undermine an organisation's own ability to create positive externalities. On the other hand, some scholars view corporations as 'externalising machines' and the cause of social and environmental problems. In this view, corporations are institutions which can only make profit because they create negative externalities (Porter & Van der Linde, 1995; Speth, 2008) for which they do not have to pay, such as air and sea pollution. Puma – the sportswear giant – produced an environmental profit and loss account in 2010, which showed the extent of their negative environmental externalities. Puma's independently valued financial account shows that while the direct ecological impact of its operations equates to 6.2m GBP and an additional 74.7m GBP falls upon its entire supply chain (The Guardian, 2011).

An emerging views in the business strategy literature focuses on exploring social entrepreneurship (Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009; Chell, 2007) and how firms approach the creation of economic, environmental and social values (Dembek, Singh, & Bhakoo, 2016; Porter & Kramer, 2011; van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016). Arguably, the overall aim of most businesses is to maximise profit and shareholder value. The Academy of Management (2014) holds that, although adding shareholder value might be seen as part of the purpose of most businesses, shareholder value might be better positioned as a legitimate expectation of one segment of society; the purpose from a broader social perspective would also include broader goals, such as 'making a difference,' or 'improving lives,' or 'reducing harm.' An example of a company already adopting this strategy as its plan is Unilever. Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (SLP), strategic goal is to double the volume of its businesses but at the same time reduce its environmental footprint. Unilever SLP launched in 2010 have three big goals, which are: improving health and wellbeing, reducing environmental impact and enhancing livelihoods (Finch, 2010).

There are many benefits associated with companies creating shared value, which focuses on solving social problems and is not necessary at odds with profit maximisation. First, the possibility of creating shared value represents significant business opportunities for many corporations. Many multinationals have restricted strategies of economic value, which blinds them to the opportunities to create economic value through solving social problems (Porter & Kramer, 2011). This is what corporations such as Tesla are doing – having driven radical improvements in electric vehicles and revolutionised the automotive industry. The second opportunity is for corporations to reconfigure their value chain system (such as production, operations and supply chain). The third opportunity leads to creation of local clusters which support the local communities in which the corporation operates. The creation of such clusters could open-up opportunities for firms to create economic value for themselves and others.

In the last two decades, the mind-set of business owners and managers has changed, and many corporations now view social and environmental purposes as more important

than previous generations did. Nowadays, managers adopt CSR to create economic value through solving social and environmental problems (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Therefore, for organisations to be truly sustainable they must consider three elements of sustainability (economic, social and environmental responsibilities). Nowadays, businesses seem to pursue these goals, although at different levels. The objectives of commercial and social enterprises tend to converge. The difference is that just like commercial enterprises, social enterprises earn their money through trade in the marketplace, while pursuing social and environmental goals as the major aims of business.

SVIs is the process of disseminating social innovation practices to promote change in organisations. These changes in organisations could be in response to legal regulations or voluntary obligations. The reasons companies engage in environmental initiatives can be due to legal regulations, economic incentives or voluntary (Huang & Chen, 2015). In business operations, it appears that social sustainability is always a voluntary action, which is not dictated by legislation. Specifically, the philanthropic obligation mainly entails organisational engagement in business and non-business-related 'CSR' activities as long as the quality of life is improved (Ehie, 2016). Henriques and Richardson (2013) posit that social sustainability is achieved when the employees' motivation, morale and commitment levels increase. This is in addition to the attraction and retention of customers and employees.

The adoption of social value in policy domain has fuelled a rapidly expanding scholarly literature (van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016). Interest in social enterprise by practitioners, policymakers and academics has grown exponentially over the last decade (GEM, 2015). However, academic literature in the social enterprise and social entrepreneurship domain has become characterised by conceptual ambiguity and a diversity of definitions and research settings (van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016; Cukier, Trenholm, Carl, & Gekas, 2011; Hoogendoon & Hartog, 2011; Mair & Marti, 2006). Furthermore, the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework has its complications related primarily to its measurement, as there is no common unit of measurement. In other words, environmental and social success or failure cannot be measured by monetary terms as the economic success. Measuring social sustainability performance against the TBL is therefore subjective. Nonetheless, TBL still provides a useful method of evaluating performance, and many companies have chosen to adopt it as a business strategy.

