A Stakeholder Approach to Strategic CSR: A Case Study of ExxonMobil and a Capacity Development Initiative in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

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I give all the glory to God almighty for his infinite mercies and provisions.

My sincerely gratitude to my wife, my family and friends without which it would not have been possible to carry out this work.

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ABSTRACT

Extant literature suggests that the business case for CSR may ensure a sustainable approach towards CSR practice. Underpinning this concept is the ability to leverage the opportunities provided a firm through adopting those CSR initiatives which align social and economic goals and referred to as Strategic CSR. There is scant research on the assessment of the social impact of strategic CSR initiatives on stakeholders aside from the financial impact on the firm. Existing studies have generally been conducted from the perspective of the firm, with less regard given to the perceptions of other stakeholders. Also, there is a dearth of empirical studies on the business case for CSR in the Nigerian context. Given these gaps, this thesis explores a stakeholder perspective of a capacity development programme adopted by Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited, a subsidiary of ExxonMobil. The aim is to explore the concept of strategic CSR in the context of the NDR of Nigeria, given the heterogeneity of the concept of CSR and the importance of this region to the Nigerian economy. This study employs a qualitative exploratory case study technique. In-depth interviews with two groups of host community members were conducted. They consisted of direct beneficiaries of the initiative and host community members considered to be opinion leaders. Field observations were made, and other relevant documents were sourced to provide differing insights. The findings revealed that contrary to the notion of the provision of welfare as philanthropy, communities in the NDR consider the practice as an ethical obligation of the firm, alluding to cultural and environmental factors responsible for this perception. In terms of the capacity development programme, it is suggested that there are opportunities to practice strategic CSR in the NDR. The findings further suggest that there is scope to improve the effectiveness of the initiative by adopting a stakeholder engagement approach.

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List of Abbreviations

AU   African Union

CED   Committee for Economic Development

CSR   Corporate Social Responsibility

CSRC   Corporate Social Responsibility Commission

EIA   Environmental Impact Assessment

EPNL   Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited

FEPA   Federal Environmental Protection Agency

FTSE   Financial Times Stock Exchange

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

GRI   Global Reporting Initiative

ISO   International Organization Standard

MEI   Mobil Exploration Incorporation

MNC   Multinational Corporations

MOPP   Mobil Oil Producing PLC

MOU   Memorandum of Understanding

MPNU   Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited

NAFDAC   National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control

NDR   Niger Delta Region

NEITI   **Nigerian Extraction Industry Transparency Initiative**

NGO   **Non- Governmental Organization**

NNPC   **Nigerian National Petroleum Corporations**

OPEC   **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries**

QIT   **Qua Ibom Terminal**

SDG   **Sustainable Development Goals**

SPDC   **Shell Petroleum Development Company**

TTC   **Technical Training Centre**

UN   **United Nations**

WBCSD   **World Business Council for Sustainable Development**

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of this thesis that reports the research fieldwork. It demonstrates the rationale and scope for carrying out this research, which investigates the social impact of strategic CSR from the perspective of the internal and external stakeholders of Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited, a subsidiary of ExxonMobil.

Going forward, the chapter presents an overview of the current literature and discusses relevant theories from existing research on CSR. It goes on to identify the gaps in the literature that the research intends to fill, including the significance of the study. It states the research aims and objectives, followed by the research questions. The methodology of the research is briefly presented, concluding with a brief description of the structure of the thesis.

1.1   Background

The controversy surrounding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is evident from its emergence in modern literature as "social responsibility" (Bowen, 1953), to the expansion and proliferation of the concept (Jamali, 2007) as it has given way to related concepts and themes expressed in (for example) Carroll (1999) and Khan et al. (2012). The concept of CSR is fraught with difficulty, resulting in arguments about its lack of congruent definitions (Khan et al., 2012) that have been responsible for the emergence of alternative concepts and themes (Freeman, 1984; Visser, 2008; Blowfield & Frynas, 2005;

Madrakhimova, 2013). As a result, practitioners must consider how to define and incorporate CSR into all aspects of their business (Zu & Song, 2008). Some authors contend that the lack of a definitional consensus on CSR makes theoretical development and measurement difficult (Hopkins, 2004; McWilliams et al., 2006; Ismail, 2011).

Nonetheless, the overarching issue of CSR is arguably the question of legitimacy (Friedman, 1962). The legitimacy discourse within the CSR arena has both supporting and opposing voices. Proponents of the discourse suggest that businesses have obligations beyond profit to shareholders, including an array of social, civic and moral responsibilities not required by law, although there are differing views on who and what is to be included (Freeman, 1984; Carroll, 1999). On the other hand, the opponents contend that the responsibility of a business is to maximise profit for its shareholders while providing society with goods and services, insofar as this is done within the law (Friedman, 1962; Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Fama & Jensen, 1983). Theorists argue about the likelihood of conflict of interest, which would involve a greater chance for CSR to adversely affect organisations' overall performance (Fama & Jensen, 1983; Jensen, 1993). Similarly, some have noted the paradoxical nature of the concept, as the quests for economic and social outcomes seem to be in conflict (Sundaram & Inkpen, 2004b). However, if we return to Friedman's (1962) contention about the extension of fiduciaries' responsibilities beyond the law, the constitution of today's laws and regulations accommodates issues that were previously perceived as ethically expected. Today's legislations are borne out of yesterday's ethical codes of conduct.

Despite the perceived difficulties and criticism of CSR, the concept has remained useful in both research and practice. It could be argued that this is partly attributable to an increasing awareness of the negative impact of large corporations on society, especially in the extractive industries (Boele, Fabig & Wheeler, 2001). With advances in information technology, international organisations, governments, individuals and groups from around

the world can now exert pressure on corporations to comply with CSR through socially responsible investment, threats of boycott, litigation and so on.

In compliance with the pressure exerted by society, corporations are increasingly adopting CSR as standard business practice. For instance, Bhattacharyya and Sen (2004) report that section on CSR issues were found in literature from 80 percent of the Fortune 500 companies. Smith (2003) found that 78 percent of the Fortune 1000 companies and 80 percent of the Financial Times Stock Exchange Group (FTSE)-100 companies had separate codes of ethics and information on social environmental policies respectively. Also, studies show an increase in ISO 14001 certifications and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) reports (Neergaard & Pedersen, 2012). In this context, it is arguable that compliance with CSR is no longer a bone of contention with today's corporations. Rather, the issue lies with how to effectively implement CSR in an increasingly competitive business environment.

Given the costs of CSR practice for businesses, the CSR discourse has shifted from an entirely altruistic approach (Frederick, 1986; Carroll, 1979, 1999) to focus on attempting to achieve compatibility with regard to profitability and social responsibility. This is not to imply that this concept is new to the literature. For instance, Drucker (1984) suggested that social issues could be perceived as economic opportunities which may lead to improved product capacity, human competence, well-paid jobs, and, eventually, wealth. In a similar vein, other authors have suggested that businesses adopt CSR initiatives that are designed to maximise profit (Baron, 2001; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Bagnoli & Watts, 2003). Porter and Kramer (2003) propose a focused approach towards adopting CSR initiatives, which strengthens the competitive context by aligning the firm's economic and social goals. Crane et al. (2008) recommend further research on individual businesses and their stakeholders regarding the effects of CSR. Some authors have investigated the relationship between CSR and efficiency (Russo et al., 1997; Salzmann et al., 2005). Others suggest a

relationship between CSR and improved skills and resources (Freeman, 1984; Evans & Freeman, 1988; Freeman & Liedtka, 1991). CSR has also been associated with improved reputation (Stuebs & Sun, 2010; Esen, 2013; Gill, 2015), including risk and cost reduction (Waddock & Graves, 1997; Salzmann et al., 2005).

The notion of aligning philanthropy with business goals and strategies, thereby reconciling economic and social goals, has come to be known as strategic CSR (Baron, 2001; Lantos, 2001; Porter & Kramer, 2003; Jamali, 2007; Sekhar Bhattaryya et al., 2008) or strategic philanthropy (Jamali, 2007). Underpinning the concept of strategic CSR is the expectation to create a competitive advantage for the practicing firm (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Crane et al., 2008). There is support for the business case for strategic CSR (Porter & Kramer, 2011; Husted, Allen, & Rivera, 2010; Orlitzky, Siegel & Waldman, 2011), but nonetheless there are also critics who perceive the concept as insincere and self-serving (Jones, 1997; Vogel, 2005; Haigh & Jones, 2006). However, some authors suggest a relationship between strategic CSR and increased sales, reduced costs and better risk management (Albinger & Freeman, 2000; Waddock et al., 2002; Chatterji et al., 2009). From their perspective, businesses can rely on a symbiotic relationship by identifying social issues in the external environment which significantly affect competitiveness in their areas of operation and leverage on them to create value, thus ensuring mutual benefits for business and society (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Sekhar Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). Typically, studies have mostly engaged in establishing a link between CSR and financial performance (Swanson, 1995; Waddock & Graves, 1997; Margolis & Walsh, 2001; Orlitzky et al., 2003; McWilliams et al., 2006). Empirical studies suggest a relationship between strategic CSR and financial performance (Orlitzky et al., 2003; Uadiale & Fagbemi, 2012), effective human resource management, reputation and operational efficiencies (Camilleri, 2012; Pollach, 2015).

Interestingly, research on strategic CSR tends to assess the phenomenon from the perspective of the firm (Maas & Boons, 2017). While this may be logical (since corporate strategy is adopted and implemented by the firm, hence the motivation and implementation process are better articulated by the firm), it is also relevant to evaluate strategic CSR initiatives from the perspective of other stakeholders to determine their effectiveness and impact to the intended beneficiaries. Burke and Logsdon (1996) refer to this notion as the visibility dimension of strategic CSR. They argue that among other requirements, a strategic CSR initiative needs to be given "observable, recognizable credit by internal and/or external stakeholders for the firm" (Burke & Logsdon, 1996, p.497). In a similar vein, Maas and Boons (2017) assert that CSR can only be strategic when it meets the condition of measuring and monitoring value beyond financial return, to include environmental and social dimensions.

Surprisingly, the impact of CSR activities undertaken by corporations on society and ecosystems remains uncharted (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). Perhaps this could be attributed to inconsistency in measuring tools for different CSR dimensions. However, studies also suggest that when measuring the impact of CSR, social and ecological aspects of strategies are not explicitly included, and in some cases are explicitly ignored (Maas & Boons, 2017). While there are available frameworks and indicators to assess ecological impacts, there are no generally acceptable standards to measure impact on society (Maas & Boons, 2017). This research intends to fill this gap by adopting an exploratory case study approach to investigate strategic CSR and its impact on society from internal and external stakeholders' perspectives. This takes into account the perceptions and expectations of the beneficiaries of the CSR initiative, and the factors that inform their perspective.

As previously suggested, mainstream CSR is gradually transforming from altruistic practices to more strategic forms of CSR (Srisuphaolarn, 2013; Idemudia, 2014). However, this trend may not adequately describe CSR in most developing nations.

Perhaps the inconsistencies may be attributed to the notion that CSR is country- and indeed context-specific (Srisuphaolarn, 2013). Studies indicate that different factors are responsible for the different patterns of CSR development in developed and developing nations (Srisuphaolarn, 2013). For instance, Matten and Moon (2008) found that businesses in Europe are less explicit in their CSR communication compared to their US counterparts, since certain CSR practices which are subject to a firm's discretion in the US are legally required by European companies. On the other hand, studies in Nigeria indicate a relationship between CSR patterns and the level of economic development (Amaeshi et al., 2006). Typically, multinational corporations (MNCs) resort to the provision of social welfare as CSR practice due to the failure of governments to provide or maintain basic social amenities (Eweje, 2006; Ajadi, 2006). Consequently, CSR researchers and practitioners in Nigeria are by default inclined to investigate altruistic approaches to CSR, and hence there is a dearth of local literature on strategic CSR, although there are a number of literature in sustainable development programmes whose focuses are mostly on community benefits (Ite, 2007a; Adewuyi & Olowookere, 2010). Thus, it is necessary to investigate CSR that is designed to create value simultaneously for organisation and society in the Nigerian context. In view of the long-term implications for all stakeholders, it is essential to identify the motivating factors for strategic CSR. This study aims to fill the gap by investigating stakeholders' expectations of strategic CSR initiatives to avoid conflict, thereby eliciting goodwill for seamless operation.

1.2   Focus on Nigeria

Oil MNCs in Nigeria are known to be at the forefront of CSR practice, hence the increasing number of studies in this area compared to other industries. The widespread CSR practice and its documentation in the oil industry are not unconnected to the

incessant conflicts in the NDR between oil MNCs, host communities and federal government.

The NDR is home to the economic wealth of the nation, as oil contributes about 95 percent of the country's export earnings, which makes up 80 percent of Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) (Hoben et al., 2012). In addition to being the most populous black nation (Amaeshi et al., 2006), Nigeria is the sixth highest oil producing nation and a significant member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The country's internal conflicts are bound to have a ripple effect on the global stage, especially on oil prices (Amaeshi, et al., 2006). Invariably, political, environmental and social issues in the country are at the heart of the nation's CSR discourse. Despite the country's oil wealth, there is an increasing level of poverty, environmental degradation and corruption perpetuated by government and the oil MNCs (Amaeshi et al., 2006). Given that the NDR is plagued by conflict, it is difficult for oil MNCs to reach maximum production.

A number of studies have explored the antagonistic relationship between MNCs and host communities in the Niger Delta (Boele et al., 2001; Idemudia, 2007; Wheeler et al., 2001). A peculiar case is the seemingly cordial relationship between ExxonMobil and host communities in Akwa Ibom State (Mbat et al., 2013; Ibok & Mboho, 2011). While it could be argued that host communities in this area are relatively peaceful when compared to other communities in the NDR, it is also important to note that oil exploration in Akwa Ibom is mainly carried out offshore. When compared with other communities with oil installations onshore, ExxonMobil operations are less likely to experience significant disruption since the company's oil installation are not located within the community.

ExxonMobil in Nigeria operates as a joint venture between Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPNU) and Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), with a profit ratio of 40 and 60 respectively (Ibok & Mboho, 2011). The company commenced operations in 1955 as Mobil Exploration Incorporation (MEI). In June 1969 the company

was incorporated as Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (NNPC, 2013). By 1970 it had begun production of crude oil off the shores of the South-Eastern State of Nigeria in the area now referred to as Akwa Ibom State, and the Qua Iboe Terminal (QIT) in Ibeno was subsequently commissioned in 1971 (Mbat et al., 2013). The company reached the one-million-barrel benchmark in oil production in 1985 and has continued to optimise oil production (Mbat et al., 2013). Following the merger of the Exxon and Mobil Corporations in December 1999, the subsidiaries Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited (EEPNL), Mobil Oil Producing PLC (MON) and Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited also merged. Currently, Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited, a subsidiary of ExxonMobil, is the second largest oil MNC in Nigeria (NNPC, 2013). It accounts for 30 percent of Nigeria's total crude oil production. Hence, its significance in the Nigerian economy cannot be overstated.

ExxonMobil's growth and expansion is reflected in its role in the economic and social development of Nigeria. Studies suggest that the firm has contributed enormously to host communities, providing social amenities while also operating planned and sustained CSR programmes which involve community development in the NDR (Mbat et al., 2013).

Mbat et al. (2013) outline CSR initiatives carried out by ExxonMobil in Akwa Ibom State; they include a range of social infrastructural programmes and capacity development initiatives implemented over the years. Ibok and Mboho (2011) classify the range of CSR programmes implemented by ExxonMobil as past and present, identifying a change in the firm's CSR strategy following the merger of the Exxon and Mobil corporations in 1997. These authors suggest that, in line with global trends, the company has changed its focus from the provision of social infrastructures to CSR strategies which aim to leverage economic and social responsibilities in an attempt to foster sustainable development (Ibok & Mboho, 2011). In a sense, the firm is focused on the economic emancipation of host communities by implementing CSR initiatives with multiplier effects. Sustainable

development initiatives that have been implemented include educational support, micro credit schemes, skill acquisition programmes and small and medium-scale business support (Ibok & Mboho, 2011).

ExxonMobil is known to adopt policies which support the employment of qualified host community members (Michael et al., 2015). The employment of host community members in this context is a precursor to poverty alleviation as traditional livelihoods are lost to the externalities of crude oil production. However, these communities often lack individuals with the required skill set for the industry. Consequently, the company has adopted the Eket Technical Training Centre as a conduit to select, train and retain community members in the firm (ExxonMobil Sustainability Report, 2012). While this initiative fulfils the local content requirement of the Nigerian Federal Government, it is also a systematic approach to secure sustainable development for all stakeholders (Alike, 2017). Accordingly, the initiative is considered and implemented as a capacity development programme.

In the area of capacity development, the Technical Training Centre has produced a pool of skilled workers which is relevant to the industry at large. Founded in 1995, the initiative has produced over 700 graduates, of whom 90 percent have been employed by Mobil Producing Nigeria (Alike, 2017). The initiative is expected to produce the required talent to keep up with the technical demands of the industry.

Despite these contributions there exists a gap between the perceptions of such CSR initiatives and host community expectations (Mbat et al, 2013; Idemudia & Ite, 2006). This gap can be attributed to the disconnection between oil MNCs and host community values. Studies suggest that community perceptions and expectations are informed by sociocultural mores, and therefore initiatives which are considered significant contribution from the perspective of the oil MNCs may not be considered same by host community members. According to Zandvliet and Pedro (2002), community perception will in time

become fact and a reality for the oil MNCs to contend regardless of the nature of that perception. As such, for oil MNCs to achieve peaceful relationship with host communities, understanding community perception and culture is a prerequisite (Agim, 1997).

Afinotan and Ojakorutu (2009) reiterate the need for dialogue and negotiation between oil MNCs and host communities as a means to lasting resolution of the crisis in the Niger Delta region. Also, Enuoh and Eneh (2015) suggest that the solution to the challenges of desired CSR outcomes rest in the understanding and consideration of the contractual relationship between host communities and MNCs. Studies overwhelmingly suggest a community focused strategy in CSR implementation, where stakeholder perceptions and expectations align (Idemudia, 2007; Enuoh & Eneh, 2015).

1.3   Justification

The significance of the NDR to the Nigerian economy cannot be overemphasised. As such, the peaceful co-existence of the different stakeholder groups is of strategic importance. Given the level of poverty, infrastructural neglect, and incessant conflict, all stakeholder groups are concerned with addressing the disjuncture between MNC intentions in adopting CSR initiatives and community expectations of those initiatives, especially in the area of capacity development. Studies suggest that despite the adoption of CSR strategies by oil MNCs, conflict in the region has only increased (Idemudia, 2010). It is generally believed that there is a disjuncture between community and oil MNC expectations of CSR activities (Idemudia, 2007; Ite, 2007b; Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). Overwhelmingly these studies argue that understanding community perceptions and expectations is a step towards resolving the conflict. Given the aforementioned, it is pertinent to understand community perceptions, and what informs these perceptions, of CSR initiatives in the NDR. The aim is to align community expectations with MNC

expectations, and thus suggest an effective CSR deployment strategy while also addressing the gap in the literature.

As earlier stated, the understanding and practice of CSR is known to be heterogeneous depending on the context (Visser, 2011; Amaeshi et al., 2006; Srisuphaolarn, 2013; Nalband & Kelabi, 2014). Arguably, this statement is applicable to strategic CSR, hence the need to understand strategic CSR in the context of the NDR. Interestingly, there has been recent interest in the study of sustainable community development programmes in Nigeria (Renouard & Lado, 2012; Adegbite et al., 2012). Nonetheless, most studies are focused on the benefits which accrue to host communities as a stakeholder group. While community perceptions and expectations stand at the core of this research, it is also essential to identify the benefits which accrue to the firm. Contrary to most CSR studies in Nigeria, the notion of mutual benefit associated with strategic CSR in this study is explicit, as it is the gist of the construct. Implementing strategic CSR requires identifying social issues to create opportunities for the firm's value chain activities or competitive context, in a manner which ensures long-term value for all (Porter & Kramer, 2011). From this perspective, CSR initiatives that do not align with social and economic goals are uncoordinated, therefore isolated from business and corporate strategy (Porter & Kramer, 2003). The effects of such CSR initiatives on the host society often have little or no significant impact, since they respond to numerous uncoordinated stakeholder demands. This case study suggests that strategic CSR leverages the opportunities provided the firm by addressing social issues that are directly linked to the organisation's competitive context, ensuring benefits for both organisation and its host communities (Jamali, 2007; Fisher et al., 2009). It seems that strategic CSR programmes have led to cost reduction, better availability of human resources, and improved organisational reputation and licence to operate (Porter & Kramer, 2006; McWilliams & Siegel, 2011; Orlitzky, Siegel & Waldman, 2011).

The importance of a skilled workforce which provides a global competitive edge cannot be overemphasised. As a capacity development programme, ExxonMobil's technical training initiative is an ideal case study for strategic CSR investment in the NDR. The firm is considered the highest private sector employer of labour in Akwa Ibom State. As earlier mentioned, this CSR initiative has produced over 700 graduates, of whom 90 percent have been employed by the firm. According to the Chairman/MD, Mr McGrath, the initiative is an attempt to comply with the local content requirements of the Nigeria Federal Government. As a collaborative programme with other stakeholders, the initiative is intended to ensure long-term benefits for the firm (Alike, 2017). Although not the only such initiative, it was the first of its kind, and has been consistent, which sets it apart since similar initiatives adopted by other oil MNCs are on an ad hoc basis. The initiative has been ongoing for over two decades. It has produced a pool of skilled personnel for the oil industry, accounting for a significant proportion of the technical workforce in the firm.

1.4 Significance of the study

As mentioned earlier, CSR is broadly seen as a social construct, and is therefore context-specific (Visser, 2011; Amaeshi et al., 2006; Nalband & Kelabi, 2014). Studies allude to the notion of CSR as a context-specific phenomenon since expectations between societies differ due to factors such as culture, historical backgrounds and business practices (Lorenzo-Molo, 2009). This is a position embraced by this study. Hence, in this study, the exploration of internal and external stakeholders within their environment and cultural context is considered pertinent. This study contributes to the scant literature on the assessment of the social impact of strategic CSR from the points of view of internal and external stakeholders (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Maas & Boons, 2017) and, in addition, to the strategic CSR literature in the extractive industries of developing economies.

This study contributes to existing knowledge on CSR as it offers insight into the perception of stakeholders in the NDR on what constitutes ethical responsibility. Contrary to widely accepted notion of CSR practices by oil MNCs in the NDR- generally characterised by providing social welfare to host communities, as a philanthropic obligation (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Idemudia 2011; Mbat et al., 2013; Ibok & Mboho, 2011; Eweje, 2006), these communities perceive these practice as an ethical obligation. Therefore, this study suggests that the provision of social amenities by oil MNCs in the NDR, given the context of this region is an ethical obligation to the firm.

Most significantly, this study adopts an exploratory case study to understand the social impact of strategic CSR. Given that community perspective on the social impact of strategic CSR to the best of our knowledge is not an area of extensive examination, this study offers insight and preliminary step to a more focused investigation into the social impact of strategic CSR in extractive communities characterised by incessant unrest (Ogawa & Malen, 1991). The findings suggest that there is scope for oil MNCs in the NDR to leverage the opportunities provided the firm through addressing social issues linked to its core business activities, thus, creating a win-win situation for the firm and other stakeholders. Notwithstanding the motive in adopting CSR initiatives, this study finds that though some CSR initiative may be perceived as coerced (Husted & de Jesus Salazar 2006), they are nonetheless strategic and will create value for stakeholders in so far as the initiative is directly linked to the firm's value chain activities and /or competitive context. Evidently, this study shows that a capacity development CSR programme led to cost reduction, the availability of human resources, and improved organisational reputation.

Furthermore, this study acknowledges the efficacy of Burke & Logsdon (1996) dimensions of strategic CSR in assessing when and in what ways CSR initiatives achieve economic and societal interest. This study builds on Burke & Logsdon (1996) concept of

strategic CSR to propose a community involvement approach by exploring stakeholder's perceptions and expectations during the planning and implementation phases of strategic CSR initiatives to achieve significant and sustained value for all stakeholders.

Finally, exploring stakeholders' perceptions of the social impact of this strategic CSR initiative should provide insight into the effective implementation of CSR in the Nigerian oil industry. Therefore, given the context of strategic CSR in the Nigerian oil industry, the findings of this study are likely to be beneficial not only to the Nigerian oil industry, but also to other organisations in the extractive industries in other developing nations.

1.5 Research aim and objectives

This study explores community perceptions and expectations following the adoption of a capacity development programme as a CSR initiative by MPNU. The aim is to explore the concept of strategic CSR in the context of the NDR of Nigeria. To reach this aim, the following objectives were adopted:

- Explore community perceptions and expectations of CSR

- Ascertain the motive behind the adoption of the capacity development initiative

- Identify the opportunities provided by the initiative to the organisation and the benefits accrued to host communities

- Determine the nature of the disjuncture between host community perception of benefits versus their expectations of the initiative

Based on the research aim and objectives, the following research questions were formulated.

1.6   Research questions

- What are the host community's perceptions and expectations of CSR?

- What is the host community's perception of the motive behind the adoption of the capacity development initiative?

- What is the host community's perception of the opportunities provided by the initiative to the organisation and the benefits of the initiative accrued to the community?

- What is the nature of the disjuncture between host community's perceptions of the benefit versus their expectations of the initiative?

These research questions including the aforementioned aim and objectives and allow for the adoption of the following research method.

1.7   Research methodology

As mentioned above, an exploratory case study was conducted. According to Saunders et al., (2012, p. 179), a case study explores a phenomenon within its context or a number of real-life contexts. It allows the researcher to gain a holistic view of the phenomenon rather than presenting a view based on isolated factors (Yin, 1994). Given the context of this study, this approach will allow for a holistic representation of the phenomenon. Typically, case study research poses answers to the questions "why" "what" and "how" (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179). In this study, the researcher investigated external and internal stakeholders' perceptions and expectations of a strategic CSR initiative in the context of the NDR in Nigeria by addressing the three research questions.

Primary and secondary data were used in this study. Semi-structured interviews were the main source of primary data, and these included face-to-face and telephone interviews.

Secondary data such as news articles and company publications were also sourced to give the company's perspective. There were two groups of participants: community members, and MPNU employees who are beneficiaries of the capacity development initiative. A total of 20 participants from Eket, Esit-Eket, Ibeno and Onna Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria were interviewed. Participants from these communities were chosen based on their host community status.

1.8   Thesis structure

This section outlines the structure of the thesis. It is divided into five chapters, with this being Chapter 1, the introductory chapter. Chapter 2 presents a review of extant literature on the topic, beginning with an overview of CSR and the evolution of the definitional construct. The concepts, its transformation and adaptation in spite of increasing expectations from various stakeholders are further discussed. Finally, the chapter discusses CSR in the context of the NDR, including the complex relations between oil MNCs and other stakeholders.

Chapter 3 discusses the researcher's philosophical underpinnings, including the methodology and the rationale behind the adoption of the research strategies and methods used to understand community perceptions of CSR and the capacity development initiative.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, based on in-depth interviews with beneficiaries of the capacity development initiative and host community members.

Chapter 5 views the findings in relation to extant literature on the phenomenon under study, including a discussion of published articles on the capacity development initiative.

Chapter 6 presents a summary of the research findings and presents the research

limitations, and discusses the implications of the study for theory and practice. Finally, it

recommends areas for future research and the development of new ideas surrounding CSR.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

This chapter discusses the extant literature on CSR. It begins with an overview of CSR, and illustrates different perspectives on the phenomenon. It discusses strategic CSR, including different strategic CSR models which determine the strategic implications of a CSR initiative. Literature on CSR from a Nigerian perspective is also discussed.

2.1   An overview of corporate social responsibility

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is increasingly becoming a major discussion topic among today's business leaders and governments. This development can be attributed to increased awareness by the public of the actions of large corporations and their impact on society. Consequently, activists and governments alike are increasingly demanding socially responsible behaviours across the board, irrespective of firm size. One of the objectives of these demands is to tackle environmental degradation and other negative externalities created by corporations. For instance, the United Nations 1999 World Economic Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which took place in Davos, was explicit in its position regarding adherence to social responsibility. Similarly, the 2015 Paris Agreement, signed by 55 countries to check climate change, reiterated the global commitment to the pursuit of a cleaner and more sustainable environment.

Global interest in CSR has since resulted in important decisions in the European Union, such as the United Kingdom's appointment of a Minister for CSR and the French government's insistence that organisations with staff numbers exceeding 300 must tender

a standardised social report (Jamali, 2007). To this effect, corporations are increasingly incorporating CSR activities as part of their business objectives. For instance, out of 250 multinational corporations, more than 60 percent reported on their CSR involvement in 2005 (Porter & Kramer, 2006). At this juncture, it suffices to say that a position of total compliance with social responsibility is approaching faster than initially envisaged.

However, the pressing issues encountered by today's corporations do not necessarily lie in compliance, but rather in how to effectively implement CSR. As a result, the concept of CSR has undergone intense scrutiny, starting from arguments about the inconsistency or non-consensual definition of the concept and moving on to issues of legitimacy, especially since CSR seems to go directly against the fundamental principle of the economic maximisation of the business. Such concerns about the perceived adverse effects on business are expressed by Milton Friedman. However, proponents such as Carroll (1999) and Freeman (1984) have argued in favour of the need for an organisation to go beyond its economic obligation to include altruistic obligations to society. Respectively, both authors proposed frameworks outlining the components of CSR (economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic) embodied in a pyramid (Carroll, 1999) and the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984).

On the contrary, authors such as Porter and Kramer (2006) and Lantos (2001) have argued that though the act of philanthropy is noble, a strategic approach to CSR will ensure viability and sustainability for both the corporation and the society. In response to the seemingly generic forms of CSR initiatives adopted by most organisations, Porter and Kramer (2006) argue that such initiatives have the tendency to focus only on the "*tension between business and the society rather than the dependence*" (p 83). As such, an approach to CSR which provides economic and social benefit is proposed. From this perspective, the firm should adopt initiatives which identify with and complement its core

competencies in order to maximise profit while also creating a substantial positive impact on society.

2.2 Definitions of corporate social responsibility

Consistent with the concept of corporate social responsibility is the lack of consensus in its definition. Perhaps because CSR is fundamentally a social construct, its perception varies among different groups. However, a number of authors have attempted to develop a broad definition of the concept. Below is a non-exhaustive list of CSR definitions.

2.2.1 Non-exhaustive definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility

"*Social responsibility refers to a public posture toward society's economic and human resources and a willingness to see that those resources are utilised for broad social ends and not simply for the narrowly circumscribed interests of private persons and firms*" (Frederick, 1960, p.60).

"*CSR refers to the firm's consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical and legal requirements of the firm*" (Davis, 1960, p. 70).

"*CSR is related to (i) products, jobs and economic growth, (ii) societal expectations and (iii) activities aimed at improving the social environment of the firm*" (Committee for Economic Development, 1971).

"*The new concept of corporate social responsibility recognises the intimacy of the relationships between the corporation and society and realizes that such relationships must be kept in mind by top managers as the corporation and the related groups pursue their respective goals*" (Walton, 1967, p.18).

"*The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that society has of organisations at a given point in time*" (Carroll, 1979).

"*The commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life*" (Cramer, 2005, p. 583).

"*…adopt values and norms along with organizational processes to minimize their negative impacts and maximize their positive impacts on important stakeholder issues*" (Maignan et al., 2005, p. 958).

CSR generally evaluates the obligations and the nature of the relationship between a business and its internal and external environments. The concept attempts to define the nature of the obligations which a business owes society. CSR as a business concept has been in existence since the notion of studying of business itself. However, it has increased in relevance both in literature and practice within the last 60 years (Dahlsrud, 2008). Bowen's Social Responsibility of a Businessman gave rise to similar or related concepts often used interchangeably with CSR. These concepts include "Business Ethics", "Corporate Philanthropy", "Corporate Social Policy", "Sustainable Development", "Corporate Citizenship", "Corporate Sustainability", "Corporate Reputation", "Social Responsible Investment", "Corporate Social Reporting" – the list goes on (Freeman, 1984; Pedersen, 2009; Visser, 2008; Blowfield & Frynas, 2005; Madrakhimova, 2013). As the phrases ascribed to the concept differ, so too do the ways in which different authors have defined it, leading to the lack of a consensual definition both in the literature and among practitioners.

Lantos (2001) summarises the most important definitions of CSR from the extant literature, defining CSR as an obligation of a business to consider society's wellbeing, by

optimising its positive effects and minimising its negative effects on society. In the same vein, Dahlsrud (2008) argues that although there is widespread concern about the inconsistency associated with definitions of CSR, in fact the existing definitions are largely congruent. He further argues that environmental, social, economic, stakeholder and volunteerism dimensions are identified as consistent with most definitions (Dahlsrud, 2008). Collectively referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility in the thesis, the concept of how business perceives its responsibilities to society has evolved from an altruistic perspective to a more strategic stance (Srisuphaolarn, 2013; Idemudia, 2014).

Various arguments put forward in earlier literature concentrated on ascertaining the nature of the responsibility of a business to society. This gave rise to two main schools of thought, which propose and oppose what may be viewed as the philanthropic aspect of the concept. Generally, the perception of the supporting school of thought is the notion that businesses have a wide array of social, civic and moral responsibilities as part of a social contract. However, the level of obligation and to whom may differ. These views have paved the way for a better understanding and evolution of CSR and they were made explicit in the work of Carroll (1999), where the author outlines chronologically the contributions, definitional constructs and evolution of CSR.

The dominant opposing view of the CSR concept is credited to the renowned economist Milton Friedman, who argues that by the very nature of a business, its only social obligation is to maximise profit for its shareholders. Friedman's position has come to be known as shareholder or agency theory, and will be elaborated on letter in this chapter. In line with Friedman, Bakan (2004) concur that the legitimate responsibility of business is to maximise profit for shareholders while providing goods and services for society. Friedman (1970) further argues that it would be irresponsible and illegal for managers to commit shareholders' funds into areas beyond their professional competence, which should rather be the responsibility of the government.

Agency theorists are strongly associated with this opposing perspective, such as Jensen and Meckling (1976), Fama and Jensen (1983), and Williamson (1993). Underpinning their perspective is the maximisation of profit for shareholders. Managers who implement CSR are seen as pursuing their selfish interests to the detriment of shareholders. Some authors argue for the likelihood of conflicts of interest and moral hazard, and the greater chance that such initiatives will adversely affect the overall performance of the firm (Fama & Jensen, 1983; Jensen, 1993). This view absolves a business from all responsibilities regardless of the extent to which it impacts on the immediate and larger environment.

Nonetheless, it is pertinent to note that the original argument was laid out by Milton Friedman in the 1970s, and as such, cognisance was not given to the pressures exerted by numerous stakeholders and the extensive list of ethical standards required of today's businesses. This premise is predicated on the notion that, as societies evolve their norms and ethical values evolve as well. For instance CSR today represents a range of compliance and ethical issues which include fair trade, child labour and workplace safety, many of which are enshrined in the law of the land. In a sense, a refusal to operate ethically may as well be breaking the law. The legal dimension of CSR as proposed by Carroll (1999) now extends to accommodate some of the practices previously perceived as belonging to the ethical dimension.

2.3 Evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility

The history and development of CSR can be categorised into three phases spanning a period of 50 years (Jamali, 2007). These include: the rise and extension of the notion, with attempts by authors to define the concept; further expansion, with increasing research and the emergence of alternative frameworks; and full-fledged proliferation (Carroll, 1999; Jamali, 2007).

Carroll (1999) refers to Bowen as the father of CSR, based on his book Social Responsibility of a Businessman. However, this does not imply the non-existence of earlier writings on the concept; in fact, Carroll (1999) also makes reference to monograms published as early as the 1930s and 1940s on related philosophies. Nonetheless, Bowen (1953) is credited as pioneering the notion that businesses are in a position of power, and hence their actions or inactions resonate through their society. Similarly, Davis (1960) argues that the social responsibility of businessmen refers to those decisions and actions taken beyond the direct economic or technical interest of the business. Consistent across both Bowen and Davis is the reference to "businessmen", which is in line with the context of the era in which both authors published, when there were not many businesswomen.

Frederick (1960) also defines the concept of CSR, arguing that businessmen should use their resources not only for narrowly circumscribed private interests but also for the public interest. McGuire (1963) takes a step further to give clarity to the nature of business responsibilities beyond the basic, arguing that businesses have not only economic and legal but also other responsibilities to society, including interests in politics, the welfare of the community, education, the happiness of its employees and its entire environment. Walton (1967) proposes a variety of models and argues in favour of the intimate relationship that exists between corporations and society, and then further suggests the need for managers to bear in mind this relation in the pursuit of their goals. Significant within these writings from the 1960s is the need to define and grasp the CSR concept, with authors in agreement about the existence of business responsibilities beyond profitability. This era marked the promulgation of the CSR concept, which was mainly dominated by academics.

The 1970s ushered in an era of proliferation for the concept of CSR, with the development of more specific definitions and alternative thematic foundations (Carroll, 1999). Alluding to the stakeholder perspective of the time, with regard to the nature of the responsibility of

business to society, Johnson (1971) argues that a socially responsible corporation addresses not only the interests of shareholders but also the interests of other people such as employees, suppliers, the local community and the nation. Johnson takes the argument beyond merely suggesting that businesses should be responsible; he specifies to whom they should be responsible.

During the same period, growing demands in the United States for businesses to shoulder societal responsibilities beyond the provision of goods and services prompted the Committee for Economic Development (CED) (1971) to investigate the concept. They defined CSR based on three concentric circles. In summary, this definition acknowledges the basic economic responsibilities of a business, but argues that the pursuit of economic responsibilities should be done in the context of changing social demands in relation to environmental, social and human rights issues, then further suggests the active involvement of businesses in addressing broader social environmental issues such as poverty, among others. Significant in this study was the fact that the finding was based on the perceptions of business people and academics, giving it some sort of legitimacy for practitioners. This is contrary to earlier assertions which were based solely on theory developed by academics.

In line with the supremacy of economic responsibility, Steiner (1971) also argues that businesses have social responsibilities, but the size of the business should determine their level of responsibility. Davis (1973) revisits CSR and further posits that economic, technical and legal requirements were minimum requirements for business, and therefore a socially responsible business is one which goes beyond these requirements, as would a good citizen. However, he argues that it is in the purview of the firm to evaluate and balance its social and economic responsibilities (Davis, 1973).

