

Effects of Economic-related Corporate Social Responsibility Activities on Sustainable Livelihood of Selected Communities in Gombe State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Many communities in the Third World, especially Nigeria, are easily drawn into a downward cycle of risks and vulnerabilities because government efforts in community development are not sufficient. Except for the private sector's support in alleviating hardship in community livelihoods, achieving long-term sustainable development will be difficult to accomplish. This study examined the effects of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on sustainable livelihood of selected communities in Gombe State. The study employed descriptive research design. The study target population was 25,479 individuals in Gombe State, drawn from 19 corporations and 22 selected communities. The total sample size for the study was 205 respondents. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the 205 respondents for the study. In collaboration with Gombe State Ministry of Trade and Industries and Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources, 22 communities mostly affected by climate change and 19 viable corporations were purposively selected. Purposive sampling technique was also used to select 110 respondents, 5 each from the 22 selected communities and 95 corporation's respondents, 5 each from the 19 sampled corporations. Data for the study were collected through structured questionnaire and were analysed using cross-tabulation chi-square test. The findings of the study showed that corporations' economic-related CSR activities contributed significantly to the sustainable livelihoods of the communities, especially in the area of capacity building in agriculture, education, vocational/skills acquisition, employee engagements and community development projects such as construction and renovation of educational facilities, clinics, hospitals, and roads among others. The study recommended that, the selection of beneficiaries for capacity building initiatives and community development projects should be based on needs assessment. People living with disabilities should be considered in CSR while tax holidays, grants, or recognition, can be designated for corporations executing CSR projects that improve the livelihood of the communities.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, development projects, Sustainable livelihood, Gombe.

Introduction

According to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2014), many of the challenges facing the African communities include the unsustainable use of natural resources, inadequate access to socio-economic, infrastructure and services, lack of water for households and agricultural uses, low literacy rates and skill levels, migrant labour practises, the breakdown of social structures, and an abundance of untapped opportunities in many economic sectors. A report from the United Nations states that, Africa's rural development state at the moment is characterized by inadequate funding and a lack of infrastructures (IPCC, 2014). The majority of rural communities rely on agriculture as their main source of income, which is a

risky endeavour because failing crops have been known to leave farmers' families in terrible financial conditions. Infrastructure, such as the roads used for transportation of commodities are sometimes not available or poorly maintained. Same with electricity, water, health centres. Additionally, natural resources are frequently used and managed in an unsustainable manner, resulting in severe environmental degradation and an overuse of non-renewable resources.

Many developmental projects in developing countries have historically been unsuccessful due to lack of participation from rural communities and lack of capacity to implement them (Fawzy, Osman, Doran & Rooney, 2020). To make matters worse, public policies governing sustainable community development are frequently vague, broad, and complex in nature. The blame has always been placed on previous colonial rule and policies, which were frequently described as invasion, annexation, or colonization. It is reported that rural areas in Africa have been left to deteriorate economically and socially in recent decades as a result of new imperialism. Because of this, the provision of services, facilities, and employment opportunities in the communities has been reduced. Community members also face a lack of education and skills, making it difficult to secure a suitable source of livelihood or employment.

Coupled with the afore mentioned constraints to sustainable livelihood of the communities, is the issue of climate change. Nigeria is one of the African countries affected by climate change. The country, like every other nation in the World, has witness frequent and unpredictable weather over time, especially in the past twenty years. States in the Northeast, such as Gombe and Yobe, Borno have experienced less rainfall, higher temperatures, and extreme weather conditions such as high sun intensity and severe winds, all of which have resulted in an increase in communal conflicts, crime and insurgency (Nwokeoma & Chinedu, 2017). Climate change has been observed to cause poor crop yields, reduced soil fertility, increased flooding, poverty, and food shortages in rural communities (Egbe, Yaro, Okon & Bisong, 2014).

In order to address these constraints militating against rural development, corporations have begun to yield to calls to integrate and implement Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities that foster development of communities. The term corporate social responsibility emerged in the academic circles during the 1950s. Ortar (2014) maintained that the origin of social expectations from the private sector can be traced to 1916 when Professor J.M. Clark mentioned the importance of transparency in business undertakings. Clark as cited in Ortar (2014) asserted that "if men are responsible for the known results of their actions, business responsibilities must include the known results of business dealings, whether these have been recognized by law or not".

