

The involvement of the University of Dodoma neighboring communities before and after corporate social responsibility project

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Abstract: The definition of Corporate Social Responsibility is still in debate, and still there is no clear definition of the concept of CSR. Different organizations, institutions, and universities through their Public Relations units have engaged in practicing Corporate Social Responsibilities in the neighboring communities as a way to promote their reputation and image. Different organizations engaging in CSR activities in while they lack mechanisms of collecting feedback to measure the perceptions of the recipients of CSR services. In this regard, the expressions of communities involved in CSR projects are not well documented to highlight the impact of CSR activities conducted. Many studies had been written on corporate social responsibility from business organization perspectives. Much has been discussed on the relationships between the act of CSR and the universities. Although universities have been in existence for centuries as the foundation of education and the development of human sustainability. Stakeholder theory describes that, the community stands as the indirect beneficiary of the organization's corporate social responsibility practices. Failure of being responsible to this group can cause sabotage, riots. Moreover, suppliers can reject to corporate with the organization. Therefore, a researcher expects to bridge this knowledge gap to society and the University of Dodoma staff and management by giving out the perception of the University of Dodoma neighboring community on the contribution of the Corporate Social Responsibility practice of higher learning institutions by taking health services provided by the University of Dodoma as CSR. The study found that the issue of information to the community is poorly exercised and observed by the health officers. The University of Dodoma used to plan the CSR activities on their own without involving their neighboring communities on what they needed. Communities participate in CSR activities only at the stage of implementation. Also, the university never seeks feedback from the community they serve to know their opinion on the services delivered. This study concludes that improved CSR practice especially ethical and philanthropy CSR practice would improve community satisfaction and institutions will gain a positive perception of the CSR activities they conduct. Also improved CSR practice in legal, ethical, and philanthropically CSR practice would improve the community to stay, belief, and feel like they are part and parcel of the institution.

Key words: Corporate social responsibility, community involvement, CSR and universities, communities' perceptions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is something debatable and there is no clear definition of the concept of CSR. For some years, different organizations, institutions, and universities through their Public Relations units have engaged in practicing Corporate Social Responsibilities in the neighboring communities as a way to promote their reputation and image. The University of Dodoma is, amongst the institutions that have been engaging in various CSR activities, including the provision of health services in Dodoma City. However, different institutions including UDOM engaging in CSR activities while they never involve the targeted communities before, during and after the CSR activities to measure the perceptions of the recipients of CSR services. In this regard, the expressions of communities involved in CSR projects are not well documented to highlight the impact of CSR activities conducted.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate social responsibility

There is no specific definition concerning corporate social responsibility, but still a debate continues on the concept of corporate social responsibility worldwide. Recently, the debate over the corporate social responsibility has become prominent. Peter Utting, (2005) notice that an increasing number of transitional corporations and large companies including universities, adopting variety of so-called voluntary corporate social responsibility. Utting (2005) explains that a recent debate on corporate social responsibility explore the CSR codes of conducts that measure to improve CSR activities.

David B. Spence (2011) define CSR as the kind of things institutions do in their efforts to navigate these swirling currents of changing expectations.

Spence (2011) corporate social responsibility that conducted by the institutions as the modern CSR where by it reflect the recognition that institutions including higher learning institutions does not happen in social vacuum but only exist in market place. Some of the expectations reflect ethical norms that may turn out to be important to an institution in long run as law and regulations.

Community involvement

Community involvement either individually or through associations seeking to enhance the public good-help to strengthen civil society, the organization that engages respectfully with the community and its institutions reflects and reinforces democratic and civic values (Salamzade et al., 2013). In developing countries, organizations use their resources to help the societies to get the political, economic, societal, and institutional reputation, but not for the betterment of the society. This is why organizations fail to get society's perceptions and feedback on their activities.

Institutions has to apply a culture of community involvement where by when a community member residing within a community and involved in a activities of the institution, will as a part of that institutions and other time a community member can engage themselves in a number of ways in institutions activities to bring welfare and benefit for the institution. Example. Kapur. R (2016) explain that, there are marginalized, deprived and poverty stricken individuals residing within the community, they recognize the significance of education and want to study, but certain problems prevent them from acquiring education, hence, community members may provide them with free coaching classes to enhance their literacy skills so that they are able to acquire self-sufficiency.