This article contributes to knowledge on some substantive questions of relevance to our understanding of social values, such as, how do commercial and social enterprises view social sustainability. What processes contribute to SVIs? What types of SVIs take place in social and commercial enterprises? By exploring these questions and more, this article contributes to filling the gap in theoretical literature on social value practices and processes. Scholarly articles and academic papers were used to grasp a conceptual and contextual exploration of the contemporary issue within business sustainability framework.

This article uses secondary information from desk research to undertake a qualitative analysis. The secondary data present a unique opportunity to compare many companies, which undertake SVI and the processes for pursuing social sustainability. This article is structured as follows: First a review of literature is undertaken to explore conceptual frameworks related to CSR, Sustainability and Stakeholder theory. This is followed by the description of the research methods. Finally, the last two sections present the analysis and discussion, followed by conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Arguably, the two main CSR dimensions are 'Profit Maximisation' and 'Stakeholder Theory' coined by Friedman (1970), and expanded upon by Edward R. Freeman (1984, 1999). In this regard, CSR requires a business serving the needs of its customers and other stakeholders in a way that is environmentally and socially responsible and at the same time economically responsible (Herrera, 2011; Mujtaba & Cavico, 2013). For example, in the airline industry, the 'green' image of airlines could influence customers' perceptions and therefore affect airline choice (Hagmann *et al.*, 2015). Hence, from a corporate perspective, businesses are increasingly adopting CSR as one of their strategies and this takes many different forms (e.g., Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006).

CSR provides firms with an opportunity to maintain competitive advantage (Herrera, 2011, 2015; Hinson *et al.*, 2010). In addition, CSR provides the commitment towards improving community social need through discretionary corporate practices and deployment of business resources. This is how SVIs and social responsibilities develop among businesses (Hansmann, Mieg, & Frischknecht, 2012; Abdel-Raheem & Ramsbottom, 2016). Nonetheless, CSR is a corporate commitment to ensure that businesses meet the economic, environmental and social expectations of their stakeholders (Kim, 2017).

In a study commissioned by the United Nations, the Brundtland Commission (1987) identified sustainable development as meeting the needs of today without compromising the abilities of future generations to also meet their needs (Greblikaite, Sroka, & Gerulaitiene, 2016). From this definition, three main dimensions of sustainability may be derived – the economic, social and environmental (Baumgartner, 2014). These key dimensions are generally referred to as CSR or TBL (Frynas, 2015; Gimenez, Sierra, & Rodon, 2012; Harjoto, Laksmana, & Lee, 2015). Nowadays, both commercial and social enterprises focus on accomplishing and fulfilling these three dimensions of CSR as part of business strategy.

The Whistler 2020 (Canada) sustainable community movement described sustainability as a minimum condition for a flourishing planet in the long term. Sustainability is a segment of CSR, which has become significant in recent years (Chang, Zuo, Zhao, Zillante, Gan, & Soebarto, 2017). The theory of sustainable development (SD) requires organisations to be economically successful, environmental, moral, and retain social values (Elkington, 1997). Elkington's (1998) TBL framework comprises social, environmental and economic principles that businesses could follow. TBL framework has been transformed into several models. One such a model is the '3-Legged Stool Model,' which explains the three elements, which are important for a company to operate sustainably. This model has been employed by several authors to describe the three main elements of business sustainability as environmental (e.g., Keitumetse, 2013), economic (e.g., Jacques & Kepos, 2010) and social (e.g., Klein, 2010).