Several years after the introduction of CSR concept globally, it has become a recognized and researched topic in academic circles, corporate governance, corporate citizenship, customer relations, environmental stewardship, philanthropy, community involvement, social and governance (Gary, 2022; Ortar, 2014). The concerns that motivate the birth of CSR are frequently broad-ranging, multifaceted, and ever-changing, but they typically include topics such as circular economy, economic effects, social impacts, employee engagements, stakeholder engagements, environmental impacts and harmonies community living, human rights, among others, all of which are aimed at improving the livelihood of communities (Heemskert, 2012).

Gombe State is one of Nigeria's poorest states with over two million people living in poverty, primarily due to poor macroeconomic policies, corruption, mismanagement, lack of education, inequality, low income, low revenue generation capacity, and a lack of welfare and social investment (Odusanya, 2023). With 74.6% of residents being poor, seven out of ten people are impoverished. The World Bank reports that extremely poor people live on less than \$1.90 per day. The state also has a high level of multidimensional poverty, with 71.9% of the population

being multi-dimensionally poor, lacking access to nutrition, healthcare, education, housing, sanitation, water, and information (Nasiru, 2021). Hence, the study was aimed to examine the Effects of Economic-Related Corporate Social Responsibility Activities on Sustainable Livelihood of Selected Communities in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Calderon (2006) defined descriptive research as a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, processes, trends, and cause-effect relationships and then making adequate and accurate interpretation about such data with or without or sometimes minimal aid of statistical methods. Also, this method ascertains prevailing conditions of facts in a group under study that gives either qualitative or quantitative, or both, descriptions of the general characteristics of the group as results.

The target population of this study was 25,497 individuals drawn from 22 selected communities and 19 corporations in Gombe State. The corporations were selected from sectors such as banks; extracting/mining industries, telecommunication companies, agricultural corporations, religious organization, NGOs, health and pharmaceutical industries. The corporations are targeted because they are in the best position to offer valuable data concerning the contributions of CSR on the livelihood of the communities affected by climate change in Gombe State within the period under review (2015 to 2019).

The study in collaboration with Gombe State Ministry of Trade and Industries, Ministry of Rural, Community Development and Cooperatives, purposively selected 19 corporations from the 37 corporations which implemented CSR programmes in Gombe State from 2015 to 2019. The reason for selection of these corporations was strictly based on their numerous corporate social responsibility programmes implemented in the communities. Similarly, in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade & Industries; and Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources, purposive sampling technique was also adopted to select 22 communities in Gombe State that have profited from CSR programmes from the corporations to serve as the sample population for the study.

From the 19 sampled corporations, purposive and stratified sampling technique was adopted to select 95 corporations' staff, five each ($5 \times 19 = 95$) to serve as respondents. The choice of the respondents was based on their involvement in the department and committees that have implemented CSR programmes in their corporations. Similarly, purposive and clustered sampling technique was adopted to select 110 respondents, five each ($5 \times 22 = 110$) from the 22 communities. These individuals were those who lived in cluster and closer to the CSR programmes and had adequate knowledge and have benefited from the CSR programmes in the community. The total sample size for the study was 205 ($95 + 110$) respondents.

The instrument for data collection for the study was the questionnaire using Likert scale of low, fair and high categories rating of corporations economic-related activities on the livelihood of the selected communities. Questionnaire was considered appropriate in collecting data from a large number of respondents within a short time (Osuala, 2005). Two (2) different sets of questionnaires were designed for corporations' respondents and the community respondents for the purpose of data collection. The questionnaire was administered at the offices and home or agreed venues to the respondents. Respondents' rights to participate or withdraw from the interview session was observed and guaranteed.

Out of the 110 copies of the questionnaires administered on sampled communities' respondents, a response rate of 82% (86) was recorded. Similarly, out of the 95 copies questionnaires administered on corporations' respondents, a response rate of 91% (97) was recorded. The

aggregate of the questionnaire administered was 205. The total response rate recorded for the study was, therefore, 183 representing 86.30% of the 205 administered questionnaire in the study.