The involvement of the community people should be on a continuous basis and it is not considered to be a one-time event. To ensure sustainability of corporate community involvement, it is vital that leaders should make sure that people should be provided with the opportunities to have a say in how to bring about their welfare. For instance, there are certain issues or a problem which has affected the working conditions of the individuals, then leaders need to formulate appropriate measures to alleviate their concerns, but they should get engaged with the community people to find out their viewpoints. (Crowther D& Aras G, 2008)

CSR and universities

Institutions including higher learning institutions (Universities) are usually responsible for the severe environmental degradation we have witnessed. (Alshuwaikhat and Abubakar, 2008; Haden et al., 2009; Hoffman and Woody, 2008)

There has been a growing interest in the social responsibility of higher learning organizations during the past few decades; the activities of these organizations will impact their surroundings which include their stakeholders, society, and other influenced parties (Charteji, 2011).

Universities require strong corporate strategies to be successful in the highly competitive education industry. In this respect, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) becomes amongst the highly preferred strategy used by higher learning institutions for gaining a good reputation. Though, less attention is given by these institutions. The University of Dodoma being one of the higher learning institutions is

responsible for the providing of CSR services to the surrounding communities. In this regard, the University of Dodoma has mentioned several services that can be provided to the surrounding communities as CSR. They include mother and children care (RCH), checking and treatment of non-communicable diseases, community health education e.g. nutrition, and outpatient disease (OPD) to name a few. In regards to the mentioned services, this research aims to examine the perceptions of the nearby communities on the University of Dodoma social responsibility practices. The major assumption of the study is how the surrounding communities perceive the Corporate Social Responsibility conducted by the University of Dodoma.

As a way of improving health services to her surrounding communities, the University of Dodoma (UDOM) offers low-cost health services and cost-free health programs as a corporate social responsibility to the community around the university and people in Tanzania (UDOM, 2020). This is implemented through its hospital and a mobile clinic that is used for outreach programs. All CSR activities need a close follow-up for the sake of getting feedback on how the societies perceive them. The question however is: How the University of Dodoma knows communities' perceptions of their Corporate Social Responsibility?

Community perception on corporate social responsibility

Society tends to purchase services or products from organizations with a good reputation for CSR performance. Azim *et al.* (2009) outline that when a type of community considers the public influence of corporate for private consumption, they would like to purchase the product or service of the organization which possesses a positive influence on society, and in this way to promote the better development of the society. Managers should ensure customers' readiness to support socially responsible organizations by examining their evaluation of the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibility of the firm (Gariga & Mele, 2004). Also outline that community will be more willing to actively support responsible business than their counterpart, consumer value highly corporate economic responsibility, and they are most concerned about business conforming to legal and ethical standards. But without knowing the perception of their stakeholder, management in organizations faces a trade-off between pursuing economic, environmental, and societal goals since they do not know what society thinks of their organization. Nedelko et al (2014) avow that the existence and future development of organizations in severe business environments importantly depends on their ability to achieve important aims as well as better understand behaviors that the ways to meet environmental, ethical, and social requirements, besides striving for satisfactory economic results. So community perception is worthy for the achievement of the responsibilities of organization CSR activities for future development of an organization, As a center of knowledge generation, higher learning institutions have to promote learning outcomes that go beyond discipline-specific

knowledge and produce good citizens who are trained for both competency and character (Wilhite and Silver, 2005).

Universities should not be only educational service providers, but shaper of identity with major responsibility to the nation and the world at large. It is argued that the social responsibility of higher learning education concentrates on the responsibility of students, academics, staff, and the community (Grigore et al 2013). But most of the higher learning institutions concentrate more on the academic staff, and students and give less concentration on community responsibility. Grigore et al, (2013) add that the concept of university social responsibility emerged as a consequence of the roles that university plays in society

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

The researcher used a qualitative research approach to attain the intended target of the research. A qualitative research approach is an interpretative approach that attempts to gain insight into the specific meanings and behaviors experienced in a certain social phenomenon through the subjective experiences of the participants. A researcher decided to use this approach to get respondents' experiences and behaviors on the health services provided by UDOM as CSR activities.

3.1 Data Collection Method

Based on qualitative type of this research, data were collected through the following methods;

3.1.1 Interviews

The researcher employed interviews with the top management of the University of Dodoma and the surrounding community to get relevant and clear information. Semi-structured interviews were used to interview the top management and other staff of the university. Relevant information was obtained from the top management and the beneficiaries (nearby community) of the University of Dodoma in which recommendations were made out of the interview. The interview was preferred by the researcher to be used to the surrounding community as it offered a friendly environment even to those respondents who could not be able to read and write.