The 1980s was characterised mostly by research on the concept of CSR with less attention to definitions. Also prevalent were a number of studies of alternative concepts such as

business ethics, stakeholder theory and corporate social responsiveness. Jones (1980) argues that although CSR encourages businesses to act beyond the obligations prescribed by the law, those obligations should be voluntary. Interestingly, Drucker (1984) proposed the notion that profitability and social responsibility are achievable, urging businesses to convert their social responsibilities to business opportunities. In order to channel CSR practices effectively, Freeman (1984) proposed the stakeholder theory, suggesting that businesses operate within the context of different stakeholders and therefore should prioritise their CSR practices.

Carroll's (1979; 1991) view of CSR consists of economic, legal, ethical and discretionary dimensions. The economic and legal dimensions are perceived as mandatory, while the ethical and discretionary dimensions are socially expected and desired (Windsor, 2001; Jamali, 2007). Carroll's definition has broader acceptability as it offers a clear-cut distinction between the different responsibilities of a business, albeit with a blurred demarcation between the ethical and discretionary obligations.

Other authors have also written extensively on the concept of CSR. Although this is not an exhaustive review, the aforementioned authors have significantly contributed to the advancement of CSR. Generally consistent with these studies is the support of a voluntary perspective towards CSR, rather than a mandatory framework. Similarly, Lantos (2001) supports the notion of voluntary CSR. However, he argues that CSR is based on ethical, altruistic and strategic responsibilities. Lantos' assertion is further elaborated later in this chapter. However, in comparison to Carroll's pyramid model, Lantos argues that the economic, legal and ethical dimensions are mandatory responsibilities, while the CSR options available to business are either altruistic or strategic (Jamali, 2007). The aforementioned conceptualisations will be expanded upon in the next section.

2.4   Corporate Social Responsibility Models

There are different models of CSR (Jamali & Mirshak, 2007). This section highlights Carroll's (1979) four-part definition of CSR and the later redefined version conceptualised as a pyramid, with economic responsibility at the base, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibility at the peak, as well as Lantos' (2001) distinction between ethical, altruistic and strategic CSR. Noteworthy are the contrasts and nuances of both concepts, especially in the area of the constitution of ethical responsibility of a business.

2.4.1   *Carroll's pyramid*

In terms of the conceptualisation of CSR, Carroll (1979) proposed what he referred to as a four-part definition of CSR, albeit embedded in the Corporate Social Performance (CSP) model. Carroll argued that for managers or organisations to participate in CSR, they need to: (1) define basic CSR; (2) identify and understand the different groups of stakeholders; and (3) identify a specific philosophy of responsiveness to stakeholders. The author further posits that a complete CSR definition needs to embrace the full spectrum of business responsibilities to society. On these bases, Carroll (1979) asserted that: "*[t]he social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time*" (Carroll, 1979, p. 500).

According to Carroll (1979), economic pursuit is the prime obligation of a firm; business is economic in nature, and hence it is expected to be profitable. This implies that according to societal standards a business is required to make returns on shareholders' investments, create jobs with fair wages, create new products and services, and promote innovation and technological advancement (Novak, 1996; Lantos, 2001; Jamali, 2007). From Carroll's perspective, the fundamental assumption is the notion that business is the basic unit of economic activity in society; this underpins all other components of the definition.

The legal obligation is the second component of the CSR conceptualisation. It requires that businesses comply with the laws which prescribe the rules for them to function in society (Carroll, 1999). In essence, society expects a business to achieve its economic goals within the confines of the law. However, operating within the law may not guarantee an equal level of compliance by businesses on different issues (Pratima, 2002), because abiding by the law is not a voluntary act; it is driven by the fear of retribution rather than being based on moral convictions (Lantos, 2001). Therefore, regulations may only ascribe minimum requirements for businesses, which do not take into consideration the ethical standards of society (Solomon, 1994; Jamali, 2007).

On the other hand, the ethical obligation addresses limitations of the legal component, as it ascribes ethical standards for the business (Solomon, 1994; Jamali, 2007). Adhering to ethical standards implies that a business subscribes to behaviours which the society deems ethical, fair, and protective of stakeholders' rights (Jamali, 2007). Hence, ethical obligations go beyond the confines of the law to accommodate societal expectations of the business. Typically, ethical obligations are embedded in religions, traditions, and humane principles which are enshrined in Human Rights Acts (Lantos, 2001). Carroll (1991) suggests moral philosophical principles of justice, rights and utilitarianism as guidelines for ethical expectations of different societal groups. Nonetheless, Jamali (2007) argues that the issue with the ethical component of this concept is its fluidity, as businesses may be unable to draw clear lines between being ethical and being philanthropic.

The final component of the concept refers to discretionary or voluntary obligations of businesses, which have no clear-cut societal expectations when compared to the ethical obligations (Carroll, 1991). The decision to take on such obligations rest with management or the business, as social norms may dictate. Engaging in discretionary obligations is predicated on an organisational desire to adopt those social norms which are not required by law, and also those which are not considered as ethical obligations but which may be

strategic in nature (Carroll, 1999). As examples of discretionary obligations, Carroll (1979) identified activities such as philanthropic contributions, training for the long-term unemployed, programmes for employees suffering from drug addiction, or day-care provision for working mothers. This implies that businesses are expected to give back to society out of the profits of their operations. In essence, the wealthy are expected to support the less privileged in society (Frederick, 1987). Although the notion of philanthropic obligation is noble, its limits are seemingly unclear, and may be at odds with the economic obligations and profit-making nature of a business (Jamali, 2007).

Carroll (1999) revisits the four-part definition of CSR, illustrating the different components of CSR in a pyramid construct, with economic obligations at the base, moving up through legal and ethical obligations and with philanthropy at the apex (see Figure 1). To clarify the implications of the construct, Carroll asserted that businesses are required to approach their different obligations collectively rather than sequentially. Invariably, to be socially responsible, organisations are required to be profitable, law abiding and ethical (Carroll, 1999; Nalband & Kelabi, 2014). From this point of view, economic and legal obligations are mandatory, ethical obligations are expected, and philanthropic obligations are desired (Windsor, 2001; Jamali, 2007). However, they are collectively required to align with CSR.

Figure 1: Hierarchy of Corporate Social Responsibility

PHILANTHROPIC
Responsibilities

Be a good corporate citizen.
Contribute resources
to the community;
improve quality of life.

ETHICAL
Responsibilities

Be ethical.
Obligation to do what is right, just,
and fair. Avoid harm.

LEGAL
Responsibilities

Obey the law.
Law is society's codification of right and wrong.
Play by the rules of the game.

ECONOMIC
Responsibilities

Be profitable.
The foundation upon which all others rest.

(Source: Carroll, 1991)

Following Carroll's (1991) clarification of the relationship between the components of CSR, he criticised the vagueness and non-specificity of the term "social" in CSR, as it fails to determine to whom businesses are responsible. He goes on to argue that there is a natural relationship between stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and CSR, since it identifies the groups or individuals that a business should be concerned when implementing CSR. Therefore, the designations achieved by stakeholder theory allow the identification of societal groups and individuals who are important to the corporation and who require a response.

The four-part definition of CSR, including subsequent attempts by Carroll to provide more clarification for the construct, has been extensively scrutinised and criticised (Visser, 2011; Crane & Matten, 2007). Among the issues raised are inconsistencies concerning

nuances in meanings and the relative importance ascribed to the components, particularly with regard to different cultures and sub-cultures outside the United States (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Nalband, & Kelabi, 2014). For instance, Visser (2006) argues that emphasis among the different components of the pyramid in Africa does not align with Carroll's assertions; he maintains that each region, country, and community have a different set of drivers for CSR. Among the important CSR drivers suggested are culture, traditions, political reforms, socio-cultural priorities, governance gaps and responses to crises (Visser, 2006; Carroll, 2016). In a similar vein, Crane et al. (2008) assert that CSR is a context-specific phenomenon. Following an evaluation of CSR in a global context, they submit that the notion of its inconsistency is also applicable in organisational contexts. According to Jamali (2007), the model also fails to distinguish explicitly between the mandatory and voluntary responsibilities of a business. Jamali argues that Lantos (2001) presents a more focused definition of ethical responsibility which distinguishes explicitly between mandatory and voluntary responsibilities. Nonetheless, Carroll (2016) further elaborates on the ethical component of the pyramid as he asserts that although the ethical obligation in the pyramid is presented as an individual component, it should be seen as permeating every other component of the concept, and therefore as underpinning the concept of CSR.

2.4.2 Lantos's 2001 conceptualisation

In contrast to Carroll's (1991) four components which collectively define CSR, Lantos (2001) distinguishes between three types of CSR: ethical, altruistic, and strategic CSR. According to Lantos (2001), ethical CSR is morally mandatory and goes beyond achieving the business' economic and legal responsibilities to also incorporate the ethical responsibilities ascribed by Carroll. This requires that businesses operate in a manner whereby they avoid harm or social injuries, including circumstances in which the business might not directly benefit (Jamali, 2007). In essence, a business must audit its actions in

order not to inflict injury or cause potential harm to society in the course of carrying out its activities. Such injuries include physical, economic, mental, spiritual and emotional injuries to stakeholders beyond two contractual parties (Lantos, 2001). Adherence to ethical responsibilities should be a fundamental requirement rather than an option, as compromise with ethical standards may lead to unintended consequences in the long run. Lantos (2001) further argues that a firm that is involved with ethical behaviour enhances its reputation among its stakeholders, including the elicitation of public goodwill. To further clarify the boundary between mandatory and altruistic CSR, Lantos refers to three philosophical usages of responsibility (Goodpaster & Matthews, 2003; Jamali & Mirshak 2007), arguing that capability responsibilities are altruistic while casual and to some extent role-related responsibilities are ethical in nature.

According to Lantos (2001), the altruistic or humanitarian form of CSR corresponds with Carroll's philanthropic dimension. Undertaking this form of CSR implies that a firm goes beyond its ethical requirements by also engaging in humanitarian and philanthropic activities regardless of whether or not it receives any form of benefit in return (Walton, 1967; Jamali, 2007). Altruistic forms of CSR include programmes such as the firm trying to solve social problems such as addiction, crime, poverty or chronic unemployment, the funding of educational institutions, and addressing other social issues (Lantos, 2001). From this perspective, the practice of altruistic CSR goes beyond the required moral obligations to accommodate liabilities of public welfare not caused by them. Lantos (2001) argues that although it is noble, practicing altruistic CSR is outside the domain of the business, and therefore may conflict with the profit-making nature of the business.

Based on these perceived limitations, an alternative to the altruistic form of CSR is strategic CSR. According to Lantos (2001), strategic CSR is focused on accomplishing strategic business goals and concurrently advancing social welfare. In a sense, strategic CSR requires that the firm identifies and invests in those altruistic activities which will

create mutual benefit for the business and society (Jamali, 2008). Such investments are clearly undertaken with an intention to maximise profit in the long term (Quester & Thompson, 2001). The crux of Lantos' (2001) conceptualisation is the argument that whereas ethical obligations are mandatory for all businesses, the firm is at liberty to choose between altruistic and strategic responsibilities.

2.5 Perspectives on Corporate Social Responsibility

Given the heterogeneous nature of CSR, different perspectives on the concept have evolved over the years. However, this review discusses corporate social performance as the concept that arguably metamorphosed into CSR, while agency theory and stakeholder theory have direct relevance to this study.

2.5.1 Corporate Social performance

Corporate social performance emerged during a period characterised by dissent towards capitalism and increasing social concerns (Camilleri, 2012). This period witnessed a rise in the enactment of laws and regulations, especially surrounding environmental protection, workers' safety, employment discrimination and product safety. Given this changing environment for business, corporate social performance emphasised the need to achieve better performance following the adoption of socially responsible programmes (Carroll, 1979; Wood, 1991). Arguably, an insistence on significant results from social initiatives drove the notion towards a business case for CSR. Studies began to allude to a common interest for business and community, suggesting a joint end for individual and collective goods (Freeman & Liedtka, 1991). According to Wood (1991), CSP is expressed through an organisational assumption of social responsibilities, with the process and effectiveness in addressing social issues expressed in a manner which is reflective of the firm and its societal relationships. Generally, CSP was motivated by the notion that businesses should

have an obligation towards addressing their externalities, therefore suggesting that their obligations extend beyond making profit for shareholders and compliance with the law. This implied that businesses were also obligated to adopt ethical standards, including discretionary obligations for the benefit of the society (Carroll, 1979).

Given the growing concerns about corporations and their effects on society in the 1970s, governments increasingly imposed legislations and regulations. Likewise, scholars focused on business behaviours including publications on corporate social responsiveness (Ackerman, 1973; Ackerman & Bauer, 1976; Sethi, 1975). The general theme encouraged businesses to adopt a proactive stance towards society. Sethi (1975) outlines the dimensions of corporate social performance. In an effort to differentiate between social responsibility, social obligation, and the social responsiveness of a corporation, Sethi argued that social responsibility required the alignment of corporate behaviour with societal norms, values and expectations. The author posited that the difference between social obligations and social responsibility is that one is proscriptive and the other prescriptive, respectively. Furthermore, he asserted that social responsiveness is anticipatory and preventive.

Following data collection from major US corporations in terms of their social responsibility activities, Eilbirt and Parket (1973) and Holmes (1976) investigated the factors responsible for the adoption of specific social responsibility activities. Among the major factors identified was the ability to match social need, which would leverage organisational capabilities in terms of skill acquisition, training and recruitment (Holmes, 1976). Carroll (1977) advocates a managerial approach to CSR. He argued in favour of the institutionalisation of corporate social policy. Taking a cue from the work of Carroll (1977), Wartick and Cochran (1985) suggest that the principles of social responsibility, social responsiveness and a policy of issues management underpin corporate social

involvement. They further proposed a three-dimensional model consisting of social responsibility, social responsiveness and issue management.

2.5.2 Agency theory

Agency theory is antithetical to the notion of social responsibility. Generally, agency theory is more inclined to the shareholder theory, which advocates shareholder primacy (Alchian & Demsetz, 1972; Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Ronnegard & Smith, 2010). Levitt (1958) argued that concern for the general welfare of society was not in the purview of business responsibilities, but rather should lie with governments. This is a notion widely associated with Milton Friedman. Friedman (1962) contended that social responsibility undermined the very foundation of society. He went on to argue that businesses have but one responsibility, and that is to maximise profit for shareholders insofar as this is done within the law. This position is also expressed by Bakan (2004) arguing that the legal responsibility of a business is to make profit for its shareholders by providing goods and services to society. These authors criticise the justification of CSR, suggesting that it is a misallocation of a firm's resources. However, Carroll (1991) points out that society's expectations of a business go beyond the satisfaction of customers and shareholders to accommodate other stakeholder groups such as employees and communities.

Agency theory describes managers as agents and owners as principals in a relationship where the former bears fiduciary obligations to the latter. The assumption is that agents will align their economic interests with the principal in exchange for incentives (Camilleri, 2012). Typically, agency theory proposes profit maximisation for shareholders. This is a notion acknowledged by Lazonick and O'Sullivan (2000) on the subject of mergers and acquisition activities. They suggest that the phenomenon may have adverse effects on managers who fall short of enhancing the value of their firm. Following these apparent effects on managers, Porter (1992) argued that such activities may be responsible for

economic instability and insecurity. Nevertheless, managers with high earnings who are capable of enhancing shareholders' interests are happy to be associated with the market valuation of their firm.

Given this apparent conflict of interest associated with CSR, Jensen (2001) argues that managers will pursue self-interest at the expense of shareholder profit. In a sense, CSR will be disguised as managerial opportunism, hence affecting the profitability of the firm. To address this problem of managerial opportunism, self-interest, and conflicts of interest, Jensen (2001) advocates for enlightened shareholder theory. He suggests that business and managers pursue value maximisation functions for the long-term survival of the firm. This position is based on the argument that CSR provides multiple functions rather than a single value function. As such, the issue of trade-offs arises from the attempt to satisfy multiple stakeholders.

However, shareholder theory underpins neoclassical economic theory, which is primarily concerned with shareholder utility maximisation. According to Garriga and Melé (2004), shareholder theory is not incompatible with the interests of certain stakeholders in the firm. This is a position earlier asserted by Drucker (1984) who argued that profitability is compatible with social responsibility. However, the change is in converting social issues into business opportunities. Suddenly, other scholars began to acknowledge that social responsibilities may lead to economic gains. In a similar vein, Keim (1978) and Jensen (2001) suggested CSR could be equated with enlightened self-interest. Others proposed cost-related marketing (Murray & Montanari, 1986; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988; Smith & Higgins, 2000). Likewise, the relationship between corporate philanthropy and competitive advantage has been examined (Porter & Kramer, 2002, 2006), along with optimal strategies aimed at serving the poor to make a profit (Prahalad & Hammond, 2003).

The notion of identifying business opportunities in social issues has been commonly referred to as the business case for CSR. An increasing number of practitioners and scholars now assume that CSR is good for business. Subsequently, there has been an increasing level of interest in investigating the link between CSR and financial performance. Unfortunately, the outcomes are mixed, as some studies suggest a positive relationship while others conclude that there is a negative relationship (McWilliams et al., 2006). Nonetheless, there seems to be overwhelming support for a positive outcome among practitioners (Camilleri, 2012). Today, this notion is widely discussed in the form of strategic corporate social responsibility (Burke & Logsdon, 1996; McWilliams et al., 2006). Burke and Logsdon (1996) advocate for strategic CSR; from their perspective, strategic CSR initiatives are those social programmes and processes which accrue substantial benefit to the firm. In a sense, such social programmes should support and be supported by the firm's overall strategy and objectives. Following the adoption of a set of hypotheses, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) conclude that there is an ideal level of CSR, which managers can determine via cost-benefit analysis. Husted and de Jesus Salazar (2006) also argued for an optimal level of social output and shareholder profit maximisation. Shareholder value theory may be linked to short-term profit. However, studies maintain that effective management of stakeholders' interests is a prerequisite to the long-term economic success of a business (Hosmer, 1995; Heskett & Kotter, 1992).

2.5.3   Stakeholder theory

Stakeholder theory is a common concept among business practitioners and academics. As acknowledged by Donaldson and Preston (1995), Freeman (2004) and Laplume et al. (2008), the proliferation of the stakeholder concept stems from Freeman's (1984) publication entitled *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach.* However, this does not suggest the non-existence of the stakeholder concept prior to Freeman's publication.

According to Parmar et al. (2010), stakeholder as a term as it is used in recent times first featured in an internal memo at the Stanford Research Institute in 1963. Similarly, Laplume et al. (2008) cite Ansoff (1965) as an example where the concept was implied in the United States. However, our adopted position on the concept as subsequently discussed in this section takes its cue from Freeman (1984), which is arguably at the forefront of the stakeholder theory debate.

While referring to existing management theories at the time, Freeman (1984) argued that they were in no position to address present and future complexities posed by the increasingly volatile business environment (Parmar et al., 2010). Among the identified issues were increasing numbers of takeovers, activism, increasing government regulations, technological advancement, consumer movements and environmental concerns (Laplume et al., 2008). From Freeman's perspective, the increasing challenges were significant and involved internal stakeholders (shareholders, customers, employees and suppliers) and external stakeholders (government, consumers, activists, special interest groups and the media) related to the business (Laplume et al., 2008). In a sense, Freeman anticipated the growing influence of novel actors at the time, who were likely to threaten or ensure the survival of the business. Therefore, he argued that it was pertinent for managers to take into account in their decision making those groups who were affected by or could affect the activities of the business (Freeman, 1984). Freeman further argued that a stakeholder analysis technique should be adopted for all stakeholders, including shareholders and corporate board members, suggesting that managers should be allowed to assume fiduciary responsibilities beyond their accountability to shareholders to include other stakeholders, a controversial stance at the time which attracted some criticism (Sundaram & Inkpen, 2004a).

Following Freeman's work on stakeholder theory, he went on to collaborate with Gilbert (Freeman & Gilbert, 1988) and Evans (Evans & Freeman, 1988), offering further insight

into the stakeholder concept. However, distinct from his original work and later publications is a move away from a seemingly strategic approach to a moral philosophical stance, arguably ushering in the idea of normative stakeholder theory (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Laplume et al., 2008).

Goodpaster (1991) outlined the paradoxical nature of the stakeholder approach, as it seemingly requires an obligation from managers in relation to shareholders' interests, while also concurrently proposing an obligation to stakeholders. In a sense, the pursuit of both economic and social issues may seem to be in conflict, as one is likely to thwart the maximisation of the other. Subsequently the concept attracted criticism, especially in terms of its paradoxical nature (Boatright, 1994; Maren & Wicks, 1999), but also advocates (Goodpaster & Holloran, 1994).

In defence, Freeman (1994) attempted to address the issue of the paradox, as he argued that the stakeholder concept is a mixture of business and morality. Later, Phillips, Freeman and Wicks (2003) posited that stakeholder theory is managerial, in that it is intimately connected with business practice, value creation and trade. From this perspective, the concept ensures that actors with a stake in the process are recognised and paid attention to.

Other authors have identified issues which they deem controversial about the stakeholder concept (Sundaram & Inkpen, 2004a). For instance, some have argued that the concept could be used to justify managerial opportunism (Jensen, 2001; Sternberg, 2000). It has also been perceived in some quarters as socialism (Barnett, 1997; Rustin, 1997), as well as being a comprehensive moral doctrine (Orts & Strudler, 2002) which requires changing the laws (Van Buren, 1999).

In response to what they refer to as detractors, Phillips, Freeman and Wicks (2003) addressed the issues, outlining them as critical distortions and friendly misinterpretations of the concept.

2.5.3.1 Stakeholder identification

Opinions differ with regards to whom or what constitutes the stakeholders of a firm. Typically, stakeholder theorists identify various groups and individuals from a spectrum of what should constitute stakeholders. Grimble and Wellard (1997) categorise the different groups and individuals as active and passive stakeholders. Some authors have adopted a narrow perspective which includes only the individuals or groups without which the firm ceases to exist (Bowie, 1988; Frooman, 1999; Pajunen, 2006) or which bear some kind of risk (Clarkson, 1995; Cragg & Greenbaum, 2002). Others have decided on a broader perspective of stakeholders (Starik, 1995; Hubacek & Mauerhofer, 2008).

Some authors have classified stakeholders to include primary and secondary stakeholders (Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). Clarkson (1995) asserts that the firm's primary stakeholders consist of shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers and public stakeholder groups. From this perspective, public stakeholder groups refer to the government and communities whose infrastructure, laws and regulations are required for the activities of the firm and to whom tax is paid (Clarkson, 1995). In a sense, primary stakeholders are stakeholders who have an impact or who are related to the primary activities of the firm, while secondary stakeholders are related to secondary activities (Frederick et al., 1992). Thus, the primary stakeholders are pertinent to the existence of the firm (Bhattacharyya et al., 2008).

As earlier suggested, most of the recent attempts to define and subsequently identify stakeholders stem from the work of Freeman (1984). Accordingly, a firm's stakeholders are individuals or groups who can affect or are affected by the decisions and operations of the firm (Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). This takes into account individuals or groups who face the consequences of the firm's actions or inaction (Langtry, 1994). Hopkins (2003) posits that a firm's stakeholders have moral and legal claims, as well as legitimate concerns regarding its operations.

Friedman and Miles (2002) contend that the main debate about the stakeholder concept is partly related to an inability to define what constitutes a legitimate stakeholder. They argue that most of the literature merely makes assumptions about legitimacy rather than identifying the differences between legitimate and illegitimate stakeholders (Reed et al., 2009). However, Friedman (1962) contends that the only legitimate stakeholders are the shareholders, and the business manager's only duty is to maximise profit on their behalf. On the other hand, stakeholder theorists attempt to justify why and to whom the business manager has fiduciary obligations, other than the shareholders, on the basis of who can be affected and can affect the firm's activities (Freeman, 1984; Starik, 1995; Schlossberger, 1994; Freeman, 1994; Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Given the broad spectrum of business stakeholders, it is pertinent to substantiate the stakeholders' importance to the firm.

From a broad perspective, different versions of stakeholder theory can be categorised as normative or instrumental (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Normative stakeholder theory attempts to justify the concept based on the moral values of the firm (Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). From this perspective, the firm seeks to address those issues put forward by stakeholders on ethical grounds, regardless of rewards of any sort. Instrumental stakeholder theory, on the other hand, is more akin to strategic management (Min Foo, 2007). Typically, the firm identifies stakeholder issues to tackle based on expected outcome, which are focused on the maximisation of profit.

However, drawing from the Shell Nigeria and Ogoni dispute, Boele, Fabig and Wheeler, (2001) argue that an instrumental approach towards stakeholders is unlikely to yield expected results, especially in situations where there is community unrest. Studies suggest that firms who address stakeholders' expectations fare better than those who chose to ignore them (Agle et al., 1999; Berman et al., 1999; Post et al., 2002; Wood & Jones, 1995). However, it would be unrealistic to assume a firm could address all stakeholder demands or give different stakeholder groups equal attention. Hence, it is pertinent to

identify stakeholders based on their perceived importance. According to Kaler (2003), stakeholder classification should be seen as a precursor to the conceptualisation of stakeholder theory. There are various propositions for stakeholder classification in the literature (Goodpaster, 1991; Clarkson, 1999; Mitchell et al., 1997; Fassin, 2009; Kamann, 2007). However, for Mitchell et al. (1997) stakeholder salience tends to be the most commonly discussed and adopted in studies (Wagner Mainardes et al., 2012). Based on Freeman (1994), Mitchell et al. (1997) outlined attributes for the classification of stakeholders based on salience. The model identifies stakeholder power of negotiation, their comparative legitimacy with the firm, and the urgency required to attend to their demands (Wagner Mainardes et al., 2012). According to Mitchell et al. (1997), the stakeholder salience model is dynamic because it allows the classification of stakeholders by managers in a manner which enables the explicit recognition of distinctive situations to further explain how managers should prioritise stakeholders. Stakeholder salience comes as a result of various combinations of stakeholder attributes (Mitchell et al., 1997). CSR initiatives aimed at addressing the salience of stakeholders' concerns are intended to meet their expectations, as negative perceptions of CSR initiatives are likely to have adverse effects on the firm (Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). Therefore, it is arguable that managing the salience of stakeholders' concerns is pertinent to ensure the seamless operation of the firm.

2.5.3.2 *Stakeholder management*

According to Clarkson (1995), the survival of the firm is dependent on its ability to remain profitable by meeting its economic and social obligations. These obligations include the creation and distribution of wealth or value in a manner which encourages its primary stakeholders to remain a part of its stakeholder system. Arguably, business organisations are interrelated and interdependent groups of primary stakeholders (Hillman & Keim, 2001; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Evans & Freeman, 1988; Greenley & Foxall, 1996;

Hill & Jones, 1992). Stakeholder management specifies the firm's approach towards managing the relationships with its stakeholder groups proactively (Amadi, Carrillo, & Tuuli, 2014).

Although managing relationships between the primary (employees, customers, suppliers, community and environment) or salient stakeholders of a firm may affect their continued participation in the firm, effective stakeholder management of these stakeholders is likely to accrue intangible resources such as reputation among others, capable of enhancing the organisation's ability to create a competitive advantage for itself (Hillman & Keim, 2001).

According to Barney (1991), cited by Hillman and Keim, (2001), the resource base view is predicated on the notion that over time, organisations possessing unique human, organisational and physical resources will outperform their competitors. Studies suggest that organisational resources which are intangible and difficult to replicate need to be engrained in the business process in order to surpass the competition, thus creating value for the firm (Atkinson, Waterhouse & Wells, 1997; Barney, 1991; Teece, 1998). To achieve a competitive edge, Barney (1991) identifies four resource requirements: they must be valuable, rare, unique, and ready to be utilised effectively (Barney, 1991). Based on these requirements, resources capable of eliciting competitive advantage include reputation, human resources, intellectual property, corporate culture and long-term relationships with customers and suppliers (Hillman & Keim, 2001). Typically, this set of resources is predicated on the firm's ability to build and maintain relationships with various stakeholders.

The main motivation to improve and maintain stakeholder relations is arguably the need to manage risk and the quest to seize the opportunities provided. Both reasons are contributory to creating economic value (Boele et al., 2001). However, with regard to risk management, maintaining stakeholder relations is synonymous with reputation management and brand protection. This is based on the premise that damage to the brand

or negative reputation could result in a loss of share value, consumer boycotts and recruitment difficulties. In a similar vein, maintaining a good relationship with stakeholders is likely to ensure loyalty, trust, improved sales and performance, and hence profitability (Abidin, 2015).

2.6 Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility

Regarding CSR as a controversial construct might seem like a cliché, but mounting pressures on corporations from governments, NGOs and other stakeholders have set the tone towards total compliance. Regardless of their philosophical stance on CSR, corporations have had to acquiesce, resulting in the adoption of a mostly generic version of the construct which is not tied to business strategy and is consequently unsustainable (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Such a generic approach towards CSR is arguably responsive, whereby a corporation aspires to be a good citizen, taking a broad approach of perceived sensitivity towards stakeholders' concerns and tackling the negative effects of its activities on society (Porter & Kramer, 2006). However, being critical of firms adopting this kind of indiscriminate approach towards CSR is not to suggest that firms are insensitive towards other stakeholders' interests or are acting irresponsibly; rather, it emphasises the need to adopt a coordinated and targeted approach towards CSR.

Notwithstanding, the consequence of a generic approach is that it tends to pitch business against society, as it is arguably not realistic for a firm to tackle effectively all its adverse impacts on society and manage the expectations of all its stakeholders (Porter & Kramer, 2011). From the perspective of the firm, these initiatives are uncoordinated and isolated from business and corporate strategy. Likewise, the effects of such CSR initiatives on society are often of little or no significant impact, since they are responding to numerous uncoordinated stakeholders demands.

The motives and impacts of CSR practiced by corporations have often been questioned, including accusations of window-dressing and self-interest. Consequently, theorists propose a strategic perspective towards CSR which attempts to find common ground for both business and society (Lantos, 2001; Porter & Kramer, 2002, 2006, 2011; Windsor, 2006; Kotler & Lee, 2005; Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010). Strategic CSR considers the fact that business by its very nature is established to maximise profit for its shareholders, but it exists in an increasingly competitive environment where a range of social factors are capable of hindering or enhancing a firm's competitive advantage. Therefore, the challenge is the reconciliation of the demands of both business and society in a manner which creates a significant positive impact for both parties.

The phrase strategic CSR in relation to profit maximisation was first mentioned by Baron (2001). According to Siegel and Vitaliano (2007), he defined the concept as the "private provision of public good". However, the concept of strategic CSR is not entirely new, as authors have previously alluded to an ostensibly strategic perspective towards CSR. For instance, Davis (1960) argued that CSR could lead to economic gains for businesses in the long run. Johnson (1971) also suggested that businesses should embrace CSR initiatives which are likely to increase profitability, and further made reference to the notion of "utility maximisation". Similarly, Drucker (1984) posits that firms could adopt CSR perspectives which aim to convert their social responsibilities into business opportunities. Also, Reinhardt (1998) asserts that firms who adopt CSR strategies increase their chances of accruing significant profit from CSR investment if their strategy is inimitable. This is in line with the notion that investments in certain CSR initiatives are expected to yield financial returns in the long run (Vaugh, 1999; Burke & Logsdon, 1996).

In a sense, strategic CSR or "strategic philanthropy" (Carroll, 2000; Porter & Kramer, 2002) implies that CSR initiatives are carried out with the intent to achieve strategic business goals. Corporations are expected to embrace those social responsibilities which

will benefit not only society but the business, thereby creating a symbiotic relationship for both parties involved and achieving a "win-win" situation (Lantos, 2001; Porter & Kramer, 2002; Falck & Heblich, 2007; Fisher et al., 2009).

Ordinarily, business executives are inclined to pursue shareholders' interest above those of society (Karnani, 2010; Camilleri, 2012). Acknowledging the interdependency between both business and society is necessary, as a short-term gain for one party will eventually undermine the prosperity of all (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

Jamali (2007) considers strategic CSR to consist of broad and narrow definitions. On the one hand, the definition broadly accommodates any philanthropic initiative with the potential of providing long-term benefit to the firm, regardless of tangibility. Such benefits could be in the form of goodwill and reputation. On the other hand, the narrower perspectives involve focused philanthropic intervention with an emphasis on financial returns. However, he further argues that due to consistent pressure from shareholders with regard to increased return on investment and accountability, a more focused approach towards profit maximisation will be sustainable (Lantos, 2001; Carroll, 2000).

Baron (2001) proposes a more explicit CSR model for profit maximisation. He argues that a firm can compete on the basis that it offers socially responsible products, thereby wooing those customers who have an inclination to social responsibility and ultimately contribute to product sales. Similarly, Bagnoli and Watts (2003) analyse the relationship between the provision of public and private goods and their relevance to competitiveness. They argue on the assumption that consumers are conversant with both attributes offered, and are also willing to patronise on the basis of a joint benefit. However, their findings indicate an inverse relationship between the private provision of public goods and competitiveness, and also an inclination towards consumers with high participation value. Interestingly, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) propose a hypothetical cost-benefit analysis to determine the optimal level of resources required to be invested in the CSR activities of a firm. These

authors presented a simple theory model involving two organisations with identical products, but for the fact that one firm adds some social attributes to its products. Consequently, the product with the social attribute is considered better by some customers.

An important attribute of strategic CSR is the link between CSR initiatives and business differentiation strategy (Husted & Allen, 2001; Siegel & Vitaliano, 2007). For instance, prior to its takeover by L'Oréal, The Body Shop associated its products with non-animal testing and organic ingredients. Some customers used their products because they felt strongly about the firm's philosophical stance towards certain ethical issues. In addition, the firm was explicit on the nature of its social responsibilities. Eventually, these attributes were used as a differentiation strategy, ultimately creating a niche market for the business (McWilliams & Siegel, 2002). Also underpinning this approach is the need to adequately communicate to the market the factors which separate the business from its competitors. Subsequently, firms adopting CSR initiatives which allow them to differentiate their product offering can achieve higher premiums in the marketplace with respect to competitors (Collins, 2003; Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010). Arguably, adopting CSR initiatives will aid a firm to acquire certain resources which a firm without those initiatives would be unlikely to be able to access.

Some authors argue that strategic CSR can be a precursor for innovation, economic growth and competitive advantage (Baron, 2001; Feddersen & Gilligan, 2001; Johnson, 2003). Garriga and Melé (2004) echo that firms adopting strategic CSR add value to society in the long run. Likewise, Porter and Kramer (2006) assert that strategic CSR takes into account the compatibility between CSR initiatives and core business strategy, with an aim to create opportunity, innovation and competitive advantage. Achieving the aforementioned implies that CSR initiatives are adopted on the basis that they align with business strategy while also creating significant positive impact for society (Jamali, 2007).

In essence, the firm remains in harmony with its environment while also maximising profit from doing good and creating a competitive advantage for itself.

However, studies have also suggested that the link between strategic CSR and competitive advantage is inconclusive, or at best subjective. Falkenberg and Brunsael (2011) point this out, and argue on the basis of the resource-based view that capabilities which had previously created economic advantage against competitors may remain a strategic necessity. Nevertheless, McWilliams and Siegel (2011) reaffirm the link between strategic CSR and competitive advantage. They argue that strategic CSR refers to responsible initiatives which guarantee the attainment of sustainable competitive advantage, regardless of motive.

Contrary to the mainly positive perspective towards strategic CSR, some authors argue that it undermines the notion of good citizenship (Camilleri, 2012). Theorists also argue about the extent of the sincerity associated with strategic philanthropy, sometimes labelling it self-serving (Brenkert, 1996; Jones, 1997). In the same vein, Moon (2001) posits that the motivation in adopting a strategic CSR approach is born out of some level of selfish interest. Arguably, the notion of CSR as a self-serving strategy is perhaps the reason why businesses are reluctant to communicate their CSR strategy, and subsequently cannot implement activities tied to business strategy. Rollinson (2002) expresses the difficulty in determining motives, whether altruism or self-preservation. Hemingway and Maclagan (2004) suggest that investments in strategic CSR are always motivated by the need to maximise profit, notwithstanding the nature of the initiatives adopted. However, it is also pertinent to note that amid the negative perceptions, the motivation for strategic CSR is always clearly related to profit maximisation. The aim is to maximise profit in the course of addressing carefully selected relevant concerns for society.

Another issue with strategic CSR is the difficulty of ascertaining the return on investment on CSR initiatives, as previous empirical findings offer inconclusive results. Some studies

suggest that firms involved in the practice of social responsibility are likely to gain in the long-term (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Orlitzky et al., 2003). However, studies also suggest that it is possible to overspend on strategic CSR (Lantos, 2001). Consequently, Orlitzky et al. (2011) argue that there is an optimal level of investment in CSR initiatives to determine the strategic implications. Typically, most factors which add towards value creation, such as reputation, goodwill, corporate image and employee morale, are qualitative, and therefore difficult to measure and quantify (Miller & Ahrens, 1993; Camilleri, 2012). Lantos (2001) asserts that firms ought to ascertain which CSR initiatives yield the most return on investment. Taking into account the interests of all stakeholder groups, it is pertinent to find equilibrium between different stakeholder interests and the gains from strategic CSR (McWilliams & Siegel, 2011; Freeman, 1984).

