

Perception of Corporate Social Responsibility of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant in Calabar Metropolis

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Abstract

This study evaluated public perception of the corporate social responsibility of the Mfamosing Plant of Lafarge Africa PLC in Calabar metropolis. The broad objective of the study was to ascertain the extent to which the corporate social responsibility of the cement manufacturing company influenced public perception, and this led to the formulation of some research questions, among which was to identify the extent to which Lafarge was performing its corporate social responsibility to its host communities. The theoretical framework applied was the social responsibility theory while descriptive survey approach was adopted, and questionnaire used as the instrument for the gathering of data for the work. A sample size of 200 respondents was used, with the application of stratified sampling technique. Data collected were analysed using simple percentages and tables. Findings revealed that while the company's corporate social responsibility activities were applauded, its attitude towards consistency, equality, etc. with the host communities was questioned. The study recommended *inter alia* that the organisation should improve on its overall attitude to the host communities by creating a balanced industry-community relationship, which would enable the company to continue enjoying the goodwill of the people.

Keywords: Community relations, corporate citizenship, corporate social responsibility, goodwill, host communities, Lafarge, public relations.

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility, as a term, has been used in different ways. There are those who support it and those against. For the antagonists, their views are that societies should not expect too much from corporate organisations and that social responsibility is indeed very expensive as it is rarely subjected to cost-benefit analysis.

In Nigeria today, governments at all levels agitate for the participation and involvement of corporate organisations in sustainable development and growth of the society within which they operate. It is quite interesting to note that corporate bodies have been rising up to their responsibilities as corporate citizens. According to Akpala (1990, p.38), the notion of social responsibility is borne out of the call “on organisations to consider themselves as owing responsibility to the community of their business, as well as to their own interests.” This simply means that every organisation owes some obligations to its host community. Nwodu (2003, p.48), lending his voice, supports this view by asserting that “successful organisational image building and sustenance require strict commitment to ethical imperative and social responsibility.”

The term, community social responsibility, came into common use in the late 1960s and early 1970s, after many multinational corporations came up with the term, stakeholder, which means those on whom an organisation’s activities have an impact. According to McWilliams and Siegel (2001), the main principles of corporate social responsibility involve “economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary aspects.” They explain further that “a corporation needs to generate profits while operating within the laws of the state. It also needs to be ethical, as well as [have] the right to be discretionary about the decisions it makes.”

Community relations are the bedrock upon which corporate social responsibility thrives. This means that for an organisation to be socially responsible, it must have a good relationship with its host community. This relationship with the community where it does business makes an organisation to be seen as “a corporate citizen.” This is as explained by Hendrix (2001, p.157):

One of the important audiences an organisation has is its community, the home of its offices and operations. Maintaining good relations with the community usually entails management and employees becoming involved in and contributing to local organisation and activities.

Also, Center and Jackson (2003, p.69) posit that “mutual trust engendered by positive public relationships is essential in order for both the community and the organisation located there to function in a reasonable manner.” An organisation doing business in a community is bound to show concern to the community as its host. Such concern must translate to the organisation behaving and actually acting as a corporate citizen. An organisation should be ready, willing and committed to its corporate social responsibility. Lafarge Africa PLC began business in Cross River State of Nigeria as a private limited company with the name, United Cement Company Limited (Unicem) in 2002. Its current shareholders are Nigerian Cement Holding B.V. (NCH) and Flour Mills of Nigeria PLC. NCH, the majority shareholder, is controlled by the multinational groups, Holcim Ltd of Switzerland and Lafarge, S.A., the biggest manufacturer of cement in the world. The company’s head office, which used to be in Calabar, close to its 2.5 million metric tonnes (MMT) per annum Greenfield cement manufacturing plant in Mfamosing, has now been moved to Lagos after the consolidation of Lafarge operations in Nigeria. In order to meet increasing demand for the product, an additional manufacturing line with a production capacity of 2.5MMT is currently being constructed in the Mfamosing Plant, which is expected to double the company’s production capacity to 5MMT per annum (www.lafarge.com.ng).