Another such a model is 'Carroll's four-part model', which encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary/philanthropic expectations that society has of organisations at a given point in time (Carroll, 1979). Carroll's model was originally created to clarify many definitional strands, which appear within CSR literature. Another is the 'Nested Dependencies Model'. This model is used to show the dependency of economy, society and environment on each other and on companies (Sarcina, Consoli, Tomassini, & Cavicchiolo, 2011). A further type of model is the '3 Overlapping Circles Model' used to explain the sustainability of companies in the intersection of economy, society and environment (Yigitcanlar & Dur,

2010). These frameworks involve balancing and integrating the three elements of sustainability (Lozano, 2008, 2012; Sakalauskas, 2010). All these models point to the environmental, social and economic obligations, which all corporations should provide.

Why has the sustainability concept moved to the centre stage over the last two decades? The main reason is that in the past, structures and policies of organisations were founded on the profit-making motive being above all other considerations. The campaign to tackle some of the most pressing problems of our times (such as environmental pollution, climate change, chronic poverty and widening inequality) led to the concept of CSR framework. Nowadays, businesses can analyse their sustainability levels and consider ways of improving their operations. Shaukat, Qiu, and Trojanowski, (2016) believe that CSR should be adopted as a comprehensive strategy. It is widely believed that companies that use the concept of sustainability will gain long-term financial benefits, exploit environmental efficiencies and meet stakeholder requirements. Consequently, a significant number of Fortune 500 corporations, including Nike, Coca Cola, Dell Computer and Starbucks Coffee are embracing sustainability as a strategy in the form of CSR (Kibert, Thiele, Peterson, & Monroe, 2012).

As a strategy, many businesses develop their environmental, social and economic sustainability to attract new customers, retain their customer base and obey the law. For example, a study by Allen and Root (2004) found at least two-thirds of 25,000 consumers in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe form impressions based partly on a company's ethics, environmental impact and social responsibility. Therefore, companies are adapting the concept of sustainability to expand the measure of success for their operations from the 'financial bottom-line' to a 'triple bottom line' that adds social and environmental performance to economic performance (Kibert *et al.*, 2012).

Contrary to Friedman's 'Profit Maximisation theory' (1970), Freeman (1994) argues that social performance is required to merit business legitimacy. Freeman argues that managers have a responsibility to all stakeholders in the organisation and not just shareholders. The arguments put forward by the stakeholder theory is that an organisation's success depends on the extent to which it manages relations not only between groups such as financiers and shareholders but also between customers, employees and the wider public interest. The main essence of the theory is that profitability is not the fundamental driver of what organisations do (Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004). However, the theory has encountered scepticism (Morsing, 2003).

The definition of stakeholder by Freeman and Reed (1984, p. 91) as 'any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives' has been agreed upon by several scholars (e.g., Clement, 2005; Boonstra, 2006; Rasche & Esser, 2006; Kolk & Pinkse, 2006; Abd Karim, Rahman, Berawi, & Jaapar, 2007; Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). Herrera (2016) argues that SVIs develop through stakeholder engagement that reflects the extent of relationships and collaboration, which addresses the systemic challenges that face businesses and the society. Furthermore, Howaldt and Schwarz's (2010) theorize that social changes develop as outcomes of societal processes and changing structures. The process of social value creation is believed to be dependent on transformative leaders (Felício, Gonçalves, & da Conceição Gonçalves, 2013; García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, & Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez 2012; Herrera, 2016). Therefore, if society is to achieve inclusive growth, it will require collaborative action and transformative leadership from multiple stakeholders (Herrera, 2015; UNDP, 2013; Clement, 2005). Herrera (2016, p. 5243) referred to the catalytic, collaborative leadership in

bridging societal divides as a process that fosters space for inclusive partnership to facilitate conflict resolution and co-create solutions to challenges. Co-creative emphasises the importance of working together to diagnose, design solution, and implement solutions.