2.7   Dimensions of strategic Corporate Social Responsibility

In an attempt to develop a method for assessing when and in what ways CSR initiatives can achieve social and economic goals simultaneously, Burke and Logsdon (1996) conceptualise the five dimensions of strategic CSR as centrality, specificity, proactivity, visibility and voluntarism (see Figure 2). They argue that CSR initiatives are strategic when they provide substantial benefit for the firm, especially in supporting core business activities, thereby contributing to the firms' effectiveness towards achieving its mission. Given the significance of value creation in the firm, the five dimensions of strategic CSR are further reflective of the five dimensions of corporate strategies (see Figure 3). These dimensions are both important to the success of the firm and also useful in relating CSR policies, programmes and processes to value creation (Burke & Logsdon, 1996).
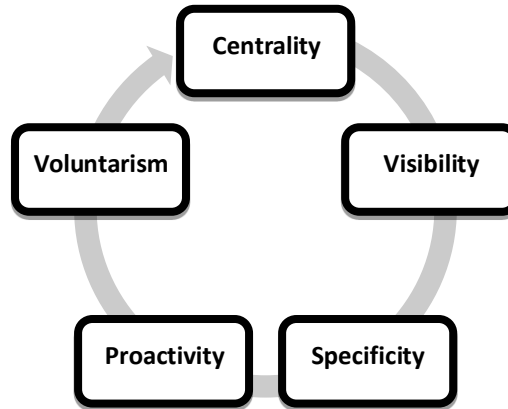
Figure 2: Five dimensions of Strategic CSR (Burke & Logsdon, 1996)
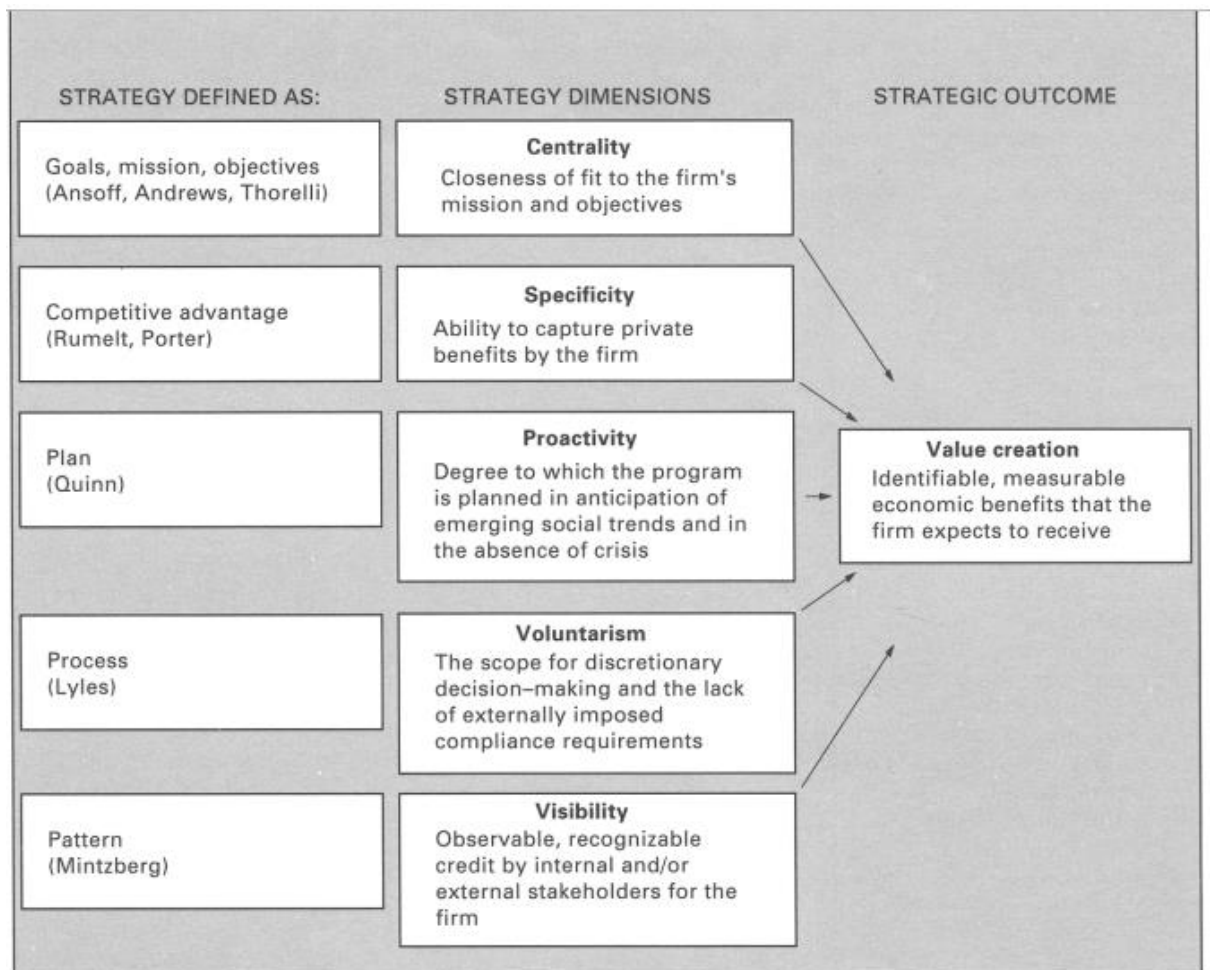
Figure 3: Link between strategy and CSR (Burke & Logsdon, 1996)

2.7.1 Centrality

Burke and Logsdon (1996) refer to centrality in terms of the relationship between an adopted CSR initiative and the firm's mission and objectives. Generally, CSR programmes mainly fall within social and environmental categories which are of importance to stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). Naturally, these sorts of activities are not always in line with the firm's objectives or mission. However, studies suggest that CSR initiatives which are closely related to business missions and objectives are liable to create value (Kanter, 1999). In a sense, the firm creates for itself business opportunities by developing resources or capabilities in the process of addressing a social issue, which may in turn be applied to business activities. The closer the fit between CSR initiatives and the core mission of the firm, the more transferable the resources (Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Du et al., 2007; Bruch, 2005). CSR initiatives which create opportunities to leverage firms' capabilities are likely to increase efficiency, thereby contributing to cost reduction by operational efficiencies (Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010). Consequently, such initiatives are expected to be prioritised within the firm to create future benefits as they translate to profit for the firm. Highly central initiatives are likely to create more value for the firm compared to broad-based programmes.

2.7.2 Specificity

Burke and Logsdon (1996) define specificity as the ability of a firm to capture private benefit through the adoption of a CSR initiative, instead of creating collective benefit to be shared with facets of society. Specificity is akin to achieving competitive advantage based on opportunities designed and created specifically to enhance the firms' capabilities or affect the competitive context, in a manner whereby the firm stands to gain the most benefit (Porter & Kramer, 2006). McWilliams and Siegel (2001) posit that CSR can be linked to product differentiation strategies when it fulfils the social needs of some customers, thus creating a niche market. Similarly, CSR initiatives can create

opportunities to achieve operational efficiencies, and thus contribute to cost leadership strategy (Hunt, 2000; Miles & Covin, 2000; Kärnä et al., 2003; Day & Wensley, 1988; Porter, 1985; Crawford & Scaletta, 2005).

2.7.3 Proactivity

According to Burke and Logsdon (1996), proactivity is the degree to which a CSR initiative is planned in anticipation of changing socio-economic and political environments, and in the absence of crisis. This notion is in line with business strategy as it requires planning and scanning the environment to identify threats and opportunities. Sekhar Bhattacharyya (2010) refers to the stage of assessment of strategic CSR as the intent screen. Typically, a CSR activity which is reactive or considered a knee-jerk reaction to external pressure is non-strategic in nature (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Porter and Kramer (2006) argue that such initiatives tend to pit business against society as their true significance cannot be met by both firm and society. On the other hand, proactive CSR initiatives allow the firm to identify and capitalise on shared interest and hence deliver value for all. However, it could be argued that there are reactive CSR initiatives which may allow the firm to capitalise on shared interest. For instance, making an investment in community education and skill acquisition due to pressure from a community asking to participate in the employment of a firm may eventually provide access to a pool of skilled workers.

On the issue of proactivity, Husted and de Jesus Salazar (2006) go further to differentiate between coerced and strategic CSR initiatives. They argue that a reactive or defensive approach towards societal issues, rather than a proactive approach, suggests that an adopted CSR initiative is not strategic, or at best it is coerced egoist CSR (Husted & de Jesus Salazar, 2006; Gyves & O'Higgins, 2008). Coerced egoist or coerced strategic CSR refers to CSR initiatives adopted as minimum compliance with government regulations and stakeholders' demands (Gyves & O'Higgins, 2008). This implies that a firm is

coerced into investing in CSR, being motivated to address impending social issues because they are likely to increase the risk of community unrest and therefore increase the firm's financial costs. Similarly, Husted and de Jesus Salazar (2006) give example of a firm that was not originally concerned with training, but was coerced into investment in employee training or quality of education in the society from which it draws its workforce, which is necessary for it to survive or grow. Coerced strategic initiatives are inclined towards protecting existing assets instead of creating value, while also limiting the needs of beneficiaries (Gyves & O'Higgins, 2008). Furthermore, coerced strategic CSR creates low sustainable increases for both firm and society (Gyves & O'Higgins, 2008). Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to determine the effectiveness of strategic CSR for both business and society by establishing some sort of measurement tool and also validating the concept with empirical findings.

2.7.4 Voluntarism

Voluntarism is defined as the degree to which a CSR initiative is adopted by the firm voluntarily, rather than in response to external pressure to comply with laws and regulations (Burke & Logsdon, 1996). In a sense, in addition to aligning with other dimensions, strategic CSR initiatives are those initiatives which are voluntarily adopted by the firm without external pressure. Voluntarism is quite similar to proactivity, given that the gist in both rests on the issue of optionality. Discretional behaviour is equally associated with strategic management, but it is often exercised in core business functions involving strategic decisions in areas such as innovation. Generally, businesses are inclined to voluntarism because the decision-making process is discretionary with regard to their daily operations (Burke & Logsdon 1996).

2.7.5 Visibility

Burke and Logsdon (1996) define visibility as the degree to which a CSR initiative is recognised by internal and external stakeholders. However, visibility could be perceived as

either positive or negative. Positive visibility is likely to attract positive attention to the firm's reputation (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). According to Robert and Dowling (2002), there is a relationship between value creation and good reputation which may not be imitated competitors. This is observable in commodity-based industries, where it is difficult to differentiate products or services from competitors. Consequently, good reputation may offer a means to differentiate a firm's product or services from those if its competition, thus accruing value for the firm by either increasing its market share or attracting premium prices for its offerings.

2.7.6   Value creation

The essence of adopting strategic CSR initiative is to create value for the firm. Value is expected to be attained through the alignment of social and economic goals. Hence, achieving value creation for the firm requires the measurement of the anticipated economic benefit directly from the adopted social initiative. In a sense, this dimension attempts to identify the link between strategic CSR and financial performance (Swanson, 1995; Waddock & Graves, 1997; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Orlitzky et al., 2003; McWilliams et al., 2006).

2.8   Corporate Social Responsibility, Value Chain and Competitive Context

Porter and Kramer (2006) elaborate on the issue of competitive advantage, proposing a framework for strategic CSR. Based on the value chain (Porter, 1985) they argue that CSR initiatives are considered strategic when they contribute to the firm's value chain practices – its primary and support activities – and/or its competitive context (see Figures 4 and 5). Similarly, Székely and Knirsch (2005) contend that CSR initiatives capable of contributing to the firm's external competitiveness or internal operations are strategic in nature. Porter and Kramer's (2006) framework highlights CSR activities contributing to the value chain's primary and supporting activities.

Figure 4: Firm CSR activities and value chain activities
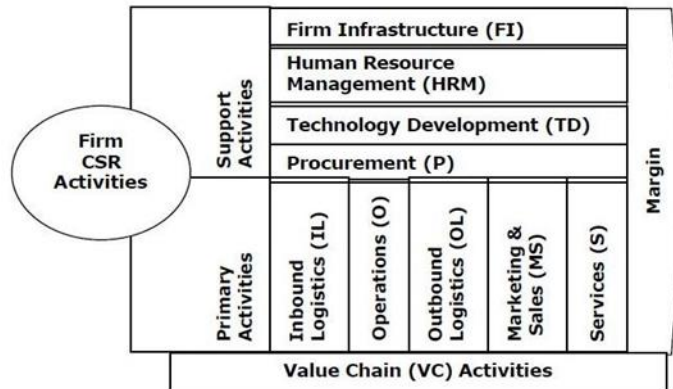
(Source: Porter & Kramer, 2006)

Figure 5: CSR activities improving the competitive context of the firm
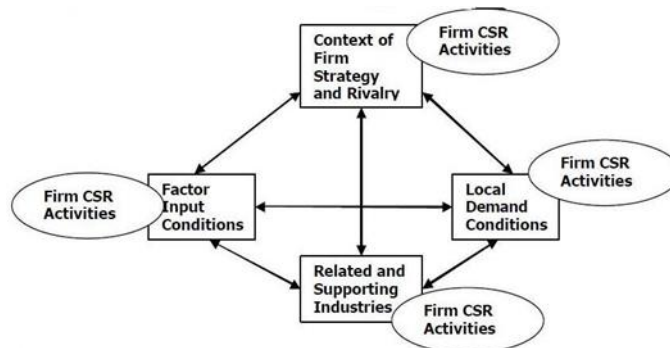
(Source: Porter & Kramer, 2006)

In a sense, strategic CSR activities are expected to positively affect one or more activities in the value chain. Among the benefits suggested are the ability to develop human resources and innovative ideas alongside communities to increase economic, social and environmental inclusion (Perrini, 2005; Crawford & Scaletta, 2005; Bonfiglioli et al.,

2006; Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010) This requires identifying the points of intersection between business and society, deciding on which social issues to address, creating a corporate social agenda, integrating inside-out and outside-in practices and creating a social dimension for the value proposition (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Accordingly, corporations are advised to identify, assess and implement their CSR initiatives to correspond with the aforementioned framework. In practice, they argue that it involves the ability to synchronise the firm's value chain practices with investment in a competitive context (the constraints and opportunities within the immediate business and external environment, such as the availability of human resources, government policies, local demand and supporting industries), while measuring the outcome based on actual profit and loss. To further illustrate the philosophy of strategic CSR, the authors highlight the partnership between Microsoft's working connections and the American Association of Community Colleges as depicting a quintessential case of shared value. Faced by a shortage of information technology candidates to fill about 450,000 positions in the US, the firm donated $50 million to improve and update IT in schools. In addition, employees were encouraged to volunteer to beneficiary colleges by offering their professional skills as a contribution to society. The results showed benefits in many communities and the firm concurrently, creating a direct, significant and potential pool for recruitment. Underpinning the narrative were the phrases "shared value" and "competitive advantage" (Porter & Kramer, 2011). In a sense, CSR initiatives can better serve companies when they are adopted in anticipation of creating shared value.

2.8.1. Critique of the value chain

However, Milliman et al., (2008) argue that the Porter and Kramer (2006) framework neither provides substantial practical ideas on the implementation of strategic CSR for businesses, nor does it describe explicitly a method to assess CSR's impact on business

and society. However, the authors acknowledge the appeal of the framework and further propose the *"systematic five-step process for strategic CSR"* (Milliman et al., 2008). Arguably, the fundamental difference with regards to Milliman et al.'s (2008) strategic CSR implementation process is the proposition of a clear means of measurement and reporting on the impact of CSR initiatives. This would allow firms to track and tag value for every initiative adopted in their quest to maximise profit.

An observation of Porter and Kramer's (2006) framework reveals that the implementation of a successful strategic CSR requires the conscious cooperation of both society and business. However, the study does not suggest ways to tackle potential dilemmas. In the event that the most salient and persuasive stakeholders are not in sync or cannot be accommodated by the firm's strategic interest, what is likely to be the way forward?

Sekhar Bhattacharyya et al. (2008) answer the question on persuasive stakeholders as they attempt to develop an implementation framework to assist managers in designing firm-level strategic CSR. They outline a detailed analysis of different stakeholders and the means to identify salient stakeholders (Sekhar Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). Furthermore, they argue that the demands of salient stakeholders should be considered when adopting a strategic CSR initiative. Significantly different from Porter and Kramer (2006) is the assertion that in the event that the salient stakeholders' interests and the firm's strategic interests do not align, the firm will have to decide on the next point of action.

2.8.2. An integrated framework for strategic CSR

Sekhar Bhattacharyya (2010) proposes an integrated perspective for strategic CSR. The author presents a set of screens required to distinguish strategic CSR initiatives from other non-strategic CSR initiatives. Given the need for managers to design and manage their CSR initiatives effectively and efficiently, the author presents a strategic CSR framework.

According to Sekhar Bhattacharyya (2010) the framework, which consists of four screens, offer a holistic and comprehensive theoretical view on strategic CSR programmes. The Intent screen identifies and selects CSR initiatives which are not reactive but proactive and anticipated (Lantos, 2001; Werther & Chandler, 2005); the Focus screen ensures that initiatives must align with the firm's overall goals and mission, the Commitment screen tests that CSR initiatives are expected to be long term (Falck and Heblich, 2007; Orlitzky et al., 2011) and require substantial resources; and the Activity screen tests whether an initiative contributes to external and internal activities (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Thus, successful strategic CSR initiatives are those which survive the scrutiny of the four screens (Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010). Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the framework in comparison with other strategic CSR frameworks is that it offers a holistic view of the concept by detailing the likely outcomes of implementing strategic CSR. The framework may offer researchers a guide to research on the concept of strategic CSR, and a range of options or outcomes for practitioners to anticipate in the pursuit of their strategic goals.

Following the work of Burke and Logsdon (1998), Porter and Kramer (2006) and Sekhar Bhattacharyya (2010) on strategic CSR frameworks, it could be argued that there is a consensus on what constitutes strategic CSR. This assertion is predicated on the notion that there are very close similarities in the three frameworks. Some of the filter screens set out by Sekhar Bhattacharyya (2010) had already been identified by Burke and Logsdon's (1998) strategic CSR dimensions (especially given that Sekhar Bhattacharyya (2010) refers to his framework as integrated), albeit with differing nomenclatures. For instance, there are similarities between the centrality and proactivity dimensions (Burke and Logsdon, 1998) and the focus and intent screens (Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010) respectively. The activity screen and specificity dimension are equally similar, as they identify CSR initiatives which are able to capture private benefit (Burke & Logsdon, 1998).

Arguably, Porter and Kramer's (2006) value chain and competitive context framework presents a holistic view for identifying strategic CSR initiatives. The authors contend that strategic CSR initiatives contribute to internal and external activity. When compared to Burke and Logsdon's (1998) centrality dimension, similarities could be drawn, as it is reflective of the internal and external context. This is based on the premise that CSR initiatives which contribute to the activities of the value chain and/or the firm's external context are akin to adopting CSR activities close to the mission and objectives of the firm (Burke and Logsdon, 1998). In a sense, the notion of contributing to the internal and external context of the firm implies the ability to capture private benefit as well as the closeness of the CSR initiative to mission and objectives of the firm. This suggests that in addition to the similarities, some components could also be perceived as overlapping when compared to the other framework. However, Sekhar Bhattacharyya's (2010) commitment screen could be considered a distinct component. Nonetheless, it could also be argued that the firm is likely to show commitment to CSR initiatives that are incorporated in its mission and objectives.

Given the similarities between the aforementioned frameworks, the thesis argues that strategic CSR is identified as: (a) a voluntary CSR initiative which is adopted by a firm with conscious effort to (Burke & Logsdon, 1998; Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010); (b) leverage on the opportunities provided the firm, through addressing social and/or environmental issues directly linked to the firm's value chain activities and/or competitive context (Porter & Kramer, 2006), and (c) the opportunities provided to the firm and the impact of the adopted CSR initiative are observable and considered significant by internal and external stakeholders (Burke & Logsdon, 1998).

2.9. Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria

As earlier noted, there is a consensus regarding the heterogeneity of the perception and practice of CSR across regions and in some cases within regions (Idemudia, 2007). Evidence for this can be drawn from the inability of scholars and practitioners to agree on a universal definition for the construct. However, studies suggest that the perceptions and practices of CSR are socially and culturally embedded (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Chapple & Moon, 2005). Hence, attempts are made to investigate and thereby understand CSR from a Nigerian perspective (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Helg, 2007; Eweje, 2006).

On this note, Amaeshi et al., (2006) draw conclusions based on empirical findings from 11 indigenous banks. They suggest that CSR in Nigeria is perceived and practiced as philanthropy, aimed mostly at addressing socio-economic developmental challenges (Amaeshi et al., 2006). Likewise, Visser (2006) examined CSR in an African context using Carroll's pyramid, arguably one of the most popular CSR models. This author argues that though the economic responsibilities are mostly emphasised, philanthropic responsibilities are prioritised above legal concerns, followed by ethical responsibilities. Philanthropy is interwoven in the fabric of society. Since business is a product of society, it is conceivable that a firm will reflect the norms and values of the society from whence it came. This is not to suggest an absence of or diminished ethical values associated with Nigerian businesses, but rather the establishment of the importance of philanthropy within business practice.

However, on the contrary, a study by Okpara and Wynn (2012) on stakeholders' perceptions of CSR in Nigeria suggests that more emphasis is placed on economic, legal and ethical responsibilities in comparison to philanthropic responsibility. Nonetheless, various reasons have been put forward to explain the inclination towards philanthropy, one being the fulfilment of the socio-cultural needs of most communities; since philanthropy has become a norm, and also the developmental stage of CSR practice on the continent

(Visser, 2006; Helg, 2007). The perceived needs of some African societies – for instance, the need for basic social amenities – promotes the case for a philanthropic approach to CSR. Not surprisingly, the lack of basic infrastructure is exemplified as one of the key drivers of CSR in Nigeria (Osemeke, 2012; Idemudia, 2010).

In a concept paper on CSR in Nigeria, Ajadi (2006) elaborates on the drivers of CSR. The author outlines the drivers as follows: the failure of the government to develop the country; the cost of corruption to business and other failures of social capital; unprecedented waste instituted in the oil and gas sector; the neglect of young people (under 25) who are the majority of the population, and are critical for the growth of the nation; and ignorance of the benefits of a potentially active and productive work force of over 120 million people. A summation of Ajadi's (2006) drivers of CSR implies that Nigeria is in a comatose state, as these issues are fundamental to the very existence of government. Unfortunately, the government in this case lacks the policies and political will to develop, and therefore businesses will have to assume some of the responsibilities of the state. Such issues have consistently plagued, impoverished and decimated communities, despite the billions of dollars accrued to the country from oil revenue – a quintessential case of a society cursed with its resources (Nwagbara & Kamara, 2015).

Since CSR mainly aims at the mitigation of the negative impacts of business on its environment, it is arguable that in order to effectively implement CSR, corporation must reassess themselves. The aim of this would be to identify the lines of intersection between the business and society, bearing in mind how the business affects and is affected by its environment and thus, strive towards sustainable development especially in the NDR, given the incessant unrest in the region.

2.9.1 Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigerian oil Multinational National Corporations

CSR practice in Nigeria is arguably mainly dependent on MNCs. Studies indicate that MNCs, especially in the oil sector, are known to practice CSR extensively compared to their indigenous counterparts (Amaeshi et al., 2006). The discrepancy between the number of CSR activities initiated by MNCs and those from indigenous firms can be attributed to the enormous resources and size of MNCs. In comparison, indigenous firms are mostly small and medium-sized organisations which cannot allocate comparable resources towards CSR (Helg, 2007). As with most developing countries, CSR initiatives implemented by Nigerian MNCs tend to place priority on the provision of social amenities such as schools, roads, hospitals and other community development initiatives (Ite, 2004). These basic infrastructures are often not provided or are neglected and left in abysmal conditions by governments due to a range of issues including corruption (Eweje, 2006). Thus, MNCs are obligated to provide these amenities to their host communities as part of their social investment (Boele et al., 2001).

Interestingly, Idemudia (2011) argues that the focus on the provision of social welfare and infrastructure undermines the issues responsible for community underdevelopment in the first instance. He further asserts that addressing issues such as lack of accountability, environmental degradation and corruption, which are responsible for underdevelopment and increased poverty in host communities, will provide a foundation for sustainable CSR initiatives (Idemudia, 2011). This is in the wake of allegations against MNCs, including negligence and collusion with government to suppress host communities in the NDR. Though it is pertinent to address these issues, it is also arguable that to implement sustainable CSR initiatives the government needs to create an enabling environment. Studies suggest that MNCs view the provision of welfare, among other CSR practices

which they currently implement in the NDR, as the responsibility of government. As such, they consider such issues to be beyond their moral responsibilities.

Idemudia (2007) categorises CSR demands in the NDR as consisting of affirmative and negative conjunction duties. The author argues that MNCs addressing affirmative conjunction duties alone is not commensurate compensation for the negative impact of their activities on the host communities, and thus both affirmative and negative conjunction duties need to be addressed (Idemudia, 2007; Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). This requires an assessment of the impacts of oil MNCs on host communities, the direct and indirect ways they have contributed to increased poverty, and how they might be perceived to have exploited opportunities from weak and failed government policies (Wheeler et al., 2002).

Idemudia (2010) elaborates on the role of government in providing an enabling environment for oil MNCs in the NDR. The author argues that CSR initiatives on their own are unlikely to address the failed political and economic structures responsible for inequality and injustice. Therefore, the actualisation of sustainable development in the NDR relies upon the cooperation of all parties involved (government and oil MNCs), and the ability for both parties to address their social responsibilities while considering and consulting with other stakeholders.

Unfortunately, both government and MNCs have been criticised for their roles, either by commission or omission, in the perceived neglect and failure to make significant contributions towards sustainable development in the Niger Delta. Such perceived failure and rebuke is evident in the Shell/Ogoni crisis, which some pundits see as having laid the groundwork for vigorous discussions in practice, in terms of studies and via direct activism in Nigeria (Eweje 2006; Idemudia, 2011; Wheeler et al., 2002).

According to Wheeler et al. (2002), the 1995 conflict between the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and the Ogoni community is arguably the "quintessential case" which facilitated the incorporation of the interconnectedness between business, the natural environment and human rights into corporate agendas. The authors posit that though MNCs may identify with outstanding stakeholder-responsive behaviours at the corporate level, the reality at subsidiary level may reveal a stark contrast. Such inconsistency between corporate and subsidiary level strategy could be attributed to incompetency or a lack of institutional will (Wheeler et al., 2002). However, MNCs have also been known to adopt a company-centric approach towards stakeholder management (Wheeler et al., 2002; Du & Vieira, 2012). Nonetheless, studies have alluded to the approach as being counter-productive and suboptimal, as it implicitly ignores the concerns of stakeholders (Chakravorti, 2010; Du & Vieira, 2012). Therefore, an effective approach needs to include a stakeholder-responsive model in the formulation and implementation of strategy, while also developing the competencies consistent with strategy. This will require MNCs to interact with stakeholders while being empathetic towards their perceptions and expectations, and also employ the resources necessary to balance ethical and economic values.

Following interviews of key stakeholders in the Nigerian oil industry, Eweje (2006) gives a more recent view on MNCs' CSR policies, suggesting the initiation of a proactive approach towards host communities' needs rather than the previous reactive approaches. Most MNCs have also gone further to establish community development departments, with the responsibility for tailoring CSR initiatives to the needs of host communities (Eweje, 2006). However, distrust and strife in the Niger Delta still persists, as is evident in the continuous insurgency and hostility directed towards MNCs in the region. Nwagbara and Kamara (2015) view the situation as one of leadership failure, suggesting that the Nigerian state is plagued by unsustainable and inept leadership crises. Such issues in

leadership permeate through government and corporate institutions, impacting significantly on the perception of leadership roles by managers and political leaders in society (Nwagbara & Kamara, 2015).

Subsequent studies have also suggested different approaches towards mitigating the tension in the Niger-Delta region (Boele et al., 2001; Eweje, 2006). For instance, Boele et al. (2001) proposed a "rights" based approach, insisting that host communities should be entitled to basic human rights such as the rights to development, political inclusion, economic emancipation and environmental conservation. On the other hand, Eweje (2006) advocated the provision of social welfare. Technically, the recommendations by both authors are in the purview of government, as MNCs should not be held accountable if the government is not capable of upholding its obligations to its people. However, it is pertinent to note that these MNCs are representatives of their host countries, and therefore should reflect high standards in their participation in and promotion of human rights and social welfare as enshrined in their corporation guidelines. Clearly, the failure of government to provide basic infrastructure for its citizens erodes the chance of establishing a foundation for CSR whereby CSR initiatives would be complementary to government programmes, and therefore become more significant. Nonetheless, Idemudia (2007) argues that government failure is only one factor in this; there are also issues of legitimacy and psychological contract among the factors responsible for strained relationships between MNCs and host communities, indicating an obvious disconnect with regard to their respective understandings of perceptions and expectations of CSR initiatives. Thus, the perception and practice of stakeholder-responsive behaviour by MNCs need to be revisited.

A review of CSR practice in Nigeria suggests non-compliance with stakeholders' perspectives, revealing that the importance of social responsibility is not attributed to either employee relations, product safety or production processes (Helg, 2007). In the

same vein, Amaeshi et al. (2006) also noted that CSR perception in Nigeria could not be framed using a stakeholder approach, since little or no regard is paid to employee relations or customer protection. These authors suggested that historically these attitudes could be linked to previous colonial corporations prior to independence and colonial laws handed down, which were pro-profit maximisation. However, laws guiding UK companies no longer legislate in favour of shareholder profit maximisation, but are more inclined towards a stakeholder approach, as shown in the recent Company Law Reform Bill, according to which companies are required to report on their activities involving internal and external stakeholders such as employees, suppliers, communities and the environment (Amaeshi et al., 2006)

However, Nigerian court rulings have favoured the notion of shareholder supremacy, viewing businesses as private actors who operate exclusively in the interests of their shareholders. Nevertheless, efforts are being made by government to demand an all-inclusive CSR approach from corporations. So far the government has established the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON) in order to tackle issues of safety (Helg, 2007). In addition, a Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) was established in 1987, followed by Decree 86 in 1992 that mandated both the public and private sectors to carry out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) in the execution of all projects. In 2007 the government enacted the Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency (NEITI) Act, demanding the compulsory regulation of CSR in corporate governance. Recently a bill for a Corporate Social Responsibility Commission (CSRC) has been sponsored. In addition to creating a supervisory agency, the bill intends to mandate corporations to spend 3.5% of their profit before tax on CSR initiatives (Yusuf, 2010; Osemeke, 2012). Although these policies may correspond with those adopted by Western countries, in some cases the

mandatory approach is likely to create adverse effects or prove less effective in the Nigerian context.

Following a study on the implementation of NEITI 2007, Ihugba (2012) asserts that compulsory regulation had the potential to contribute greatly towards stakeholder engagement and social development. The author observed a positive perception by most respondents regarding the additional level of transparency and accountability since payment and receipts between oil MNCs to government had been opened to scrutiny. However, a further analysis of the Act about the social environment indicated that such regulation can only be effective if it is effectively enforced and transparent. Unfortunately, such agencies in Nigeria have been known to be stifled by corruption and bureaucracy, creating unnecessary bottlenecks and thereby rendering them impotent and unable to reach their full potential. Thus, regardless of the nobility of intention in these laws, insofar as there is no political or institutional will to enact and implement them to the letter, their effects will be negligible.

Nonetheless, Ehikioya (2009) proposes a voluntary form of CSR, arguing that the government ought to rise to its responsibility of providing basic infrastructure for its citizens while corporations should act voluntarily on social responsibility. Ideally, however, such a proposition would apply in a developed nation where institutions are independent and strong, in contrast with the Nigerian state which is constantly in flux. Moreover, corporations in the past have been accused of having a negative impact on the state of their host communities, and of taking advantage of government inadequacies. For instance, studies allude to issues of bribery and corruption involving MNCs and government. Presently, government agencies depend on information provided by MNCs on issues of oil leaks, as these agencies do not have the resources to pursue independent investigations in remote communities; hence, MNCs effectively regulate and report themselves. An examination of this self-regulation indicates that MNCs have not been

active in curbing the impact of their activities, since evidence points to myriad oil leaks which are mostly undocumented. Therefore, it is arguable that voluntary CSR in this context is unlikely to yield significant positive results. In any evaluation of Nigerian perceptions of CSR, pundits need to acknowledge the particularities of the country, and the enormous challenges. Interestingly, Amaeshi and Adi (2007) point out the existence of conflicting rationales associated with the normative CSR ideology, asserting that pundits have proposed both the self-regulating and the mandatory form of CSR. Further, they submit that until CSR is presented as a business case, its legitimacy will remain in doubt.

2.9.2 Business case for Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria

Despite the underdeveloped version of CSR being practiced in Nigeria (mostly understood from a philanthropic perspective), a few studies have endeavoured to explore a business case for the construct. Abdulsalam and Akinboboye (2013) discuss the CSR practices of a telecommunications firm in Lagos and the relationship with profitability, patronage and market growth. The study indicates an increase in customer patronage that is largely attributed to philanthropic practices. However, there is no attempt to accurately establish the exact return on investment on CSR practices initiated by the firm, even given the increasing pressure on managers to justify objectively the allocation of funds towards CSR initiatives (Oba, 2011). While CSR proponents argue in favour of the implicit benefits that accrue to corporations practicing CSR, it is necessary to properly address the issues of direct gain from CSR investments, so they can be seen to make business sense (Burke & Logsdon, 1996). Therefore, Oba (2011) argues for the need to explore the link between CSR and financial performance from a positivist perspective, as past research has been descriptive in its point of view.

There is a dearth of literature on the subject, but Oba (2011) investigates Nigerian firms who incorporate CSR in their operations, with the aim of ascertaining whether there is

economic gain or whether CSR is merely a philanthropic cost. Findings suggest that the initiatives adopted had no significant impact on the companies' market value. Therefore, the notion that CSR practices can impact on market value is a Western idea and may not necessarily apply in the Nigerian context (Oba, 2011). Conversely, a study by Uadiale and Fagbemi (2012), based on 40 financial statements from quoted companies in Nigeria, suggests a positive significant relationship between CSR and financial returns. The business case for CSR in Nigeria is still in its infancy, as evidenced in the scant literature. Nevertheless, the affinity towards philanthropy remains dominant due to general factors such as culture, socio-political underpinnings and poor economic situations (Obalola, 2008). Despite the need for philanthropic social responsibilities, it could be argued that organisations ought to focus on strategic CSR initiatives which are sustainable and also provides the means to significantly impact on a range of stakeholders (Oba, 2011).

Similarly, Amaeshi et al., (2006) alludes to a more strategic approach towards the implementation of CSR by banks in Nigeria. In this sequel to a study on financial exclusion, the author suggests that CSR initiatives involving education may in turn reduce the level of illiteracy, which is associated with a rise in financial exclusion in Nigeria. This implies that given the size of the potential market, a more literate population will increase the chances of people appreciating and using financial services, thereby creating shared value for banks and communities (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

2.9.3 Community perceptions and expectations of Corporate Social Responsibility and ExxonMobil

A number of studies have explored the relationships between MNCs and host communities in the Niger Delta. The relationship is generally described as antagonistic and full of strife. Perhaps a peculiar case in the midst of these hostilities would be the mostly cordial relationships between ExxonMobil and Akwa Ibom State communities. It may suffice to

say that Akwa Ibom has always been known for its peaceful nature, even though it lies in the midst of one of the two most volatile regions in Nigeria. However, the existing relationship between the oil MNC and its host communities could be attributed to the non-existence of onshore exploration in or near these communities. Compared to other communities in the NDR, oil exploration in Akwa Ibom is carried out offshore. As a result, it could be argued that the risk of vandalising oil installations is lower compared to communities with onshore operations.

Despite the mostly cordial relationship between this MNC and its host communities, perceptions and expectations of the nature and implementation of CSR initiatives in the community remains highly unfavourable. In fact, studies suggest a disjuncture between local priorities and the mainstream CSR perception of ideal CSR practices (Idemudia, 2007). Though the relationship between ExxonMobil and Akwa Ibom State is seemingly peaceful in comparison to neighbouring states and other MNCs, the perceptions and expectations of most host communities in the Niger Delta remains the same.

In examining the efforts of ExxonMobil in various communities, Ibok and Mboho (2011) acknowledge the existence of a range of initiatives, including community assisted programmes and projects which have been implemented over the years in a bid by the MNC to act as a responsible citizen. Interestingly, Enuoh and Eneh (2015) argue to the contrary, citing reports of insufficient, dysfunctional or a lack of such initiatives.

These initiatives are expected to cut across the state, but with emphasis on the host communities. For instance, the operational site of ExxonMobil is in Ibeno LGA, and consequently a range of amenities have been provided ranging from piped water, electricity, school buildings, hospitals and roads, among others (Ibok & Mboho, 2011). Such CSR initiatives are typical of MNCs in Nigeria, due to the failure of government to provide these amenities. Though they are in line with the needs of these communities, there is also demand for initiatives which will promote poverty alleviation. Consequently,

Ibok and Mboho (2011) assert that there is an urgent need to invest more in initiatives such as youth training and empowerment, so as to mitigate the chances of youth restiveness encountered by other MNCs in the Niger Delta region.

Following the merger of Exxon and Mobil, Mbat et al. (2013) noted the change in the nature of CSR initiatives from concentrating solely on physical infrastructures to capacity building and economic programmes. Further, the post-merger MNC was found to dedicate more CSR resources towards initiatives such as educational support, skill acquisition, micro credit schemes, business start-ups and development and agricultural support (Mbat et al., 2013). Education receives priority with millions of Naira given out in the form of university scholarship and grants, whereby a greater percentage of such funds go to the immediate communities. This implies a shift from ad hoc initiatives to practices which the organisation may perceive to be sustainable community development programmes, therefore giving priority to programmes with multiplier effects on individuals and community. Nonetheless, programmes that are seen as sustainable community development programmes need to take into account the perceptions and expectations of host communities in order to achieve their goals. According to the findings of World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) (1999, 2000) CSR practices differ from country to country and appear to reflect host communities' perceptions and local needs. Arguably, this implies that the heterogeneity associated with the CSR construct is quite likely to apply to local perceptions of sustainable community development programmes, and therefore adopting a generic approach could be paving the route to failure.

Despite the contributions by ExxonMobil to host communities as highlighted and commended by Ibok and Mboho (2011), there seem to be a disjuncture between what is implemented and the perceived expectations of the community (Mbat et al., 2013; Idemudia & Ite, 2006). The disconnect is not unexpected, as studies suggest that

community perceptions and expectations are informed by sociocultural mores, and what seems like a logical contribution from the viewpoint of MNCs may not be perceived accordingly by members of host communities. Zandvliet and Pedro (2002) posit that regardless of the nature of community perceptions, with time they become facts to community members, and constitute a reality with which the MNCs must eventually contend. As such, the manner in which these perceptions are handled will determine the nature of the relationship between both parties. Similarly, Agim (1997) argues that in order for MNCs to achieve peaceful relations with their host communities, they must first seek to understand community perceptions and culture. In the same vein, Afinotan and Ojakorutu (2009) reiterate the need for dialogue and negotiation between MNCs and host communities as a means to a lasting resolution to the crisis in the Niger Delta region. Also, Enuoh and Eneh (2015) suggest that the solution to the challenges of desired CSR outcomes rest in an understanding and consideration of the contractual relationships between host communities and MNCs. Studies overwhelmingly allude to the fact that MNCs assume they understand the needs of host communities, without considering how to effectively implement CSR from an empathetic point of view.

Interestingly, studies have continuously investigated and documented CSR activities in Nigerian MNCs, especially in the oil and gas sector, albeit from the firms' perspective, while little is known about host communities' perspectives. On that note, Idemudia (2007) explores community perceptions and expectations in the Niger Delta, with emphasis on ExxonMobil and oil communities in Akwa Ibom State. Overall, the findings from the study suggest that host communities perceived the oil industry as a burden rather than a blessing. Factors responsible for community perceptions and expectations were socio-cultural values and experience, the issue of legitimacy and the existence of psychological contract (Idemudia, 2007). According to Idemudia, (2007) the MNC seemed to presume that addressing their affirmative injunction duties alone was commensurate with

addressing their negative injunction duties. Resorting to choosing and picking those initiatives deemed fit by MNCs, without dialogue or negotiation with host communities to arrive at an amicable position, constitutes the crux of the issue. When it comes to CSR implementation in their communities, such an exclusion of host community members in decision making contributes towards negative perceptions.