The data collected for the study was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics used was frequency distribution and percentages while the inferential statistics used was chi-square. The descriptive statistics was used to analyse the demography of the respondents while inferential statistics was used to analyse the data on contributions of economic-related activities to the livelihood of the selected communities in Gombe State.

Result of the Findings

Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents considered for this study were sex, age, age (years), and highest educational qualification.

Table 1: Demography of the Respondents

Description	Corporations respondents		Community respondents	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Sex				
Male	63	73	71	73.20
Female	23	27	26	26.80
Total	86	100	97	100
Age				
35 – 40	13	15	16	16.49
41 – 46	21	24	32	32.99
47 – 52	10	12	22	22.68
53 – 58	25	29	18	18.56
59 & Above	17	20	9	19.29
Total	86	100	97	100
Education Qualification				
National Certificate of Education	9	11	12	12.37
National Diploma	12	14	10	10.31
Higher National Diploma	25	29	28	28.87
Degree	33	38	36	37.11
Masters	7	8	11	11.34
Total	86	100	97	100

Source: Field survey, 2020

According to data in Table 1, 73.20 % of the communities' respondents were male while 26.80% were female. On the other hand, 73% of the corporation's respondents were male while 27% were female. This gender distribution can be attributed to the socio-cultural and religious inclinations of the people in the study area, where women are restricted from participating in the public domain. Due to these factors, only a small proportion of women were available as respondents for the study.

In the same vein, Table 1 also indicates that, 16.49% of the communities respondents were within the age range of 35 – 40 years, 32.99% were within 41 – 46 years 22.68% were within 47 – 52 years, 18.56% were within 53 – 58 years and 19.29% were within age range of 59 years and above. For corporations respondents, 15% were within the age range of 35 – 40 years, 24% were within 41 – 46 years, 12% were within 47 – 52 years, 29% were within 53 – 58 years and 20% fell within the age bracket of 59 years and above. This suggests that a significant proportion of the respondents consisted of active and engaged youths within the study area. Given their involvement in various productive ventures, they are likely to provide valuable insights into the corporations' Corporate Social Responsibility activities within the community.

Table 1, further reveals the educational qualifications of the respondents. Specifically, 12.37% of the community’s respondents had attained Nigeria Certificate in Education, 10.31% had National Diploma, 28.87% had a Higher National Diploma, 37.11% possessed a degree, and 11.34% held a Masters qualification. Table 1 further showed that 11% of the corporations’ respondents had Nigeria Certificate in Education, 14% had National Diploma, 29% had Higher National Diploma, 38% had Degree and 8% had Masters. These findings indicate that all the respondents had achieved some level of educational attainment. Moreover, the results demonstrate that the respondents were well-educated, which positions them to effectively respond to the research questions.

Effects of Economic-Related Initiatives on Sustainable Livelihood

Three indicators associated with CSR economic-related initiatives on the sustainable livelihood of selected community in Gombe State were studied. These indicators encompassed capacity building programmes, community development projects, and employee engagement initiatives.

The study conducted a cross-tabulation chi-square test on the three indicators using eighty six (86) corporations’ respondents to determine the effects of corporations’ contributions to economic-related CSR activities on the sustainable livelihood of selected communities in Gombe State. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Effect of Economic-related CSR Activities on the sustainable livelihood of communities

N = 86	Rate of Contributions	Effects on Livelihood of Communities Affected by Climate Change		
		Unsatisfactory Effect on Livelihood	Satisfactory Effect on Livelihood	Highly Satisfactory Effect on Livelihood
Contributions of economic related CSR activities in capacity building programmes, community development projects and employee engagement programmes in communities	Low	26.5%	55.9%	17.6%
	Fair	8.3%	54.2%	37.5%
	High	25.0%	0.0%	75.0%

Pearson Chi-square= 11.463; df=4; P-value=0.022

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 2 presents the proportion of the rate of contributions of economic-related CSR activities to the sustainable livelihood of communities in terms of low, fair and high categories. Data collected showed that the economic related CSR activities accomplished in the study area was in the area of capacity building which include the provision of climate resilient seeds to boost yield in the communities (12.9%), provision of networking opportunities for far (16.10%), provision of farm inputs such as fertilizers, water pumps to farmers (22.60%), and training of youths and women in various vocational skills (25.80%); community development projects which were the construction and renovation of schools (22.70%), provision of instructional materials, desk, chairs, computers, school bags in schools (27.30%), construction of new roads, drainages and bridges in the communities (18.20%) and employee engagement programmes which were centred on employees family care and work safety (55.50%), employees’ allowances and bonuses (33.30%) among others (see appendix 1).