Many organisations go beyond what is expected of them to ensure they exceed stakeholders' needs in order to improve their brand and to maintain competitive advantage. CSR demands that businesses act responsibly and ethically (Lawrence & Weber 2017). The importance of businesses behaving ethically in the forms of economic, social and environmental initiatives is that it does potentially result in higher customer satisfaction and better representation for the business. Social values creation has become an important element of CSR framework in modern organisations. Social value ideas come from many sources, e.g. business owners, business executives, employees, citizens, service users, communities, social activists, etc.

While it is evident that CSR is now an instrumental component when evaluating an organisation, stakeholders adopt this analysis as well. If the stakeholders do not believe the practices within an organisation to be legitimate, it can have an adverse effect on the organisation. It has been stated that if implemented properly, CSR can enhance a consumer's motivation to purchase (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006), as it acts as a powerful marketing tool (Brønn & Vroni, 2001) which in turn can affect employee morale. Therefore, CSR promotes long-term profits, stakeholder relationships and business reputations (Lawrence & Weber, 2017; Li, Chen, & Ma, 2016), as well as protecting corporations from causing negative impacts to stakeholders. For example, in 2016, Volkswagen settled in federal court in San Francisco to fix or buy back nearly 500,000 diesel cars in the United States which are equipped with illegal emissions software (over emission scandal). The cost of buying back all the cars in the United States was estimated at 7 billion USD and there are many more faulty cars in Europe and elsewhere in the world still to be recalled (The New York Times, 2016).

Scholarly interest in social enterprise in the last decade has primarily included practical issues from descriptive case studies together with the adaptation of concepts, definitions, research settings and theoretical boundaries. As a result, the purpose, structure and types of organisations that exist within the social enterprise and social entrepreneurship has been well researched (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014). However, a universal typology and definition remains frustratingly elusive (Jackson & Jackson, 2014). Despite scholarly efforts to define and clarify its meaning, the concept of social enterprise is still considered ambiguous, and the state of knowledge continues to be fragmented (van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016). This has led to a present lack of clarity or overview of what constitutes a social enterprise or a non-social enterprise.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a pragmatic philosophical view as described by Bryman (2008). Given that the aim of the study is to examine the social value practices of companies, the study focused on obtaining specific and in-depth understanding of the concept of CSR frameworks and their practices. This led us to adopt the inductive approach as described by many authors (e.g., Berg, 2009; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The inductive process began with an extensive review of the literature to understand the concept of CSR and to identify the patterns of practices of SVIs and factors that influence the practices among companies.

This article employed secondary data sourced from official organisation websites and information from unrelated authors. It could be argued that relying solely on company's websites could potentially bring bias to the analysis. Despite its limitations, this method presents an opportunity to undertake an analysis of a large number of companies. A qualitative analysis was undertaken to compare companies that undertake SVIs and the processes for pursuing social sustainability. Fifty UK based companies' websites and policy documents (30 commercial enterprises and 20 social enterprises) were researched. The analysis focused on examining CSR and social value practices among social enterprises as compared with commercial enterprises. It theorizes and develops social values system, processes and their motivations among commercial and social corporations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Social Value Initiatives and Practices

The analysis into companies CSR initiatives and practices revealed some similarities and differences. Both social and commercial enterprises adopt the CSR concepts of economic, social and environmental sustainability as business strategy. Whereas, SVIs strategy of nearly all the social enterprises analysed (94.4%) developed at the early stage of the formation of the companies, CSR strategy of most commercial organisations (68.0%) was incorporated into the management as operational strategy at later stages of the company's operations (Table 1).