In another study involving ExxonMobil, Enuoh and Eneh (2015) concluded that one of the factors responsible for negative perceptions was the impression that the motives behind CSR initiatives were self-serving, and as such did not reflect community interests. For instance, participants in the study claimed that CSR initiatives implemented by ExxonMobil were non-reflective of actual community needs but were a means to improve their social status (Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). This implies that the main benefactors of CSR are the MNCs, since the initiatives implemented are perceived to be aimed mainly at profit maximisation and improved reputation rather than any significant addressing of community issues (Enuoh & Eneh, 2015; Eweje, 2006). Often MNCs are reluctant to address certain issues, arguing that they are the purview of government. While such statements might be valid, studies suggest that the very existence of oil MNCs in these communities has largely contributed to inequality among citizen as well as environmental degradation, which invariably affects the means of livelihood among community members. As such, it is conceivable from an ethical point of view that these MNCs ought to address the negative externalities responsible for setbacks in host communities. Therefore, it is pertinent for both parties to find common ground in order to avoid conflict and gain legitimacy, while also benefitting significantly from CSR initiatives.

2.10   Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable development

The solution to the impasse in the NDR rests in the ability of oil MNCs to embark on

sustainable development initiatives as an approach towards CSR strategy (Ekwok & Ugor

2018). This assertion is precipitated by the notion that CSR activities of oil MNCs in the

region are reactive rather than being proactive. In a sense, overwhelmingly, CSR activities

adopted by oil MNCs are aimed at addressing their negative externalities (Naanen, 1995;

Okoh, 1996; Onduku, 2001) and generally categorised as philanthropic. Such a response

does not amount to significant development in oil communities as sustainable

development initiatives require deliberate and proactive endeavours to create a positive

impact on the people and their environment (Ekwok & Ugor, 2018). Hopkins (2016)

contends that the much-needed developmental projects exceed philanthropic gestures by

organisations to encompass cooperation with people and public organisations in achieving

sustainable development. Sustainable development is considered an effort towards

meeting today's developmental needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations

to meet theirs (WCED, 1987, p. 41). Given the increasing social, environmental, and

economic impact of large corporations on communities vis-à-vis their enormous resources,

it is arguable that these corporations have a significant role in contributing to sustainable

development (Oginni & Omojowo, 2016).

Overwhelmingly, studies link CSR to sustainable development, with emphasis on

economic, social and environmental sustainability (Adewuyi, & Olowookere, 2010;

Oginni & Omojowo 2016; Ite, 2007; Adegbite et al., 2012). For instance, Xia et al. (2018)

conceptualises CSR practice in the construction industry and highlights the nexus between

CSR and sustainable development. Similarly, Oginni & Omojowo (2016) assert that CSR

embodies businesses' commitment to the society, economy, and environment, which

sustains its activities. Thus, the broad scope of CSR can be integrated into sustainable development. The crux of CSR in contemporary times is akin to sustainability or sustainable development (Oginni & Omojowo, 2016; Ekwok & Ugor 2018). Consequently, the notion of CSR and how it contributes to sustainable development has become a global issue with the UN at the helm of the campaign (Xia et al., 2018). Likewise, Behringer and Szegedi (2016) suggest that sustainable development has been a core issue of discussion in the United Nations conferences since the beginning of the millennia, given the significant strides towards achieving its sustainable development goals (SDG).

2.10.1 *Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Agenda 2030 and the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063*

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Agenda 2030 of the UN, was adopted by the UN general assembly in September 2015. Participants in the agreement featured heads of states and governments from193 countries and private sector delegation. SDGs are an attempt by the UN to achieve global peace and eradicate poverty of all forms as a means towards sustainable development for people, planet, and prosperity (Xia et al., 2018). As an upgrade from the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), this agreement is geared towards inspiring and informing the private sector to take the lead in the pursuit of inclusiveness and sustainable prosperity through "shared values," thus, corporations can identify and leverage on the opportunities provided in addressing social and environmental issues (Kanie, 2015; Nwokorie, & Obiora, 2018). The SDGs outlines global direction towards achieving 17 goals which comprise of a range of economic, social and environmental issues such as poverty, hunger, health and well-being, education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable energy, decent work and economic growth

and industry innovation (UNESCO, 2016) (See figure 6). Other issues include inequality, habitation, marine habitation, ecosystems, consumption, climate actions, peace and justice, and partnership to achieve the goals. Also, the SDG Agenda 2030 further outlines 169 targets and 231 unique indicators, however, the total numbers of indicator as listed in the global indicator framework is 247 as twelve indicators overlap two or three different targets (un.org). Nonetheless, these indicators are refined annually and reviewed accordingly.

Figure 6: The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

(Source: Pedersen, 2018)

Like SDGs Agenda 2030, The African Union Agenda (AU) 2063 was adopted by African countries in September 2013 following their quest to identify and pursue a developmental agenda to promote individual states and the continent at large (Ozoemena, 2017). The AU Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework intended to address the socio-economic challenges of the continent and its people in 50 years (Fourie, 2018). It is set on the foundation and poised to accelerate past and existing initiatives on growth and sustainable development in the continent (Vazquez, & Lucey, 2016). The aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063 are relatable to the UN SDGs. For instance, the first aspiration of the agenda commits to a prosperous African based on inclusive growth and sustainable development can be related to the SDGs 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (Bolu et al., 2018). The agenda identifies seven aspirations, as it aims to achieve its objectives from a self-sufficient perspective, by using African resources to promote its sustainable development in all facets (See table 1). Similar to SDGs, a critical ingredient to the success of these aspirations is dependent upon the participation of multiple stakeholder groups at all stages of the implementation process, while adopting a result-oriented approach with measurable objective (Fourie, 2018).

Table 1:   The Seven Aspirations of Agenda 2063

Agenda 2063 aspirations
1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
2. An integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance
3. An African of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights. Justice, and rule of law
4. A peaceful and secure Africa
5. An Africa with strong cultural identity, common heritage, values, and ethics
6. An Africa whose development is people-driven relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children
7. Africa as a strong, united, and influential global player and partner

(Source: Fourie, 2018)

Predictably, the socio-economic and environmental challenges in Nigeria and most especially the NDR are synonymous with most of the issues earmarked as critical sustainable development challenges in the SDGs Agenda 2030. In addition, the socio-economic and environmental challenges of the NDR require the fulfillment of the aspirations laid out by the AU agenda 2063. Consequently, CSR activities embarked on by oil MNCs in the NDR are often an attempt to address some of these issues (see Allen & Eze, 2019; Mbat et al., 2013). For instance, the adoption of the technical training centre by MPNU in Eket, Akwa Ibom State aimed at providing the community the essential skills for gainful employment (ExxonMobil Sustainability Report, 2012) is poised to address a number of the SDGs including poverty eradication (SDG1) (Spencer, 2018), and decent work and economic growth (SDG8). In the same vein, MNCs who utilise CSR reporting frameworks such as Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) outline the process required to promote inclusive and peaceful communities for sustainable development (Selmier II, & Newenham-Kahindi, 2017). In a sense, CSR practice in the NDR are expected to complement SDGs given that SDGs are globally consistent, sustainable development issues with specific targets that are directly relevant to the social responsibilities of business (Spencer, 2018). Besides, SDGs encourages partnership with multiple stakeholders to achieve their set goals as it also provides a framework for companies to assess their CSR outcomes. Nonetheless, it is essential to note the contesting nature of CSR and sustainable development and the unintended consequences of CSR activities, especially in the NDR, despite its good intentions (Spencer, 2018).

Given the increased effort to link the private sector and international development through SDGs, specifically on the assumption that large corporations are better suited to contribute significantly towards poverty reduction, Spencer (2018) assert that although the private sector is assumed to embody the solution to some sustainable development issues, there is, however, no acknowledgment of their contribution towards inequality, corruption, and

violence, especially in the extractive industries. Thus, there is a need for the private sector to admit their role unequivocally in the current situation to partner successfully with the government and other stakeholders (Spencer 2018). Nonetheless, they further suggest the need to design empirical research to understand the process in which CSR can be used to achieve worthy goals of sustainable development and poverty reduction (Spencer 2018). Allen and Eze (2019) echo similar concerns, as they question the assumption of a widely perceive positive role for CSR practice and its contribution to SDGs in the NDR. Hence, research needs to also focus on the perspectives of the intended beneficiaries of CSR initiatives as this may reveal the inadequacies of evaluating the impact of CSR, given that the perception of poverty and development are generally viewed from a mainstream perspective (Blowfield & Dolan, 2014).

Ekwok and Ugor (2018) investigate CSR practices by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and its role in promoting community development in the NDR. The results indicate that though the CSR initiatives adopted by the firm address some SDGs, they, however, do not have an effective means to promote inclusiveness, and thus, sustainable development is not achieved. Their findings further suggest that oil MNCs in the NDR lack effective methods to address the issues of environmental degradation, a fundamental problem in the region that is directly linked to the presence of these MNCs (Ekwok & Ugor 2018).

Oil spills in the NDR is a major contributing factor to environmental degradation. The majority of the spills are offshore and are particularly devastating to the wetland's ecosystem, which accounts for 76,000sq km of the NDR (Elekwachi et al., 2019). Elekwachi et al. (2019) suggest that the oil spills and subsequent degradation of the wetland ecosystem in the NDR are mainly as a result of the negligence of oil and gas facilities by oil MNCs in the region. Addressing the issues of oil spills in the NDR is fundamental to ensure society achieves sustainable social and economic development

while also tackling the climate crisis. These challenges encountered by wetlands like the NDR can be associated with most of the obstacles featured in SDGs, but especially SDGs 2, 6, 11, 13, and 14 (Elekwachi et al., 2019). In a similar vein, Olanrewaju and Chimenwo (2019) confirms the existence of widespread incidents of the oil spill in the NDR and further suggest an effective monitoring and enforcement operations of relevant authorities capable of adopting right risk management approach to achieve the SDGs 12, 13 and 14.

According to Allen and Eze (2019), oil MNCs are yet to respond to sustainable development challenges in the NDR adequately. Though CSR projects adopted by oil MNCs may provide opportunities for short term palliative measures, the prospect of achieving the SDGs is in doubt (Allen & Eze, 2019). Broadly attributed obstacles to the achievement of SDGs in the NDR is poor governance of resources, a result of weak economic, political, and social institutions in Nigeria- an issue consistent with resource endowed countries in African (Allen & Eze, 2019; Ajibo 2019). Thus, Ojibo (2019) suggest African countries reflect on their responsibilities towards achieving the SDGs and how their actions and inaction impact on environmental governance and social equity.

2.11   Theoretical Framework

This study explores strategic CSR in the context of the NDR from the perspective of a stakeholder perspective. To explore strategic CSR in the context of the NDR, community perception, and expectation of the capacity development initiative of study are explored. Consequently, Carroll's (1991) social responsibility of a business, and Burke & Logsdon (1997) Strategic CSR dimensions are adopted as theoretical frameworks, respectively (See table 2). Although Burke & Logsdon (1997) Strategic CSR dimension is the primary model to guide the study, it was, however, pertinent to begin with exploring community perception of CSR with Carroll (1991).

Carroll's (1991) CSR pyramid is mainly relevant in addressing the first research question in this study. Typically, the concept identifies and differentiates between four types of corporate responsibilities of business: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic obligations (Carroll 1979). It suggests that businesses have first and foremost economic responsibilities to ensure returns on investment to shareholders, create jobs and fair pay for its employees, and promote technological advancement and innovation (Jamali, 2007). Secondly, a business has legal responsibilities, which require that it acts following the law (Carroll, 1979). In a sense, businesses have the legal responsibility to perform it economic activities within the provisions of the law. However, though regulations may mandate a firm to respond to legal requirements, it is nonetheless challenging to enforce broader ethical issues across the board (Pratima, 2002). Thus, Carroll (1979) identifies the ethical responsibility of a business as the third component of the pyramid. As the law articulates the limit of acceptable business behaviours (Solomon, 1994), ethical responsibility goes beyond that limitation to suggest that business embraces ethical values expected by the broader society. Philanthropic responsibility is the fourth and final component of the construct. It indicates that business has a discretionary judgment in deciding on philanthropic contributions as a means to give back to society (Jamali, 2007).

However, Carroll's pyramid has been widely criticised for different reasons (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Nalband & Kelabi, 2014), including the inconsistency between the emphasis on the various components of Carroll's pyramid and that of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Visser 2008). In the same vein, Crane et al. (2008) argue that CSR is context-specific, a position embraced by this study. Nonetheless, Carroll's (1991) CSR framework is known to have offered a significant advancement in CSR research by identifying the criteria to evaluate the concept of CSR (Jamali, 2007). Thus, it has been adopted broadly by previous studies when attempting to understand CSR, especially in the Nigerian context (Visser, 2006; Fadun, 2014; Helg, 2007; Amaeshi et al., 2006).

Given the prominence of Carroll (1991) in CSR literature, the framework is adopted as a guide to evaluate the similarities and nuances of the different components of CSR in the context of this study. Following the data collection, analysis, and emergence of themes, there is a conscious effort to ascertain if indeed, the themes have similarities or nuances in relation to the components of Carroll's pyramid.

For the remaining research questions of this study, Burke & Logsdon (1997) dimensions of Strategic CSR is adopted on the basis that its components/dimensions are easily identifiable, and subsequent frameworks (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010; Werther & Chandler, 2005) differ only on semantics and in some cases the components overlap.

Burke & Logsdon (1997, p.496) propose a strategic CSR framework that they refer to as "a *comprehensive basis for identifying the relationship between CSR and the firm's strategic interest*." They argue that strategic CSR initiatives are initiatives that accrue considerable business-related benefits to the firm by supporting core business activities, which in turn contributes to the organisation effectiveness towards achieving its goals. They further identified centrality, specificity, proactivity, voluntarism, and visibility dimensions, which take into account the full range of strategic behaviours and opportunities required for an organisation to benefit from CSR. Consequently, these criteria assess when and in what ways CSR activities accrue both economic and societal interest (Burke & Logsdon 1997).

The centrality dimension measures the consistency of a CSR initiative with the firm's mission, goals, and objectives (Burke & Logsdon 1997). In a sense, strategic CSR initiatives are those initiatives or programs adopted on the basis that they are of strategic interest to the firm. Centrality dimension is consistent with the "Focus screen" of Sekhar Bhattacharyya, (2010) framework as he argues that activities that do not contribute positively towards achieving the goals and objectives of the overall mission and vision of

the organization are not central to a firm. Centrality can also be inferred from Porter & Kramer (2006) as they argue based on the value chain, that CSR programs are strategic when they contribute to the firm's value chain practices – its primary and support activities – and/or its competitive context. Porter & Kramer's (2006) assertion can also be attributed to the specificity dimension, which suggests that strategic CSR initiatives possess the ability to capture or internalise private benefits. In a sense, CSR programs that support or are supported by the value chain activities or competitive context of the firm leverages the firm's opportunities. Likewise, the benefits of such programs are expected to be recognisable by both internal and external stakeholders, and this notion is referred to as visibility dimension (Burke & Logsdon, 1997). Also, strategic CSR initiatives are expected to be adopted voluntarily without external pressures and proactively, in anticipation of emerging social trends and, in the absence of a crisis, hence the voluntarism and proactivity dimensions. Strategic CSR initiatives are expected to possess all of the attributes as presented by Burke & Logsdon (1997) dimensions of strategic CSR. In the context of this study, emerging themes are compared to establish if and how the capacity development initiative contributes to the overall goals and the objectives of the firm; if it accrues private benefits to firm; if it accrues significant and recognisable benefits to internal and external stakeholders groups; ascertain the motive behind the adoption of the initiative and whether indeed it is considered a voluntarily adopted program.

Given that this thesis explores the nature (with regards to strategic or altruistic CSR) of the capacity development initiative from the perspective of stakeholders (community members), Burke & Logsdon (1997) Strategic CSR dimension offers the parameters to evaluate the initiative effectively. In line with the research questions, the framework provides the criteria to determine if and how the initiative of study is of strategic interest to the firm. It also resonates with the case study research strategy as the dimensions of

Strategic CSR are adopted to explore the phenomenon within its contexts (Saunders et al., 2012; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Thus, the analysis of both secondary and primary data is guided by the Burke & Logsdon (1997) dimensions of strategic CSR, though the finding is mainly based on primary data. Nonetheless, it is essential to mention that given the inductive and exploratory nature of this study, it is pertinent to have an open mind during the analysis to allow the emergence of new ideas (Saunders et al., 2012).

Table 2: Carroll (1979; 1999) CSR Dimensions and Burke & Logsdon (1997) Strategic CSR Dimensions

Carroll (1979;1991) CSR components	Burke & Logsdon (1997) Strategic CSR dimensions
Economic: ensure returns on investment to shareholders, create jobs and fair pay for its employees, and promote technological advancement and innovation	**Centrality consistency:** with the firm's mission, goals and objectives
Legal: compliance with laws and playing by the rules of the game	**Proactivity:** In anticipation of emerging social trends and in the absence of crisis
Ethical: doing what is right, just and fair and avoiding harm	**Visibility:** Observable and recognisable by both internal and external stakeholders
Philanthropy: voluntary contributions to society, by giving back to social activities	**Specificity:** The ability to capture or internalise private benefits.
	Voluntarism: adopted voluntarily without

2.12   Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature surrounding some topics on CSR and strategic

CSR as they apply to CSR practice in Nigeria. It began with an overview of the CSR

concept, including the evolution of the phenomenon. The review cited the inconsistencies

associated with CSR definitional constructs, with emphasis on Carroll's pyramid and

Santos' definition of CSR which incorporates strategic CSR. Given the heterogeneity of

CSR, similar and/or alternative concepts were identified with suggestions that they

emerged from CSR. There was an attempt to elaborate on stakeholder theory as it

underpins the thesis, on the basis that it is fundamental to understand the community as the

main subject of this research and its legitimacy in CSR discourse. Strategic CSR was also

discussed as the crux of the thesis, with cognisance given to the different frameworks. The

chapter discussed the similarities of the frameworks, citing slight variations and some

cases of overlap in components. Eventually, a conclusion was reached on an adopted

definition of strategic CSR, based on the different frameworks. Lastly, CSR in Nigeria

was discussed, highlighting the contributions of MNCs and issues of community

perceptions and expectations of CSR.

The next chapter discusses the methodology and strategies adopted in this study, including

the justifications for the adoption.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology and the rationale behind the adoption of the research method and strategies used in exploring stakeholders (community) perceptions of a strategic CSR initiative implemented by MPNU in the NDR. The research methodology comprises the different approaches adopted by the researcher in the process of collecting and analysing data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Harding 1987). It is the lens through which the researcher views the world and how decisions are made about the study (Mills 2014). The methodological underpinning of this study is consistent with the philosophical assumptions of the researcher. Its consistency is evident in the research questions on how to explore strategic CSR in this research, which is reflective of the researcher's ontology and epistemological stance. In this study, the social construction narrative of CSR and the context-specific nature of the phenomenon are amplified, thus, setting the stage for qualitative/inductive research investigation. Research methodologies are broadly classified as quantitative and qualitative methods (Myers, 1997; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007).

In this study, a qualitative research approach was adopted to explore the strategic CSR initiative deployed by MPNU in the NDR as it. Dudwick, Kuehnast, Jones, and Woolcock (2003), refer to the qualitative method as a range of data collection and analysis techniques, which typically includes purposive sampling and semi-structured open-ended interview questions. The qualitative research method emphasises the representation of reality from the perspective of the participants (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993). It allows the researcher to explore and unpack within the community the differing views of a homogenous as well as a diverse group of people (Choy, 2014). Embracing the qualitative

method is appropriate depending on the nature of the social phenomenon to be explored, albeit guided by the research questions and analytical objectives (Morgan & Smircich, 1980; Mark, 2005). Given that CSR as a social construction (Dahlshrud, 2008) is investigated in the context of a community with likely underlying assumptions, values, and beliefs, the qualitative method allowed for the exploration of the phenomenon with in-depth interviews, thus eliciting responses which may yield information more nuanced than data derived from surveys (Dudwick et al., 2003). In this context, the research sought to understand stakeholders' perspectives of a strategic CSR initiative in the context of a capacity development initiative adopted by MPNU in the NDR. To fully understand and appreciate community perception and expectation, it was necessary to understand what drives their perspectives; thus, a qualitative/inductive approach was appropriate (Yauch & Steudel, 2003).

Given the context-specific nature of the phenomenon, a case study approach is appropriate (Yin, 2009). Evidently, the understanding and practice of CSR are known to be heterogeneous depending on the context (Visser, 2011; Amaeshi et al., 2006; Srisuphaolarn, 2013; Nalband & Kelabi, 2014). Thus, the research method adopted should allow for data to be collected in a subjective, qualitative, and a manner interpretative of the strategic nature of the CSR initiative in the context of the NDR. Going forwards, a thematic analysis is incorporated into this research design to identify and analyse the qualitative data systematically in a manner that links to the stakeholder approach to strategic CSR in the NDR. According to Braun & Clarke (2006) thematic analysis is flexible and accessible; this could be used in exploring and analysing data across research methods. However, it is pertinent to collect and analyse data in a manner that allows context to be apparent (Castleberry & Nolan). In every study, there are different methods at the researcher's disposal. However, it essential for the researcher to acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, depending on the research topic and the nature of the specific

problem, some methods may be more suitable than others. The following section discusses in detail the researchers underlying assumptions and research strategy mentioned above, followed by the different qualitative techniques adopted in exploring the phenomenon of study.

3.1 Research Philosophies

According to Saunders et al. (2016), the term research philosophy relates to our underlying assumptions about the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge. In a sense, research is a prerequisite to the development of knowledge in a specific field. Consequently, these assumptions influence our perception of what constitutes knowledge at every stage of the research. Research philosophies are defined in terms of their ontology and epistemology (Blaikie, 2007). Johnson and Clark (2006) point out the need for business and management researchers to be aware of their philosophical stance. They argue that our research philosophy is reflected through our choice of research strategy, as it will have a significant impact on what we do and how we understand what is being investigated. On this premise, it is pertinent to identify our research philosophy and how it reflects on the assumptions made about the nature of this study and how it is investigated.

3.1.1 Ontology

Ontology underpins the research design. It defines the nature of reality, albeit from the researcher's perspective. According to Blaikie (2007), ontology is defined as the study of being. A researcher's ontological stance answers the question of the nature of the human and social reality that we seek to investigate. This includes our concern about what exists, what it looks like, what units it is made up of, and how these units interact with each other

(Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Sutrisna, 2009). In a sense, our ontological assumptions reflect our perceptions of what constitutes social reality.

This study explores community understanding of CSR and the implementation of a CSR initiative in the Nigerian oil industry, including the host communities' perceptions and expectations of the initiative. Although an objectivist approach could be adopted, this may limit our insight in understanding the complexities associated with how different host communities in this region frame their perceptions and expectations of the oil industry, including the factors which are responsible for these perceptions. An objectivist approach would imply that community expectations and perceptions must be treated as tangible objects, without giving cognisance to the complexities involved in these social constructs. Moreover, this study is not focused on inferring statistical evidence from population (Saunders et al., 2012). Rather, it seeks to elicit individual understandings of the initiative, since the phenomenon of study is socially embedded, and consequently perceptions may vary depending on context (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In contrast to the objectivist approach, therefore, a subjectivist approach is adopted in this study. CSR is known to be a social construct. Hence, it is arguable that values, beliefs and other environmental factors are likely to inform its practice, and also its perception by the locals. In the context of this study, community perceptions and expectations are informed by political, economic, social and environmental factors. These factors have varying impacts among individuals and communities, while also remaining in a state of constant change. Similarly, the organisation's intentions and interpretations of the initiative may not be consistent with the community's perceptions and interpretations, based on differing underlying assumptions. Arguably, CSR perceptions and expectations in this context are social constructs. Therefore, in order to explore and understand community perceptions and expectations of initiatives, a subjectivist approach is the most suited ontological stance.

3.1.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is the aspect of the research philosophy concerned with what constitutes knowledge (Gog, 2015). Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge in terms of the methods used to acquire knowledge, its scope, legitimacy and justification between rationality and opinion. Different forms of data are considered legitimate, ranging from factual data to interpretations. Generally, epistemology focuses on how the researcher knows what they known (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). It is about our understanding of knowledge and how that knowledge is achieved and presented to others. Typically, business and management researchers adopt different epistemological stances in their fields of study. Epistemology is commonly considered from two perspectives, namely positivist and interpretivist (Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2012). Distinctive between the two is the idea that the positivist believes that reality can be observed, studied and perhaps modelled, whereas the interpretivist believes that reality can only be interpreted. These distinctive beliefs will further influence the process of the research and its outcomes. In this study, an interpretivist approach has been adopted.

The interpretivist philosophy has an inclination towards the social sciences, which is consistent with the study of people. According to Saunders et al. (2012), this philosophical stance suggests that it is incumbent on the researcher to understand the complexity in studying human beings as social actors. The interpretivist researcher typically acknowledges the disparity between people and physical phenomena as people construct meanings (Saunders et al., 2012). These meanings are informed by culture, environment, and our various collective and personal experiences. On this premise, this study acknowledges that community perceptions and understanding of the phenomenon of study will be interpreted in line with their cultural and collective experiences, and hence their constructed meanings. Arguably, community members also interpret the organisation's

intentions and the implementation process of the initiative in accordance with their set of meanings (Saunders et al., 2012). In this situation, as an interpretivist the researcher is saddled with creating a richer understanding and perhaps a new interpretation of the world around the subjects of study. This requires approaching the study of community members not as objects, but with the understanding that they differ in terms of their groups, beliefs and experiences. As mentioned in the literature chapter, CSR is a social construct, and therefore the understanding and perception of the concept will differ among communities and individuals. Community perceptions of the initiative are, in a sense, a construct of their mind-set, which is a reason to refrain from objectifying the study.

Typically, an interpretivist approach is associated with a holistic view. This study will adopt a holistic view of the perceptions and expectations of the implementation of the CSR initiative in context. Taking an interpretivist approach will allow the researcher to elicit responses from respondents which will contribute to the outcome of the research. As earlier hinted, the purpose of this study is to gain understanding of a specific topic rather than explaining relationships. Studies suggest that interpretivist research can be carried out to develop understanding of a topic area.

3.2 Research approach

Saunders et al. (2012) identify three research approaches, namely, deductive, inductive, and abductive approaches. The deductive approach is mostly associated with quantitative research strategies, and it commences with a review of the literature to ascertain the context for the research, followed by testing through empirical observation. Typically, hypotheses are derived from theory, following which data is collected, and the result is compared with the hypothesis. However, this approach would limit our understanding of the social reality of this study, which is embedded in the meanings created by the subjects

of study. A deductive approach may not create a holistic picture of the community's perceptions of the initiative, which are based on personal information provided by community members. Moreover, this study does not intend to test hypotheses or variables; instead, it is focused on an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon.

Consequently, this study identifies with an inductive approach. An inductive approach could be considered as the opposite of a deductive method. It is focused on understanding the phenomenon of study by adopting a less structured methodology to elicit rich information (Sutrisna, 2009). The inductive research is devoid of hypotheses, which allows the researcher to keep an open mind while probing to answer questions about the phenomenon under study. Invariably, the inductive approach is mainly associated with qualitative studies. Data is collected before identifying appropriate literature, which will eventually lead to the development of new literature (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 13).

Nonetheless, this does not imply that the research is carried out devoid of extant literature. Often, inductive researchers use literature as a foundation for research. On this basis, Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 14) posit that deductive and inductive approaches should be considered as tendencies instead of a set of distinctions. In this research, a partial literature review on the phenomenon was carried out initially to establish a foundation for the research and consistent with the qualitative/inductive approach. Following the partial review, data collection commenced, and themes were identified, and then there was further resort to literature. A back and forth approach was adopted, arguably combining deductive and inductive approaches to some extent (Saunders et al., 2012).

In a similar vein, Ali & Birley (1999) argue that researchers can combine both approaches in a manner consistent with epistemology. In a sense, the researcher seeking to embrace an inductive/qualitative approach may precede their study with an initial specification of the construct to be investigated. Although the use of theory with a qualitative method may seem antithetical, in practice, the researcher often falls along the continuum between the

two extremes (Deshpande, 1983). Hence, Ali & Birley (1999), contend that the difference between inductive and deductive approach is how they draw on existing theory. Typically, the inductive approach is appropriate, where theory is composed of a construct. At the same time, deductive is akin to variables, suggesting a middle ground where existing theory is adopted by qualitative/inductive researchers but presented in the form of a construct rather than variables (Ali & Birley 1999). Arguably, the inductive approach to theory will enable the researcher to elicit new information not envisaged before the study. While there are an extensive exploration and discussion of strategic CSR construct in the literature, to the researcher's knowledge, it has rarely been explored in the context of the NDR and specifically from the perspective of stakeholders from the receiving end of a CSR initiative. Given that the above argument vis-à-vis CSR as a social construct and the exploratory nature of the study, an inductive approach is appropriate (Sofaer, 2002).

3.3   Qualitative research method

Following the researcher's inclination towards subjectivist, interpretivist and inductive views, a qualitative method as earlier mentioned was adopted as the most appropriate methodology for the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A qualitative method will yield more understanding of the phenomenon of study as against a quantitative study, which offers mainly numerical measurements (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 140). The qualitative view takes into account the context of reality within a phenomenon, while also acknowledging the subjective dimensions of that reality. At this juncture it is worth reiterating that the focus of this study is to gain understanding and further interpret information gathered, from the respondents' perspective. In this context, the qualitative method will afford this research an in-depth understanding of how the community in context perceives the initiative, and the factors which inform their perceptions and

expectations. This is based on the premise that reality is subjective, and as such the observed reality is subject to the researcher's interaction with the phenomenon.

Invariably there are pros and cons with regards to both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In perspective, a quantitative methodology would constrain the much sought-after understanding of community perceptions and expectations of the phenomenon, including its justifications. According to Snider (2011, p. 408), although numerical measurements are impressive, they tend to ignore parts of the study which are embraced by qualitative methods. However, qualitative studies are known to be subject to bias, in that they may be too close to the researcher's attachment to the subject. On this basis, this research adopts semi-structured interviews to ensure that respondents discuss their views unhindered and without researchers' bias.

Also associated with qualitative research is a lack of consistency in structure, therefore making it difficult to replicate. Typically, researchers investigating a particular topic may emphasise different aspects of the topic and consequently ignore other important aspects. This study attempts to take into consideration all aspects related to the phenomenon, which will affect the findings (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 408). Another common criticism of qualitative research is the inability to generalise findings due to its limited number of participants. However, this study does not intend to generalise based on population; rather, it seeks to generalise based on existing literature on the phenomenon. Arguably, this case study will also be important to the Nigerian oil industry in implementing sustainable strategic CSR initiatives in the Niger Delta region.

In what follows, details of the case study approach are discussed followed by information about data collection, analysis and how the conclusion of this study was reached, meticulously presented for transparency.

3.4   Case study as a research strategy

A case study approach is adopted for the purpose of this research. According to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 179), a case study explores a phenomenon within its context or a number of real-life contexts. It allows the researcher a holistic view of the phenomenon rather than presenting a view based on isolated factors (Yin, 1994). Case studies can be associated with the interpretivist philosophy (Yin, 2015, p. 16). They are relevant when attempting to gain an understanding of context and the processes of enactment (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The aforementioned premises align with the ideals associated with this study as it aims to identify the blurred lines between the phenomenon of study and the context within which it is studied (Rowley, 2002). Most importantly, case studies aim to answer the questions "why," "what" and "how" (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179). As such, they are often used in exploratory research (Rowley, 2002; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). In a similar vein, this study explores a stakeholders perception of strategic CSR, albeit from a community perspective on how and what informs community perception and expectations of strategic CSR, ushering in, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, a unique perspective to investigating strategic CSR (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Acquiring appropriate data to actualize an interesting outcome will require that respondents are able to discuss freely. To this end, a case study approach will ensure a closer relationship between the researcher and the participants, thereby allowing the elicitation of important data. Therefore, the researcher is positioned to understand better the participants (Lather, 1992, p. 89).

This research is a single case study. A multiple case study was considered mainly to garner more evidence and arrive at a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in context. However, cognizance was given to certain limitations of multiple case studies, i.e., that they are time-consuming and difficult to manage (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 550). Nonetheless, as a single case study, the initiative in the study is unique among other CSR

initiatives adopted by the organisation. In comparison to similar initiatives in the region, it is consistent, defined, and focused on achieving economic and social benefits for the parties involved. As such, this case study offers the opportunity to observe and analyze the training centre initiative within the context of the communities and from the perspective of beneficiaries.

Nonetheless, a single case study may also exhibit the limitations of multiple case study mentioned above. However, the researcher hails from the location of study and has direct beneficiaries of the initiative and community members as contacts. These contacts form the basis for the adopted purposive sample method (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 231). Given the researcher's direct relationship with the contacts, there is the likelihood of gaining their confidence regarding the safe and discreet use of information gathered.

3.5 Research Design

The research design in this study is in line with the case study research strategy. Unlike other research strategies such as grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology, the case study research strategy lacks a prescriptive plan which guides the research through the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data (VanWynsberghe and Khan, 2007). However, it is of critical importance to carefully plan and develop a systematic implementation structure when conducting a case study research (Merrian, 2009; Yin 2014). Given the importance of achieving rigour in research, it was pertinent to ensure that the implementation structure is in alignment with the researcher's philosophical underpinning and methodology with the research purpose and method (Harrison et al. 2017). Thus, the action plan that guides this research from the research question to the conclusion can be related to the following steps suggested by Creswell (2006) as cited in Wilson (2016).

- Conceptualising the problem

- Writing research questions

- Data collection

- Analysis

- Interpretations

- Writing report

In the context of this research, CSR is considered a social construction as its perception and interpretations are influenced by factors such as cultural (Visser, 2006) and level of economic development of the community (Amaeshi et al. 2006). Given the subjective underpinning of the concept, the research deemed it appropriate to adopt a qualitative/interpretivist approach in exploring the phenomenon in the context of the NDR, thus gain a full appreciation of community perception and expectations (Yauch & Steudel, 2003). Therefore, the research questions for this study are formulated to explore strategic CSR as a phenomenon, giving cognisance to the cultural, economic, and environmental context of the NDR.

As appropriate for case study research, data collection involved multiple sources (Yin, 2003). According to Yin (2003), data collection techniques for case study include documents, interviews, direct observations, and participant observations. Following the mentioned recommendation, this research carried out semi-structured interviews with internal and external stakeholders of the firm, made observations in the process of conducting interviews and sourced documentary data in the process of data collection. This rigorous approach to data collection aimed to ensure an in-depth understanding of community perception and expectation of the CSR initiative, given the cultural, economic, and environmental issues of the NDR (Creswell et al. 2007).

Following data collection, a detailed transcription was carried out, describing the participants' understanding of CSR and the sustainable development initiative. Details included participants' expectations of MPNU regarding their social obligations to the community and their understanding of the benefits accrued to the firm and the community. Following a vivid description of data, there was a focus on themes to understand the complexities of the case (Stake 1995). At this juncture, analysis required identifying issues within the case further to identify common themes (Yin, 2003).

Finally, there is a broad interpretation of the understanding of CSR and the expectations of community members in the NDR.

3.6 Location of Study

This study was carried out in the core oil-producing local government area (catchment area) of Akwa Ibom State, a state in the NDR of Nigeria. Before looking at this area in detail, it is pertinent to present an overall perspective of Nigeria and the NDR.

3.6.1 Nigeria

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located in Western Africa. It has borders with the Niger Republic in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the southeast, and Benin in the west. The southern part of the country lies within the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean. The area presently known as Nigeria was a British colony. Arguably, the name Nigeria is derived from the river Niger, which flows from the Guinea highlands and discharges through the Niger Delta.

Modern Nigeria gained independence from British rule in 1960. Earlier the area had consisted of the Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria Protectorates. However, in 1914

the two were amalgamated and the name Nigeria was adopted. Presently the area is home to approximately 250 ethnic groups (Ogundiran, 2006). Given the diverse nature and complexity of the different ethnic groups, cultures and traditions, the country remains disjointed. Issues of discontent with regards to the distribution of economic and political wealth are at the crux of its problems. As the main contributor to the Nigerian crude oil economy, the NDR is no doubt a significant part of these issues.

3.6.2 The Niger Delta Region (NDR)

The NDR is estimated to contribute at least 95% of Nigeria's export earnings and 80% of its gross domestic product (Hoben et al., 2012). To put this into perspective, Nigeria is the eighth largest exporter of crude oil in the world. Despite its abundance of oil and gas resources, however, the NDR is arguably one of the poorest places in the world (Ikelegbe, 2005; Ogonor, 2003). The region is rife with unrest and conflicts, precipitated by the lack and complete neglect of social amenities, widespread poverty and high levels of unemployment. This state of conflict has been attributed to different factors, including the marginalisation of local communities (Welch, 1995; Ukeje, 2001; Ifeka, 2001; Ikelegbe, 2005) and the externalities of oil exploration and exploitation (Naanen, 1995; Okoh, 1996; Onduku, 2001).

The NDR is located in the southern part of the country and covers an area of about 70,000 square kilometres with a coastline stretching 560 kilometres (Idemudia, 2007). This accounts for 7.5 percent of the total land mass of the country and approximately two-thirds of the entire Nigerian coastline. It has a population of 27 million (NDDC, 2004). The region is made up of 9 out of the 36 states in the country, including: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers States. Due to the location of the CSR initiative and its immediate catchment area, Akwa Ibom State was selected for this study.

Akwa Ibom State has a population of 3.9 million people, with an average population density of 463 people per square kilometre (Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). The state consists of 31 local government areas, out of which Eket, Esit Eket, Ibeno and Onna local government areas have been selected for the study. The selection criterion was the host community status of these communities to ExxonMobil and the CSR initiative.

3.7 Selection of Participants

This section discusses the selection process for recruiting participants to the study. It includes the sampling techniques used, the sampling criteria for participants, the sample size and selection, which are all in line with the chosen qualitative research methodology.

3.7.1 Sampling Technique

In line with qualitative case study research, a non-probability sampling method was adopted. Given the exploratory nature of this research, a non-probability sampling method is appropriate in answering the research questions (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 281). Generally, this research seeks to understand the implementation of the CSR initiative from the community perspective, and how this perception affects their expectations. In the context of this study, a non-probability sampling method allows for an information-rich case study to explore the research questions and subsequently gain theoretical insight (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 283). The non-probability sampling method does not allow for generalisation regarding population; rather, the generalisation in this research pertains to theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 442; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 283).