The mission statement of Unicem, at inception, was “to strive to be one of the most socially responsible cement companies in Nigeria.” To achieve this, it set out to “operate on the basis of best practices in accordance with shareholder, lender and local Nigerian legal and regulatory requirements, as far as corporate governance, good corporate citizenship and sustainable practices are concerned.” With Unicem now serving as an associate of Lafarge Africa PLC and known as Lafarge Mfamosing Plant, this operational goal has been subsumed under the parent company’s essential values in corporate governance, which are “courage, integrity, responsibility and respect for others.”

Lafarge Mfamosing Plant has six host communities from where its raw materials are sourced and manufacturing plants located. These communities are Abiati, Ekonganaku, Mfamosing and Mbobui in Akamkpa Local Government Area as well as Akansoko and Akwa Ikot Effanga in Akpabuyo Local Government Area. Calabar municipality, which hosts the company's operational office and truck parks, was later added as the seventh host community. How has Lafarge Mfamosing Plant related with these host communities and the larger Cross River State? Is it seeing the communities as "fertile grounds" for profit-making as Udeagha (1999, p.235) argues that "business concerns in developing nations especially Nigeria pay insignificant attention to their social responsibility roles except when forced" by the people? Or has it lived up to expectations of the people as a corporate citizen within the community? And where it has provided social services/amenities to the respective communities, do they meet the needs of the beneficiaries or does the company execute "projects that are not needed by its host communities," as noted by Ukpaukure (2003, p.5)? These and many others are questions this work seeks to answer.

The objectives of this paper, therefore, are imbued in the following research questions: (1) What are the corporate social responsibility functions of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant in Calabar metropolis? (2) How does the public perceive the corporate social responsibility of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant in Calabar metropolis? (3) What are the economic and social impacts of the company in Calabar metropolis? (4) How responsive is the company to the desires/needs of the people of Calabar metropolis? (5) And how can Lafarge Mfamosing Plant live up to its social responsibility in Calabar metropolis?

Concept of corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model. Its policy functions as a built-in, self-regulating mechanism whereby a business monitors and ensures its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards and international best practices. It is titled to aid an organisation's mission as well as a guide to what the company stands for and will uphold to its consumers or host communities, the home of its business. According to Udoakah (2011, p.222), "corporate social responsibility does not have to do with only the companies' host communities, but all the publics of the companies including their staff." This means that

in demonstrating corporate social responsibility, a company must extend its tenacities beyond the host community to its staff and all who have one thing or the other to do with it.

In practical terms, it is the responsibility of a corporate organisation to actively participate in the infrastructural development of its host community as a way of compensating it for the damage caused by its operational activities. Social responsibility packages must address realistic priority needs of the target beneficiaries in order to make the people appreciate what have been given to them. Okiyi (2011) is of the opinion that “the image of a caring and loving corporate entity does a lot to achieve understanding and strengthening of a bond between such an organisation and its public.”

Olutele (2002) observes that corporate organisations are realising that a good business citizen is one which strikes the balance between what it owes society and what it expects from it. She, therefore, defines social responsibility as “the implied, enforced, or felt obligation of managers acting in their official capacity to serve interest groups other than themselves.” For Drucker (1974), “being a good corporate citizen does essentially mean putting something back to society.” He explains further that “when a firm responds to societal interests, it is said to be socially responsible.” All these go to confirm the notion that an organisation that is socially responsible has the social conscience and feels obliged to put back to society what it has gained from it without any expectation of special consideration in return.

Udoakah (2011, p.222) contends thus:

Corporate social responsibility should be seen as the avoidance by corporate bodies of all acts or actions which run contrary to the Golden Rule in their business transactions and relationships with the people upon whom they depend for their success and wellbeing.

He explains further that “companies must not shut their ears to the demands of their publics as this can help a company to avoid misunderstanding.” He adds that “corporate social responsibility demands that companies operating in communities should include them in their value added machinery.” An organisation doing business in a community must ensure that it identifies with its host community. This is what makes her a corporate citizen. That is why Nwosu (2001,

p.49) posits that as a corporate entity, an organisation must “identify with the problems and achievements of the communities in which it operates.” An organisation’s corporate social responsibility to its host community, therefore, determines the benefits, peace and mutual cooperation it will enjoy from the community.