Findings suggest that the long-term goals of social enterprises aimed to make profit as an element of economic sustainability, just like the commercial enterprises. Some studies have shown that companies are adapting the sustainability strategies that adds social and environmental performance to economic performance (Kibert *et al.*, 2012). It is clear from the information gathered from social and commercial enterprises that economic sustainability in the former is driven by a desire to make profit to pursue social needs and problems (51%), while in the later, it is driven by a desire to maintain competitive advantage (56%) and maximise profit for shareholders' interest (65%), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The SVIs and practices

Social value practices	Percentage of social enterprises	Percentage of commercial enterprises
Developed at the early stage of company	94.4	8.2
Incorporated later into the management	5.6	68.0
Broadly defined short and long-term CSR	86.4	47.2
State long-term social sustainability strategy	85.0	52.0
Desire to maximize profit to meet social need	51.0	4.1
Desire to meet environmental needed	73.3	45.0
Desire to maximize profit for shareholders	18.0	65.1
Desire to strengthen the customers' awareness on social and environment issues	89.2	42.0
Targeted at community needs	78.0	15.2
As competitive advantage strategy	38.0	56.0
CSR activities in annual reports	65.4	30.1

Source: authors' calculations based on secondary data.

A high proportion of social and commercial enterprises adopt SVIs as a strategy aimed at meeting environmental needs (73.3% and 45% respectively). Therefore, CSR strategies of both social and commercial enterprises focus on the adoption of the CSR based on the TBL (as defined in the 'Elkington, 1997 framework' of economic, environmental and social values). In a similar trend, about 89.2% of social enterprises and 42% of commercial enterprises have CSR as an integrated element to strengthen customers' awareness of social and environment issues. In this regard, there are more social enterprises that engage in creating awareness on societal social and environmental problems than commercial enterprises.

As shown in Table 1, about 30.1% of the commercial organisations communicate their CSR/Sustainability-related activities in their annual reports as against 65.4% of social enterprises. Within the social enterprises, more than 50% communicate their CSR practices through four modes of communication – webpages, press releases, annual reports, and policy statements. Several authors suggest that businesses aim to promote environmental awareness among customers based on public pressure regarding environmental problems (Bratt, Hallstedt, Robèrt, Broman, & Oldmark, 2011; Buckley, 2002). Therefore, environmentally sustainable practices could become very important to companies given that it can potentially improve company's brand and social recognition. For example, Flybe airline has integrated Eco-labels into its online booking process and has displayed them on their aircrafts since 2007 (Flybe, 2015). Such a scheme develops environmental awareness among customers when making choices. Furthermore, it encourages airlines to improve their environmental performance, which may lead to more environmental competition within the industry (Baumeister & Onkila, 2016). Some of the social value activities engaged by commercial organisations analysed were fair trade, paying premium price to suppliers or producers, donations to charity, social events sponsorship, scholarships, building health clinics or schools, fight against child labour, labour exploitation, etc.

Social enterprises promote social and environmental initiatives as both short-term and long-term goals aimed at addressing social and environmental issues within their communities. About 86.4% of social enterprises have well defined short and long-term goals relating to social and environmental sustainability with the aim of operating ethically as sustainable strategies (as shown in Table 1). On the contrary, only about 47.2% of commercial organisations published their short and long-term sustainability strategic goals. Some of the short and long-term goals of social enterprises were employment generation, housing needs, adult and social care, education, animal welfare, water conservation, natural conservation, etc. A third of the social enterprises focus on providing their customers with assurances in terms of the quality, diversity and eco-friendliness of their product range. More than half of the social organisations embarked on initiatives such as donations and sponsorships to pursue environmentally and socially related needs, hosting school trips to educate future generations, embarking on sustainability promotion and visitor awareness through displays, activities and experiences.

Identifying Social Value Initiatives and Processes

This article focuses on contextualising the motives and processes of SVIs among organisations. The findings show that the process of SVI in social enterprises are slightly different from those of commercial enterprises as shown in Figures 1 and 2. From the analysis, many SVIs from social enterprises point towards a new kind of economy that focuses on maximising community benefits and eco-friendly products and services. About two-third of the social enterprises

describe their mission as promoting a 'social economy' policy which aims to maximise community benefits and minimise natural resource exploitation to meet stakeholders' expectations. Therefore, SVIs by social enterprises represent strategic approach where community social and environmental issues are considered highest among other business interests. The process whereby SVIs of social enterprises develop is represented in Figure 1. It reveals that SVIs among were aimed at maximising community benefits and eco-friendly products and services and minimising exploitation of natural resources and supernormal profits.