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 261) identify purposive and volunteer sampling as non-probability sampling techniques, among others. Based on Saunders et al.'s description, a combination of both techniques was used in this study. Purposive and volunteer techniques were used in selecting community members and direct beneficiaries/employees respectively. These techniques are appropriate in the selection of respondents whose characteristics are relevant to the research questions (Merriam, 2009).

Due to fears about divulging sensitive company information, the direct beneficiaries/employees were initially unwilling to participate in the study. On this basis, it was necessary to reach out to a few employees who were already known to the researcher. Subsequently the researcher was introduced to other employees (potential participants) and was able to provide assurances about preserving their anonymity in the study. This process of seeking out employees to gain access to their other colleagues is consistent with snowball sampling (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 261). However, there may be issues of bias with this technique as participants are likely to refer people who are like them, thereby increasing the risk of a homogenous sample (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 303).

To address this issue, the researcher utilised more than one source to facilitate the recruitment of participants, all from different backgrounds.

In line with a purposive sampling technique, community members were selected as participants on the basis that there were knowledgeable about the CSR activities of the firm and most especially the initiative under study.

3.7.2   Sampling Criteria

Given the two groups of respondents in the study, the criteria for selection were slightly different for the different groups. The first group consisted of community members from the catchment areas, while the second group consisted of direct beneficiaries of the programme (graduates of the training centre) regardless of their employment status. All the participants except for one hailed from the host communities (otherwise known as the catchment area) of ExxonMobil in Akwa Ibom State. These communities consist of the Eket, Esit Eket, Ibeno and Onna local government areas. The community members selected were resident in the state and were considered in their communities to be opinion leaders. The direct beneficiaries included individuals who were employed by ExxonMobil, either directly or indirectly, or by other oil MNCs.

3.7.3   Sample Size

Given the qualitative nature of the study, the number of participants was small. This is based on the notion that when adopting a non-probability sampling technique, the sample size is often dependent on the research questions and objectives (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 283). Typically, sampling is expected to continue until the researcher establishes a point of data saturation where new information ceases to unfold (Sanders et al., 2012, p. 283). A total of twenty interviews were conducted, after which new information ceased to emerge

or suggest new themes. At this point the researcher discontinued data collection, acknowledging the point of data saturation.

3.7.4   Sample selection

The participants in this research were made up of two groups of community members: community opinion leaders, and direct beneficiaries of the programme (graduates of the initiative). The areas of most concern for both groups were time constraints due to their busy schedules, and sensitivity of information, although the latter was mainly a concern for community members employed by ExxonMobil. To address their concerns, the preservation of anonymity was guaranteed and a 45 minute to 1-hour duration for the interview was agreed upon.

The approach used in identifying participants for each category of respondent differed. For community respondents the researcher reached out to Dr Ekong Daniel at the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, whose journal papers had aided in gathering preliminary information about this study. The researcher had come across journal articles co-written by Dr Daniels on ExxonMobil and Corporate Social Responsibility in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria: Past and Present. Given that Dr Daniels is conversant with the subject area, he was able to introduce the researcher to a guide who had previously assisted a PhD student engaged in a similar project. Following our meeting with the guide, contact was made via telephone with community members who met our criteria. Subsequently, arrangements were made for face-to-face interviews with four of the participants. Since the researcher hails from this region, it was also possible to contact other community members via telephone who met the criteria for community respondents. The purpose and focus of this research were explained to them,

and then they agreed on the time and place for face-to-face interviews. A total of ten interviews were conducted with opinion leaders in community.

In selecting the direct beneficiary participants, the researcher reached out to friends, relatives and former schoolmates, some of whom are currently employed by ExxonMobil in Nigeria. The decision to approach potential participants in this manner was due to the initial refusal of some ExxonMobil employees to participate, perhaps as a result of the fear of repercussions because of divulging sensitive information. Eventually, the researcher was able to meet with a participant introduced by a relative. During the meeting the researcher presented the participant with the scope of the study and further guaranteed the preservation of anonymity. A face-to-face interview followed, after which the participant gave the researcher telephone numbers for additional colleagues after conducting a short introduction on the telephone to two potential respondents. Based on contact made by friends, four respondents were identified, two of whom were beneficiaries not employed by ExxonMobil. This set of respondents had no qualms about meeting the researcher for face-to-face interviews, and furthermore they gave the researcher contact telephone numbers for other beneficiaries. At this point time constraints and personal commitment had become a factor for the researcher, who had to return to the United Kingdom. However, additional contacts were made and telephone numbers of five other individuals were collected. Following the researcher's return to the UK, telephone interviews were requested from the five additional contacts and were subsequently carried out.

3.7.5   Data Saturation

Data saturation was reached at a point of replication and redundancy of data, where new data from additional respondents ceased to identify new themes (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In the context of this study, a constant comparative approach was used in analysing the data.

This entailed going back and forth through the data to identify similarities or repetitive patterns and new information. Data analysis commenced prior to the first transcription of data. This involved the development of codes, followed by explicit notes on the interpretation of the data, while assessing the relationship between the data and the extant literature on the phenomenon. Initial interpretations were concise, comprising words or phrases. At this point initial themes had emerged, allowing the researcher a glimpse of the likely categorisation of data or themes. Following the transfer of all transcripts to NVivo, the process was repeated until the final themes emerged. Going forward, additional data and further analysis ceased to reveal new perspectives in relation to the final theme, and therefore a point of saturation had been reached. On this premise, sampling was discontinued.

3.8   Data collection

Both primary and secondary data were employed in this study. The main source of primary data was interviews, which included face-to-face and telephone interviews. During the face-to-face interviews, observations were made in form of field notes. Secondary data was sourced from existing literature on relevant topics.

3.8.1 Interviews

The interviews consisted of face-to-face and telephone interviews. The aim of the interviews was to understand community perceptions of CSR and the implementation of a seemingly strategic CSR initiative, and how these perceptions informed the participants' expectations of the initiative. The questions allowed for variation to reflect the different groups and the individuals in the groups (see Appendix A).

A semi-structured interview format was adopted, and each interview lasted 45 minutes to 1 hour on average. This format was developed based on our research objectives and prior review of literature on the topic, and discussion with the supervisory team to identify inconsistencies or errors in the interview format. A pre-test was carried out with a colleague as a volunteer.

The interview format consisted of two parts: demographic questions and semi-structured interview questions. The demographic questions differed slightly between the groups of respondents. Generally, the questions included gender, designation, highest level of education completed, and for the beneficiaries a question about their entry level qualification onto the programme was added.

The second stage of the interview format had a list of semi-structured interview questions. They were open-ended questions and were designed to be asked in no particular order, allowing the respondents to discuss freely (Bryman & Bell., 2011., p. 249). Open-ended questions are commonly used in exploring areas where there is a lack of existing knowledge (Bryman & Bell., 2011, p 249). The aim of the interview questions was to elicit rich information including feelings from the respondents while remaining focused on the research questions (Creswell, 2007). The researcher was open to probing respondents on interesting areas by following the direction and flow of the discussion (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 391). The interview questions were framed in simple terms and could be readily explained so as to avoid misinterpretations and confusion. There was a conscious effort to avoid leading or loaded questions while also ensuring the questions were as short as possible (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 267).

3.8.2 Conducting Interviews

In the course of this study, a total of 20 interviews were carried out during the months of July and September 2017. The interviews included of 14 face-to-face and 6 telephone interviews. All the face-to-face interviews took place in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria at the residences of the respondents in their various local government areas, with the exception of one which was held at the respondent's place of work in the state capital, Uyo. Telephone interviews were held following the researcher's return to the United Kingdom. Choosing the time for the telephone interviews was at the desecration of the respondents. This allowed participants to decide on a convenient time. In all, the settings for the interviews were chosen to be convenient for both the respondents and the interviewer.

Prior to conducting the main interviews, the researcher had brief discussions with respondents via telephone. During this period the research purpose, the nature of the questions and the sampling criteria were discussed. In some cases, introduction letters stating in detail the purpose of the research, the members of the supervisory team and a copy of the interview questions, including the duration of the interview (see Appendix B), were sent via email. This allowed the participants to familiarise themselves with the interview topic and process beforehand.

The semi-structured face-to-face interviews commenced with a brief preliminary discussion on the research topic. This period allowed for familiarisation between the interviewer and the respondents, ensuring a cordial atmosphere. Respondents were informed that the interviews will be audio-recorded, and then issues of information confidentiality and anonymity of sources were clarified. A copy of an informed consent form (see Appendix C) was handed to respondent for their perusal and the addition of their signature, if they understood and consented to the interview process. Following the respondent's consent, an audio-recording app on the interviewer's phone was turned on and the interview commenced. Audio-recording of the interview was useful since it

allowed for the collection and preservation of the data without alterations for later use. With regard to the recording of interviews in research, Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 481) argue for the importance of recording conversation. Interview questions were not asked in any particular order; rather, questions were allowed to flow with the discussion. All the interviews were conducted in English and they lasted 45 to 60 minutes on average.

During the interview sessions the researcher used probing questions when necessary to elaborate on certain areas of interest. In some cases, respondents ventured into areas that were not directly related to the topic. Typically, CSR in this region is a sensitive topic and can arouse emotional responses. However, in such situations the interviewer cautiously and politely brought respondents back to the topic of discussion. Attention was given to verbal and non-verbal reactions and notes were taken accordingly.

Following the conclusion of each interview there was a debriefing session. During this period the interviewer was open to questions from the respondents regarding the interview and other areas where they required clarity. At the end the researcher thanked the respondents for participating and bade them farewell.

3.8.3 Secondary Data

The secondary data sources used in this study consisted mainly of documentary data type. According to Saunders et al. (2012) documentary data includes newspaper articles, journals, books, companies, and government publications. In this case, they were mainly text-based online publications such as the company publications and newspaper reports. Although data collected on the capacity development initiative was from a limited source, they nevertheless contributed to the initial source of knowledge and gave context to the phenomenon of study. The information sought included insight into the CSR activities of MPNU in the host communities and specifically the capacity development initiative

explored in this thesis. The secondary data gathered and analysed provided a perspective of the firms' commitment to the CSR initiative of study, the motivation to adopt the initiative and the benefits accrued to both the firm and the community (See table 3). The criteria above are based on the theoretical underpinning of strategic CSR expressed in Burke and Logsdon (1996) dimensions of strategic CSR. Given that it is the overarching theory of strategic CSR in this study, it was pertinent to evaluate the information available on the CSR initiative to ascertain its consistency with the concept. Though not presented explicitly in the findings chapter, secondary data collected and analysed, however, turned out to be relevant for the corroboration of the primary data mainly in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

Interestingly, Cowton (1998) identifies publications from other academic researchers, among other sources, as a source of secondary data. In the same vein, Saunders et al. (2012) suggest they could include raw and published summaries. In addition to other secondary data sources, academic articles from previous studies provided the foundation for this thesis. Typically, the data sought from these sources were relevant and consistent with its aim and objectives of this study and were significant as a platform for secondary data sources. Information from literature at the inception of this research paved the way for the formulation of the research questions, research design, and, subsequently, the analysis of primary data. More specifically, secondary data allowed existing conceptual and empirical studies to be explored while identifying any gaps in the literature. The review of secondary data was necessary to avoid the duplication of research while also establishing a foundation to address the purpose of this study (Saunders et al., 2016; p. 316).

Generally, secondary data are verifiable and can be referred to at any time, for instance, regarding the validity of the literature review (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 330). Also, uninterrupted access to the vast resources of the University library and databases ensured

that no additional cost was incurred as time was managed effectively in the course of the study. In a sense, this addressed the issues of lack of access to materials and the costs associated with secondary data (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 333). However, cognisance was given to the quality of sources used in this study; consequently, peer-reviewed journals only were used to increase the chances of utilising credible sources. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that no relevant statistical data about the CSR initiative in this study was found.

Table 3: Evaluation of secondary data with Burke and Logsdon (1997) Strategic CSR dimensions

Source of data	Data extract	Inferred Meaning	Strategic CSR dimension
https://corporate.exxonmobil.com/-/media/Global/Files/locations/Nigeria-operations/publications/ExxonMobil-in-Nigeria-coffee-table-book.pdf	This has been instrumental to increasing the pool of skilled workers in the industry which would be beneficial not only to ExxonMobil affiliates but to the entire oil and gas industry in Nigeria. To date over 600 personnel have graduated from the training centre and Mobil Producing Nigeria has hired at least 500 of these graduates.	Suggesting that the benefits of the initiative are observable and recognisable by the firm.	Visibility
https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/11/14/i-am-a-product-of-local-content-says-chairman-mobil-producing-nigeria/	He further stated that Nigerian Content is integrated into ExxonMobil systems and processes, while the company has also adopted a systematic approach to secure sustainable long-term benefits	Suggesting the closeness of the initiative to the firms mission and objectives	Centrality
https://www.vanguardngr.com/2010/03/csr-exxonmobil-invests-280-m-on-community-development/	In the area of workforce development, decades ago we established a Technical Training Centre in Eket, Akwa Ibom state to train and produce a pool of skilled personnel for different aspects of the oil and gas industry. The centre is projected to produce 500 graduates over the next five years which would provide a constant supply of talent to keep up with the needs of the industry. The importance of a skilled workforce that provides a global competitive edge cannot be overemphasized. •	Implying that the initiative was planned in anticipation of emerging social trend and the absence of crisis

The initiative is positioned to capture private benefit to the firm and the industry | Proactivity

Specificity |

3.9. Pilot Study

Pilot interviews were held with four participants, two from each group of respondents, prior to the actual investigation. The aim was to provide an opportunity to adjust and revise the interview schedules for the main study (Kim, 2011). Given the CSR disposition regarding culture and context, the pilot interviews helped to identify potential issues in the recruitment of participants, timing and organisation of the interview process, and the modification of interview questions (Kim, 2011). The pilot interviews allowed the researcher to test the interview guide and receive feedback from potential participants of the study.

During the pilot study, the researcher realised that certain questions allowed for limited responses, thereby limiting the potential for an individual to tell his/her story. To elicit rich responses and facilitate in-depth interviews, the researcher had to tweak or redefine some questions in the interview guide. It was obvious that the ability to elicit responses was in some cases dependent on probing questions, and hence the researcher had to hone his probing skills prior to the main investigation.

It was observed that respondents were likely to use narratives. In the process of answering a question, some respondents addressed other, later questions in the guide. Following this experience, the researcher acknowledged the need to allow the conversation to flow, especially when it addressed issues relevant to the study. It was also acknowledged that questions in the interview guide need not be followed sequentially but could be addressed in accordance with the flow of the discussion.

Following the pilot interviews, the feedback and observations were discussed with the supervisory team and adjustments made accordingly. Subsequently, an improved semi-structured interview guide was designed for the study (see Appendix A).

3.10 Data Analysis

Typically, data analysis in a qualitative study involves the process of preparing and managing data, with the aim to discover relevant information leading to a conclusion (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative data analysis requires the identification of the relationship between categories or themes of data to broaden our understanding of the phenomenon of study (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). In this study, thematic analysis was adopted as an analytical framework. The process involved a combination of deductive/top-down and inductive/bottom-up coding approaches. Data was consistently compared to identify similarities among the themes. This was carried out separately for both groups of participants. Given the similarities in the two groups, the identified themes were merged. The initial coding was informed by the prior research questions and existing literature on corporate social responsibility. Adopting this approach enabled the researcher to identify themes as they emerge from the codes ascribed to the data. Following the generation of codes, repetitive patterns and differences in the codes were sought out to identify themes or categories.

3.10.1   Analytical framework

Braun & Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a "method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It is a method used to systematically identify, arrange, and provide insight into patterns of meaning, generally referred to as "themes" across a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis allows the researcher to code and analyse qualitative data systematically in a way that can be linked to theoretical or conceptual subjects (Clarke et al., 2015).

Generally, thematic analysis is associated with the identification of themes in qualitative data, a process fundamental to most qualitative data analysis (Holloway & Todre, 2003). Castleberry & Nolan (2015) assert that most published papers on qualitative studies are

essentially analysed with thematic analysis but are either described as another method or not at all. On a similar basis, some authors have argued that given the prevalence of thematic process within major analytical frameworks, for instance, phenomenological approach and grounded theory, it should be considered a tool within different qualitative methods rather than a method in its own right (Boyatzis, 1998; Ryan & Bernard, 2000). However, Braun & Clarke (2006) argue that in so far as research is driven by the research questions and the theoretical assumptions, thematic approach will produce insightful analysis and thus, should be considered a method in its own right, given it flexible approach.

Concerning flexibility, thematic analysis can be associated both with inductive and deductive modalities (Castleberry & Nolen, 2015). In a sense, it can be adopted where there are no previous studies on the phenomenon, thus the need to code from bottom-up, and when testing existing theory in a different situation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kynas, 2008). However, Clarke et al., (2015) argue that in practical terms, researchers often adopt a combination of both approaches when coding and analysis data. This assertion is consistent with this study as it is pertinent to be guided by theory on strategic CSR in exploring the phenomenon within the context of the study, while attempting to make sense of the reality of the participants. Strategic CSR in this study is explored in the context of the NDR with emphasis on the perception and expectations of host community members as stakeholders. Therefore, it is vital to understand the phenomenon from their perspective and what informs that perspective. In similar terms, Castleberry & Nolen, (2015) posits that it is important to consider the context in which data is being examined. It is further suggested that a researcher who is familiar with the context influencing the story of participants is bound to develop a wider understanding of the study (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Thus, the thematic analysis provides the framework of analysis, which allows the context of the data to be evident in analysis (Castleberry & Nolan, 2015).

In this study, thematic analysis is adopted as an analytical tool on the basis that it is accessible and flexible, as it allows abundant and comprehensive, yet the complex account of data (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). Given the context-specific nature of the CSR, it is pertinent to collect and analyse data in a manner that allows context to be apparent in data (Castleberry & Nolan, 2015). The notion of context is also consistent with the case study strategy as it explores a research topic within its context (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, the framework allows the emergence of detailed and nuanced accounts of participants in line with the research questions, and it is in-line with the researcher's philosophy. The step-by-step process of thematic analysis in this study involved the researcher's familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, defining and naming the themes, and finally, producing the report (See table 4). However, it is essential to note that analysis is often not carried out as a linear process; instead, it involves a constant back and forward movement between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data and the analysis of the data it produced (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 4: Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of process
1. Immersion and familiarity with interview data	Interview recording was listened to repeatedly, then transcribed and subsequently read repeated while noting down the initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding began with the identification, which is of interest to the researcher. These were typically based on literature, community values, and subject matter. It was done systematically across the entire data set.
3. Searching for themes	Given the virtual advantage of Nvivo software, codes were collected into relevant and potential themes.
4. Reviewing themes	At this point, themes were cross-checked with their associated data extract to ensure consistency with the interpretations. The relationships between the themes and sub-themes emerged.
5. Defining and naming themes	Analysis progressed to refining the specifics of

	each theme and the overall narrative from the analysis, generating clear definitions and names of themes.
6. Producing the report	Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples and relating to research questions and literature to present the findings.

(Culled from Braun, & Clarke, 2006)

3.10.2   Data Management

Data management involved the arrangement and storage of the different forms of data collected during the study. Interviews formed the bulk of the primary data. Following transcription, the data was mainly managed with NVivo 11.0 software. NVivo software is known for its ease in the management of qualitative data (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). The software aided in the arrangement and access to data at different stages of the study. Audio-recordings, initial transcribed data, observation notes, and other relevant documents were collected and stored for safekeeping and easy access. The audio-recordings were transferred to iCloud as insurance, in the event of loss or damage. A copy was also kept on the phone used for the audio recording, with password protection. The transcribed data and other relevant documents were given file names and stored in the researcher's laptop computer, while the hand-written notes were stored under lock and key. Throughout the period of study and afterwards, the only individuals with access to the research data were the researcher and the supervisory team.

Following the completion of each interview session, the recordings were played back repeatedly to discern words and phrases which the researcher found interesting and relevant to the study. A verbatim transcription of the audio recording was carried out and was then read repeatedly to immerse the researcher in the data for coding and analysis. This was also necessary to correct any transcription errors. During transcription, the

researcher highlighted his thoughts and interpretations of the data with the aid of the comment review function in the Microsoft Word processor software, and this paved the way for the initial coding (see Figure 7). Indeed, the analysis of this research commenced from the point of interview transcription. The duration of the interviews varied, and likewise the duration of the transcription process. On average, 9 to 10 hours was required to transcribe every hour of recording. The process was laborious and lengthy.

Generally, the process adopted in this study allowed for the participants' individual interpretations, perceptions, experiences and practices to be transcribed. The resulting data allowed for a coding process and thematic analysis, in line with the qualitative methodology chosen for the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Figure 7: Highlighting Excerpts and Pre-interpretation Prior to Concise Codes

3.10.3   Analysing Data

Data was analysed by a combination of NVivo 11.0 qualitative software and manual thematic analysis with the aid of Microsoft Word. The aim of the initial use of the NVivo software was to allow for a further robust coding process, the arrangement of data and the visual representation of the codes. The utilisation and recommendation of NVivo software due to its ability to manage the coding procedure during data analysis is documented (Auld et al, 2007; Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). Designed for qualitative data analysis, this software simplifies the complexity and difficulties associated with analysing qualitative data, making it a less laborious procedure (Hilal & Alabri, 2013).

The continuation of the data analysis in this study used a manual approach and commenced following the coding with the NVivo software. As will be elaborated upon later in this chapter, this enabled the broad interpretation and presentation of data. In qualitative studies with less than 500 pages of transcribed data, a manual thematic analysis is preferable (Creswell, 2007).

3.10.4   Coding Process

Following the researcher's immersion in the data, the transcription and the subsequent transfer of interview transcripts from Word documents to NVivo software, coding commenced. Coding process is generally associated with qualitative data and it underpins the analysis of data due to its text-based nature (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). According to Bazeley and Jackson (2013), codes are defined as "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study". In this study, codes were summarised meanings of words, phrases, sentences or in some cases paragraphs which illustrated the interviewee's understanding, including their expectations, of the motives, implementation and the impact of the CSR initiative on individuals and the

community (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). They included negative and positive feelings attributed to the implementation process of the CSR initiative.

Due to the researcher's familiarity with the phenomenon of study, it was necessary to keep an open mind during the coding process. The exploratory nature of the study required that the phenomenon must be viewed inductively to allow the emergence of new ideas from the data (Saunders et al., 2016). In addition, this approach was expected to minimise the impact of the researcher's own thoughts and feelings. However, this does not imply that the coding process was entirely inductive, as cognisance was given to the research questions and extant literature on CSR during and after the coding process. Reading through the interview transcripts, excerpts were identified and highlighted based on community perceptions and expectations, and then summarised as nodes in the NVivo software. The summarised nodes, otherwise referred to as Descriptive codes (Saldaña, 2015), were represented as words or phrases depending on suitable interpretations. Some codes were taken directly from the excerpt as meanings or interpretations of the excerpt, commonly referred to as Vivo codes (Saldaña, 2015).

During the coding process the Memos function of NVivo was utilised as it allowed notes to be taken about descriptive codes. The researcher documented and elaborated on his ideas and interpretations of specific excerpts in these Memos. In some cases, one excerpt was ascribed more than one code and vice versa. These echoed the similarities, differences and repetitive patterns associated with the data. In a sense, it is typical to identify repetitive patterns in qualitative studies as this is consistent with human affairs, and also intended by the researcher (Saldaña, 2015). The same process of coding was carried out for the rest of the interview transcripts.

Using the NVivo software, more than 250 initial nodes were created containing a series of individual codes across the data. This was followed by theme construction from the nodes.

In some instances, nodes accommodated more than one code as illustrated in Figure 8. In

such cases, this implies that the codes were quite similar.

Figure 8: Showing Total Number of Nodes, Interview Excerpts with Assigned Codes in One Node
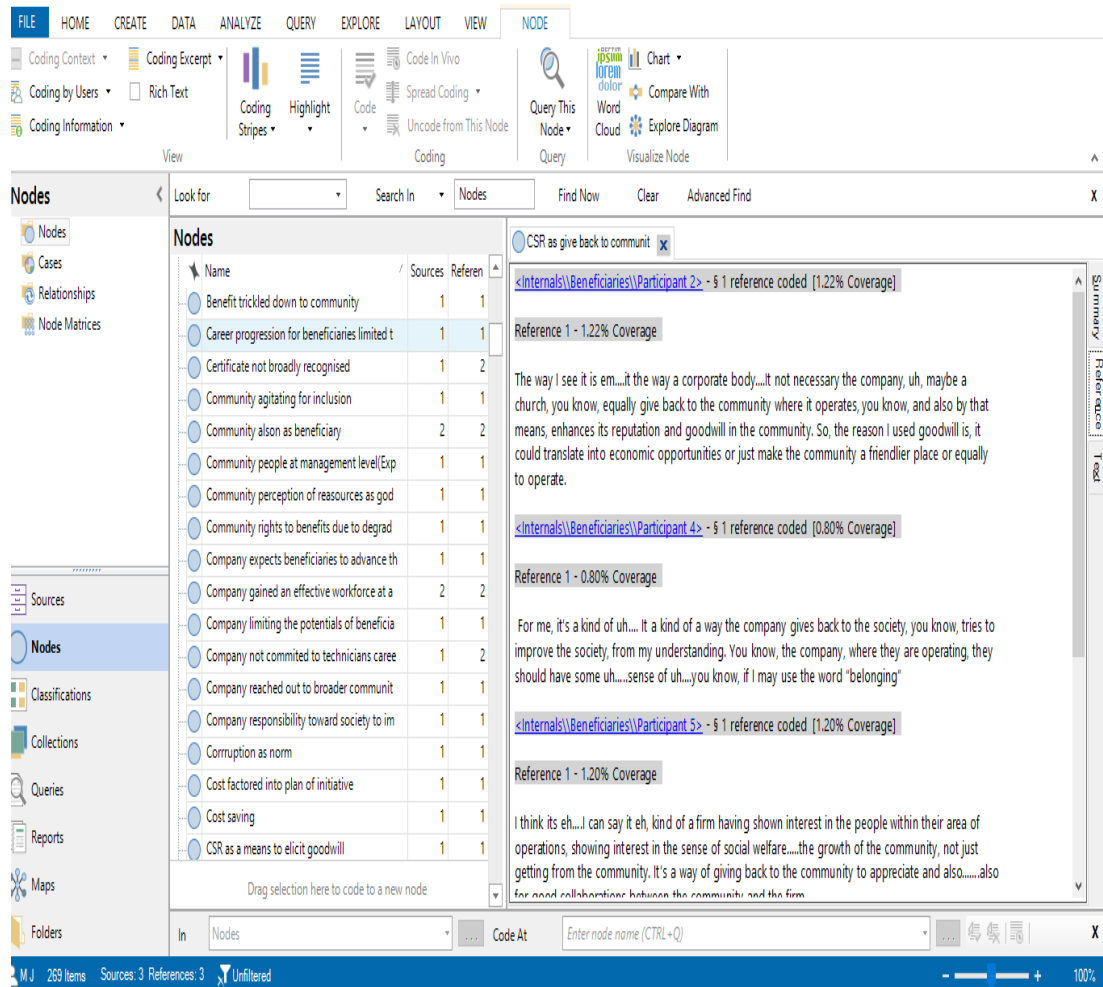
3.10.5 Identifying themes

Following the coding process, patterns were identified from the codes, facilitating the emergence of an initial list of themes and sub-themes within the data (see Figure 9). The sub-themes identified contribute to enhancing the depth of analysis. At this point the identified themes and sub-themes were re-assessed for relevance to the research questions and the extant literature on the phenomenon. Subsequently, another set of themes emerged from the combination of apparently unclear themes. Similarly, themes whose codes were seemingly inconsistent were separated to form new themes, while some were discarded, depending on the unfolding ideas from the data. The process of merging and identification

of themes was significantly simplified by the use of the NVivo software. It was possible to visualise the repetitive patterns, similarities and differences among individual codes while working back and forth to derive a sound conclusion (Hilal & Alabri, 2013).

The process of merging and discarding themes, subthemes and codes continued until a final set of themes emerged (see Figure 10). At this point the identified themes and sub-themes for both groups were transferred to separate Word documents and given explicit interpretations and meanings. This process involved the illustration of the data in tabular form, identifying excerpts from each participant and the interpreted meaning of those excerpts, grouped under sub-themes and themes (see Table 5). This ensured that informed meanings were attributed to each code, identified under sub-themes and themes to present relevant arguments on the emergent themes. Because of their similarity, the themes from both groups were then merged to allow for a comprehensive presentation of the findings.

Figure 9: Showing Initial Themes

Figure 10 : Showing Final Set of Themes
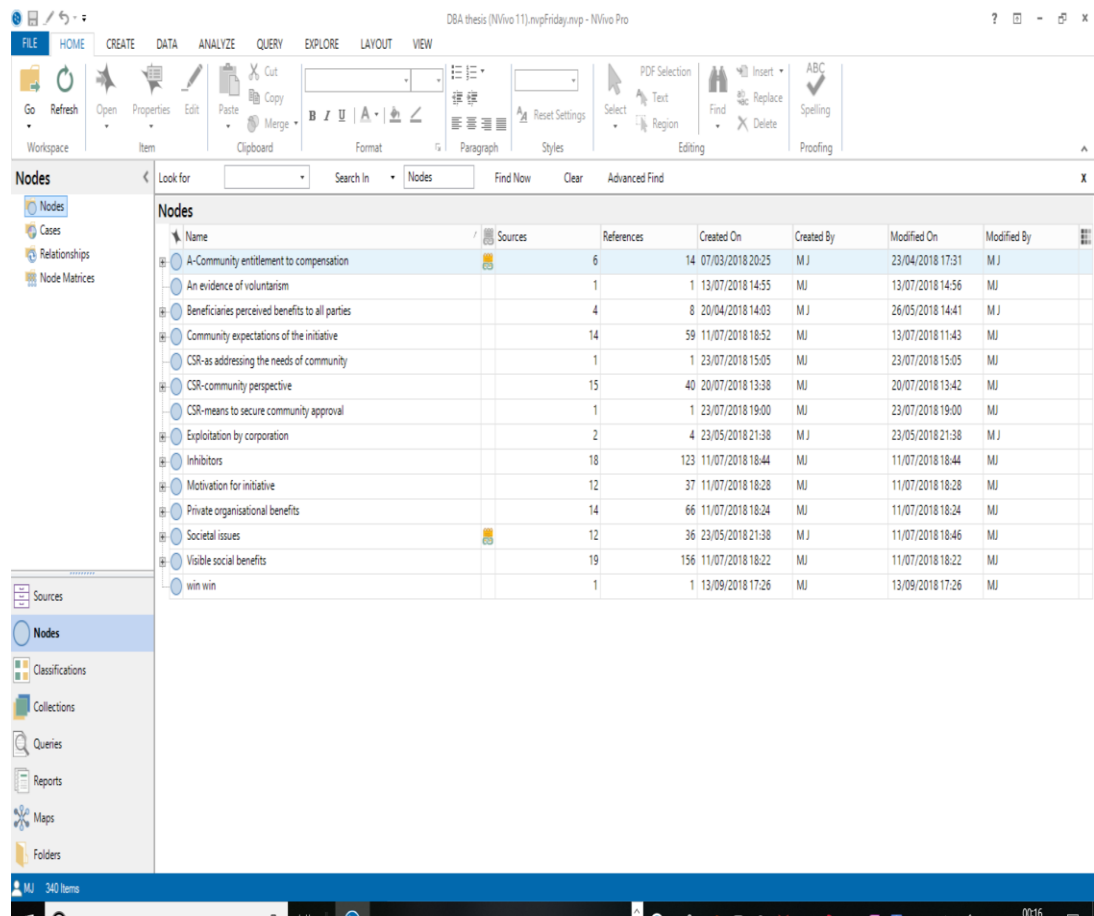
Table 5: Emergent themes

Voices of Participants	Meaning	Sub-theme	Theme
In return, what are the benefits to you that own the land, very few may have an engagement with them, which your number can never give a positive impact to their operations and tomorrow they send you away because of where you come from.	A perception that beneficiaries are dispensable, position in firm an incommensurate compensation to the community	A perception that community participation is hindered by the marginalisation of community members.	*Factors inhibiting signific in the firm.*
	A perception that beneficiaries		

The expectations were that our people will be employed, and that they would grow through the ranks, and that we would have many directors and that they would be the voice of the community, that they will bridge the gap. But it hasn't been so, because these folks go in and try to protect their jobs and you know, do what Mobil wants them to do. That way Mobil does not hear us through them and they are not at that position where they can take decisions that will impact the lives of members of the community in anyway. So in other words, they are on their own and we have little to gain.	have insignificant roles to play in the firm as they remain low level staff. In an environment where job opportunities are scarce, beneficiaries' loyalty is to firm rather than community. Beneficiaries cannot represent community adequately as they lack authority in the firm.		
There are cases that our sons here have the opportunity of maybe taking first or second position, first class or second class, whatever, but denied the opportunity of employment because of what? Interest of those at the top who feel that the place is supposed to be occupied by a Yoruba son or by a Hausa son or by an Igbo son, depending on the position of their leaders. Therefore, the used to be a lot of discrimination, there is still discrimination against members of the community by other Nigerians that are better placed eh, training wise, education wise and so on. As you know the company is largely being dominated by some people from a particular region in Nigeria and all that....so there is that little bit of that element of ethnic bias that you find some people trying to favour some people from a different region of the country.	A perception that the existence of favouritism in the selection and recruitment process is based on ethnicity. Unfair treatment of community by other ethnic majority groups; regardless of host community status. Host communities marginalised by people in power. A perception that the initiative is dominated by non-host community ethnic groups. An expectation of significant participation as a stakeholder Intended benefit of the initiative to the community now circumvented by favouritism.	A Perception that community participation in the initiative is hindered by bias.	
They have engineering degrees, but they can't present it. They can't present it, if they present it, they are sacked. That's their own policy, I don't know, I don't want to talk about that, but I know of a guy that was warned and I know....several of my guys that are there, they can't bring out their certificate that they have a degree	A perception that beneficiaries are discouraged from seeking career progression onto engineering cadre in the firm. A perception that the policy of the firm limits the growth of	A perception that there existence a glass ceiling for beneficiaries which limits significant participation.	

in engineering.

As far as my knowledge goes, if you enter Mobil as an artisan, you remain artisan forever. There is no ground for in service training where you have to improve your qualification. If you enter as a technician that is what you remain, if you entered as a technologist, that is how you will remain and of course you cannot become a manager at that level, only engineers will become big people.

You know, in terms of career progression, if you train people like that, you'll see that a university graduate who is employed will always have an advantage over these ones. | beneficiaries.

A perception that the firm lacks a career path for beneficiaries to progress to other cadre regardless of educational attainment.

Beneficiaries are at a disadvantage due to available qualification. | | |
| Even though it is located in the community, I think it's still very exclusive to many of the citizenry. I think I'm aware of the……….of the school because I've been………..educated. For those who are at the…………. level, I think mostly does not know that the school exist.

They should be able to tell us, this is why this school is established, if they are trying to bridge the skill gap between our educational system and the industry then we should have a better strategy. | A lack of awareness on the existence of the school by the broader community.

Lack of information on the firm's objectives regarding the initiative. | A perception of the lack of information on the initiative which hinders community participation. | |

3.11 Validity

Validity refers to the credibility of this study with regard to how it adequately represents

the participants' realities in relation to the phenomenon of study (Creswell & Miller, 2000;

Schwandt, 1997). This requires consistency between the researchers' inferences from the

data and the actual data collected. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), the approach

to validity in qualitative studies is dependent on the researchers' choice of lens to validate

the research and his/her philosophical assumptions. In this study, assessing validity was

approached from different perspectives, including the lenses of the researcher, the participants, and the people who read and reviewed the study. Given the qualitative research view of the complexity and dynamic nature of reality, it was necessary to understand the perceptions of those involved in the study, to reveal the complexity of human behaviour and thereby provide a holistic picture of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation, member checking and peer debriefing were adopted as different validity approaches to reflect the different participants and audience of this research.

3.11.1   Triangulation

In this study, triangulation as a validity technique involved identifying the convergence between different sources of information (Creswell & Miller, 2000). According to Denzin (1978) as cited in Creswell and Miller (2000), there are four types of triangulation: across data sources, theories, methods, and different investigators. For this study, different methods of data collection were employed, compared and verified, and they were reflective of the four types of triangulation.

The methods of triangulation utilised included the congruence of personal interviews from participants, a review of the extant literature on strategic CSR, community perceptions and expectations of the host communities in the Niger Delta, and publications detailing the company's perspective on the initiatives. With regard to the investigators, the viability of this research was assessed and approved by a research panel. Subsequently, every stage until the conclusion were assessed and approved by the supervisory team. This study utilised triangulation to converge, interpret and assess the interpretation of different sources of information.

3.11.2   Member checking

In line with determining validity from the lens of the participants, member checking was employed. Member checking required sharing the data and interpretations with the interviewees to ascertain the plausibility of the information and the narrative accounts (Creswell & Miller, 2000). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), member checking underpins the establishment of credibility in research.

In this study, following the transcription of the interviews the interview transcripts, including the researchers' notes, were sent to most of the participants via email to confirm they reflected the responses collected during the interview. Following the interpretations of the data, each respondent was also sent a summary of the researchers' interpretation of their individual interview to cross-check whether the interpretations reflected their thoughts during the interview. This process of member checking reassured the researcher that the interview data and the interpretations truly reflected the participants' thoughts.

3.11.3   Peer debriefing

Peer review as a validity procedure accounts for validity from the point of view of individual/s familiar with the research, other than the researcher and the participants of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The research committee was consulted at the inception of this study, during the proposal phase. Later the supervisory team was consulted throughout – prior to designing the data collection instrument, during data collection, during interpretation and analysis, and during the writing-up stage. Consultations with the research team took place on a regular basis, following assessments and subsequent approval of the study to the next stage. During this period the supervisory team challenged the researchers' assumptions, methodology and interpretations of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba & Lincoln 1994). The researcher also discussed regularly with colleagues who had experience in corporate social responsibility, and in the issues of the

perceptions and expectations of host communities in the Niger Delta. At different stages of the research, including the writing-up stage, the draft chapters were shared with these colleagues for their insights on the study so far. Their contributions were shared with the supervisory team and changes were made accordingly. The credibility of this study was established by the close collaboration between the supervisory team and researcher, which fits with a critical paradigm (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.12   Ethical considerations and gaining access

This study was carried out following the approval of the research ethics committee of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Gaining approval required that the research must be carried out based on a standard of behaviour which guides the researcher's conduct in relation to the rights and safety of the participants in the research and others affected by it (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 226). In compliance with this, ethical issues were addressed at all levels of the research, with utmost caution given to issues related to causing harm or intruding on privacy.

