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## Environmental corporate social responsibility of brewery firms in Ethiopia

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### Abstract

The main objective of this study is to examine the perception of employees towards environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives of Brewery firms in Ethiopia. For the study purpose, a cross-sectional research design was employed, sought to gather data only at the time of the survey. Convenience sampling technique was used to select participants and collected primary data from a total of 429 employees of major five brewery firms (BGI Ethiopia, Meta Abo, Bedele, Harar and Dashen). A closed-ended self-administered survey questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. Data that has been collected was analyzed using standard deviation, mean, and percentage for descriptive statistics, for inferential statistics, T- test and ANOVA was performed. The finding of this study revealed that employees hold positive perception of Environmental CSR initiatives of brewery firms however, firms accorded a limited attention to provide regular voluntary information about environmental management to the external stakeholders. This study contributes to previous research on the practical aspects of CSR by highlighting the influence of demographic factors on perceptions of employees, including gender, year of experience, and employees' position. Thus, this study concluded that gender and position do not influence the perception of employees toward the ECSR initiatives of brewery firms but employees' year of experience influence their perception on ECSR of firms.

**Keywords:** Corporate social responsibility, employees, environment, Perception, stakeholder.

### 1. Introduction

Environmental responsibility is generally seen as a part of Corporate social responsibility (CSR here after). However, the idea that business has a responsibility toward the environment is dealt with almost as a self-evident proposition, and the theoretical premise for such an assumption is seldom discussed. Whether the objects of environmental ethics - wildlife, the natural environment, and so forth - qualify as a stakeholder is among the key inquiry that should to be re-evaluated. The concept of responsibility toward the natural world in general has emerged only in recent years, as human activities that interfere with natural cycles have been done on such a scale as to upset the balance of nature and the environment (Mitsuhiro, 2010) [24]. Corporate action might have numerous kinds of negative impacts happening in the surrounding natural environmental because of business operations. Such impacts might include: overuse of natural, non-renewable resources of energy, pollution wastage, and degeneration of biodiversity, climate change, deforestation and so forth (Uddin *et al.*, 2008) [43].

After recognizing an increase in environmental disasters that was contributed by the unethical business interest and human careless attitude (Banyteet *et al.*, 2010) [7], business enterprises is turning to CSR as its payback mechanism. Organizations would effectively try to integrate environmental consideration into their operation and activities. These comprises promoting the benefits of environmental-friendly products (Jansson, 2010; Pickett-Baker, 2008; Ramayah, Lee, & Mohamad, 2010) [20, 32, 34], promoting eco-tourism; (Chiutsi, Mukoroverwa, Karigambe, & Mudzengi, 2011; Stronza & Gordillo, 2008; Weaver & Lawton, 2007) [11, 41, 45], creating environment friendly behaviour through workplace environment (NikRamli, 2007; NikRamli & Naja, 2011) [26, 27] and many more. These studies have then turned in to the empirical basis to the advancement of a holistic organizational perspective to environmental protection or Environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR here after) (NikRamliNik Abdul Rashid *et al.*, 2014) [28]. Then, Williamson *et al.* (2006) [46] have referred ECSR as:

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“...a concept about companies extra effort integrating environment concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders. It is viewed as the contribution that firms make to sustainable development by balancing and improving environment impacts without damaging economic performance”.

European Commission (2001) has broadly considered CSR as:

“... a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on voluntary basis”.

The main objective of the study is to examine the perception of employees towards environmental corporate social responsibility of brewery firms in Ethiopia. Employees of the brewery are considered as a unit of analysis to determine their perception towards ECSR of firms. Barnett (2007) [8] contended that employees, as a stakeholder group, impact CSR policy. First, employees can act as agents for social change when they push corporations to adopt socially responsible behavior (Aguilera *et al.*, 2007) [4]. Secondly, environmental policy demonstrates that employees' support is necessary to secure effective CSR programs and policies (Ramus and Steger, 2000) [35]. Thirdly, employees as a stakeholder group perceive, evaluate, judge and react to CSR programs and actions (Rowley and Berman, 2000; Rupp *et al.*, 2006; Wood and Jones, 1995) [36, 37, 47]. Moreover, in the Freeman's stakeholder model (1984, 2004) employees represent one of several other stakeholders group addressing the company with their own demands.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Most technologically sophisticated equipment and other human actions have to large extent harmed the environment and its parts such as water, air, land and others. With this intricacy, international organizations have been able to set up a system which ensures that all countries are adhering to the need for environmental sustainability. Certainly, the general public and the individual clients could set common model industries' dedication and engagement about protecting the environment. Redesigning of the process; recuperation of by-products or reuse of effluents are regarded as some of the probable actions towards an eco-efficient approach. The most noteworthy environmental issues related to the operation stage of breweries embrace water consumption, wastewater, solid waste and by-products, energy use and emissions to air (Olajire, 2012) [30].