This was found to have contributed satisfactorily on the sustainable livelihood of the selected communities at the high category with the highest response rating of 75.0% than the other categories. This finding suggests strong evidence that economic-related CSR activities such as

capacity building programme, community development projects and employee engagement initiatives had important effect on the sustainable livelihood of the communities. Similarly, the chi-square test ($\chi^2=11.463$, $p=.022$) further shows that, there is statistically significant relationship between the corporations’ economic related CSR activities on the sustainable livelihood of the communities at 0.02 level of significance. This implies that any continuous effort by the corporations in delivering economic related CSR activities will lead to positive effects on the livelihood of the communities.

In capacity building, the farmers were provided with climate resilient seeds to boost yield, provided network for feedbacks amongst farmers, marketers, and manufacturers to enhance marketing. Some were trained on the use of new farming methods and implements and were provided with agricultural soft loans and training on pest control to resist the impacts of climate change. Many youths and women were trained in various vocational skills acquisition programmes such as tailoring, computer repairs and maintenance, handsets repairs, automobile mechanic, hair barbing salon, telecommunication businesses, among others.

Similarly, on community development projects, corporations constructed or renovated classrooms, roads, culverts, science laboratories, clinics and provided electrification, solar light and other infrastructure that have positive effects on the livelihood of the communities. The employee engagement initiatives achieved through employee engagements mechanisms such as prompt payment of salaries and other remunerations, work safety measures, trainings, community meetings, annual general meeting among others also led to increase welfare and jobs satisfaction for corporations’ employees where the employees carried out CSR programmes that contributes to the livelihoods of the communities. Książak and Fischbach (2017) affirmed that, within framework triple bottom line, the economic related CSR activities are also seen as the real economic benefit enjoyed by communities. In other words, it is the real economic effects which corporations have on the livelihood of communities. Indeed, sustainable livelihood theory advised that all the basic assets of every community should be identified and harnessed, for sustainable development of the community.

In a similar vein, to cross check the result in the communities, the researchers conducted a cross-tabulation chi-square test on the same indicators using ninety seven (97) community respondents to determine the effect of corporations’ performance in economic-related CSR activities on the sustainable livelihood of the selected communities. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Effects of Economic-Related CSR Activities on livelihood of communities

N=97	Rate of Contributions	Effects on Livelihood of Communities Affected by Climate Change		
		Unsatisfactory Effect on Livelihood	Satisfactory Effect on Livelihood	Highly Satisfactory Effect on Livelihood
Contributions of economic related CSR activities in capacity building programmes, community development projects and employee engagement initiatives in communities	Low	30.2%	53.5%	16.3%
	Fair	11.8%	54.9%	33.3%
	High	20.6%	52.6%	26.8%
Pearson Chi-square= 10.105; df=4; P-value=0.039				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 3 shows the proportion of the rating of the contributions of economic-related CSR activities on the sustainable livelihood of communities as low, fair and high categories. The

table revealed that, the economic related CSR activities accomplished in capacity building programmes, community development projects and employee engagement programmes contribute satisfactorily to the sustainable livelihood of the communities at rating of fair performance category with the highest response rate of 54.9% than the other categories. This implies that a major proportion of the community members have adequate share of the effects of economic related CSR activities on their livelihoods. The chi-square test ($\chi^2=10.105$, $p=.039$) further revealed that, there is statistically significant relationship between economic-related CSR activities and the livelihood of the selected communities at 0.04 level of significance. This finding suggests that any continuous provision of economic related CSR activities by the corporations would further yield effects on the livelihood of the communities.

Appendix 1 indicates the number and percentage of economic-related CSR initiatives which were implemented in the study area within the period under investigation in capacity building programmes (31 events), community development projects (22 events), and employee engagement initiatives (27 events).