Prior to the approval of the research a risk assessment was carried out, detailing the potential risks and the mitigation of these risks in the course of the study. Parties considered in the risk assessment included the researcher, the participants, the University and any other people who could be involved directly or indirectly.

Given the case study nature of the study and the level of convenience, using existing contacts to gain access to participants was adopted as a strategy (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 2019). Existing contacts were sought using the researcher's familiarity with the area of study. This meant that the contacts could trust the researcher's stated intentions, with assurances about discretion regarding the use of data obtained (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 219). Subsequently, these contacts were also able to introduce the researcher to other

potential participants, vouching for the intentions of the study. Not all referrals were keen to participate in the study; for individuals who declined to participate, their decisions were accepted with no attempt to exert pressure or coerce them in any respect (Robson, 2011).

Prior to the interviews, participants were informed explicitly about the focus of the study and the researcher's intentions regarding the data to be collected. Afterwards, emails were sent detailing the purpose of the research, including the research aim and objectives and the research questions. This was done in line with Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, p. 71), who argue for the importance of adequate information for participants. Our decision to fully inform potential participants also allowed for a better understanding of the research, and hence an opportunity for the potential participants to reconsider their participation in the study. When the participants had agreed to participate they were encouraged to decide on a convenient venue for the interview. By allowing participants to choose the location for their interview, they were able to decide on places where they felt safe and relaxed, thereby diffusing any sort of unintended pressure.

At the commencement of the interviews, the purpose of the study was further reiterated, and informed consent from the participants were sought verbally and also via written forms (see Appendix B) which were given to participants to read and sign, acknowledging that they have full understanding. This ensured that participants had given informed consent prior to their participation (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 238). Consent was freely given, following sufficient information about the nature of the study, the requirements for participation, the implications of participating, participants' rights, use of data, and who to contact to raise concerns or questions about the research. The issue of confidentiality was also addressed, with the researcher guaranteeing the anonymity and privacy of participants who wanted to remain anonymous (David & Sutton, 2011, p. 47).

Throughout the process of data collection, analysis and writing up, there was a conscious effort to remain objective by recording the data accurately and completely in order to

maintain the aim of the study. Maintaining objectivity in research is often discussed in terms of the validity and reliability of the study (Sanders et al., 2012, p. 241). These issues have been discussed previously in this chapter under the validity heading above.

3.13.   Summary

This chapter has presented in detail the methodology and rationale underlying this study. The research design was adopted to elicit the understanding of CSR by stakeholder groups in the NDR, including their perceptions and expectations of a technical training school, adopted by ExxonMobil as a CSR initiative.

The case study approach adopted allowed the exploration of the phenomenon within its context. Similarly, the research design allowed access to in-depth information as participants relayed their experiences through personal narratives, thereby enabling the emergence of themes. The result is an information-rich case study to explore the research questions and subsequently gain theoretical insight. Data analysis highlighted the emergent themes consistent with participants' perceptions and expectations of CSR practice and the initiative under study. The study design employs rigorous academic and interpretivist procedures which will subsequently inform an effective implementation process for strategic CSR in the NDR.

The following chapter presents detailed findings from the data collected and analysed after purposive sampling of 20 participants from the two stakeholder groups.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study, based on in-depth interviews with beneficiaries of ExxonMobil's capacity development programme and the community members from the Eket, Ibeno, Esit Eket and Onna local government areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, regarding their understanding of CSR and their perceptions and expectations of the technical training centre adopted by Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited, an affiliate of ExxonMobil, as a CSR initiative.

4.1   Background information on respondents

This section presents brief information about the participants in the study selected by a purposive sampling method. The findings consist of responses from two groups of respondents, selected based on the following criteria: (1) member of the one of the host communities as mentioned above, (2) community beneficiary of the Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited training centre initiative.

The members of the host communities consist of ten participants, ranging across community leaders, local chiefs, politicians, entrepreneurs and community members. They includes a Paramount ruler, a retired ExxonMobil employee (manager) and a former local government chairman, a former Commissioner for Women's Affairs in the state, a Senior Special Assistant to the state government, a retired local government council secretary, a village head, a youth leader, an entrepreneur, a civil servant and an unemployed university

graduate. Respondents ranged between the ages of 25 and 75, and all had a minimum of secondary school certificate.

Community beneficiaries of the initiative also consisted of ten participants, including six beneficiaries presently in the employ of the firm, one beneficiary who is a temporary (contract) employee of the firm, two beneficiaries employed by other oil organisations, and one beneficiary who was unemployed at the time. Participants were between the ages of 25 and 45, and they all had a minimum of a university degree or equivalent. The period since the respondents' completion of the programme varied from the first to the ninth of the beneficiaries. All the respondents from both groups, except one (who was from a neighbouring state), are local inhabitants of the core oil producing communities in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, commonly referred to as the catchment area. These communities include Eket, Esit Eket, Onna and Ibeno local government areas. At the time of data collection, twelve of the respondents resided in these communities while eight resided in the state capital, Uyo. Most of the participants were male, as the different areas were mainly male dominated. However, the gender status of the interviewees had no impact on the findings because the research is issue based. Tables …and … below illustrate the background information on the community members and the community beneficiaries of the initiative respectively.

Table 6: Background Information on Community Members

S/N	Designation	age	Gender	Marital status	Local government area of origin	Entry level into the technical training centre	Year of completion of technical training centre	Highest ed attained
1	Participant 1	46	Male	Married	Onna	O level	1997	BSc
2	Participant 2	37	Male	Married	Eket	O level	1999	BSc
3	Participant 3	36	Male	Single	Eket	O level	1999	MSc
4	Participant 4	25	Male	Single	Ibeno	OND	2009	OND
5	Participant 5	27	Male	Married	Onna	OND	2007	HND
6	Participant 6	22	Male	Single	Esit Eket	OND	2011	HND
7	Participant 7	26	Male	Married	Ibeno	OND	2005	HND
8	Participant 8	43	Male	Married	Eket	O level	2001	MSc
9	Participant 9	29	Male	Married	Esit Eket	OND	2009	MSc
10	Participant 10	44	Male	Married	Eket	O level	1997	O level

Table 7: Background Information on Community Beneficiaries of the Initiative

S/N	Designation	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Local Government of origin	Occupation	Highest educati
1	HRME	75	Male	Married	Eket	Retired Civil servant	MA
2	FLGCE	64	Male	Married	Eket	Retired ExxonMobil employee	BSc
3	SAGE	49	Male	Married	Esit Eket	Entrepreneur/ Public Servant	BSc
4	RCSEE	59	Male	Divorcee	Esit Eket	Retired Public Servant	BSc
5	CME	42	Male	Married	Onna	Business owner	MSc
6	CMO	32	Male	Single	Eket	Civil Engineering	HND
7	CMI	23	Male	Single	Ibeno	Unemployed	BSc
8	FCWAI	46	Female	Married	Ibeno	Career politician	BSc
9	VHI	52	Male	Married	Ibeno	Traditional ruler	O level
10	YLO	37	Male	Married	Onna	Local politician	O level

4.2   Consolidated findings for both groups of respondents

This finding presents the consolidated findings for the host community members and the beneficiaries of the technical training centre, regarding their perceptions and expectations of the technical training centre initiative. The findings are arranged under seven main themes, summarised as follow:

- Community perception of corporate social responsibility

- Perceived societal issues

- Perceived motive for adopting the initiative

- Perceived social benefits

- Perceived organisational benefits

- Factors inhibiting significant impact of the initiative

- Community expectations of the initiative

Each theme is embellished with sub-themes to give further perspective to the underpinning themes. The sub-themes are also illustrated with interview extracts from respondents to identify generally agreed perceptions and differing perspectives.

4.3 THEME 1: Community perceptions of corporate social responsibility

When asked to define corporate social responsibility, participants defined the phenomenon in the context of the firm and the communities in which the firm operates. Often, participants expressed their perceptions of the organisation's practice of CSR and the expected relationship between an organisation and its immediate environment with little or no consideration to the global environment and other stakeholders beyond the immediate context. Observations suggest that this region has been characterised by growing animosity involving oil companies, the federal government and host communities. Issues raised are generally in relation to the dilapidation and outright lack of social infrastructure, and as such, CSR is very much about the tangible impacts of the social welfare provided by the firm to host communities, and hence is philanthropic in nature.

In relation to CSR, there was a general perception of the firm's obligations to contribute in the form of social welfare to communities around the location of its operations. Further, participants indicated that the provision of social welfare was in line with the expected behaviour of a good citizen, providing compensation for environmental pollution as a result of the firm's operations and attempts to elicit goodwill from host communities. As

mentioned above, community perceptions are further discussed in terms of sub-themes as follows:

- Obligation to provide welfare

- Give back as a good citizen

- Give back as compensation for degradation

- Give back to elicit goodwill

4.3.1 Obligation to provide welfare to host communities

Respondents perceive CSR practice by the firm in terms of its obligation to provide social welfare. Participants suggest that institutions should provide host communities with a series of social benefits to compensate for their presence and operations in those communities. The social benefits identified consist of an array of welfare initiatives which range from financial and educational support for community members to the provision of social amenities, such as roads and hospitals.

> *It varies, the kind of programmes they do, I'll just stick to corporate social responsibilities, it varies, some of the ones I am aware of include educational assistance, in terms of things like scholarships, equipping laboratories or providing buildings for classrooms, some go into things like … healthcare initiatives. For instance, there was a malaria programme, anti-malaria programme rather, where there was a sensitisation of locals on the issues of malaria, mostly focusing on prevention and treatment, and other corporate social responsibilities that will also do with things like providing … like social infrastructures, roads, electrification projects, water projects, any other thing that will improve the condition of the immediate host community. (P7)*

A kind of development, infrastructural, educational, technical, eh, an otherwise, social, empowerment and others that a corporate company like that should undertake, especially for their immediate catchment community. (RCSEE)

According to respondents, CSR initiatives are voluntary social welfare programmes aimed at supporting the less privileged. They should be designed and implemented specifically to benefit the host communities and consequently empower community members. Participants further suggest that an effective CSR initiative requires an assessment of community needs to identify and implement those initiatives which address significant community issues.

I think the right phrase is host community for a company or for a corporation … benefits by having that corporation in its environment. And that benefit is not by accident. It is actually planned, premeditated and designed that the community should benefit. That is what I understand. (P1)

I would say that it is an organisation residing in your locality, taking a sentimental or a sensitive look at the needs of that locality, of the members of that locality and trying to address those … needs in various ways through programmes and projects. (FCWAI)

Respondents attempt to justify the need for organisations to adopt CSR initiatives. They argue that organisations derive benefits from the communities in which they operate, as well as having inevitable effects on these communities. On this basis, organisations have the moral responsibility to "give back" as good citizens, as compensation for unintended negative impacts on the community and to obtain from the community the license to operate.

4.3.2 Give back as a good citizen

A common phrase invoked by most participants following the interview question to define CSR was "give back" – in this case, to the community where the firm operates. This sub-theme identifies the general perception of both groups of respondents as they put forward their understanding of the relationship between the organisation, CSR and ethical obligations in the context of their community.

Respondents are of the view that organisations have a moral responsibility to contribute to the community out of the fortunes which accrue to it from that community. In this context, there is a general perception of substantial gains to the oil companies from the exploration and exploitation of oil, and consequently they should be required to contribute to community social welfare as a gesture of gratitude. CSR is not perceived only as philanthropy, but also as an ethical obligation in view of the firm's perceived benefits deriving from the community.

> *I think corporate social responsibility is an obligation by any corporate organisation towards the environment or the society it finds itself. Since it, eh, benefitting from the environment, it has a moral responsibility, it has a moral responsibility of actually giving back to that society. (P10)*

> *It has to give back to the community part of what it takes from the community. (HRME)*

> *I don't think it is mandatory. ... What you could say is, it's good to do, but it's not mandatory. It not like the company must ... in my mind, it not like a company must do it, but it is something that is good to do. Ehm ... yeah, because you are corporation, companies. Even as an individual, if it were to be an individual thing, you'd want to give back. So, it's nice but it is not everybody that does that. (P2)*

According to most participants, CSR is carried out voluntarily; they note there are no known laws mandating firms to provide social welfare for community members. However, they believe it is an ethical obligation for a firm to adopt and implement CSR initiatives towards its host communities, insisting that CSR is the duty for an organisation to uphold and a sin for it to ignore.

> *That is giving back to the community of which they operate, and they're working and they're making profit from that same community. So, it is just duty bound for them to actually give back to the community. (SAGE)*

> *But for a corporation, it's supposed to be a … .it's not like it's a must, but it will be a sin not to give back. Yeah, it's an ethical thing because……… (P3)*

Typically, these communities exhibit some sort of collective culture where group support propels individuals and vice versa. It suffices to say that the norms suggest that those individuals in positions of power and wealth must act as good citizens. This entails a commitment to the assistance of less privileged members of the community, and in a similar vein, organisations are expected to act in the same way as benefactors. Overwhelmingly, participants believe that the proceeds of oil exploration are enormous, and hence their conviction around the notion of "give back" is reinforced.

4.3.3   Give back as compensation for degradation

Give back as compensation for degradation was mentioned by most of the participants in both groups, although it was only discussed explicitly by some. Respondents were of the view that the firm is obligated to give back to the community as compensation for the environmental degradation caused by its activities (Idemudia, 2007).

Consistent gas flaring and oil spillages are characteristic of oil exploration and exploitation, and they are believed to pollute the environment, thereby affecting the health, properties and livelihoods of community members. In this regards, respondents reported that the consequences of environmental degradation by oil companies have lasting effects on host communities that outlast the organisation and their operations, affecting communities' expectations of the firm to contribute to the wellbeing of the community and future generations.

> *...and for a corporation like ours whereby we extract this oil, damages are done to the ecosystem, we know because I am deeply into it. The sea is vandalised, you know, the spills, they are inevitable stuff that comes with ... you know, the terrain, the business. So it will be a sin if the company does not sit back and say, let's give back to this society because of the impact of our operations, not even the employment of the people, not even ... just what it does to ... what it will do to kids that are not yet born, that will come and see the wreckage when this business shuts down. (P3)*

> *Like us here, the air you breathe is polluted, the water you use is polluted, and even the rain water, because this is a tropical environment, we have a lot of rain. And that rain is polluted by the carbon that is flared into the air and once in a while we hear of oil spillages, and those spillages destroy our waters. So in that vein, they owe the responsibility to take care of the people that live in those environments because those environments existed before they came. (CMO)*

Participants' perceptions of CSR stem from the notion that the organisation is responsible for a series of environmental pollution effects. Consequently, it is necessary to compensate the inhabitants of the community to show concern, and to also acknowledge their existence prior to the arrival of the firm. It is further suggested that this requirement of organisations to implement CSR programmes differs based on the industry and the firm's

operational activities. For instance, respondents suggest that industries which are non-extractive, and therefore with less environmental impact, are not obligated to participate in CSR. On the contrary, the operations of oil companies have direct implications for the wellbeing of the local communities, and hence they are ethically required to give back in the form of social welfare programmes.

> *So, it's mandatory that these companies put it in their conscience that they must do it. For other businesses like telecoms, most of their stuff is not physical, so they could say, after all, we are not seeing their signals, but for us, for a company like ExxonMobil, and we take it seriously too, going by the ones that I have seen. (CMO)*

This insistence on the issue of give back among the participants is further buttressed by the federal government policy on resource control. The policy suggests that extractive resources in the country, regardless of location, are owned by the federal government. As such, the proceeds accrue to the federal government rather than the communities who live close to where the resources are extracted. Participants consider this a deprivation of their right to the resources exploited on their lands, especially considering the environmental impact. On this basis, they argue that it is pertinent to give back to these communities as compensation for their disposition in the general scheme of things.

> *It has to give back to the community part of what it takes from the community. In this particular case, it is very, eh, very poignant [according to the participant this word means "very important" "very apt"] because the oil that the oil company is exploiting belongs really to the community, but in Nigeria, it belongs to the federal government and the community has nothing to show for it. So, indeed, the need for the oil company to give back to the community something is very important. (HRME)*

There is a general perception among host community members that there is an increasing decline and non-existence of social infrastructures in host communities. These communities are believed to be plagued by poverty, despite the long presence of oil multinationals in their vicinity and their overwhelming contributions to the gross income of the country. Participants feel that all the parties involved in the exploitation of oil resources have benefited greatly, except the communities where the resources reside. On this premise, the requirement to give back as compensation for degradation and lost benefits is even more important.

4.3.4 Give back to elicit goodwill

Giving back to elicit goodwill as a sub-theme was identified by most participants and was discussed explicitly by some from both groups. This sub-theme identifies the perception that CSR projects implemented by oil companies are adopted partly to secure some sort of license to operate in host communities. Respondents perceive CSR as an obligation for institutions to give back to the communities where they operate, and consequently enhance their reputations and further elicit goodwill from these communities. For example, one participant mentioned that CSR is a strategic community development programme designed specifically to elicit goodwill and support from host communities.

> *Corporate social responsibility, to me, I think it's actually, uh, a strategy that is being planned just to get goodwill from the operating environment. I am looking at it from the oil company's perspective. It is a programme put in place and it must be planned strategically so that you can actually get goodwill from your operational community, operating environments and the like. (P9)*

Interestingly, some respondents suggest that enhanced reputation and goodwill can translate into economic opportunities. This implies that a peaceful operational

environment would allow the firm to optimise its production capacity to further maximise profit.

> *The way I see it is, em … it's the way a corporate body … It's not necessarily the company, uh, maybe a church, you know, equally give back to the community where it operates, you know, and also by that means, enhances its reputation and goodwill in the community. So, the reason I used goodwill is, it could translate into economic opportunities or just make the community a friendlier place or equally to operate. (P2)*

> *In my own words, it is a chance of one benefiting from your relationship with the community and in turn achieve peace to maximise your profit in business. (VHI)*

> *Because if there should be any row, maybe dispute between the community and the firm, it's going to stop their operations and that's going to cost them money. So, our people believe that for a firm to work and do their things without any issues, they have to be kind of understanding, eh, the understanding. (P5)*

It is observed that these communities are often in conflict with oil companies following the perception of environmental degradation and community marginalisation. For example, another participant argues that CSR is an obligation to provide community welfare programmes implemented in response to or in anticipation of community strife, adding that the implemented welfare programmes appease the host communities.

> *Sometimes it is driven by the pulse of the host community, when you as an organisation start seeing some form of hostility. You'll know yourself; I think I have not done well for this community. So, you tend to do it because of what you're perceiving, maybe you want to look good. Sometimes you want to look good, you say, let's build a civic centre, and then you do a big ceremony to… (P3)*

Goodwill could come in diverse forms, like, uh, necessary support, uh, reduced community strife and issues. As in communal crisis, you won't really have crisis because, if they think that whatever you are doing is actually enhancing the livelihood of the people around that community, then they will definitely give you the support, they may not disrupt your operation. Those are the kind of stuffs I'm talking about.(VHI)

Generally, CSR is seen as an obligation owed to the community, following the presence of a firm in that community. In this context, adopting community development programmes is a requirement to ensure smooth operation. Respondents believe that to achieve good collaboration with the community and promote peace, the firm is required to provide relevant social amenities for the community.

4.4   THEME 2:   Perceived societal issues

The interviews identified generally perceived social issues in the host communities as a theme. Most respondents identified different social issues affecting the host communities. The main issues are discussed below as sub-themes, as follows:

- Economic hardship

- Limited job opportunities

- Deteriorating education system

- Environmental degradation

4.4.1 Economic hardship

Economic hardship refers to the general economic crisis endemic in most host communities. The sub-theme is seen as an attribute of perceived broader societal issues. It was generally expressed by both groups of respondents and discussed explicitly by the beneficiaries of the initiative. Most beneficiaries reflected on their experience of financial difficulties prior to joining the programme. They traced their journeys from their enrolment on the programme to employment, including their assessment of their present environment.

Prior to their enrolment on the programme and subsequent employment, most respondents tended to have experienced economic hardship. Typically, the hash economic reality in society meant that most community members reported limited options to succeed. One respondent suggested that though some community members possessed the intellectual ability to excel in different areas, lack of financial support continued to impede progress. According to some beneficiaries interviewed in the study, this is a factor responsible for the rate at which community members resort to enrolling on the programme.

> *And we were all from backgrounds that were not very stable financially. So, everybody had to analyse the situation … you think you're brilliant but you're struggling in school. And you're not sure maybe your parents can do that for the next four years, for the next five years at the most. And so, you had to take a decision and like, okay, which one, do I count on luck or do I take my destiny in my hands? (P1)*

> *And I can tell you that for, maybe, 60 to 70% of the young people that ended up in the training centre, they never wanted to be there. It just because maybe they had … or they couldn't get exactly what we wanted in terms of furthering our studies, it could be economic reasons, it could be… (P2)*

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Most respondents expressed the view that the inability to afford university education encouraged young people to resort to the programme. This also includes prospective university graduates who had to drop out of school due to the deteriorating economic situation in their homes. Interestingly, there was an indication that despite the financial rewards attached to employment, there was still some level of disdain for the programme, as technicians are often held in low regard. Observations suggest that in a decent economic situation with job opportunities, individuals would be more inclined to aspire to university education, especially since the programme beneficiaries' growth in the firm is also capped.

> *The technical training centre, I had to drop out from the university and attend the programme against my dad's wish anyway. But he later understood because he was actually finding it difficult financially to even cope with my education then. (P10)*

Regardless of the perceived career limitations in the programme, the increasing economic difficulty was perceived to reinforce the beneficiaries' decision to remain in the employ of the firm. After assessing the rate of poverty in the community, including their contemporaries' slow pace of growth, some beneficiaries expressed appreciation for the opportunity given to them by the firm.

> *I know a bunch of people, those guys that I went to university with that time, unfortunately so many of them have not still found a foot in, you can imagine how old they are now. So, you still see a guy even right now, still calling you for 1000 Naira* (less than £5) *to buy stuff for the house. Whenever you see that training centre, you are like, you guys did this for me, you know. Every time I drive past that training centre, I just smile [chuckle] you know. Because without this place, I probably would be worse than what I am now, or most likely not be as good as it is now, you know. So, it's a blessing. (P3)*

And on our own part too, we were grateful to have that opportunity, because …
like I have come to attribute before, most of us took this opportunity for economic
reasons, you know. … are not really well to do, so they gave us a foundation, to
start our lives and also, you know … help our families. (P2)

4.4.2 Lack of employment opportunities

The lack of employment opportunities is considered a sub-theme among the generally perceived societal issues. It is an increasing phenomenon in these societies, and was mentioned by both groups of respondents. However, it was a perception explicitly discussed by the direct beneficiaries of the initiative. Participants expressed the lack of job opportunities for community members both within and outside the firm. This included beneficiaries who looked for other opportunities in the firm.

Generally, participants suggested that there are scarce employment opportunities in the country, especially for graduates. Often, people seek employment in jobs and positions which are considered below their educational attainment level. The employment opportunities for beneficiaries who are associated with the initiative are perceived to be reduced. Fewer beneficiaries of the initiative are offered employment in the firm following their completion of the programme.

And in the course of these four groups, they employed lots of people, more than
500 in number. And that should be, like, 10 years ago. Recent times, I don't think
they've even employed up to a 100, maybe less than that … Most of them will be
driven by, where can I make a livelihood from, even if it is in the bank, even if it is
somewhere that is not related to my career and all of that. So, it just all about, you
know, for a lot of people getting, uh, a source of livelihood. (P4)

It was observed that due to the lack of employment opportunities in the country, beneficiaries in the employ of the firm are reluctant to seek other opportunities elsewhere. They decide to remain despite the perceived limitations associated with career progression in the technical cadre of the firm. Some participants suggested that despite being an employee with the relevant qualifications to upgrade, beneficiaries would be required to apply for a position as a new applicant. Subsequently, there were no guarantees of reabsorption into the firm.

> *You know, within the country, there are no jobs, it's kind of difficult when ... you know, and most of the jobs that are available, the ones that might actually give me that career progression may not actually pay me as much as what I'm earning, even though I'm not on that cadre right now ... You'll probably have to leave the organisation, go start with applying and coming in and all that, and you know how things are. In Nigeria, it's not very easy, and once you've started, you know, putting in some years, it becomes very difficult for you to leave. (P9)*

> *Your growth in the company is not going to be big as someone with a degree. So, some of them have gone personally to develop themselves education-wise. Some people have gone as far as getting a Master's, but the biggest challenge is, are you working with what you have? You are still working as a technician, your line of growth is very slow, and you can't leave the job, because in Nigeria, getting another job that pays that much is very, very limited. (P5)*

Respondents believe that there are limited opportunities for employment outside the firm with the possibility of career advancement at equivalent remuneration. Their pessimism is further exacerbated by the perceived age barrier in the country, whereby older applicants have fewer opportunities compared to their younger counterparts.

4.4.3 Poor education system

Nigeria's poor education system is considered a sub-theme and a general societal issue in the host communities. This perception was reflected by most participants of the study, but was discussed explicitly by the direct beneficiaries of the initiative. The findings indicate the perception of an unreliable education system, leading to a preference for foreign and private institutions.

Most respondents were of the view that there is a declining educational system in the country. Local education institutions often do not have the required technical abilities to bring graduates up to speed with current employment requirements. They are perceived to be of a lower standard compared to contemporary institutions in the West. One respondent expressed disdain for his alma mater, declaring that his offspring would have the opportunity to attend a better institution.

> *I want my boy to go to Stanford. I took him there, I told him this is the school you should go to. You are not going to go to the school that I went to, I took him to University of Uyo and said, this is where I and your mum went to [laughter]. So, this is what you should be aiming to go to. (P3)*

In the same vein, another respondent recollects his experience of the declining state of the local education system. Following his enrolment on the programme, this respondent was excited to learn that he could objectively project his finish date. This contrasted with his experience of the high level of uncertainty associated with local institutions, where students are only aware of their start date.

> *There used to be an educational system that was full of chaos. Then you got into this place that is completely in order. You know the day you are starting school, you know the day you're writing your test, your exams. (P2)*

Some respondents also suggested that beneficiaries have had to resort to the programme due to the poor education system in the country. It has become a preferred option, despite the perception that it offers a qualification inferior to university education. These respondents were of the view that in addition to the lower standards, the university education system is often in chaos and full of uncertainty. Often, the administrative bodies of the schools are on long-term strike, creating an academic environment where students are left in limbo. These prolonged strikes have put community graduates at a disadvantage.

> *And as usual ASUU (Academic Staff Union of Universities) was on strike for about two or four months. So that was what even helped me stay on that programme. Because I'm almost sure that if ASUU hadn't been on strike, I would have just walked away with the first set of monies. (P1)*

There was a suggestion that the declining education system contributed to the adoption of the initiative. The intention was to bridge the gap between the broken system and the required technical capabilities for the industry.

4.4.4   Environmental degradation

Environmental degradation as a sub-theme is considered a general societal issue in these communities. It is common knowledge that oil producing communities in the Niger Delta are experiencing increasing environmental pollution due to the activities of oil multinationals in the region. This was a perception expressed by most community participants. They believe that the increasing level of environmental pollution in their environments is affecting their way of life.

Respondents argue that the continuous pollution of the environment is further aggravated by climatic conditions in the region, and is at odds with the economic life of community

members. It was suggested that constant gas flaring and oil spillages have destroyed the sources of livelihood for many community members.

> *Like us here, the air you breathe is polluted, the water you use is polluted, and even the rain water, because this is a tropical environment, we have a lot of rain. And that rain is polluted by the carbon that is flared into the air and once in a while, we hear of oil spillage, and those spillages destroy our waters … they don't give concern to the destruction meted by the corporation on the people, because if they do, by this time they would have taken care of the flaring. The federal government, I don't know, they are still working towards zero flare environments, but until then, we will see what will happen. (CMO)*

> *You know, this right arises not only because these resources belong to the community naturally, but also the community suffers a great deal from the effects of oil exploration and exploitation. Poisoning the atmosphere, the environment, they destroy it and so on. You know, the fish in the water, there used to be a lot of fish here, now because there is constant leakage, spillage of oil, the fish are no longer there. The fish, you know, have to find healthier environments and so on. The soil, because of, eh, you know, there is gas flaring and so on, you can't find fruits here in Eket, you know? (HRM)*

This is in the context of communities that are predominantly dependent on farming and fishing businesses. In a similar vein, one respondent points out that the major occupations of community members are dependent on their environment. She alludes to the notion that continuous oil spills caused by the firm's activities are responsible for the loss of food crops and aquatic life in her community. This implies that continuous degradation caused by the firm's operations are having a direct negative effect on the livelihood of community members, and contributing to the increasing rate of poverty.

Most times, most means of livelihood have been lost to those spillages; the
economic life of the community has gone down, it has degraded as a result of the
impact of those spillages. As is very well known, the people of that community, of
our community, the riverine communities are mostly fishermen. They are into
agro-fishing businesses, but as a result of the spillages, the aquatic life is very
nearly lost, and then that particular means of livelihood has been tempered.
Therefore, the people have been left in squalor I would say, and Mobil is not
addressing that aspect of the impact of the spillage on the people. Instead, they
come up with palliative measures. And with palliative measures, all you have are
structures, classroom structures, you know, projects that do not directly solve the
welfare problems created by the spillages. (FCWAI)

Respondents argue that the firm is actively destroying the environment while the national
government remains complacent. Furthermore, they believe the firm has made no effort to
adopt measures to curb the adverse effects of its activities in these communities. They
further contend that the emission of dangerous gases from flaring and oil spillages is
having a lasting effect on both health and property, thereby increasing the cost of living
for community members.

4.5.   THEME 3:   Perceived motive for the adoption of the initiative

The perceived motive for the adoption of the initiative is identified as a theme in the
findings. Respondents discussed the firm's intention to implement the initiative, and
attributed the organisations' motives to two main factors. Interestingly, the factors that
were perceived as initial motivation by the firm were divided along group lines. The direct
beneficiaries perceived the intention as an effort by the firm to bridge the gap between the
lack of technical skills in the host communities and its anticipated technical requirements
for expansion. On the other hand, community members believed the initiative was inspired

by the need to empower community members by way of employment. As mentioned, the factors perceived are:

- Anticipated technical requirements

- Community empowerment

4.5.1. Anticipated technical requirement

Anticipated technical requirements for future operations were perceived as one of the main motives for the firm's adoption of the initiative. This is a perception shared mainly by the direct beneficiaries of the programme. It suggests that the initiative was adopted in anticipation of the firms' expansion into new projects which require a competent technical recruitment pool (Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010).

Generally, respondents consider the initiative as a strategic training programme, whereby the firm set out to make investment in its future and has since benefitted from it. Similarly, some respondents suggest that the firm executed a recruitment and retention strategy, designed and implemented to achieve its technical requirements (Porter & Kramer, 2006). They suggest that this perception may be akin to an organisational strategy, as insiders.

> *Before now, I was looking at it as a kind of em … you know, a company that has, uh, long-term vision, and that is actually a long-term vision by the company. Probably because I am on the inside, so to speak … so I saw it purely as, eh, an investment that the company made in its future. (P2)*

> *The point I'm trying to make is, they projected the numbers they needed, there were expanding, okay? 1992, they did Oso, they hired a lot of people for Oso around 1995. By 1998, they expanded Oso to Arre and they built the Bonny River terminal. They needed people to man that facility, Ekpe had just come on line, I*

think 96. So they had projected their expansion and projected the manpower for the future, and went into that programme specifically with the intent to provide that manpower. (P1)

Some participants believe that graduates from local technical institutions seldom possess adequate technical skills for immediate employment. Thus, the implementation of the initiative was intended to ensure a supply of readily available and competent hands for the firm's continuing operations. This bypasses the process of having to retrain potential employees, and solves the challenge of instilling organisational values to fit the firm.

So, what I am saying, graduates come out of Nigerian polytechnics, they are not like ready to go into the oil industry immediately. So, the employers have to retrain them. Their learning cost is huge. (P1)

The perception of inadequate technical skills in the community was also expressed by some community respondents. Consistent with these respondents' suggestions is the idea that the initiative boosts the employment of community members. This is on the basis that most community members lacked the required technical skills prior to implementing the initiative. Following the provision of skills, respondents believe that some members of the community have been empowered.

I will also agree that as at that set time too, that there were not very many graduates with the technical background to fill in most of the work positions that were available in Exxon. (SAGE)

You know, if the community says to Mobil, you are not employing our people, Mobil says, your people are not qualified. Then Mobil has to do something to get them qualified to be employed, so the need for the school arose. (HRM)

I think why they did that ... maybe the report they got to absorb more of the community, the number that will really appease the community, because from my set, we were very few. To get that number out from the number that came, they had to step down their requirements in terms of cut-off points for the test. Okay, community, if the cut-off point for every other person is 70%, community 50%. So, now you can't take the person that scored 40% to be in the same class with the one who scored 80%. From your judgement, they are not at the same level. So to bring him up to speed, just to give him a pre-booster, a kind of booster for him to be able to cope with this guy, put him through a pre-training. That's what happened. So, in order for them to take the required number from the community, they had to drop the cut-off point for the community people. (P5)

It was generally perceived by the direct beneficiaries of the initiative that it was conceived by the organisation in anticipation of planned expansion. Respondents believe that the lack of technical manpower in the host communities complements the expansion. Thus, the firm identified the initiative, implemented the process of converting unskilled community members to skilled workers, and eventually succeeded in its expansion. However, most of the community participants were more inclined to the opinion that the initiative was adopted in response to community insistence on greater participation by means of employment. The shift in perception stems from the idea that community beneficiaries, being internal stakeholders (employees), may perceive the initiative from a strategic stance which is likely to align with the firm's perspective.

4.5.2 Community empowerment

Community empowerment is considered a sub-theme. It refers to the decision to empower the host community members as a motive to adopt the initiative. A common perception among the groups of respondents was that the decision to implement the programme was

in response to community agitation, demanding community participation in the organisation by means of employment. Respondents believe that following this agitation, the initiative was conceived with the intention to empower community members. This involved giving community members the required technical skills for further employment into the firm.

Prior to that time, there was a lot of community agitation and pressure on Mobil to employ their own people into Exxon … and em … ExxonMobil, as at that time, always has this excuse that the community people did not have the requisite skills and qualifications to be employed at some level in the company. So, when this thing kept mounting, I can quite remember once like that, there was … that's when Adeusi was governor, there were a lot of problems in Eket, that the governor even said that the Akwa Ibom people were not educated enough to be employed in Mobil. (SAGE

Young men who will want to participate as you are asking, with relate to Mobil, they came up by putting forward a lot of applications, and I think the school came as one of those. So that's the way it came, it wasn't really a direct community demand. (FCSEE)

Participants also perceive the initiative as part of a memorandum of understanding between the host communities and the firm. An agreement which prescribed the requirement for their peaceful co-existence, whereby the firm provide assurance for the employment of host community members and the communities in turn guarantee conducive operational environment.

So, an idea of a memorandum of understanding, of, eh, producing a memorandum of understanding was … came about. An MOU was designed, which was an agreement between the community and the company. We set out what the

community expects the company to do and the company agrees to do them and so on. In return, the community gives the company a peaceful environment to work. (HRME)

The school was part of the MOU. The MOU was fashioned by the four communities, Eket, Esit Eket, Ibeno, Onna and, eh ... as part of the MOU, they now picked ... it was an agreement that it is we, the members of the core communities, that should produce a public relations officer. (FLGCE)

Generally, respondents indicate that the initiative was designed to give preference to the host community members, as majority of the beneficiaries were from the state with a focus on the host communities. There is a perception that the core communities were given quotas and a head start to improve their chances of success in the programme. From some respondents' points of view, the aim was to facilitate community participation in the organisation. They suggested that the initiative was designed to encourage and accommodate all eligible community members regardless of their financial status, further suggesting that provision is made by the firm for all expenses.

4.6.   THEME 4:   Perceived social benefits (visible social benefits)

Perceived social benefits encompass the perceived benefits which accrue to the direct beneficiaries of the initiative, including the host communities. Respondents suggested that there are visible social benefits of the initiative (Burke & Logsdon, 1999). Although similar and seemingly overlapping, the perceived benefits for the direct beneficiaries and the community at large are addressed with different headings for clarity. The aim is to identify the different perspectives as perceived by both groups. In general, respondents perceived these benefits in five categories, as detailed below:

- Personal development

- Employment opportunities

- Poverty alleviation

- Trickle-down

- Role modelling

4.6.1 Personal development

Personal development was reflected by both groups of respondents, although from varying perspectives. While the direct beneficiaries reflected on personal development from their individual perspectives, the community participants talked about a skill acquisition programme for the entire community. Overall, respondents believe that the initiative ensured the acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary for the foundation of beneficiaries' careers in the oil and gas industry. The perceived skills and knowledge are considered to give beneficiaries an edge in the oil and gas industry with regard to employment. This edge is attributed to the hands-on approach in the training programme, which exposes beneficiaries to state-of-the-art equipment and real-life scenarios that are often not available to their contemporaries in other local institutions.

> *.... because that programme alone has opened my eyes. Brought me to the limelight of what is happening in the oil and gas system. The skill, the knowledge I acquired from the training alone is what I'll say has brought me to where I am today. (P5)*

> *I was using machines that I knew definitely were not in any Nigerian institution then, you know. For that brief two years I was there, the exposure … even if I wasn't employed then, the exposure alone would have given me the … should I use the word competitive edge… (P8)*

Respondents were also of the opinion that the technical skills acquired were transferable as their relevance cuts across industries. The programme is seen as delivering a world-class skill set which transcends the firm's technical requirements, working towards the establishment of a potential pool of competent technicians in local communities with access to the oil and gas industry.

> *Because of the programme, generally with technical competencies, opportunities would seem unlimited. Unlimited in the sense that the courses they offer sort of form the basis for any manufacturing or processing industry. (P7)*

> *The manpower so trained in that school, whether the school continues or not, the manpower will remain in the community. (YLO)*

Some respondents believed that the initiative offers relevant employment skills in the industry which could be an alternative to university education. This is considered a more certain alternative with regard to gainful employment, since there is a high unemployment rate in the country for university graduates.

> *I know a couple of folks that were studying geology, somebody at a level 300, somebody at level 400 dropped out just to attend this programme and they were admitted. And what was their drive? They were going to get employment at the end of the day. (CMEE)*

However, some community respondents also expressed the view that the initiative lacks a multifaceted approach as a training programme. They suggest that there is a need for the initiative to accommodate training which transcends organisational agendas. The idea stems from the notion that adopting a multifaceted approach which offers a comprehensive skill set is likely to create employment options not necessarily tied to the industry. It is believed that this approach will allow beneficiaries the option of employment in other non-technical functions in the firm and across different industries.