For corporate social responsibility to be dynamic and purpose-driven, it must embrace effective communication. Both the organisation and its host communities must maintain a high level of communication, sharing meaning and understanding for mutual relationship to prevail. The views of both parties must be respected for cordiality to thrive. That is why Wilson (2005, p.4) admonishes that “communication messages should be deeply rooted in and reflect the cultural sensibilities of the generality of the people.” Both Lafarge Mfamosing Plant and the community members should closely embrace this admonition. Doing so will be beneficial to everyone – the organisation shall enjoy a hitch-free operational environment where resources are used for positive engagements rather than on dousing tensions; while the communities shall stand to gain from mutually articulated and well-implemented plans for social and human development.

Lafarge Mfamosing Plant’s social corporate responsibility strategy:

Corporate social responsibility is synonymous with community relations. An organisation that has good and cordial “community relations” with its hosts will not fail to be socially responsive to their needs. Peak (1991, p.117) sees community relations as “an institution’s planned, active and continuing participation within a community to maintain and enhance its environment to the benefit of the institution, its employees and stakeholders, and the larger community.” He goes on to explain that “community relations demands that corporate organisations should work closely with their host communities in order to sufficiently understand and contribute immensely to the concrete priority needs of such communities...” This, therefore, confirms why Hendrix (2001, p.157) sees the community as “one of the most important audiences an organisation has.”

Lafarge Mfamosing Plant is expected to be socially responsible to its host communities. It should be sensitive to the needs of these communities and regularly gauge the people’s feelings towards it. The company should do all in its power to establish mutual relationship with the host communities since this is a way of ensuring that its statement of operations is achieved. One major way of creating and

maintaining this mutual relationship is by communicating timely, meaningfully and effectively. No wonder Benson-Eluwa (2003, p.41) sees communication as “a process of transmitting meaning between individuals, through the meaning of the message, intentions, designs, feelings and knowledge as transmitted from one person to the other.”

There have been some cases of disagreement between the company and its host communities which prompted the youths, on a few occasions, to block the roads thereby disrupting the movement of trucks evacuating finished cement products from the factory. The community leaders, for instance, sent a letter in October 2016 to the country chief executive officer of Lafarge in Lagos, complaining of the following:

- Marginalisation of indigenes in the employment of staff by the company in favour of people from other parts of the country;
- Mass disengagement of indigenous employees in the company and their replacement by staff from other plants operated by the company;
- Secret employment of staff, some of whom have no experience in cement manufacturing, for the Line II Project while no one from the host communities were considered;
- Unfair treatment of indigenous contractors who were denied patronage by the company and those considered were given only menial jobs to execute;
- Delay in payment for procured services and supplies, sometimes running to more than three months, thereby increasing bank charges incurred and denying the affected contractors who are mostly indigenes any meaningful profits;
- And delayed decision making process arising from the relocation of the company headquarters from its operational base in Calabar, Cross River State, to Lagos.

In order to bring everyone on the same page, the organisation has made efforts to narrow those areas of misunderstanding. One major approach taken was to unfold in 2016 the Lafarge Mfamosing Plant community relations strategy with the following objectives:

- To build sustainable relationship with the company’s primary and secondary communities within its operations;
- To create a conducive operating environment for business;
- To proactively address emerging trends that can stop operations;

- And to manage expectations from communities within its operations to give Lafarge and Associates visibility.

The Lafarge Mfamosing Plant community strategy has three rungs, namely stakeholder mapping, stakeholder engagement and community development. *Stakeholder mapping* involves developing a stakeholders' map of all communities capturing their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, categorising stakeholders by rings and developing a social needs database of all communities. *Stakeholder engagement* includes developing a communication plan based on peculiarity of each community, setting up of a community relations committee, creating a structured calendar for engaging communities and the committees through meetings, setting up a complaints log platform to collate, treat and track progress of dealing with the complaints logged, and building synergies with NGOs and other stakeholders to strengthen relationship and increase visibility of the company and its associates. Lastly, *community development* deals with using information from the community needs assessment report to drive community development for the host communities, ensuring development projects conform with the company's focus areas of education, health, economic development and environment, and enlightening communities on the development focus of the company to guide and manage expectations and achieve the company's objectives.