The Brewery industry is a multi- national business complex that consists of the producers with a large system of suppliers, distributors, wholesalers, and related businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, bars and advertisers. The Ethiopian beer production and market pretty much run by the private sector has shown enormous change for the last couple of years. This explosion of the beer market and boost in production could lead a hand to other sectors' development through backward and forward economic integration. Hence, this in turn would have an impact on social and environmental aspect of the country.

The subject of corporate social responsibility is a Perplexing one for any industry, not the least so for the brewery industry. Alcohol industry actors (producers, distributors, etc.) believe that a systematic integration of CSR into their business practices can make a positive influence on their

economic, social, and environmental performance (Code of Responsible Practices..., 2009; Baggot, 2006; Juscius & Kondratuuk, 2012) [13, 5, 21]. Therefore, brewery firms ought to give high attention to the demand of various stakeholders who affected by their operations. It is imperative to note that, Brewery firms should integrate CSR into their core business strategy with the aim that they can get advantage out of it. Therefore this study attempts to answer the following research objectives.

1. To examine the perception of employees toward environmental aspect of corporate social responsibility of brewery firms.
2. To determine the influence of employees' demographic characteristics on their perception towards ECSR initiatives of brewery firms.

### 2. Literature review

A general idea behind the motivation of firms to invest in ECSR activities comes from the stakeholder theory. Stakeholder theory recommends that organizational survival and achievement is dependent up on satisfying both its economic (e.g., profit maximization) and noneconomic (e.g., corporate social performance) objectives by addressing the needs of the company's various stakeholders (Pirsch, Gupta, & Grau, 2007) [33]. Stakeholder theory recommends that organizations are motivated to widen their objectives to incorporate other goals in addition to profit maximization. In light of this theory, organizations that embraced the ECSR activities as an approach to promote socially responsible activities and policies is in a better position to react successfully to the stakeholder demands (Maignan & Farrell, 2004) [22].

An important justification for attempting to investigate the environmental dimension of CSR lies in the basic idea around which the “green business organization” is created (Nik Ramli *et al.*, 2014) [28]. A company that truly held environmental protection and sustainability need to have a comprehensive and consistent strategic management approach (Velasquez-Manoff, 2009) [44]. Its organizational members are expected to embrace shared assumptions and beliefs about the significance of balancing economic efficiency, social equity and environmental accountability (Bertels, Papania & Papania, 2010) [9]. Peattie's STEP Framework likewise shown the need for a balanced and holistic perspective that considers the Social, Technological, Economic and Physical aspects business operation (Peattie, 1995) [31]. This comprehensive global view recognizes that only through the appreciation of “whole entities” and positive collaboration among all stakeholders (which includes customers, shareholders, competitors, citizens, and government and legal institutions) (Nik Ramli *et al.*, 2014) [28].

A proactive management approach permits organizations to save money by foreseeing and evading expenditures arising from environmental damage, and minimizing the cost of complying with future legislation. Likewise, operating expense can be lessened through waste minimization, pollution prevention, and the elimination of health and safety hazards (Sarmiento *et al.* 2006) [38]. Environmental management can minimize external effects, enhance financial performance and, improve reputation among communities, customers and stakeholders (Sarmiento *et al.*, 2006) [38]. As it was also indicated by European foundation, the organizations being surveyed have introduced environmental management systems and have worked

systematically with minimizing the environmental impact of their activities have experienced operational cost savings through environmental efficiency measures. Moreover, companies managed to acquire significant business advantages through the development of intangible assets like enhanced image and better relations to neighborhood community, and several innovations have been introduced (European foundation, 2003) [16].

In effect, managers must start to consider environmental management a basic part to obtain sustainable competitive advantage (Hunt and Auster, 1990) [19]. According to Banerjee (2001) [6], environmentally conscious management is the understanding of environmental issues by organizations and integration of these issues with company's decision making process. Therefore, environmentally conscious management is an essential part of corporate social responsibility.