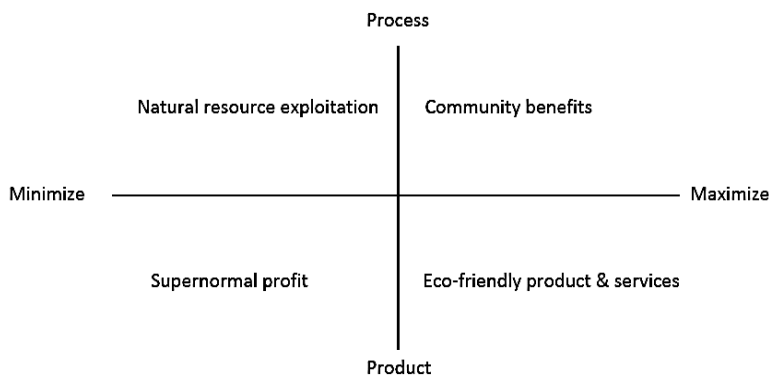


Figure 1. The Social Value Initiatives and Processes among social enterprises

Source: author's framework based on findings.

On the contrary, the evaluation of commercial organisations shows that many SVIs develop a strategic goal aimed at maximising natural resources and supernormal profit to increase shareholders value. Unlike social enterprises, nearly two-thirds of the commercial organisations focus their strategy on maximising natural resources, wealth and human resources for their shareholders' interest (Figure 2). About two-thirds of the firms stated in their policy documents that they recognise the need to incorporate environmental and social initiatives to achieve the goal of maximising natural resource and wealth generation. More than half of the organisations specifically want to achieve this target through voluntary initiatives, avoiding negative publicity, reducing pollution and waste in the production, marketing and supply chain.

Overall, the analysis showed that in both social and commercial organisations, the rise in public and stakeholders' interest in environmental and social issues has coincided with a marked turn towards the adaptation of CSR as a strategic tool. Evidently, sustainability approaches develop as operational strategy in the later stages in most of the commercial firms (68%) as identified in Table 1. Therefore, SVIs of commercial enterprises develop as an innovative strategy aimed at developing social and environmental awareness among customers, maintaining growth, competitive advantage and shareholders' value as shown in Figure 2.

Our analysis aligns with the literature on 'Profit Maximization' and 'Stakeholder Theory' as explored by several authors (e.g., Friedman, 1970; Freeman 1994; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Freeman *et al.*, 2004; Smudde & Courtright, 2011; Frederick, 2016). It is obvious that CSR starts with a central idea about an environmental or social issue. However, the idea itself is often prompted by public and stakeholder's interest or new evidence which brings to light an environmental or social need or injustice. Organisations develop their CSR using

feedback systems to identify possible problems. In many cases, research, mapping and data collection are used to uncover problems, as a first step to identify the sustainability approaches to follow or initiate as a strategy.

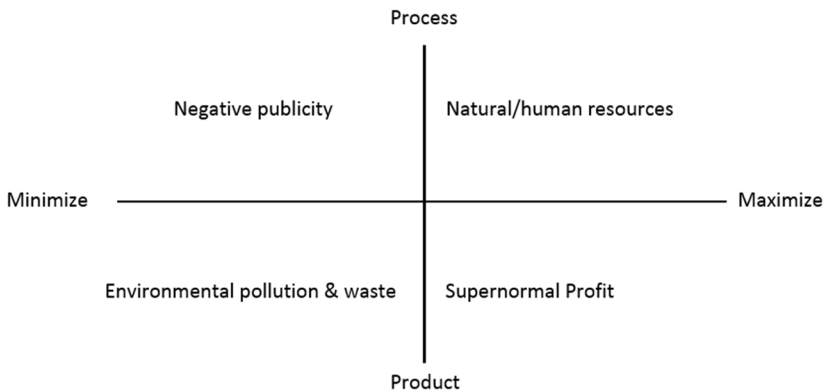


Figure 2. The Social Value Initiatives and Processes among commercial enterprises

Source: author's framework based on findings.