3.1.2 Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion makes use of the human ability to tell stories and is suitable in communities with a low level of literacy and strong oral tradition. It also provides better access to people who are not outspoken and who would normally fear taking part in an individual interview (Grbich 1999, p114 Foll, Bromley Et al 2003:13). Researchers must be aware that focus group discussion tends to elicit opinions, attitudes, and experiences that are shared only normatively in a group or community (Kitzinger 1995, 2006). This study employed this approach

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Findings

The findings of this study are obtained from the aforementioned research objectives. The findings were analyzed using thematic analysis whereby they were obtained through interviews, focus group discussion, and observation on the perception of the UDOM's neighboring community.

The involvement of the intended community members before and after the CSR project.

Before CSR

4.2. Lack of information to the community due to lack of research before visiting them to provide the services.

The study found that the issue of information to the community was poorly exercised and observed by the health officers. The University of Dodoma used to plan the CSR activities on their own without involving their neighboring communities on what they needed. Communities participate in CSR activities only at the stage of implementation. Also, the university never seeks feedback from the community they serve to know their opinion on the services delivered.

Sometimes—we wake up in the morning and find—a university car with nurses—that is where we realize that there are health services in our area, and when we ask them they tell us to go and check our health for free. This creates reluctance of people to attend a particular service offered. (Respondent)

Most of the time nurses and doctors from UDOM come to our areas on weekdays of which most of us are in, our economic activities, so it happens that when they come, they serve a small number of people who appear to be at home. (Respondent)

The people of UDOM suggested that they should always be informed on the day, date, and month in which the health officers are intending to visit them in their respective homes so as they get alert and remain at their homes. Moreover, they added that they should be publicly announced to them by passing through their villages with loudspeakers. By so doing, they believe that the institution will reach a big number of the target groups and provide their CSR services without barriers. However, they insisted on the two times visit of the officers to them.

Respondents from both sides admitted that the services are offered to them without pre-visit to the people in the village. The respondent from the UDOM community said that they have never seen some officers visiting them to conduct research on the lacking services or get to know the most important services they need. On the same, they recommended that they have to research so that they do the right thing at the right time according to the needs and demands of the people. However, they said that UDOM is really trying to perform well in their activities but lack of research sometimes is a barrier to them.

Communities are not involved in the corporate social responsibility activities provided by the University of Dodoma, but they only participate in the implementation stage. Therefore, most of the time, the surrounding communities are not aware of what is going to happen in their areas. At the end of the day, according to the people of Dodoma, the involvement of the community is what will always lead to the successful provision of services to the people.

After the CSR activities

The study found that the University of Dodoma never looks back to the beneficial community for the feedback on how the CSR activities went. The university health officers never take trouble for the seeking of the feedback on what they did to the community.

"We never see the university health officers come to us and ask us how the activities went through, but after they finish what they did they disappear until another activity"

Knowing how community perceive your CSR activities is one of the success of the corporate social responsibility activities, the university of Dodoma never know how their surrounding community perceive their CSR activities, so that it is clear that UDOM do not know how their intended communities perceive their activities and researcher conclude that UDOM corporate social responsibility activities are not succeed.

V. DISCUSSION

The community expects the institution to have obligation to the society in which they are located, to the people they employ and their customers, beyond their traditional bottom-line and narrow shareholders 'concern (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Carroll, 1979; Jones, 1980; Maignan, Ferrell, & Hult, 1999). As the University of Dodoma provides health services to the neighboring community as corporate social responsibility, they have to provide those services according to the needs of the community they serve so that the community will positively perceive the health services. In UDOM neighboring community, there is a lack of health services provisions, and people in the area expect the university of Dodoma to provide them with quality health services as the university has many professionals in the health care field, so the university has to fulfill their responsibility and provide good quality and needed health services accordingly.

From the respondents of this study, they perceive health services from the University of Dodoma like a gift and they do not see it as their right by the presence of the institution in their area, so the institution (UDOM) has to conduct corporate social responsibility activities as it is needed to make community feels like the institution is responsible to them and they are not receiving a gift.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study endeavored to answer three questions (1) how the neighboring community perceives and benefit from health

services provided by the University of Dodoma? (2) The health services provided by the University of Dodoma through CSR which are deemed to be necessary from the community perspective? (3) How the community is involved in the corporate social responsibility projects conducted by the University of Dodoma? Based on the findings few key findings can be used to conclude this research. The community requires the health services provided by the University of Dodoma through CSR. The community is not involved in the CSR projects conducted by the University of Dodoma in terms of decision-making. The community perceives CSR activities from the University of Dodoma as a gift and not their rights.

This study concludes that improved CSR practice especially ethical and philanthropy CSR practice would improve community satisfaction and institutions will gain a positive perception of the CSR activities they conduct. Also improved CSR practice in legal, ethical, and philanthropically CSR practice would improve the community to stay, belief, and feel like they are part and parcel of the institution.

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