### 3. Methodology

The research design in this study was basically cross-sectional design, sought to gather data only at the time of the survey, which is analyzed through quantitative methods. Survey questionnaires were used to assess employees' perception toward Environmental CSR initiatives to determine their levels of agreement on the given parameters. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect primary data from a total of 525 employees of major five brewery firms in Ethiopia such as: BGI Ethiopia, Meta Abo, Bedele, Harar and Dashen brewery firms. Closed ended self-administered questionnaire was designed and distributed, thus, the return rate was 81.71 % (429). The questionnaire was structured in a rating order of 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4= agree; and 5=strongly agree. In this research study quantitative research was carried out and involved some quantitative analyses with the use of statistical tools (descriptive and inferential). For the analysis of quantitative data, the researcher utilized SPSS version 20. The measuring instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire taken from Turker (2009) [42]; Mishra and Suar (2010) [23] and Maignan *et al.* (1999) with a little modifications.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Pilot study

Pilot test was performed to determine the appropriateness and relevance of the questions in the instrument. Test of content validity was performed which was measuring to the extent of the instrument provides adequate coverage, representativeness the universe, specificity, and clarity of the topic under study. The instrument was provided to two academicians and two practitioners who assessed each item thoroughly. This early draft was also circulated and piloted on 25 employees of Dashen Brewery in the context of Ethiopia brewery firms. Based on the feedback, several modifications were made to the wording of some questions, and some less important questions were deleted to reduce the length of the questionnaire.

### 4.2 Reliability and Validity test

The reliability of the data in the present research was assessed by Cronbach's Alpha. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) [29], Cronbach Alpha coefficient scores were used above a 0.7 cut-off value. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of the scale used in the research is 0.892, and this value is above 70%. Results also indicated that all the items had  $\alpha$

coefficient above 0.8. The scales with a coefficient alpha above 0.80 are considered to have very good reliability (Zikmund, 2010). Content validity of the instrument was also tested by academicians and practitioners in the area which found that pretty good and appropriate for the brewery firms to gather relevant data against environmental aspect of CSR initiatives.

**Table 1:** Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
.892	10

### 4.3 Demographic profile of respondents

Among 429 respondents, the majority (71.1 %) of respondents was male and 28.9% was female. The majority of employee respondents (56.8%) were working from 0 to 5 years; 29.4% of respondents was working for 6 to 10 years; and those who were working for more than ten years were 13.8 %. In relation to the respondents' position in their organization, employees from the lower position were 64.3%, they were the majority of the respondents; 26.6% respondents were from the middle position; and those employees from senior position were 9.1%.

**Table 2:** Demographic characteristics of the sample respondents

Demographic variables	Frequency	percent	Valid percent	
Gender	Male	305	71.1	71.1
	Female	124	28.9	28.9
	Total	429	100.0	100.0
Year of experience	0 to 5	244	56.8	56.8
	6 to 10yr	126	29.4	29.4
	above 10yr	59	13.8	13.8
	Total	429	100.0	100.0
Position	senior	39	9.1	9.1
	Middle	114	26.6	26.6
	staff	276	64.3	64.3
	Total	429	100.0	100.0

Source: Sample survey

### 4.4 Firms responsibility towards the environment

At present time companies are taking proactive initiatives for emission reduction in anticipation of future policy, and societal and competitive developments with regard to environment. With increasing significance of environmental friendly products, processes, and services, firms are recognizing the value of adopting environmental standards for their sustainability in the long run. This has made possible the development of green resources and capabilities and compliance with global standards such as ISO 14000, OHSAS 18000, and environmental legislations. Environmental performance is increased by improvements in three aspects – (a) product technologies such as use of recycled raw materials and other resource saving schemes, (b) process technologies such as use of efficient production techniques and end-of-pipe controls, and (c) management systems such as workers' training programs and environmental audit (Mishra and Suar, 2010) [23].

Accordingly, the finding of this study in general revealed that there were strong agreements on the statements about environmental aspect of CSR. It was registered high mean scores which ranged from 3.59 to the statement of providing regular voluntary information about environmental management to stakeholders up to 4.17 for the statement

about the disposal of waste and residues, and recuperation and recycling systems.