Also, under this strategy, there is a community relations committee made up of a chairman (nominated from among members of the committee for a period of two years and on rotatory basis), some staff of the company, representatives of the state and local governments, divisional police/security officers, community youths, men and women leaders, and non-governmental organisations with shared values from within the communities. The committee has the responsibilities to review the stakeholders' map, periodically interface with the communities based on the planned engagement calendar, carry out periodic risk analysis of relationship with communities, implement the stakeholders' community communication plan, develop a budget through project initiation for community development based on the company's corporate social responsibility policy and the needs assessment to achieve shared value, give monthly update to management on the status of logged complaints and projects implementation deliverables, and maintain a database of projects, beneficiaries and impacts on the communities.

This strategy, as can be seen, has the capacity to build bridges between Lafarge Mfamosing Plant and the host communities. Through it, both parties can effectively communicate, community development projects can be mutually initiated and implemented, while a mutually beneficial relationship can be established, developed and sustained. At the end, everyone shall be happy for it. This research work is, therefore, to help in determining if these lofty ideas have been properly executed by the organisation and the perception the people have of it.

Theoretical framework:

This research is anchored on the social responsibility theory, which is one of the theories of the press propounded by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm. It owes its origin to the Hutchins Commission of Freedom of the Press, set up in the United States in 1947 to re-examine the concept of press freedom as enunciated in the libertarian or free press theory. It advocates that while the press should operate freely without censorship, such freedom should go with responsibility. Anaeto, Onabanjo and Osifeso (2008, p.57) explain: "The major premise of the social responsibility theory is that freedom carries concomitant obligations...." What this implies is that just as the press seeking for freedom to operate is expected to act responsibly, an organisation having the freedom to do business in a community is obligated to be part and parcel of that community.

Unfortunately, some organisations are counter-productive and counter-beneficial to the community they operate in. This should not be so. An organisation's programmes should be such that can be of great benefit to its community of business, and not affect it negatively in any way. As the social responsibility theory insists that "the mass media should permeate and represent all the strata of society," an organisation's development programmes should affect the entire community its business covers. The relevance of the theory to this study is the clarion call on organisations to behave themselves responsibly to their business communities. As they have all the rights and privileges to operate in their business communities, they should be conscious of the fact that these rights and privileges have greater commitments attached to them. Organisations should, therefore, impact on their host communities in a manner that makes them real corporate citizens. They should act as "partners in progress," maintaining a symbiotic relationship with their business communities.

Research methodology:

Descriptive survey approach was used for this study. The population was the inhabitants of Calabar metropolis. The choice of the area was necessitated by the fact that Calabar, as a host community, is greatly impacted by the activities of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant. A sample size of 200 respondents was drawn from the study area, through the use of stratified sampling technique. Questionnaire was adopted as the instrument for the gathering of data for the work. Out of 200 questionnaires distributed, 194 were retrieved. The views as expressed by the respondents were subjected to critical analysis, using simple percentages and tables.

Data presentation and analysis:

The data obtained from the selected respondents are presented below:

Table 1: Distribution of respondents' knowledge about Lafarge Mfamosing Plant

Respondents' knowledge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	136	70
No	58	30
Total	194	100

Arising from the above table, 136 respondents, representing 70%, had knowledge about Lafarge Mfamosing Plant, while 58 or 30% knew nothing about the company.

Table 2: Influence of the activities of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant on the respondents' views

Respondents' views	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	128	66
No	66	34
Total	194	100

The views of 128 respondents (66%) were influenced by the activities of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant, and 66 (34%) were not.

Table 3: Influence of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant's activities on public support for the company

Respondents' knowledge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	122	63
No	72	37
Total	194	100

Table 3 above shows that 122 respondents (63%) indicated that the activities of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant attracted their support for the company. On the other hand, 72 (or 37%) responded in the negative.

Table 4: Influence of previous reputation of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant on current opinions of respondents

Respondents' views	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	68	35
No	126	65
Total	194	100

Sixty-eight respondents (35%) indicated that their current opinions about Lafarge Mfamosing Plant were influenced by the company's past reputation while 126 (or 65%) indicated otherwise.

Table 5: The current performance of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant against its past shortcomings

Respondents' views	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	138	71
No	56	29
Total	194	100

One hundred and thirty-eight respondents (71%) held the views that the current activities of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant had exposed its past shortcomings, and 56 (29%) said they did not.