So, if ExxonMobil is really taking up a corporate social responsibility that is not selfish – when I say selfish, it's not tied to their own enterprise culture – they think they want to embark on development that will create life, then, they should look at solving a generic problem. That's the way I look at it, so you train these guys, they graduate, they come out, they can go out, work elsewhere, anywhere. (CMEE)

Nonetheless, some respondents argue that the initiative allows beneficiaries to take their destiny in their hands. They allude to the notion that beneficiaries can reach the heights of their ambitions, regardless of the perceived limitations expressed by the majority.

We have guys that are managers. I know a guy that was the set before me, he's a manager in Elf now. He went on to do a whole bunch of programmes, did his Master's in the UK. Applied for a job in Elf and was transferred back to Nigeria. Yes, you can be anything. I don't think the training centre … did not limit anybody from being whatever they wanted to be. (P3)

Regardless of the differing perspectives, there is a consensus with regard to the initiative as a significant community development programme and a conduit for the employment of community members into the firm. Any dissatisfaction about the initiative seems to emanate from its implementation process. This was the reason for the suggestion by participants to accommodate comprehensive skills which transcend the organisational agenda.

4.6.2 Employment opportunities

Employment opportunity as a sub-theme was identified as one of the attributes of perceived benefits to the direct beneficiaries of the initiative. There is a general perception of the programme as a facilitator of the recruitment of community members into the firm.

It is also seen as doubling-down as skill acquisition centre for community members to further expedite their employment in the oil and gas industry.

Some participants suggested that effort was made towards the enrolment of community members on the programme to subsequently ease their absorption into the firm. It was suggested that the initiative allows beneficiaries to bypass the rigorous recruitment and selection process often experienced by potential employment candidates. As such, the initiative is credited as having been a pathway for the majority of community members presently in the employ of the organisation.

> *The people from the environment, at least they have the opportunity to work in the oil company without the struggle of writing an application, hoping to be called for interview and all that. At least that on its own has given employment to a lot of people in this environment. (CMO)*

> *Mobil gave the community a reasonable quota, and not only to give them a quota in the school, but you know, also have the policy that all community graduates from the school are directly employed into Mobil. So that of many as the Akwa Ibom people that work in Mobil today, most of them passed through the school. (SAGE)*

One respondent suggested that the employment of community members gave rise to a crop of financially empowered young graduates. The average employment age of school leavers in these communities is in the mid-twenties. However, the initiative ensures the gainful employment of beneficiaries at a much younger age. The respondent argues that this development to an extent is exceptional as the graduates are fortunate to be employed, beginning to assist their families at an age commonly considered to be still dependant in these communities.

All of a sudden, they had people coming in between the ages of 19, some of the people started working at probably 20, 22 or even 19 to 22 in that bracket started working. So, it generated a level of empowerment for multiple groups of people. So you started seeing people becoming financially independent a bit early and helping out family. (P1)

Respondents further allude to the notion that the knowledge and skills acquired from the programme ensured a head start for beneficiaries who are not immediately offered employment by the firm. The knowledge and skills acquired are perceived to aid their education and subsequently increase their chances of selection elsewhere in the industry. One respondent asserted that the qualification he obtained, combined with a university degree, gave him an advantage during recruitment.

Going back to school, it was so easy for me to understand what we were doing, what I was studying and then I started applying for jobs, and each time I went for an interview or any test, I always felt at an advantage over others … I must say it, if not for that training I had, I don't think there is any way I could have sailed through to get this job. (P5)

Nonetheless, some community respondents argued that there are dwindling employment opportunities in the firm for beneficiaries in recent times. They suggest that following the initial implementation of the initiative beneficiaries were absorbed into the firm until the point of saturation, where the firm can no longer take beneficiaries in numbers but only as required.

Because of recent, apart from the second or third batches that were trained and absorbed, what about those people they have trained and those people were left stranded? (YLO)

...and they did that for a couple of sessions in the school, a couple of years, until it

got to a point that erm ... they could no longer absorb everybody who graduated

from the school. (SAGE)

There is a general perception about the impact of employment on the community. Overwhelmingly, respondents are of the view that the initiative has had a positive impact on the economy of the community. This positive impact undoubtedly is attributed to the gainful employment of community members in the firm. However, there is also the perception that there are limited employment opportunities for community members who are beneficiaries in recent times.

4.6.3   Financial independence

Financial independence is connected with perceived social benefits. It is a perception commonly expressed by the direct beneficiaries of the initiative. Participants believe that the initiative led to employment opportunities, and subsequently guaranteed financial liberation for them and their families. The majority of the beneficiaries are believed to have come from underprivileged backgrounds and to have experienced prior financial difficulties. Participants suggest that most beneficiaries joined the programme due to financial difficulties experienced by their families and their inability to acquire university education.

> *I think it has actually empowered a lot of people which ordinarily would have been*
>
> *difficult for them to get to the level they are right now. I know a lot of people*
>
> *wouldn't have been privileged to go to university, maybe by virtue of their family*
>
> *background. (P9)*

Respondents suggest that following employment, beneficiaries achieved financial liberation. Empowered with disposable income, beneficiaries are now able to cater for

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their families and, to an extent, the community at large. Particularly valued by respondents was the ability for beneficiaries to sponsor the education of their siblings through university – something they had struggled with prior to their financial independence.

> *...because in our own clime here, where on the average a lot of people go through a lot of financial difficulties, having had that employment as an upshot of that training, one has been put in a better position to be able to carry along my dependant, you know ... family and friends, and without much burden. (P7)*

It suffices to say that there is a high level of poverty in these communities, and as such beneficiaries are expected to shoulder the needs of other community members. One respondent suggested that the effects of the financial empowerment which they identify with are mirrored by other beneficiaries. The impact is further magnified by the number of dependants associated with each beneficiary, and the consistency of the initiative over the years. This conclusion is based on the notion that community members tend to live collectively. Hence, financial independence for one individual means alleviation from poverty for many.

> *I also feel strongly that they also have similar or near similar experience from ... they still obtained financial empowerment at the end of the programme, on employment. So ... so far, the training school has run roughly about seven or eight groups to the best of my knowledge, that is on the average about eighty people per group, it might seem like a small number, but if you look at the dependants per participant, from a ... point of view, that's a great impact that has visibly made at least to our local community. (P7)*

As expected, financial independence is seen as a consequence of employment. The impact is mostly significant because beneficiaries who are gainfully employed by the oil and gas sector tend to have comfortable disposable income for their wellbeing, as well as enough

to accommodate relatives. As such, the impact of the empowerment experience by beneficiaries is also felt by the community, especially considering the scale of the initiative.

4.6.4 Trickle-down

Trickle-down is considered a sub-theme of the perceived social benefits of the initiative. Discussed in this sub-theme is the trickle-down effect of money in the host communities. The findings indicate that it is a common perception of the spill-over effect of wealth from the beneficiaries, who are gainfully employed, to the less privileged in host communities.

As suggested by some participants, most beneficiaries of the programme continue to reside in their communities following their graduation and subsequent employment. Participants indicate that beneficiaries stimulate the economy through their day-to-day financial transactions with community members, including other investments carried out in these communities. This implies that the proceeds of their employment reverberate through the host communities, with a significant impact on commerce.

> *But you see money has a generic impartation, it goes round, so because whatever thing you do to generate money, money is meant to be spent and money has a spill-over effect, a revolving effect, so … and you find out that most of these community people that have been employed by Exxon still live within the community. (FLGCE)*

Due to the large financial rewards associated with the employees of the industry in comparison with the high levels of poverty and unemployment, beneficiaries are morally obligated to support other community members. Such gestures often come in the form of financial assistance, scholarships, other financial educational support and support for the acquisition of vocational skills by other members of the community.

I have one of them at X community, the guy has a routine training ... that he trains

at least seven people a year, he has trained over thirty people in whichever field

you chose, he will train you and equip you. Carpentry, electricians, hairdressing,

vulcanizing ... he will train you and equip you. (YLO)

Members of these communities are known to display some sort of communitarian culture. In this context, beneficiaries are expected to cater for family members, including extended family and friends, following employment. Typically, when an individual is employed with a comfortable disposable income he or she becomes the breadwinner in the family. This implies that the individual supports siblings and other relatives who are still in search of their own financial breakthrough.

You know, in Nigeria, when you work, you don't eat alone. If you have one person

working in a family, you'll be towing more than 20 or 30 persons, including

friends. (P6)

Respondents are of the view that the proceeds of employment also cascade through the community from the establishment of small businesses. Beneficiaries often invest in small-scale businesses and support the business ideas of friends and relatives. This perception gives credence to the notion that commercial activities triggered by such small-scale businesses and infrastructural developments are cable of supporting the local vendors and labour alike.

...you see, they will now also create some small-scale employment for the young

folks that are around the community, right. Some are wise enough to re-invest in

some kind of businesses that also create a little employment, you know? (CMEE)

There is the tendency for beneficiaries to carry out community development projects in their immediate society, owing to their individual financial stability and the lack of existing infrastructure. It was observed that social infrastructures in these communities are

often neglected or not present hence it becomes the responsibility of capable community members to assist.

> *And if you find a Mobil staff member also lives in small community, there is always one community development thing that person based in that community also tries to do, probably open up drains, try to correct some pot holes around the street and also help to organize town hall meetings within the small community, within the family, village. (SAGE)*

Furthermore, the impact of the spill-over is perceived to be magnified by the sheer number of beneficiaries and the consistency of the initiative. Participants suggest that the initiative has transformed the community into a hub of a sort, alluding that the meeting of people from different parts of the country has impacted the socio-economic life of the community.

> *You know, you have different tribes mixed together, when you see for example a Yoruba person, you know that this person will be from the training centre. And the community has been quite accommodating in terms of having people come and stay for … I think there is a big effect on the social-economic life of the community where it is located. (P8)*

There is a consensus on the trickle-down effect of the initiative with regards to the financial benefits to beneficiaries which stem from employment. Participants acknowledge varying perspectives, identifying the influence of culture on the community as the residence of the firm and most beneficiaries.

4.6.5   Role modelling (mentorship)

Role modelling is perceived as an attribute of the benefits which accrue to the community from the initiative. This sub-theme identifies benefits to the community, whereby community youths look towards the beneficiaries of the initiative as a source of inspiration and motivation to also succeed.

Some respondents expressed the view that beneficiaries are role models in their communities. As a society with a limited number of people in professions with significant gains, it suffices to say that beneficiaries stand out among their peers. Consequently, other community youths aspire to be in the same line of work, and hence they are encouraged to enrol on the programme in the hope that they will eventually gain employment. On this basis, one respondent posits that community youths emulate beneficiaries in search of financial empowerment, thereby reducing the chances of juvenile delinquency and crime. He further adds that the impact of role modelling is also experienced in families, where siblings tend to choose a similar career path to that of their older siblings.

> *We need people that other people look up to. It helps the young ones following you to try to stay away from crime and drugs and the rest, knowing that they now have a future. They now have a path they can go through. After I got admitted onto the programme, it immediately influenced my younger ones. All of them were now going towards the science area. All of them now chose to study science hoping for opportunities to also come in. (P10)*

It is further suggested that having been considered successful, beneficiaries are viewed as mentors to guide other community members along a path which is likely to lead to financial emancipation. Respondents argue that being experienced in the process of the programme, beneficiaries can advise and support other community members.

The impact is also great in terms of mentorship, which is an aspect that people

don't usually identify with. Mentoring and role modelling, young people are able

to look at us and be like, okay, I want to be like you. If he has been able to achieve

this, then I too can do it. And you get access to these young people, advising them

on how to do this … based on your own experiences, how to go about things. (P2)

Generally, respondents are of the view that the admiration of beneficiaries by youths and their subsequent emulation is likely to produce a consistent crop of technicians in the host communities. Furthermore, they suggest that beneficiaries are accessible to other community members, and are also capable of offering relevant support.

4.7   THEME 5:   Perceived organisational benefits (private benefits)

Respondents are of the view that there are benefits which accrue to the organisation from the implementation of the initiative. Organisational benefits were perceived in three categories as detailed below:

- Cost saving

- Availability of skilled labour

- Goodwill

4.7.1   Cost saving

Respondents hold the view that the organisation saves costs in its overall operations through the initiative. However, the perception of cost saving has a mixed reception among the different groups of respondents. For instance, while the direct beneficiaries perceive cost saving as part of a mutual benefit provided by the initiative, most community

participants hold a more cynical view. They are of the view that the initiative is borne out of the organisation's intention to maximise profit.

4.7.1.1 Perception of direct beneficiaries on cost savings

Participants believe that the organisation made a strategic investment in adopting the initiative. In addition, they believe that the organisation considered the cost of training and the subsequent remuneration in comparison with the cost of employing already qualified technicians. They further suggest that the wages of beneficiaries at entry level are lower than those of their contemporaries employed from outside the firm. The discrepancy in wages is perceived as an attempt by the organisation to recoup the cost of implementing the initiative.

> *I think, for me, I see it as an investment. It is actually an investment, because by the time you train your workforce, you look at the cost of training, vis á vis how much you are going to pay them at the end of the day, everything is strategically done.(P4)*

> *...because you were trained by the company, uh, the entry level might be slightly lower than what will be given to your contemporary coming in from outside. So that in a way is cost saving for the company, meaning in the long term they are going to gain. (P9)*

Nonetheless, respondents believe that beneficiaries are undeterred by the knowledge of lower wages due to the poor economic situation in the country. It is further suggested that at the time of employment, beneficiaries were less concerned about wages but grateful for the job opportunities.

...our parents were so happy we had jobs, they didn't even ask us how much we
were paid. Nobody wanted to know how ... just get the job. So it helped, and it was
cheaper for the company. (P3)

Some respondents also believe that following the implementation of the initiative, the
organisation saved costs through the reduction in personnel costs of engaging experts.
They suggest that the cost of engaging experts far outweighs the cost of training and
retaining locals who are capable of carrying out similar tasks.

The cost to retain an expert doing what I am doing is in the region of 30,000
dollars a month. So, if you compare that to what I am earning, doing the same job
(chuckle), that expert is earning more than ... is earning up to maybe [pause] 9
times what I am earning, you understand. So, you can see the cost implication to
actually getting a national with the competence to do what an expert is able to do.
(P2)

Respondents are of the view that the initiative provided competent technicians at a lower
rate of pay, who were able to man operations and further reduce the rate of downtime.
There is a perception that this has increased the firm's production output while taking
advantage of the volatile oil sector price. This is particularly attributed to the perception
that the initiative produced competent technicians who are trained specifically for the
industry, and thus facilitate the company's operations seamlessly.

They believed that the training will pay off, and the training did pay off. Because
basically they ran an entire brand-new NG [natural gas] facility with entry level
hiring. That's what they did. So, from a cost perspective, it was fantastic. From a
safety perspective, the guys were so new they had to take what you told them. (P1)

But with the coming of the technical training centre, you had more competent
people manning the operations, so operations moved smoother, and we had lower

down time, lower break downs, so ... and that's what every company wants ... and

you pay less. (P3)

Furthermore, respondents suggest that following the company's planned expansion, the

initiative made it possible to operate entirely new platforms with an entry level workforce.

Cost is believed to have been saved on the new projects by retaining new entry level

manpower with lower wages compared to experienced hands.

4.7.1.2   Perception of community respondents on cost saving

Community respondents also suggested that the company saved cost over time, following

the implementation of the initiative. However, cost saving in their view echoes the notion

of an unbalanced set of benefits between both parties. Some consider the initiative to

guarantee cheap labour against the engagement of experts and the costs associated with

this. They suggest that the benefit from cheap labour is not commensurate to the benefits

which accrue to the community. On this basis, profit maximisation is considered the

paramount motivator in adopting the initiative.

> *You know, it helped to reduce the number of experts that were coming in to take*
>
> *over technician jobs in the firm, and that solved their problem. But solving their*
>
> *problem is not fully solving our problem. (CMEE)*

> *You see, first and foremost, all these organisations are out there to make profit.*
>
> *And if you look at the component called Mobil, now ExxonMobil, it's a highly*
>
> *capitalist organisation. (SAGE)*

Respondents further argue that the initiative is an exploitative venture, suggesting that

beneficiaries are systematically stagnated in their employment while the organisation

continuously makes the most of their talents. They are of the view that the true intention of

the initiative is in doubt, alluding that it stems from a selfish approach. On a general note, participants suggest that the perceived gains to the communities are insignificant and further question the sincerity of the initiative, suggesting that to an extent it offers a one-sided solution.

> *Invariably, I don't know any other programmes that Mobil has which will help to train the indigenes in the engineering aspect of Mobil operations. So, I think that the school is a condemnation for my community, condemning people to the artisan level and giving them ... they train them, they graduate, so they use them in the way they like, as labourers, that's all. (RCSEE)*

> *The intention behind it at the end of the day, I don't really think it is sincere, it is selfish. In as much as it is presented as it is, for both sides to gain, but one side gains the more. It is gainful but not sufficient. (FCWAI)*

Nonetheless, some respondents believe that following the implementation of the initiative which ensured the engagement of community members, the initiative offered mutual benefits. They perceive the gains with regard to cost saving by the company, as its reward.

> *...the community had its own fair share, because if you can recall, it was very difficult for community people to get employed in Exxon then. So, they now satisfied that quota for the community to get them employed in the company, and they now also have their own cut by having people to work for them who are less expensive, as they should have sourced them outside. (SAGE)*

4.7.2 Availability of skilled labour

There is a perception among the direct beneficiaries that the initiative has created a pool of readily available skill labour for the organisation. Respondents are of the view that the

initiative provides a steady supply of technicians to the firm. Thus, they perceive that the firm is dependent on the initiative for technical level recruitment. So far, the majority of the technical personnel in the organisation are believed to be beneficiaries of the initiative. Respondents indicate that it also contributes significantly to the pool of competent technicians in the oil and gas industry.

> *We started with a large number, about 103. When we initially finished, immediately we finished the programme, on completion, there were only seven that were not picked immediately. But later they had to pick them when there was a need for manpower, they had to call them in. That's from my own group, but there are subsequent groups that were not picked. But one way or the other, they will use them for … to either recommend them to servicing companies, or pick them and hand them over to servicing companies to use them for technical level jobs. (P10)*

> *I think it is dominated by guys from the TTC. It would be, if you go to the platforms, it's about maybe 70% or let's say between 50 and 70% of the guys on the production platforms are from the TTC. Because it's been a while now, the company hasn't really employed technicians from outside. (P9)*

> *…. for them, the benefit on the other hand is at the end of the day, you have a pool of competent people to replace your workforce as they age or retire, as they change career, as they seek other alternatives. (P7)*

The organisation is perceived to have benefited from the young age of the beneficiaries. Respondents believe that beneficiaries were engaged by the firm at an age when they would generally be considered as dependents. Thus, they could put in more years of service in an environment where the new entry employment age is relatively high due to the years required to earn a qualification. Furthermore, it is perceived that the beneficiaries

are vibrant, enthusiastic, committed and easy to motivate in comparison to a more mature individual with the possibility of family responsibilities.

> *You get a guy at 20, for the first 12 years, he's yours to do whatever … as you please. He's basically very vibrant, he wants to learn, he's very energetic. He thinks the world is … the zenith. So, you got the person at a very good point. Like the military does, when they are tapping … when they are getting very young people. They get people at 18, throw them into a command college, four years after you're out at 22, you're second lieutenant. It's the same kind of thing. (P1)*

> *You know, we had the enthusiasm of youth, the strength of youth. You know, rather than go hire a guy that already has three kids in high school … they can't give you the same commitment as a…. (P3)*

> *Okay, but Exxon now gives us training that is specific to what they want us to do, so that basically from day 1 we are good to go. Back then we used to have field trips, used to have what we called the IT thing. You actually go on the facility and you get oriented with, eh, how it is to work on a facility. (P2)*

> *You basically take a kid … you take raw people and mould them in exactly the way you want. So in the learning curve, it's good for you, you don't have to unlearn bad habits. You pick the guys and infuse in them the very habits you'd like your workforce to have. (P1)*

Respondents further suggest that the graduates of the initiative are conditioned to be compatible with organisational agendas. There are of the view that the initiative allows the firm to mould beneficiaries in a way that will fit with the firm's operations. Beneficiaries are believed to be specifically trained to fit with the firm's operations and assimilate organisational culture. It is perceived that in addition to providing a pool of competent

technical workers for the organisation, the graduates have also reduced operational risk and cost.

4.7.3 Goodwill

There is a perception that the initiative elicits goodwill from the host communities, which subsequently improves the reputation of the firm. Respondents are of the view that there are significant benefits that accrue to host communities, and as such, communities feel obligated to protect and preserve the initiative. A CSR initiative with such a reputation is of importance to the firm, as the region is prone to community agitation which often escalates into violence and vandalism of company properties. Respondents believe that the perceived importance of the initiative to the community has acted as a shield during such community unrest.

> *A lot of people from the community have actually benefitted. So, there is every tendency for the locals to give ExxonMobil now as a company some level of support. If there is a community crisis or something, it's actually the community guys who will come to persuade those that are causing problems, telling them about the good works these guys are doing, vis á vis this kind of setup. (P9)*

> *That's why no matter what happens in Eket ... let them burn everywhere, nobody will vandalise... The training centre has never been breached. The community who is host to that training centre, there was ... once we had community unrest, those guys were ready to kill anybody that attempted to cross into the training centre. (P3)*

Respondents believe that a significant number of community members have been empowered through the initiative. This empowerment is further magnified by the number of dependants and other community members who are affected financially and otherwise

by the direct beneficiaries of the initiative. Therefore, there is a perception of some level of emotional attachment to the initiative, underlining its importance to host community members. On this basis, there is a tendency for them to support the organisation. Respondents are of the view that the significance of the initiative is evidenced in the fact that it has outlasted most of the other CSR initiatives adopted by the firm.

4.8   THEME 6:   Factors inhibiting significant impacts of the initiative

The interviews suggest that despite the perceived noble intentions of the firm, there are factors which inhibit the host communities from accessing the full potential of the initiative. These factors are discussed as sub-themes below:

- Glass ceiling

- Bias

- Lack of information on the initiative

4.8.1   Glass ceiling

There is a general perception that the beneficiaries' career progression is capped by the firm. The interviews presented two main perspectives towards this perceived glass ceiling associated with the programme. However, perspectives differed among participants, rather than along group lines. While most of the participants viewed this glass ceiling as a hindrance to their personal career development, some community respondents believed it also affects their significant participation in the firm.

Respondents suggest that there is an attempt by the firm to systematically limit the career progression of beneficiaries. It is believed that the local subsidiary of the firm adopts policies which stagnate beneficiaries, adding that the firm is rather speculative on the issue

of career progression due to fears about staff turnover. This is responsible for the drive to seek career progression outside the organisation, because employees become dissatisfied. Respondents suggest that these limitations have led to underutilised talent. However, there are very limited options for leaving, due to a lack of similar job opportunities outside the firm.

For ExxonMobil, it is not a company that does well, at least the Nigerian affiliates, we don't do well with career progression for non-engineering and management level people, okay … It is shrouded in hearsay, a bit of secrecy, because they are afraid that if you tell people that they are capped, that those people get frustrated and their energy level drops. (P1)

I never thought that, eh, I wanted to stay for my whole career, doing what I was doing back then, in spite of how much I appreciated the opportunity. (P2)

There is a perception of a general societal disdain for technicians, as technicians' jobs are considered to require a lower standard of education. This explains why respondents consistently felt the need to showcase their educational achievements during the interviews. Typically, most beneficiaries aspire to become engineers, and they considered the initiative a stepping stone. However, their dreams have been short-lived, since the organisation offers no pathway for technicians to progress into the engineering cadre.

I was thinking I could actually get to the summit of my career anytime, any day upon joining the company. But I realised I am kind of limited, there's a level beyond which I cannot go, irrespective of how long I stay with the company, as a result of my entry level, irrespective of how far I have upgraded myself educationally. (P9)

… secondly, you know, the Nigerian environment, if it is not a university degree …
you are not totally considered as somebody that actually went to school, so to say.
(P8)

Respondents expressed an inability among beneficiaries to reach their desired career goals in the organisation, despite educational attainment. A further frustration is perceived in the discrepancy between the beneficiaries' career growth and that of engineers, despite acquiring similar engineering qualifications and having more years of experience. It seems that the only available career growth path for technicians is horizontal, but even that direction of growth is also considered rare.

Some people have gone as far as getting a Master's, but the biggest challenge is,
are you working with what you have? You are still working as a technician, your
line of growth is very slow, and you can't leave the job, because in Nigeria getting
another job that pays that much is very, very limited. So, that's one thing about
ExxonMobil, I've had some friends that have resigned. (P6)

From the community perspective, the lack of career growth for beneficiaries is also believed to affect significant community participation in the organisation. It is suggested that beneficiaries are not able to represent their communities adequately, since they lack authority in the firm. Some respondents are of the view that beneficiaries are dispensable and have insignificant roles to play in the firm. As such, they are perceived to be more committed to their employer, rather than the communities from whence they came.

The expectations were that our people will be employed, and that they would grow
through the ranks, and that we would have many directors and that they would be
the voice of the community, that they would bridge the gap. But it hasn't been so,
because these folks go in and try to protect their jobs and, you know, do what
Mobil wants them to do. That way Mobil does not hear us through them, and they

are not at that position where they can take decisions that will impact the lives of

members of the community anyway. So, in other words, they are on their own and

we have little to gain. (FWACI)

Such a show of loyalty is understandable in an economic climate where job opportunities are rather scare. In general, the perceived insignificant community participation in the firm indicates that although there is an increasing number of community members employed, community requests for greater participation are yet to be met.

4.8.2 Bias

Bias is identified as a sub-theme in the study. It is seen as an inhibitor to the potential impact of the initiative to the host communities, and was reported mainly by community participants. However, there were also a few direct beneficiaries who expressed similar perceptions of bias, but this was limited to those who had joined the programme relatively recently. This may imply that there have been some changes in the perceptions of the beneficiaries about the initiative over the recent time period.

Favouritism and nepotism is believed to permeate all levels of the programme. Respondents suggest that favouritism, especially along ethnic lines, is perpetuated by the ethnic majority already established in the firm. It is seen as the reason for the perceived domination of the programme by non-community members. This elicits feelings of indignation, as participants protest the denial of preferential status to host community members. Respondents suggest there has been a clear decline in community participation in recent times, leading to the perception that the intended benefit to the community has been short-changed.

There are cases where our sons here have the opportunity of maybe taking first or

second position, first class or second class, whatever, but are denied the

opportunity of employment because of what? … interests of those at the top who feel that the place is supposed to be occupied by a Yoruba son or by a Hausa son or by an Igbo son, depending on the position of their leaders. (VHI)

It was for us, the core communities of Eket, Ibeno, Esit Eket and Onna. It wasn't meant for the Yorubas, but today the Yorubas are 80% in the training school. So, we are not feeling the impact of the training school at all. (YLO)

The perceived denial of host community rights is attributed to their minority ethnic status. Respondents are of the view that the management of the initiative lacks transparency. However, favouritism is also expressed by the members of the community who are from the same ethnicity. Often, beneficiaries are selected based on their connections and relationships with people in power.

I actually know a guy that was probably the best in one of the … probably the best, but he wasn't employed. But other people that were maybe not as good as the guy academically were employed. (P9)

But in all of these, it is not the company's fault. The governing body might not even know about this. The headquarters of the company might not even know about this, that's just the truth. So it's just some local, uh, local management, that are Nigerians, that are carrying the Nigerian mentality into the company that will throw a negative light on social responsibility. (P4)

According to these respondents, the issues perceived do not reflect the original intention of the organisation. Rather, they are of the perception that the present situation is a deviation, orchestrated and driven by the local management. Beneficiaries are presumed to be selected according to parameters unknown to the community, and hence the recruitment process is devoid of merit. Issues of nepotism and favouritism seem to be an increasing problem, which was rarely identified earlier in the initiative.

4.8.3 Lack of information

That lack of information about the initiative is considered a hindrance to the significant participation of community members. Respondents suggest that host community members are not privy to relevant information with regard to the recruitment and selection criteria for the programme. This perception was particularly expressed by some community interviewees, who reported that there is limited awareness of the existence of the initiative among the broader community. Relevant information on the initiative is believed to be for the privileged only. This implies that the poor in society, who ideally should be the focus of the initiative, are marginalised. Hence, the significance of the initiative in empowering host communities is greatly reduced.

> *Even though it is located in the community, I think it's still very exclusive to many of the citizenry. I think I'm aware of the school because I've been educated. For those who are at the … level, I think mostly do not know that the school exists. (FCSEE)*

> *But in this case, to gain access to the form is difficult because it belongs to the bigwigs, probably for the children of those personnel who are working there. Whereas, before now, Mobil will come to science school here and drop forms. (YLO)*

Respondents are also of the view that community members lack access and the necessary support to facilitate selection onto the programme. This is on the basis that outlets and information centres are no longer located in their communities, but have been moved to the headquarters of the firm. This development is a particular challenge for host community members, as they are domiciled in rural areas with little or no communication tools to aid them. Recent development also suggests a decline in the initial collaboration

between the firm and local schools that were intended to facilitate enrolment on the programme.

> *So, it is in Lagos now, and it is difficult to have information or access to where the form is. Even when you have access to the form, you may not have the opportunity to get to Lagos. It is now in the hands of who is who, it is no more common as it used to be. It is no more a common thing when one can just finish secondary school and parade, forms were enough, at the end of the day, if twenty were in the training school, at least five, seven will come out successful ... before now the principal will be in charge of giving out forms, they will go on to train students on what is to be expected in the exams. When you get there, what you see is what you were taught in school, by so doing, you write the aptitude test and gain entry to the school, from entering the school, you have gone places. But now it is no more, because everything is out of the reach of the people in the community. (YLO)*

Furthermore, some respondents believe there is a lack of information about the firm's objectives regarding the initiative. It is suggested that the motives for adopting the initiative and the target beneficiaries (the focus stakeholders) are not made explicit. Respondents argue for the importance of clearly identifying the main benefactors of the initiative, adding that it remains difficult to assess the significance of the programme on this basis.

> *They cannot tell us why, I have not been able to know the reason behind the establishment of the school and if they say that is their own CSR. If so, that means that programme is for Nigeria, not for the community ... they should be able to tell us, this is why this school is established, if they are trying to bridge the skill gap between our educational system and the industry then we should have a better strategy. (CMEE)*

Field observation suggests that there is a certain amount of disagreement about the intended beneficiaries of the initiative. Although most beneficiaries insist it is designed to accommodate host community members, there are discrepancies in the perception of what constitutes a host community. While the four communities are mainly referred as host communities, the entire state is also considered a catchment area.

4.9   THEME 7:   Community expectations of the initiative

Community expectation is identified as a theme in the study. The theme identifies community expectations following the implementation of the initiative, and specific approaches or interventions to ensure a significant impact of the initiative in the community. Generally, respondents expressed dissatisfaction about the impact of the initiative on their communities. Their expectations are expressed in six categories as subthemes, detailed below:

- The need to ameliorate the initiative

- Create a pathway for career progression of beneficiaries

- Comprehensive approach towards implementing the initiative

- The need to tackle bias

- The need to evaluate the impact of the initiative

- Community involvement

4.9.1   *The need to ameliorate the initiative*

The need to ameliorate the initiative in this context refers to the participants' expectation and proposition for an upgrade and expansion of the programme to accommodate more

community members. Expectations and subsequent propositions were expressed by both groups of participants in the study.

Considering its date of inception, some respondents expressed the view that an upgrade to the initiative is overdue. They suggest that an upgrade to the graduate training programme would bridge the gap between the large numbers of community engineering graduates from local institutions, with less on-the-job experience, and the required capabilities of the oil and gas industry. Others suggest that a comprehensive graduate programme which includes non-engineering graduates would have a greater impact on the community. An upgrade to a multifaceted graduate training programme would be expected to offer beneficiaries the skills to fit into other industries.

> *So my expectations before now was that the school should have been expanded to be bigger than what it is … em … the level of training and certification's also higher so that graduates from the school, in the school, can also compete with any other graduates from any other such schools all over the world. But that has not been the case; instead the school is still in its mushroom self, so I don't see much expansion towards that direction. (SAGE)*

> *let this school be upgraded to a graduate training programme. Whereby you are not just training engineering, alright, and then you have a programme that you absorb people, train them for at least the duration, that will inject the skills and knowledge they need to apply in a familiar and unfamiliar situation. So, you give them opportunity to also work with … to understudy experts and those that are working in the field. Give them challenges that will develop them for at least a year or two, and then when they finish they can go out elsewhere. (CMEE)*

In the same vein, respondents suggest that an expansion to a proper institution following the inception of the initiative would be appropriate. It is argued that an expansion of the

initiative to include national accreditation and the issuance of generally recognised

certifications would allow beneficiaries to compete favourably with their contemporaries.

They believe that accommodating more community members at this point would also

boost employment in industries not necessarily attached to the firm. To facilitate such

employment, one respondent suggested the involvement of community members in the

selection process to build the confidence of community members.

> *I would prefer the school to be enlarged and then for greater intake, for Mobil to*
>
> *have, for the school to have a greater intake of people from these communities. Not*
>
> *necessarily for employment by the company, you know, but because that will be of*
>
> *great benefit to the community. (HRME)*

> *... the people that are to manage that school must be indigenes of the oil producing*
>
> *community who are trusted. (VHI)*

Generally, respondents expect the initiative to adopt a community focus perspective. They

believe it would have more significance in host communities if it extended its quality of

training in the technical field to accommodate other disciplines. Respondents argue that

honing the skills of community members in other areas would encourage the search for

employment in other industries, thus lifting the burden of employment on the firm.

4.9.2 Create pathways for career progression

Career progression as a sub-theme identifies the respondents' expectations that

beneficiaries should progress career-wise in the firm, unencumbered by caps or barriers.

The issue of career stagnation among beneficiaries was raised by most of the participants

in the study. Some of them explicitly criticised the organisation for what they perceived as

a deliberate intent to stagnate beneficiaries in the organisation. They indicated that their

expectation of the programme was that it would ensure the participation of community

beneficiaries at significant levels of the firm, where they could represent the interests of their communities adequately. Unfortunately, the limited career progression of these individuals means that the potential of the initiative to benefit host communities is diminished.

> *The expectations were that our people will be employed, and that they would grow through the ranks, and that we would have many directors and that they would be the voice of the community, that they will bridge the gap. But it hasn't been so, because these folks go in and try to protect their jobs and, you know, do what Mobil wants them to do. That way Mobil does not hear us through them, and they are not at that position where they can take decisions that will impact the lives of members of the community anyway. So, in other words, they are on their own and we have little to gain. (FCWAI)*

On addressing the issue of career stagnation, respondents suggest they had expected the firm to institute a pathway to enable beneficiaries to advance their career. Similarly, some respondents recommended the adoption of additional educational qualifications as a pathway to career progression. They suggested the introduction of a scheme whereby the best students are offered the opportunity to acquire higher education qualifications to enable them to aspire to managerial levels in the firm. One respondent hinted that at the inception of the programme, it was rumoured that the best would be offered scholarships for further education and subsequent progress in the firm. However, such rumours fizzled out over time.

> *I expect to be done differently, is to establish a channel for maybe the best of the graduates to continue their education to somewhere, not just getting all out into the farm as third level workers or fourth level workers, just as artisans, I think that's the right word. They should do something to also assist those who are on top*

to progress qualification-wise, to come back and participate as mid people in the company. (FSCEE)

But one of the things that was rumoured when that programme started was that the top people from every group will be company sponsored for degree programmes in North America. Now, it was a very strong … I'm calling it rumour because there was never an official statement. Some people who had access to senior level managers did hear that such a thing was being planned, at some point, but it never materialised. A programme of that nature would have made a whole world of difference. (P1)

Overall, career stagnation among beneficiaries and the expectation of a resolution, considering the perceived hindrance to significant participation by host communities, is expressed by most respondents. However, observations during data collection indicate that the beneficiaries directly affected have capitulated and speak mostly about this issue in hushed tones. Perhaps their reaction is due to fear of repercussions if they are seen to be criticising the firm openly, considering the limited employment opportunities in the country.

4.9.3 Comprehensive approach to implementing the initiative

A proposition for a comprehensive approach towards the implementation of corporate social responsibility initiatives is identified as a sub-theme in the study. Participants expect the firm to adopt a comprehensive community development approach to effectively empower community members. Some community respondents argue that though the idea of the initiative is noble, it does not consider other community members who are neither technically nor mainstream educationally inclined. They suggest that a more effective

approach to the initiative would consider different traditional community occupations, and consequently have a holistic impact on the community.

> *The educational skill acquisition centre there, my dear, it is not for all ... and it can never be for all. The fishing terminal also can never be for all, you balance the equation, then you watch what is going to happen, you watch the life of the people, how it's going to be. (VHI)*

> *...when you educate the child you educate the world. Education for me is one of the best impactful community development programmes, but at the same time too, you know ... the health of citizens matters, the economy of the citizens matters. So, because you have to stay alive first, you have to stay healthy first to be able to think of development. So ... not that one would have a real edge over the other, it's just that ... In terms of human capital development, that is very good, it's about the best. (SASGE)*

In the same vein, some respondents propose the accommodation of other community development programmes to complement the initiative. They suggest that there are basic infrastructural development initiatives which are primary to the survival of community members. Furthermore, they argue that it is logical to adopt a multi-dimensional approach towards community development, as no one initiative is more important than others in this context.

Field observation indicated that despite repeated attempts to focus on the initiative of study, respondents often associated it with a general perception of the firm's corporate social responsibility. Their high expectations of the firm could be attributed to the lack of social amenities in these communities. Despite the seemingly high approval rate of the initiative in host communities, the level of dissatisfaction among participants was equally high.

4.9.4   The need to tackle bias

The need to tackle bias as a sub-theme identifies the expectations of the participants, with regard to the resolve of perceived favouritism and nepotism influencing the outcome of the initiative. This is an issue broadly perceived to exist at varying levels of the firm by most participants in the study. Respondents indicate that favouritism, mainly perpetuated along ethnic lines, needs to be expunged in the firm to actualise significant and consistent benefits of the initiative. However, some respondents also allude to the notion that the issue of favouritism is endemic in the country and is deeply entrenched in societal norms.