From the analysis, it is obvious that SVIs develop from both social and commercial enterprises as a business strategy. However, there are differences in the stages of its introduction, implementation and the strategic objectives. Whereas 'SVIs' develop during the later stages in as many as 68% of commercial enterprises as part of management operational strategy, it assumes a foundation strategy in about 94.4% of social enterprises at the conceptualisation of business operations.

CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis revealed some similarities and differences in the CSR initiatives and practices of social and commercial enterprises. Whereas SVIs strategy of social enterprises develop at the early stage of formation of the companies, CSR strategy of most commercial organisations have been incorporated into the management as an operational strategy at the later stages of the company's operations. SVIs among social enterprises were aimed at maximising community benefits and eco-friendly products and minimising exploitation of natural resources. On the contrary, many SVIs of commercial companies develop as business strategic tool aimed at maximising resources and profit to increase shareholders value. Therefore, CSR is now an instrumental component when evaluating an organisation and can be an important tool for maintaining profitability, stakeholder relationships and business reputations.

Many companies go beyond pursuing economic value as the sole aim of their business. Arguably, for firms to be truly sustainable they must incorporate the three pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental responsibilities). CSR demands that businesses act responsibly, ethically and socially. Nowadays, most businesses seem to pursue these goals, although at different levels. The purpose from a broader social perspective is targeted at making a difference or reducing harm through innovative environmental and social practices. The aims and objectives of commercial and social enterprises tend to con-

verge. Our findings and other studies show that SVIs provide a more strategic and pragmatic approach to sustainability approaches. Nowadays, many businesses recognise the opportunity that sustainability policy brings for improving business value and brand reputation, key drivers for profit maximisation and operational cost reduction.

This article focused on evaluating the scope of sustainability policies in multinational corporations by exploring CSR and SVIs practices. One of the limitations of this study was overreliance on secondary data. Therefore, we recommend that future studies should adopt qualitative-oriented primary research. Such studies should focus on conducting an audit of commercial and social enterprises to assess organisations' CSR and sustainability initiatives. This will measure the overall performance of initiatives by considering the views of management, customers, employees and shareholders.

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Authors

The contribution share of authors is equal and amounted to 33% each of them.

Paul Agu Igwe

Senior Lecturer in Enterprise and Strategy at the University of Brayford. He received his PhD from University of Plymouth (UK). His research interests include SMEs in Africa, Entrepreneurship in developing countries, Transformational Entrepreneurship, CSR, Business Strategy and practices. **Correspondence to:** Dr Paul Agu Igwe, Lincoln International Business School, University of Brayford Wharf East, Lincoln, LN5 7AT, United Kingdom, e-mail: paul.igwe2016@gmail.com

Afam Icha-Ituma

Director for Internationalization, Linkages, Advancement and Global Ranking of the Federal University Ndufu-Alike (Nigeria). He received his PhD in Brunel, and his FHEA in the UK. His research interests include Gender Issues in Management, Cultural Context in Careers, Employability and e learning, Transformation and Feminization.

Correspondence to: Dr Afam Icha-Ituma, Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo (FUNAI) PMB 1010 Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria, e-mail: afamituma@yahoo.com

Nnamdi O. Madichie

Director of the Centre for Research and Enterprise (CRE) of the London School of Business and Management. Course Leader – MBA and Senior Lecturer (Business). He received his PhD and his FHEA in the UK. His research interests include areas of marketing; gender Issues in Management, ethnic, transnational and social entrepreneurship.

Correspondence to: Dr Nnamdi O. Madichie, London School of Business and Management, 1 Malet Street, London, WC1E 7JN, e-mail: madichie@gmail.com

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