Table 6: Perception formed about Lafarge Mfamosing Plant as a result of its current performance

Respondents' perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lafarge Mfamosing Plant is helpful to its communities	98	50
The company is of no help to its host communities	62	32
No indication	34	18
Total	194	100

According to table 6 above, 98 respondents (50%) indicated that their regard for Lafarge Mfamosing Plant was based on the fact that the company was of help to its host communities, 62 (or 32%) said it was of no help, and 34 (18%) indicated nothing.

Table 7: Lafarge Mfamosing Plant's interest in the welfare of its host communities

Respondents' perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	118	61
No	76	39
Total	194	100

On the issue of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant's having interest in the welfare of its host communities, 118 respondents (61%) said the company did while 76 (39%) said it had no such interest.

Table 8: Demonstration of welfare interest by Lafarge Mfamosing Plant to its host communities

Respondents' perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employment of youths	69	35.6
Provision of amenities	58	29.9
Creating enlightenment programmes for the people	39	20.1
No indication	28	14.4
Total	194	100

The areas Lafarge Mfamosing Plant's demonstrated commitment to the welfare of its communities were identified by respondents as: employment of youths – 69 (35.6%), provision of amenities – 58 (29.9%), enlightenment of the people – 39 (20.1%), and those who indicated no preference to any of the options – 28 (14.4%).

Table 9: Lafarge Mfamosing Plant's areas of lack or weaknesses

Respondents' perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inconsistency	41	21
Favouritism	53	27
Unequal treatment	40	21
Sentiments	29	15
No indication	31	16
Total	194	100

According to respondents' rating in table 9, Lafarge Mfamosing Plant is weak or lacking in the following areas and order: favouritism – 41 respondents (27%), inconsistency – 53 (21%),

unequal treatment – 40 (21%), and sentiments – 29 (15%). However, 31 of them (16%) did not indicate an opinion as regards any of the options.

Table 10: Respondents’ opinion on their experience in relation to their dealing with Lafarge Mfamosing Plant

Respondents’ perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Satisfying	93	48
Moderately satisfying	42	22
Not very satisfying	34	17
Not at all satisfying	23	12
No indication	2	1
Total	194	100

As shown on the above table, 93 respondents, representing 48%, indicated that their experience in relation to their dealing with Lafarge Mfamosing Plant as being satisfying; 42 (22%) recorded “moderately satisfying,” 34 (17%) – “not at very satisfying,” 23 (12%) – “not at all satisfying” and 2 (1%) indicated nothing.

Table 11: Respondents’ approval of the attitudes of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant to its host communities

Respondents’ perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	132	68
No	62	32
Total	194	100

The table here shows that 132 respondents, representing 68%, indicated their approval of the attitudes of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant towards its host communities, 62 of them (or 32%) did not approve of the company’s attitudes.

Table 12: Benefits derived by host communities from Lafarge Mfamosing Plant’s contributions towards its host environment

Respondents’ views	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Award of scholarships	62	31.1
Construction of roads	52	26.8
Job opportunities	45	23.1

Enlightenment programmes	27	13.9
No indication	8	4.1
Total	194	1090

The following were identified as the benefits derived by host communities from the company – award of scholarship (31.1%), construction of roads (26.8%), job opportunities (23.1%), enlightenment programmes (13,9%), and no indication – 8 (4.1%).

Table 13: Areas of improvement for Lafarge Mfamosing Plant in its attitude towards its host communities

Respondents' views	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Impartiality	55	28
Equal treatment of all its host communities	60	31
Recognition for leaders of its host communities	48	25
No indication	31	16
Total	194	100

As shown above, 55 respondents (28%) indicated that the company should not be partial in its attitude to its host communities, 60 (31%) said it should accord equal treatment to all its host communities, 48 (25%) said the company should improve its attitude towards leaders of the host communities, while 31 (16%) failed to make any indication.

Table 14: Portrayal of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant as a corporate citizen in comparison with other companies in Calabar metropolis

Respondents' perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	158	81
No	36	19
Total	194	100

As regards Lafarge Mfamosing Plant as corporate citizen in comparison with other companies in Calabar metropolis, 158 (81%) indicated its favour and 36 (19%) indicated otherwise.

Table 15: Hope for Lafarge Mfamosing Plant maintain its leadership in its area of operation

Respondents'	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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perception		
Yes	152	78
No	42	22
Total	194	100

Is there hope for the company to maintain its leadership in the area of its operation? Those who indicated “yes” were 152 (78%) and those for “no” were 42 (22%).