As it was shown in Table 3 and annexed Table A, very large number of respondents (81.6%, n=350) revealed their agreement on the concern of companies to show their responsibility on the disposal of wastes and residues, which involves recuperation and recycling systems. In this case high mean score was registered (4.17) with standard deviation of 1.06. In addition, the same number of respondents (81.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that there were systems and techniques for producing environmentally safe products with high mean score of 4.16 and standard deviation of 0.83. slightly more than three fourths of respondents (78.3%, n=336) conveyed their agreement on the concern of businesses to protect and improve the quality of the natural environment. In this case high mean score of 4.00 was registered with standard deviation of 0.85. Almost three fourths of respondents (76%, n=326) agreed or strongly agreed that there are policies in place to protect pollution of soil, water, and air. In this case high mean score (4.03) was registered with standard deviation of 1.00. A mean score 4.0 was registered to indicate high level of agreement on the availability of explicit definition of environmental policy and long term plans in the companies, which represented 70.6% (n=304) respondents. About the same number of respondents (70.2%, n=301) declared their agreement on the availability of systems for measuring/assessing environmental performance, in this case high mean score (3.95) was calculated with standard deviation of 0.96. Almost two thirds of respondents (67.6%, n=290) agreed or strongly agreed on the availability of designs to facilitate reduction of resource consumption and waste generation during production, distribution and product usage. In this case 3.83 mean score was recorded with standard deviation of 1.02. Similarly, two thirds of respondents (66.7%, n=290) conveyed their agreement on the availability of programs in place to reduce the amount of energy and material wasted in the businesses with mean score of 3.8, which was high and standard deviation of 1.00. Only 61.5% (n=264) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that environmental training has been given to employees. In this case high mean score (3.72) was recorded. About half percent of (52.4 %, n=225) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that regular voluntary information about environmental management have been provided to stakeholders, in this case respondents rated high mean score of 3.59. Interestingly, 35.9% (n=154) responses were undecided/neutral.

The information obtained from secondary source data supported the findings of this empirical study. All brewery under study implemented Environmental management systems (EMS) and have already been certified ISO 14000. Those firms adopting EMS have been extensively reducing their wastewater, energy and treating their effluent and discarded in to the river (for instance, Bedele brewery, BGI Ethiopia) and the effluent from rural breweries (for example, Dashen brewery, Meta Abo and Harar) is used for irrigation purposes after undergoing primary treatment,. Breweries that are already implementing ISO 14000 have identified water efficiency as one of their key focus areas (UNEP, nd). Both Harar and Bedele (Heineken Company) launched Brewing a Better Future (BaBF) a 10 year programme starting from 2010. The program focuses on four key areas: protecting water resource; reducing CO2 emissions, and energy consumption; sourcing sustainably and advocating responsible consumption (African Business Review, July 23,

2014) [18]. Harar Brewery also does afforestation of Hakim Gara (spring water source area); beautification of road sides of Harar and Dire Dawa town. All Breweries ISO 14000 accredited are undertaking environmental reporting (internal reporting) but there is no requirement existed for the others to submit such a report (UNEP, nd).

**Table 3** Employees' perception on environmental aspect of CSR initiatives (n=429)

Items	mean	SD
Explicit definition of environmental policy and long term environmental plans	4.01	0.96
Systems for measuring and assessing environmental performance	3.95	0.96
Designs facilitating reduction of resource consumption and waste generation during production, distribution and product usage	3.83	1.02
Provide natural environmental training for its employees	3.72	1.10
Disposal of waste and residues, & recuperation & recycling systems	4.17	1.06
Policies for preventing direct & indirect pollution of soil, water, & air	4.03	1.00
Systems and techniques for producing environmentally safe products	4.16	0.83
Program in place to reduce the amount of energy& material wasted in our business	3.83	1.00
Protect and improve the quality of the natural environment	4.00	0.85
Regular voluntary information about environmental management to stakeholders	3.59	1.05
Grand mean	3.93	0.70

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4= agree; and 5=strongly agree

**4.5 Influence of gender on the Perception of ECSR initiatives**

A result of independent sample t-test shows that gender difference does not influence the perception of employees on ECSR initiatives with statistical significance at the level of 0.05 (sig= 0.823). The finding of the present study is consistent with the previous findings. For instance, According Stawiskiet al (2010) [40], on average, men and women tend to rate the CSR of their organizations about the same, that is both groups tend to think that their organizations are doing pretty well as corporate citizens. The result of this study also consistent with the findings of Agrawal et al. (2015) [3] which found that gender as demographic factor does not influence the employee's perception for the social and ethical behavior of their firm.

**Table 4:** Result of t-test for the influence of gender on the perception of ECSR initiatives

Variables	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
ECSR initiatives	male	3.9220	.73135	2.24	.823
	female	3.9387	.62453		

P<0.05 (2-tail)

**4.6 Influence of employees' position on the Perception of ECSR initiatives**

A result of one way ANOVA shows that employees' position in their organization does not influence their perception on ECSR initiatives of firms with statistical significance at the level of 0.05 (sig= 0.087). The finding of this study is inconsistent with the findings of Stawiski et al. (2010) [40] and Changchutoe (2012) [12]. According to them company

employees in different position had different level of perceptions CSR. Those at the highest levels in the organization have the most positive impressions of their companies' CSR initiatives. Therefore, the influence of position on the perception of employees on CSR initiatives had mixed results.