This finding indicates that employee engagements in CSR initiatives were essential for the success and sustainability of CSR programmes that improve community livelihood. This result was consistent with those of Tsourvakas and Yfantidou (2018), Carr (2018), Tariqq (2015), Memon *et al* (2020), and Glavas (2016), who in separate studies found that employee engagements had notable benefits for both corporations and the communities where those corporations operate.

This finding is consistent with sustainable livelihood approach which is explained human communities have abundant resources ranging from economic, social and environmental which can be harvested especially during unexpected events and tensions such as climate change. Typical programmes such as CSRs must seek to identify their sources, enhance and developed them over time for the benefit of communities. However, Bahadur and Waqqas, (2013) and Chwiłkowska-Kubala *et al* (2021) posited that the attainment of one dimensional one out of the triple-bottom-line does not yield to achieving CSR programmes. The other dimensions must be carried alone in order to achieve effective results.

Some of the Constraints Identified in the Study

Some of the barriers for the implementation of employee engagement include; lack of formal structures for proper employee engagement initiatives by some corporations, lack of development, promotion, and appreciation of well performed employees by the corporations' management and lack of clarity about the aims and objectives of labour policies. Not all corporations treat their employees well. Others include unacceptability by some community members due to differences in culture and beliefs. The result of low impacts on employee engagement programmes did not significantly improve the livelihood of the members of the communities.

Capacity building programmes by the corporations were hampered by some factors including difficulty in recruiting specialist that educate the participants in current necessary skills on capacity building, inadequate funds to help execute sustainable capacity building programmes by the corporations, difficulty in selecting beneficiaries and the skills to train them due to their difficulties in comprehending new technological skills among others.

There were prejudices and political preferences in the selection of the programme beneficiaries, late arrival of capacity building materials, failure of few corporations to provide start-up kits and capitals for the trainees and exclusion of people living with disabilities (PLDs) in the implemented capacity building programmes. There were also concerns about the late distribution of capacity building materials and the provision of substandard materials given to

the beneficiaries. It was also complained that the efforts by the corporations were mostly directed toward urban and semi urban residents in the communities affected by climate change. Consequently, following these complaints some of the respondents maintained that capacity building initiatives did not significantly improve the livelihood of members their communities.

Conclusion

The contributions of economic-related CSR activities in capacity building programmes, community development projects and employee engagement have high significant effect on the sustainable livelihood of the communities with the chi-square test results of ($\chi^2=11.463$, $p=.022$) as revealed by corporations' respondents. This position was also echoed by the community respondents that the economic related CSR activities had significant effects ($\chi^2=10.105$, $p=.039$) on the sustainable livelihood of the selected communities.

Recommendations

The study recommended that there should be collaboration with corporations, NGOs, and community organizations in the selection processes of the beneficiaries for capacity building initiatives and community development initiatives. People living with disability should be deliberately chosen for empowerment to enable them earn a livelihood, tax holiday should be granted to corporations that implement CRS projects that improve livelihood; corporations can pool resources together to accomplish capital intensive projects in the study area.

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Appendix 1: Economic related CSR activities implemented in the communities

Capacity Building Initiatives	Items/Events	%
Provision of climate resilient seeds to boost yield in the communities	4	12.9
Provision of networking opportunities for famers between marketers and manufacturers	5	16.1
Training of farmers on the use of new farming methods and implements.	3	9.7
Provision of agricultural soft loans and training on pest control	2	6.5
Provision of farm inputs such as fertilizers, water pumps to farmers	7	22.6
Training of teachers on new technology and teaching aids	2	6.5
Training of youths and women in various vocational skills	8	25.8
Total	31	100
Community Development Projects		
Construction and renovations of clinics or maternities	3	13.6
Constructions and renovations of schools,	5	22.7
Provision of instructional materials, desk, chairs,computers, school bags in schools	6	27.3
Construction and donation of examinational hall with furniture	1	4.5
Construction of science laboratory complex;	1	4.5
Electrification of rural communities	2	9.1
Constructions of new roads,drainages and bridges in the communities	4	18.2
Total	22	100
Employees Engagement Initiatives		
Employees family care and work safety	15	55.5
Employees' allowances and bonuses	9	33.3
Employees' involvement/training of youths and women in various community services	3	11.1
Total	27	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020