Discussion of findings:

The findings of this study are discussed here, using the five research questions as the basis:

- *Research question 1: What are the corporate social responsibility functions of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant in Calabar metropolis?*

In table 6, half of the respondents acknowledged that Lafarge Mfamosing Plant’s function is helping its host communities. Table 7 shows that 61% of the respondents felt the company had the welfare of its communities at heart. In table 8, which had a follow-up question to the previous one, 35.6% of the respondents recognised the corporate social responsibility activities of the company as employment opportunities to the youth of the host communities, 29.9% identified provision of social amenities, and 20.1% appreciated the company’s creation of enlightenment programmes for the host communities. This, therefore, confirms that the residents of Calabar metropolis do recognise the corporate social responsibility functions being undertaken by Lafarge Mfamosing Plant.

- *Research question 2: How does the public perceive the corporate social responsibility of the Lafarge Mfamosing Plant in Calabar metropolis?*

Table 10 indicates that 48% of the respondents perceived the corporate social responsibility of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant as satisfying and 22% as moderately satisfying. This shows that a greater percentage of the respondents had positive perception of the company’s corporate social responsibility in the metropolis. This is in contrast to the 12% who saw the company’s corporate social responsibility as “not at all satisfying.”

The import of the above position is as explained by the Individual Differences Theory that people look at, accept and perceive things differently. This is because there are various intervening variables that are known to affect people’s feelings or reactions to events or things. According to Konkwo (1997, p.153), “individual differences in needs,

attitudes, values, motivations and moods as well as the psychologically oriented personality variables of members, coupled with environmental conditions, greatly influence how the individual perceive the world.” Okunna (1999, p.168), in support, argues: “Even when people belong to the same social category and group, [share] norms and values in common, each person still has characteristics which are unique to her.” So many parameters make people’s perception of things to differ.

Whatever the case may be, the findings, as stated earlier, have shown that a greater percentage of the respondents are satisfied with the corporate social responsibility of the company.

Research question 3: What are the economic and social impacts of the company in Calabar metropolis?

To answer the above question, it is pertinent to look at the data in tables 8 and 12. In table 8, the respondents, totalling 35.6%, indicated that Lafarge Mfamosing Plant offered employments to the youths of the communities, 29.9% acknowledged the company provided social amenities to its host communities, and 20.1 % stated that the company created enlightenment programmes for the host communities. In table 12, a total of 32.1% of the respondents indicated that the company awarded scholarships, 26.8% stated that it built roads for the host communities. This has shown that Lafarge Mfamosing Plant’s presence is felt by its host communities in terms of its social and economic impacts on the people. Thus, the finding supports other studies which found out that an organisation should, as a corporate citizen, impact positively on its community both socially and economically (Drucker, 1974; Olutele, 2002; and Okiyi, 2011). Any organisation that cannot be of benefit to its host community cannot be qualified to be seen as a corporate citizen. This means that for an organisation to be a corporate citizen, it must, as a matter of necessity, put something back to the society of its operation. By this study, the respondents have confirmed that though faced with some challenges, Lafarge Mfamosing Plant was not lagging behind in its social and economic commitments to its host communities.

- *Research question 4: How responsive is the company to the desires/needs of the people of Calabar metropolis?*

Tables 11 and 14 help in providing answer to the above question. Table 16 shows that 68% of the respondents approved of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant’s attitude towards its host communities, while table 14 presents the endorsement of the company’s response

to the desires/needs of the people in Calabar metropolis as compared to other companies operating within the area. From these data, it does appear that the public appreciated the corporate social responsibility efforts of the company in the area.

This finding is supported by scholars such as Udeagha (1999) and Ukpaukure (2003), who are of the opinion that an organisation should be responsive to the needs of its host community or communities so as to help strengthen the oneness between them. This means that harmonious relationship is achieved when an organisation and its host community have a common understanding.

- *Research question 5: How can Lafarge Mfamosing Plant live up to its social responsibility in Calabar metropolis?*

In answering this question, tables 9 and 13 are to serve as a guide. Data in these tables were obtained from responses to the open-ended questions raised to give the respondents opportunity to comment freely about Lafarge Mfamosing Plant. In the areas of lack or weaknesses of the company, table 9 shows that 21% of the respondents identified inconsistency as one of its weaknesses, 27% indicated favouritism against the company, 21% were of the opinion that the company treated its host communities unequally, and 15% maintained that it showed sentiments in its treatment of the host communities.