**Table 5:** Result of ANOVA test for the influence of employees' position on the perception of ECSR initiatives

Variable	position	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
ECSR	Senior staff	4.0667	.86156	2.460	0.087
	Middle	4.0114	.71825		
	lower level	3.8721	.66523		

$P < 0.05$  (2-tail)

**4.7 Influence of employees' years of working experience on the Perception of ECSR initiatives**

A result of one way ANOVA shows that employees' year of experience influence their perception on ECSR initiatives of firms with statistical significance at the level of 0.05 (sig= 0.001). The finding of this study is in accordance with the finding of Changchutoe (2012)<sup>[12]</sup> which found that private

company employees who had different period of employment had different level of perceptions toward CSR. The finding of this study also consistent with the study of Chunu (2009)<sup>[12]</sup> cited in Changchutoe (2012)<sup>[10]</sup> which found that employees who had different period of employment had different level of perceptions toward the performance of public official council. Period of employment is considered a key factor that leads to difference of employee's perceptions. It is likely that employees with a longer period of employment acknowledge CSR policy, operation and performance of the company and thus have higher perception than employees with shorter period of employment (Changchutoe, 2012)<sup>[10]</sup>.

**Table 6:** Results of ANOVA test for the influence of employees' year of working experience on the perception on ECSR initiatives

Variable	Service year	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
ECSR	0 to 5	3.8480	.68874	5.278	0.001
	6 to 10	3.9611	.64844		
	>10	4.1357	.80010		

$P < 0.05$  (2-tail)

**Annexed A.** Employees' perception on environmental CSR initiatives (n=429)

Items	1	2	3	4	5	Total
The company has explicit definition of environmental policy and long term environmental plans	2.6	1.9	24.9	33.3	37.3	100%
	11	8	107	143	160	429
The company has systems for measuring and assessing environmental performance	1.9	4.7	23.3	37.3	32.9	100%
	8	20	100	160	141	429
The company has designs facilitating reduction of resource consumption and waste generation during production, distribution and product usage	2.6	8.2	21.7	38.7	28.9	100%
	11	35	93	166	124	429
The company provides natural environmental training for its employees	3.7	10.3	24.5	33.8	27.7	100%
	16	44	105	145	119	429
There is responsible disposal of waste and residues, & recuperation & recycling systems in the company	4.4	4.2	9.8	33.6	48.0	100%
	19	18	42	144	206	429
The company has policies for preventing direct & indirect pollution of soil, water, & air	2.6	5.8	15.6	38.5	37.5	100%
	11	25	67	165	161	429
The company has systems and techniques for producing environmentally safe products	0.5	3.3	14.7	42.9	38.7	100%
	2	14	63	184	166	429
The company has a program in place to reduce the amount of energy & material wasted in our business	3.7	4.2	25.4	39.2	27.5	100%
	16	18	109	168	118	429
The company participates in activities that aim to protect and improve the quality of the natural environment	1.2	4.4	16.1	50.1	28.2	100%
	5	19	69	215	121	429
The company offers regular voluntary information about environmental management to stakeholders	4.4	7.2	35.9	29.8	22.6	100%
	19	31	154	128	97	429

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4= agree; and 5=strongly agree

**5. Conclusion and Future direction**

**5.1 Conclusion**

The study concluded that the employees had positive perception to all items of ECSR initiatives of brewery firms as they rated high mean value (3.93) with standard deviation of 0.70 which do not vary greatly. However, firms accorded a limited attention to provide regular voluntary information about environmental management to the external stakeholders. This study contributes to previous research on the practical aspects of CSR by highlighting the influence of demographic factors on perceptions of individuals, including gender, position, and working experience. Thus, this study concluded that gender and position do not influence the perception of employees toward the ECSR initiatives of brewery firms; however, years of experience influence the perception of employees towards ECSR initiatives of firms.

**5.2 Limitation and Future direction**

This study is limited in its scope not only to the brewery firms but also limited to employees' perception on environmental aspect of CSR initiatives. Therefore, future study should include other alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverage industries and the perception of other stakeholders (such as local community, customers etc.) toward ECSR initiatives should be also examined.

**5.3 Contribution**

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the field of CSR from the perspectives of employees in general, to Ethiopian literature in particular. Managers of the brewery and other industry can make use of this research output to devise their ECSR strategies to address effectively the environmental impact of their business activities so that they can acquire significant business advantages through

minimizing the cost of complying with future legislation; operating expense can be lessened through waste minimization, pollution prevention, and the elimination of health and safety hazards; enhance financial performance; and improve reputation and relations among communities, customers and stakeholders.

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