The respondents, therefore, advocated, as shown in table 13, that for the company to live up to its corporate social responsibility, it must improve in its attitude towards its host communities. Their positions were – 28% said the company should show impartiality, 31% wanted equal treatment for all the host communities, and 25% needed recognition for leaders of the company's host communities. Lafarge Mfamosing Plant, as a corporate citizen, must strive to live up to its mandate as contained in its mission statement. That is, whatever does not make for corporate citizenship must be avoided. Therefore, to live up to its corporate social responsibility, any identified vice that does not portray it as a corporate citizen should be done away with.

The finding thus agrees with the view of Day (1995) that a company operating in a community must ensure that a balancing act is carried out to satisfy every stakeholder in the company's environment. Olutele (2002) supports this view by stating that a socially responsive management identifies the prevailing social norms of its host community and then changes its social involvement to respond to the

changing social conditions. He stresses further that an organisation should also be seen to be beneficial to all involved without taking any undue advantage over them. Dalton and Cosier (1986) observe that organisations must do something proactively to further the goals of equal employment opportunity for their host communities. They emphasise that any action carried out which is beneficial to the host communities is good. So, Lafarge Mfamosing Plant will live up to its corporate social responsibility if it is fair to all its host communities in all ramifications.

Conclusion and recommendations

The findings have indicated that the corporate social responsibility of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant is positive as perceived by the public. The respondents indicated that the company was living to its responsibility to its host communities. They perceived the activities of the company as very benefiting to its host communities. According to respondents, the company is a corporate entity as some of its attitudes toward its host communities were in line with the organisation's mission statement. The respondents also were of the opinion that the company acted fast in addressing its weaknesses in order to survive the competition that exists from other companies. It, therefore, behoves on the management of the company to ensure that it lives always by its mission statement.

There is a saying that "nothing good comes easy." It is a well-articulated toil that brings about a bountiful harvest. Once the public perceives that an organisation is able to discharge its desired responsibilities, the fortunes of such an organisation are bound to aglow. Arising from this, it is not very difficult to discover why the people of Calabar metropolis so applauded the activities of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant. It was also not difficult to find out why the weaknesses in the corporate social responsibility of the company as identified by respondents were quite noticeable. The company, according to its mission statement, strives "to be one of the most socially responsible cement companies in Nigeria, with a mandate of corporate governance, good corporate citizenship and sustainable practices." In the light of this, the public expects it to live above board in all areas.

In line with the research findings and the social responsibility theory that ties this study together, the following recommendations are made:

1. With such a high drive to become the most socially responsible cement company in Nigeria, Lafarge Mfamosing Plant should be consistent in all its dealings with its host communities knowing that consistency is a mark of honour and truthfulness. To be socially responsible is to maintain constancy. So, where there is any hitch, the public should be informed adequately and instantly.
2. Favouritism, which is another name for partiality, does not give reputation to any individual or organisation. Its only achievement is to breed division. The community relations department of Lafarge Mfamosing Plant should advise its management to avoid showing favouritism of any kind to its host communities as such action would tarnish the company's reputation.
3. No one feels good when he is not given equal treatment with others. As a corporate citizen, Lafarge Mfamosing Plant should ensure that all the communities of her operation receive equal treatment, which makes for peace and harmonious relationship among all.
4. Sentiment is the expression of attitude or opinion influenced by emotion. Expression of emotional feelings brings disharmony among the people. In its dealing with the host communities, Lafarge Mfamosing Plant, whose main desire is to be socially responsible, should avoid any emotional attachment since such can be destructive to its reputation. Corporate social responsibility calls for open-mindedness; and any expression of bias or the likes would be counter-productive.
5. Lafarge Mfamosing Plant now has a community relations strategy in place. This should be the guiding instrument for the company in its relationship with its host communities in terms of providing social amenities to them. When it strictly adheres to the strategy, it would help the company to display a high level of equal treatment to all its host communities thereby saving itself from any allegation of favouritism, sentiments and the like. This way, the company would be seen as living up to its mission statement of striving to be "the most socially responsible cement company in Nigeria."

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