> *Simple remove the tribalism, this Nigerian mentality, it is what is taking Nigeria back, and that's the truth. You are a Nigerian, right? (Yes) And you grew up in Nigeria, right? (Yes, of course.) So, you know how it is in Nigeria, right? (laughter) Exactly. The company should have a way of shielding the Nigerian factor away from its business. They should have some form of, uh, rationale behind what they are doing. (P4)*

Similarly, other respondents suggested the adoption of a merit-based system for the selection and elevation of beneficiaries. They opine that abiding strictly by such a practice will accrue more benefits to the organisation, while minimising incessant community agitation. In addition, one respondent suggested the inclusion of community members in the selection process of beneficiaries to the initiative and subsequently to the firm, adding that such a development would provide a platform to protect community interest.

> *If everybody within the system can be given a fair judgement, such ethnic tendencies removed completely from the company and let everybody be judged by their technical abilities to improve on the fortunes of the company, employment based on such, promotion based on such ideas – I think it will really, really*

accommodate some of these crises and people agitating that there are things that

are not making the organization respond properly to the community needs. (SAGE)

... the people that are to manage that school must be indigenes of the oil producing

community who are trusted. (VHI)

It was observed that there is a broad spectrum of perceived bias by individuals from the different communities. The perceptions of the victims of bias and the perceived perpetuators varied, depending on the origin of the participant. For instance, participants from the Ibeno community, which harbours the firm's main operations, felt marginalised by Eket (the location of the school and former local government council headquarters), while Eket felt marginalised by the rest of the state; this trend continues across the country. Respondents' expectations also followed this pattern.

4.9.5   The need to evaluate the initiative

The study identified the need to evaluate the initiative as an aspect of community expectations. Respondents were of the view that there was need to evaluate and realign or redesign the initiative to address the changing environment and community needs. On a similar note, some respondents proposed the reassessment of the initiative based on the initial memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the firm and the community. It was argued that realignment with the MOU would ensure equal and significant gains for both parties compared to the perceived one-sided benefits presently accruing to the firm.

Going back to the MOU, it will be perfect. The company will toe the line of the

MOU while the community will equally toe the line of the MOU so that both

parties will be happy. But presently it's not done that way, maybe the company is

happy and the community is not happy. The company might be happy and the

community is not happy, I think that is what is playing out. (P6)

Similarly, another participant expressed the need to review the MOU from time to time, arguing that the firm is often reluctant to do so. This view is based on the notion that the needs of the people are not consistent, but are subject to change over time. Therefore, it should be required for host communities to gather periodically and re-evaluate the initiative based on their expected benefits, making attempts to identify and realign their objectives and benefits with those of the firm at all times.

> *… urge Mobil to be renewing the MOU, so that eh … because at times it will be time for the community to review the MOU but Mobil will be very reluctant to review the MOU. And the MOU, when the four local governments come together will look at what they lack in the entire system and see how the … can be tailored to take care of those things. So MOU, very, very, important, Mobil should be urged to review the MOU with the community. (HRME)*

Given the perceived intention of the initiative as a community-focused CSR programme adopted to address existing social issues, participants believe that it is pertinent to reassess the initiative based on an agreed MOU to ascertain the main areas of concern for stakeholder groups, and thereby address them adequately. However, an agreed MOU needs to give cognisance to the host communities' perceptions of impending social issues.

4.9.6 *Community involvement*

Community involvement is considered an expectation by the stakeholder groups who participated in the study. As previously mentioned, respondents believe that host communities are marginalised. As a result, there is insignificant participation by community members in the planning and implementation of the initiative. This is perceived as a hindrance towards an adequate impact of the programme. Hence, respondents are of the opinion that their involvement in the different facets of the initiative

would help to guarantee expected benefits. One participant suggested that offering host community members significant positions in the different processes of the initiative would bolster the impact of the initiative. He further asserted that the presence of host community members in the process would give credence and trust to the selection process, as they would be in a position to protect community interests.

> *The people that are to manage that school must be indigenes of the oil producing community who are trusted and the standards given must be such standards that the local people will be able to have access to the admission, do you understand me, such that the confidence could be there, all those communities that have percentage in the skill or the training school must have their representatives that protect their interests. (VHI)*

Also suggested was extensive dialogue with host communities to evaluate the impact of the initiative on these communities. One respondent argued that there is need to establish a significant level of corporation between firm and community in relation to the implications of CSR initiatives. She further opined that the introduction of forums involving host communities, such as town hall meetings and the like, would enable the firm to identify the main concerns of community members. Furthermore, the respondent suggested that top management presence in the host communities would give an articulate perception of host communities in relation to issues of concern.

> *Mobil should conduct town hall meetings, you know, where the attendees will cut across every stratum of the community. I would encourage them to have town hall meetings, off camera meetings and then engage the people, random questionnaires like this; you know, randomly engage the people and feel their pulses … And if everybody that has a voice or can take any form of decision in Mobil resides within the community where it is undertaking its exploration, they would be on … you know … at first hand, will feel the pulse, they would know what the people know.*

See, they do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. (FCWAI)

They can enter into a social contract with the people and then, they sit down and prioritise the needs of the people and see where and what are the people's priority per time, and then go down that list. (FCWAI)

Respondents expressed a need for the organisation to embrace an empathetic stance towards its dealings with the community. It was further suggested that understanding the community's perception intimately would enable the firm to implement CSR initiatives significant to community needs. This is expected to take into consideration the fact that over time, priorities as they apply to different stakeholders change.

4.10   Summary of findings

The findings illustrated the general perception of corporate social responsibility by some host community members of ExxonMobil Nigeria, and community beneficiaries of the technical training school initiative in Eket, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It further conveys their views on the technical training centre initiative, detailing their differing perceptions and expectations of the initiative.

Following in-depth interview with the respondents and subsequent thematic analysis of the interview data, seven themes emerged which embody the respondents' understanding of corporate social responsibility, including their perceptions and expectations of the technical training centre initiative. These themes consist of: (1) community perception of corporate social responsibility, (2) perceived broader societal issues, (3) perceived motive for the adoption of the initiative, (4) perceived social benefits, (5) perceived organisational

benefits, (6) factors inhibiting significant impact of initiative on host communities, and (7) community expectations of the initiative.

The general perception of corporate social responsibility by both groups of respondents suggested that the firm has a moral obligation to provide social welfare for its host communities. This perception was generally informed and reinforced by the need for the firm to give back to the community. First, as a good citizen, then as compensation for environmental degradation-given, the negative impact of the firm's operations in these communities, and also to elicit goodwill, hence create a safe and cordial environment for the firm's hitch-free operations.

Along with the environmental degradation issues, broader societal issues in these communities were generally discussed by the respondents. Among the issues raised were economic hardship, lack of employment opportunities for the teeming youths, and a flawed education system. Community beneficiaries of the initiative, in particular, elaborated on these broad societal issues and their impact on their families prior to and after joining the technical training centre, including the present influence of these issues on the communities.

The responses on the motivation of the initiative exposed a split along group lines. On the one hand, the direct beneficiaries perceived the CSR initiative as proactive, an attempt by the firm to fill the gap between the lack of technical skills in the community, and its anticipated technical requirements. On the other hand, community members perceived the CSR initiative as reactive, a response by the firm to community agitation and demand for community members to participate by way of employment in the organisation.

Following the adoption of the initiative by the firm, both groups believe it has accrued significant benefits to both the community and the organisation. Respondents suggested that the community benefited from skill acquisition, leading to personal development and

employment opportunities as the initiatives facilitated the recruitment of community members into the firm. The employment provided led to poverty alleviation as the financial emancipation of the few allowed for further trickledown of resources to other community members. Beneficiaries are further perceived as role models in their communities as younger community members aspire to more technical backgrounds.

On the other hand, respondents indicated that the benefits accrued to the organisation from the CSR initiative include cost saving, availability of skilled workforce, and goodwill. In a sense, the adoption of the initiative allowed for the training and recruitment of a local and effective workforce to perform efficiently, thereby, reducing cost of hiring expatriates while also benefitting from goodwill in host communities.

However, the findings also suggested that there are factors inhibiting the significant impact of the initiative on host communities. Among these factors are issues such as the glass ceiling; respondents suggested that there exist a system which prevents community beneficiaries employed by the firm from reaching the pinnacle of their career in the firm, bias; as respondents complained about nepotism and favouritism in the admission and recruitment process, and the lack of information on the recruitment and selection criteria.

Going forward, respondents expressed their expectation of a more significant impact of the initiative. They suggest the need to improve on the initiative by creating a pathway for career progression for beneficiaries employed by the firm. It was also recommended that the firm adopts a comprehensive approach which caters for technical needs as well as non-technical areas, and the need to tackle bias. Furthermore, respondents expressed the need to re-evaluate the impact of the CSR initiative to realign with its objectives. Finally, the respondents insisted on increased and significant community involvement in the organisation.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.0   Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings of this research as it explored strategic CSR in the context of the NDR of Nigeria, from the perspective of 2 stakeholder groups. This chapter puts the findings into perspective by addressing the research questions with the extant literature on the phenomenon of study, as well as published articles on the technical training centre initiative. This chapter begins with a snapshot of the process of data analysis to the conclusion of the research.

In line with qualitative method, a combination of purposive and snowballing sampling technique was adopted (Dudwick, Kuehnast, Jones and Woolcock, 2006; Choy, 2014) to identify 20 participants from the two stakeholder groups. The objectives of the study were to (1) Explore community perceptions, and expectations of CSR, (2) Ascertain the motive behind the adoption of the CSR initiative (3) Identify the opportunities provided by the initiative to the organisation and the benefits accrued to host communities (4) Determine the nature of the disjuncture between host community perception of benefits versus their expectations of the initiative. Given the nature of the study, a case study approach was deemed appropriate and the following research questions underpinned this study as it explored stakeholders' perceptions and expectations of CSR in the NDR of Nigeria and the adoption of the capacity development initiative by MPNU.

- What are the host community's perceptions and expectations of CSR?

- What is the host community's perception of the motive behind the adoption of the capacity development initiative?

- What is the host community's perception of the opportunities provided by the initiative to the organization and the benefits of the initiative accrued to the community?

- What is the nature of the disjuncture between the host community's perceptions of the benefit versus their expectations of the initiative?

A qualitative research method is embraced to answer the above research questions, as mentioned in the methodology chapter. The appropriateness of the qualitative method in this study is based on the notion that CSR is arguably a social construct (Dahlsrud, 2008) investigated from the perspective of community members with real-life experiences and values (Yin 1994). Thus, a qualitative approach allowed the investigation to take into account the context of the reality within the phenomenon while acknowledging the subjective dimension of reality (Saunders et al. 2012). In a sense, the qualitative methodology, along with the research design, afforded an in-depth understanding of how the community perceives the initiative and the factors responsible for their perceptions and expectations. Given that CSR theory is approached as a construct in this research rather than theory representing variables, an inductive approach is suitable (Ali & Birley, 1999). Moreover, the focus of the study is to understand the phenomenon by interpreting the lived experience of the participants (Saunders et al., 2012). Consequently, the data collection instrument was designed and implemented in the form of semi-structured interviews, and subsequently, thematic analysis was adopted.

Data analysis is based on examining, categorising and tabulating data to assess whether the evidence can be corroborated from other sources of evidence (Rowley, 2002). As an analytical tool, thematic analysis allowed the researcher to identify, organise and make sense of the collective meanings within the data (Braun, & Clarke, 2012; King, & Brooks, 2018).

Following data collection via in-depth interviews and subsequent transcription, there was a conscious effort to code data inductively, in line with the researchers' inductive stance, thus allowing for the emergence of new information. Nonetheless, the process was guided by existing literature on strategic CSR. The notion of an inductive approach incorporating existing literature is consistent with Braun & Clarke (2006) as they argue that a researcher is neither free of themselves or their theoretical commitment. They further assert that data is not coded in an epistemological vacuum (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Given the combination of deductive and inductive approach towards coding and subsequent analyses of data, thematic analysis was an appropriate tool due to its flexibility (Braun, & Clarke, 2006; Frith & Gleeson, 2004; Hayes, 1997). The process of thematic analysis in this study involved the researcher's familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, defining and naming the themes, as illustrated in table 4, page 115 of the methodology chapter.

According to Ryan & Bernard (2005), the identification of themes is at the core of a qualitative study. Consequently, themes are referred to as constructs identified by the researcher throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Typically themes are informed by literature, the researcher's values, theoretical underpinning, local construct, and subject matter (Maxwell, 1996; Strauss, 1987). In a similar vein, the themes in this study were re-assessed for relevance to the research questions, the extant literature on CSR and strategic CSR, and other ideas emerging from the data (Russell, 2000). Themes emerged from a collation of similar codes emanated from participants' inferred meanings. For instance, it was assumed on a collective basis that the provision of social welfare by oil MNCs in these communities is an ethical obligation given the negative externalities of the firms. While the need for community engagement and increased participation in the firm and the recruitment and selection process onto the capacity development initiative were generally expressed, there was also a convergent of perceptions on those benefits

such as skill acquisition, leading to personal development, and employment opportunities accrued to the community. Likewise, benefits such as cost savings, availability of skilled workforce, and goodwill were generally considered as benefits accrued to the firm. However, in certain instances, perceptions diverged along group lines. For example, the group made up of direct beneficiaries perceived the CSR initiative as an attempt by the firm to fill the gap between the lack of technical skills in the community and its anticipated technical requirements. Community members, on the other hand, perceived the CSR initiative as a response from the firm to community agitation and demand for community members to participate by way of employment in the organisation. The split in perception is attributed to their lived experience being that the direct beneficiaries. However, community stakeholders are also internal stakeholders of the firm, thus are privy to information which is not common knowledge.

Following the review of themes, seven overarching themes were identified from the thematic analysis: (1) community perception of corporate social responsibility, (2) perceived broader societal issues, (3) perceived motive for the adoption of the initiative, (4) perceived social benefits, (5) perceived organisational benefits, (6) factors responsible for inhibiting significant impact of the initiative on host communities, and (7) community expectations of the initiative. Subsequently, the findings are presented, and research questions are further addressed.

About the research question on the perception of CSR, the findings indicated that contrary to the generally accepted prominence of philanthropy in CSR practice in Nigeria, some stakeholder groups in the NDR (host communities) consider the provision of social welfare by oil MNCs as an ethical obligation. Also suggested is the notion that CSR, if aligned with socio-cultural values in the NDR, will lead to harmonious coexistence among all the parties involved (Idemudia, 2007; Ite, 2007b; Enuoh & Eneh, 2015), thereby creating business opportunities for the firm. Given the challenges experienced by oil MNC

in the NDR (Boele et al., 2001; Idemudia, 2007; Wheeler et al., 2001) alignment of community and MNCs expectation of CSR is crucial to sustaining the psychological contract between host communities and oil MNCs (Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). This finding provides an insight into the community perspective. Though it may not be realistic to respond to all community demands, however, understanding community perspective will be advantageous to the firm. Thus, they can approach the CSR strategy sustainably (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Bhattacharyya, 2008).

Concerning the question about motivation for the initiative, the findings revealed differing perspectives along group lines with the reason for adopting the initiative. While the community beneficiaries employed by the firm consider the decision as proactive (in anticipation of leveraging organisational capabilities with opportunities provided by socio-economic factors), the other group of community members perceive it as a response to community agitation- following their insistence on participation in the firm by way of employment. However, as a voluntary programme, it adoption, regardless of motive, leverages the opportunities provided, and thus, it is strategic (Porter & Kramer, 2006). The findings suggest that critical in implementing strategic CSR is the ability to address social issues and/or environmental issues directly linked to the organisation's competitive context, and thus mutual benefits are achieved for both the organisation and its host communities (Porter & Kramer 2006; Bhattacharyya et al., 2008).

Regarding the benefits accrued to stakeholders, the findings suggest that strategic CSR programme led to cost reduction, the availability of human resources, and improved organisational reputation and license to operate (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Simultaneously, the initiative is also attributed with contributing to poverty alleviation, employment opportunities, and skill acquisition. This finding suggests the strategic approach towards CSR programmes could create a win-win situation for all stakeholders (Bhattacharyya et al., 2008; Lantos, 2001) regardless of motive. In a sense, the initiative is a catalyst for

sustainable development as it provides strategic opportunities for the organisation while contributing to the socio-economic transformation of the NDR.

Finally, a stakeholder involvement approach (Trapp, 2014) towards deploying strategic CSR in the NDR is proposed. The thesis further argues that there is scope to improve significantly on the implementation of strategic CSR practice in the NDR by encouraging community involvement in the design, planning, and implementation of CSR (Orubu et al., 2004; Idemudia & Ite, 2006; Rwabizambuga, 2007; Idemudia, 2014; Katamba & Akora, 2017), the adoption of consistent ethical values throughout CSR planning to implementation; and the periodic re-evaluation of CSR programmes are identified as necessary to achieve effectiveness and ensure consistency with the intended stakeholder's priorities, hence reaffirming community perceptions of mutual benefit.

The following section substantiates the above address of the research questions by elaborating and discussing the findings with the extant literature on the strategic CSR, as well as published articles on the technical training centre initiative.

5.1   Understanding community perceptions and expectations of Corporate Social Responsibility

Our findings indicate that CSR practice by ExxonMobil in the NDR is mainly perceived by the participants as a means to "give back" to host communities through the provision of social welfare initiatives. According to the mainstream CSR literature, the provision of social welfare by corporations, in this case to their host communities, is considered a philanthropic gesture (Carroll, 1991; Carroll, 1999; Lantos, 2001; Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Amaeshi et al., 2006). Likewise, the prominence of philanthropy in CSR practice is consistent with most findings on CSR in Africa and other developing countries (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Jamali, 2007). However, contrary to the association of the provision of

welfare as philanthropy, this study revealed that host communities in the NDR (stakeholder groups) consider CSR practices of providing social welfare by oil MNCs as an ethical obligation (Carroll, 1991) to host communities, which may eventually lead to business opportunities (Drucker, 1984; Vitolla, Rubino & Garzoni, 2017)

5.1.1 Community perception of Corporate Social Responsibility as an obligation

Although the provision of social welfare may correspond with philanthropy, respondents believe that giving back to host communities is an ethical obligation. To "give back" in this context connotes some level of ethical undertone, because this provision is expected (Carroll, 1999). Such a perception is informed by the socio-cultural mores of the host communities and further reinforced by the expectation of compensation for the negative externalities associated with the industry.

The relationship between societal norms and the ethical dimension of CSR has been highlighted by Carroll, whose four-part definition of CSR set broadly acceptable standards in understanding the phenomenon (Crane & Matten, 2004; Visser, 2006; Nalband & Kelabi, 2014; Carroll, 2016). According to Carroll (1991), ethical responsibility requires the firm to act in a manner consistent with the expectation of socio-cultural values of the society. Extant literature on CSR in the NDR has also identified the need to align stakeholder expectations of CSR with corporate assumptions (Idemudia, 2010; Ojo & Akande, 2014; Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). For instance, Idemudia (2006) argues that to attain CSR legitimacy in the NDR, oil MNCs need to re-examine and re-align their underpinning assumptions about CSR with local culture, priorities and expectations. Therefore, it is arguable that contrary to the general belief that philanthropy is the main emphasis of CSR practice in Nigeria, CSR practice in the NDR as perceived by host communities (Hillman & Kiem, 2001; Freeman et al., 2004) is mostly considered an ethical obligation in line with the expectations of these communities.

Given the dominant practice of providing welfare by MNCs in the NDR and the community perception of this form of CSR, this finding is in contrast with Visser (2006). Following his examination of CSR in an African context, this author argued that though the economic responsibilities are mostly emphasised, philanthropic responsibilities are prioritised above legal responsibilities, followed by ethical responsibilities. It is pertinent to note that previous studies have tended to investigate CSR from the perspective of the firm (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Visser, 2006; Jamali, 2007; Helg, 2007). Often, when the stakeholders at the receiving end of the implemented initiatives are investigated, this is done with a preconceived and projected understanding of CSR regarding their views towards the relationship between initiatives and construct. In contrast, this study investigated the understanding of CSR from the perspective of host community members as stakeholders, whose socio-cultural mores are integral to their CSR perspectives.

Similarly, compensation for degradation is a factor responsible for community perceptions and expectations of the nature of oil MNCs' CSR obligations. The firm is expected to give back to host communities as compensation for perceived negative externalities. This notion is consistent with Lantos' (2001) definition of the ethical responsibilities of a firm, as the author asserts that ethical responsibility extends to the groups and individuals affected by the firm's course of action. Given the increasing rate of poverty in the region and environmental degradation, which is arguably linked to the activities of oil MNCs, tackling these externalities is considered a moral obligation. Interestingly, this requirement, though understood by participants as a voluntary initiative (since they were not aware of laws mandating firms to carry out CSR), is seen as a moral obligation for the oil industry.

The perception of moral obligation is mainly associated with the extractive nature of the industry, which has the potential to affect host communities more negatively compared to non-extractive industries. In essence, companies who engage in the extraction of natural

resources are expected to contribute more to local society compared to their counterparts in the non-extractive industries. The varying levels of CSR expectations between extractive and non-extractive industries contribute to the existing literature on CSR as a localised and socially embedded construct (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Amaeshi et al., 2006; Visser, 2006).

5.1.2 *Opportunity for strategic Corporate Social Responsibility*

Going forward, this study also acknowledges that there is scope for oil MNCs to rely on reputation building in the NDR as a strategic approach to CSR. This requires the elicitation of goodwill from host communities, following an alignment between community and corporate values and expectations in understanding CSR. Studies indicate that the NDR is in a constant state of unrest due to distrust between host communities and oil MNCs (Idemudia & Ite, 2006; Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). Typically, respondents believe that aligning community and corporate expectations is a prerequisite for the harmonious co-existence of both parties (Idemudia, 2007). Hence, it is arguable that in the context of the NDR, a peaceful environment may guarantee seamless operation for the firm born out of goodwill, and thus allow for effective overall benefits. This notion of a relationship between strategic CSR and goodwill as a valuable resource and benefit to the firm is noted in the literature (Lewis, 2003; Lantos, 2001; Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010). For instance, Sekhar Bhattacharyya (2010) mentions the distinctive position of the Tata Group, based on enormous respect and support given to the firm by local and national level government in India as a result of its long-term CSR practice. This finding is also consistent Jamali's (2007) assertion that CSR activities which accrue tangible and intangible resources (including goodwill) to the firm in the long-term can broadly be referred to as strategic CSR.

Generally, this study suggests that CSR practice in the context of the NDR is considered an ethical obligation for the practicing firm, and it is likely to pave the way for a strategic outcome. Communities in the NDR expect oil MNCs to give back on the grounds of morality and compensation for the negative externalities brought about by oil exploration (Lantos, 2001). Aligning these expectations with those of the firm may contribute to a peaceful environment, and thus act as a factor to maximise production. Indeed, this study has shown that when expectations align, the environment becomes less toxic for both parties and the result is mutually beneficial. In this context the firm has identified an expected and acceptable CSR initiative by the communities, which guarantees employment for young people while providing much-needed technical manpower for the firm.

5.2 Motivation for the Adoption of the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative

The findings indicate that the adoption of the CSR initiative was partly proactive, in anticipation of leveraging the firm's capabilities with opportunities provided by socio-economic factors. Given the lack of technical workforce in the communities and the poor economic situation, the capacity development programme allowed the firm to provide community members with the required skill set, and in return created a pool of skilled technicians for the company's operations and expansion (see Theme 3, Anticipated Technical Requirements, pp.138 respondent P1). This notion is consistent with previous studies which identify proactivity as an attribute of strategic CSR (Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Husted & Allen, 2009; Sekhar Bhattacharyya, 2010; Bocquet & Mothe, 2011; Marques-Mendes & Santos, 2016). In a sense, reactive and unplanned CSR initiatives are considered non-strategic. In perspective, Porter and Kramer (2006) argue that the reactive approach to implementing CSR initiatives pits business and society against each other, rather than harnessing the opportunities which rise from their interdependence. On the

other hand, a proactive approach allows the firm to scan the environment to select suitable CSR initiatives by identifying the lines of intersection between an array of social issues and the firm's value chain activities, including strategic context (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Thus, the motivation for the initiative in this context is predicated on the need to expand the firm's operations with an effort to access skilled workers in an environment with a dearth of technical level workforce (Ezeji & Okonkwo, 2016) in relation to the sophistication of the industry, while addressing the issue of employment among other societal issues.

Interestingly, the findings also indicate that the initiative was adopted in response to community agitation, insisting on participation in the firm by way of employment; therefore, it was not entirely proactive (see Theme 3, Community Empowerment, p.140 respondent SAGE). This is a view consistent with external stakeholder group in the study (community members who are not direct beneficiaries of the capacity development initiative). Obviously, this position is in contrast with the previous view of perceived proactivity. Perhaps this differing perception could be attributed to environmental factors, including information available to the different groups. Nonetheless, this statement denotes the adoption of the initiative as reacting to community agitation, and therefore reactive.

Being reactive or defensive to societal issues rather than proactive may suggest that the initiative is not strategic, or at best it represents coerced egoist CSR (Husted & de Jesus Salazar, 2006; Gyves & O'Higgins, 2008). Coerced egoist or coerced strategic CSR refers to CSR initiatives adopted as minimum compliance with government regulations and stakeholders' demands (Gyves & O'Higgins, 2008). This implies that a firm is coerced into investing in CSR when it is motivated to address impending social issues because they are likely to increase the risk of community unrest and therefore increase the firm's financial cost. A similar example is given by Husted and de Jesus Salazar (2006) of a firm

not originally concerned with training, which is coerced into investment in employee training or quality of education in the society from which it draws its workforce in order to survive or grow. These authors argue that coerced strategic initiatives are inclined towards protecting existing asserts instead of creating value, while also limiting the needs of beneficiaries (Gyves & O'Higgins, 2008). Furthermore, coerced strategic CSR creates low sustainable increases for both the firm and society (Gyves & O'Higgins, 2008).

Interestingly the previous statement is in contrast with the findings reported in this thesis. Rather, the current findings indicate that the initiative has indeed created value for all stakeholders involved, despite being perceived as coerced. For instance, while host community members have benefitted from economic development, the firm has also been able to capture private benefits such as cost reduction and the availability of human resources (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). The current findings support the earlier statement, affirming that although the initiative has been beneficial to both the firm and society, the significance of its impact and the firm's ability to sustain its momentum is in doubt. Nonetheless, the current findings also indicate that there is scope to address such concerns effectively, thereby optimising the social benefits accrued, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Arguably, proactivity may not account for all strategic CSR initiatives. As identified by Gyves and O'Higgins (2008), the motivation behind the adoption of CSR initiatives should not simply be considered as a binary characterisation, since responsive CSR could also be strategic in nature. Conversely, if effectively implemented, coerced CSR may eventually accrue substantial and perhaps sustainable benefits for both the corporation and society, as will be suggested further on in this chapter. Although in contrast with the significance of proactivity in the strategic CSR concept, this study suggests that the determining factor may be the ability of the firm to align with the opportunities provided by the value chain and/or competitive context, regardless of motive.

Notably, it could be argued that stakeholders' demands rarely align with value chain activities and competitive context in a manner which ensures significant and perhaps sustainable value creation for all, as in this case study. Nonetheless, in this context, it is indicated that the basis for identify strategic CSR initiatives may not necessarily be their proactivity, and as such this should not be compartmentalised as a choice between reactive and proactive only. It suffices to say that an initiative could be in response to stakeholder demands, yet could also create optimum value for all, insofar as the initiative aligns with the opportunities offered by value chain activities and/or competitive context (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

5.3 Leveraging opportunities provided by strategic Corporate Social Responsibility

This investigation into the adoption of the capacity development initiative by ExxonMobil, being a CSR initiative in the context of the NDR, revealed that the capacity development programme is strategic in nature. This is predicated upon the notion that as a voluntary programme, the adoption of the initiative is a conscious attempt to leverage opportunities provided to the firm. Such opportunities stem from addressing the social issues directly linked to the organisation's value chain and competitive context, to ensure mutual benefits for the organisation and its host communities (Porter & Kramer, 2006). In this context, the firm initiated the capacity development programme to provide community members with the technical skills for onward employment into the firm. The CSR initiative addressed the issue of unemployment in the community (see Theme 4, Employment Opportunities, p.145 respondent SAGE) while also providing the firm with the required skilled workforce to expand its operations (see Theme 5, Availability Skilled Labour, p.158 respondent 7). This finding is consistent with the concept of strategic CSR (Lantos, 2001; Porter & Kramer, 2006; Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Sekhar Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). As advocated by Porter and Kramer (2006), strategic CSR allows a focused approach towards adopting

CSR initiatives, which strengthens the competitive context by aligning the firm's economic and social goals. Accordingly, a firm which practices strategic CSR is likely to change the competitive context in its favour (Gyves & O'Higgins, 2008, Sekhar Bhattacharyya, et al., 2008). Hence, strategic CSR initiatives increase the benefits which accrue to the firm. This finding also lends support to the firm's position on creating a mutually beneficial programme, aimed at providing capacity building and education to host communities while ensuring the firm's access to a highly trained labour pool (Adepetun, 2010).

CSR initiatives which are strategic in nature are expected to create value for the firm, while also addressing specific social issues. To explain this concept, Porter and Kramer (2006) illustrate strategic CSR practice in Marriot and Microsoft, demonstrating the ability to cultivate necessary talent from community members through the implementation of skill acquisition programmes. Weber (2008) advocates a business case for CSR, arguing that CSR can accrue monetary and non-monetary business benefits, ensuring competitiveness and profitability. In a similar vein, this research has identified a business case in favour of the adoption of the CSR initiative, which provided cost reduction in recruiting entry level employees, access to a competent workforce, and improved reputation of the firm in host communities (McWilliams & Siegel, 2011), while fostering skill acquisition, employment opportunities and reduced poverty as benefits to host communities (Bhattacharyya, 2010). Thus, mutual benefits for the parties involved are ensured, as discussed further below.

5.3.1 Cost reduction

This study confirms the contribution of the initiative towards the reduction of the firm's overall operational cost in the long term. Cost reduction stems from reduced personnel costs, improved operational efficiencies and better risk management as upshots of the technical training programme (see Theme 5, Cost Savings, p.156 respondent P3). This

finding is consistent with prior studies on the business case for CSR, which identified, among other benefits, cost reduction, efficiency and risk management as business benefits of strategic CSR (Kanter, 1999; Kong et al., 2002; Heal, 2005; Weber, 2008). This study indicates a general perception of the reduction in cost of recruiting entry-level employees (Porter & Kramer, 2006). This is in consideration of the lack of local technical workforce in the industry, the required up-to-speed training, and the costs associated with the engagement of expatriates (see Theme 5, Cost savings, p.155 respondent P2). Plausibly, in an industry generally dependant on expatriates, organisations able to recruit competent employees locally are likely to reduce personnel costs, which arguably gives them a competitive advantage over competitors in an industry with homogenous product offerings. A similar view on cost saving and the challenges of differentiation in the oil industry is expressed by Kraisornsuthasinee and Swierczek (2009) in the context of Thailand, albeit around innovation involving the recycling of raw material.

As stated previously, the findings also attribute cost saving to operational efficiencies. For instance, beneficiaries are likely to readily absorb the organisational norms, thus bypassing the learning curve experienced by new starters. Combined with the customised training offered, it is arguable that beneficiaries perform seamlessly on their entry into employment, thereby contributing to a reduction in down-time. Also noteworthy is the likelihood of minimising the occurrence of community strife. The oil industry in Nigeria is characterised by community unrest, which results in vandalism of company properties and constraints on operation, thereby increasing operational costs (Idemudia & Ite, 2006; Eweje, 2006). Non-engagement of community members by oil multinationals is one among the many issues raised. Therefore, a programme which ensures employment opportunities for young people by providing skills arguably reduces the likelihood of conflict, which could impact on profitability. In a similar vein, Bhattacharyya (2008) argues that the mismanagement of social issues may lead to hindered operations or

increased project costs, and hence financial loss. This study indicates the need for the firm to communicate to the community the scope and the expected mutual benefits of the initiative. As will be discussed later in the chapter, this study suggest that active partnering with communities in addressing the societal issues directly involving them may help to bridge the gap between company motivations and community perceptions and expectations.

5.3.2   Availability of human resources

The findings reveal that the initiative created a readily available talent pool suited for ongoing and future positions in the technical cadre of the firm (see Theme 5, Perceived organisational benefits (private benefits), p.158 respondent 7). This assertion is consistent with the organisation's position on the benefits of the initiative. It is stated that following the implementation of the initiative, host communities have benefited in terms of capacity building among other things, while the firm has gained access to a pool of highly trained employees, including a competent and extensive supplier base (Adepetun, 2010). The notion of a relationship between the adoption of a skill acquisition programme as a CSR initiative and the provision of skilled labour to the firm is documented in both literature and practice (Ricks & Williams, 2005; Porter & Kramer, 2006; Husted & de Jesus Salazar, 2006). Generally, human resource could be considered as the main capital and driving force of each organisation (Vveinhardt & Zygmantaite, 2015). Consequently, access to human resources is vital to any organisation, let alone the availability of local skilled labour in the country's oil and gas sector where expatriate recruitment is the norm.

As indicated in the study, the supply of competent workers is expected to also be beneficial to other players in the industry. On such a premise, it is arguable that the initiative seemingly may not only elicit its supposed intended private benefit to the firm (Burke & Logsdon, 1999), but also extends its benefits to free-loaders in the industry. The

graduates of the capacity development initiative are not reserved for the providers of the

initiative alone, but are at liberty to pursue employment with other competing firms. The

issue of free-riders is most common with investment in knowledge acquisition and on-the

job training (Husted & de Jesus Salazar, 2006). From such a perspective, the firm is

unlikely to capture all the benefits of its adopted CSR initiatives. However, given the

context of this study (for instance, the socio-economic factors), the firm accounts for the

employment of over 80% of the graduates of the programme, thereby accruing the most

benefit from the programme.

Nonetheless, during the 2010 Oil and Gas Conference the Chairman suggested that on a

broader scale, the intention is to build a skilled workforce and viable industry which is

globally competitive (Adeoye, 2010). Therefore, the initiative is focused on value creation

to strengthen the general economy by ensuring coordinated and consistent assess to the oil

and gas sector (Adeoye, 2010). In a sense, the intended overall outcome far outweighs the

immediate technical needs of the firm. The aim is to usher in a conducive environment

which will attract complementary industries to further expand the industry, with the

availability of numerous highly skilled workers as one of the features required. However,

in the interim the community perspective suggests saturation, whereby the firm is unable

to accommodate more beneficiaries partly due to economic difficulties in the country (see

pp.147 respondents YLO & SAGE). Such a point of reduced marginal improvement in the

firm's reputation against a labour surplus which is creating no further advantage to the

community is also noted by Husted and de Jesus Salazar (2006).

Studies on the effective implementation of CSR in the NDR have highlighted the need for

the government to partner with the NGOs, host communities and oil companies, to further

address its responsibilities towards its people by adopting and implementing policies that

will ensure sustainable growth (Idemudia, 2007). Arguably, the onus at this point remains

on the government to create an enabling environment which complements the initiative and allows it to fulfil its potential.

5.4.3   Improved organisational reputation

The findings suggest that CSR initiatives with significant positive impact will elicit goodwill from stakeholders, among other benefits to the firm (see Theme 5: Goodwill, p.177 respondent P9). In an environment characterised by conflict between oil MNCs and host communities, a firm with a good reputation could guarantee for itself a license to operate and subsequently ensure smooth operations and access to resources (Shiau, 2012; Esau & Malone, 2013). Although intangible in nature (Lewis, 2003; Ricks, 2005), good reputation is among the most common justifications for CSR (Porter & Kramer, 2006; İyigün, 2015). According to Sekhar Bhattacharyya et al., (2008), strategic CSR initiatives designed to address the needs and sentiments of relevant stakeholder groups improve visibility, thereby enhancing reputation. Similarly, enhanced reputation and increased visibility of CSR initiatives increase the firm's social license to operate (Sekhar Bhattacharyya 2008). Interestingly, community participants expressed the obligation to protect the initiative from neighbouring communities in the event of community unrest, which is particularly pertinent in the context of persistent community strife in the NDR (see p.177, respondent P3). Such a commitment could be explained by the sheer number of community members whose livelihoods are directly and indirectly linked to the survival of the initiative. This may indicate that the initiative has earned a license to operate for the firm, based on its reputation and the visibility of its CSR initiative among community members. This CSR initiative provides direct and indirect employment opportunities for community members, and subsequently stimulates the local economy. However, this study has also revealed that the good reputation enjoyed by the firm compared to its competitors is eroding due to the decreasing visibility of other CSR initiatives.

5.4   A Stakeholder Engagement Approach to Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility

Based on socio-economic practice in oil producing communities, exploration for and exploitation of oil has always been embraced by indigenous people (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009; Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). Subsequently, host community members expect to be positively affected by such developments, which often occur in the form of CSR programmes. CSR initiatives are expected to have a significant impact on the receiving party. Identifying community expectations is a precursor to aligning such expectations with the corporate expectations of oil MNCs. This is crucial to sustain the psychological contract between host communities and oil MNCs (Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). Our findings reveal that there is a gap between the perceived benefits of the initiative and host community expectations. For instance, community members report the existence of bias in the admission process, the marginalisation of host community members, capped career growth for beneficiaries, and a lack of information on the initiative, all of which hinder the impact of the CSR programme. Among the community expectations were community involvements in CSR planning and implementation, the adoption of ethical values throughout the design and implementation of CSR, and evaluation of and necessary upgrades to existing CSR initiatives.

5.4.1   Community involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility planning and implementation

The findings indicated that host community members expect to be involved in the planning and implementation of programmes designed for their benefit (see Theme 7, Community expectations of the initiative, p.177 respondent VHI). Community

involvement in the planning and implementation of CSR is a position held by previous studies (Orubu et al., 2004; Idemudia & Ite, 2006; Rwabizambuga, 2007; Idemudia, 2014; Katamba & Akora, 2017). For instance, Idemudia and Ite (2006) argued that the antagonistic relationships that were prevalent between oil MNCs and host communities in the NDR could be ameliorated by introducing CSR policies which accommodated community involvement and participation in the decision making processes. Specifically sustainable partnerships should take the form of implementable memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between both parties, whereby opposing views are balanced equitably towards resolving issues (Orubu et al., 2004). Echoed in this study was community insistence that the firm should revert to previously established MOU practice between both parties, with consideration of the constant evolution of community needs. An MOU is believed to form the basis of incorporating community expectations to further actualise significant benefits from adopted CSR initiatives. Studies suggest that stakeholder involvement throughout the spectrum of CSR implementation-related aspects and process activities is a prerequisite for a successful CSR implementation (Grayson & Hodges, 2004; Dunham et al., 2006; Katamba & Akora, 2017). In a sense, community involvement would eliminate the perception of being blindsided, while keeping the host community abreast of expected CSR benefits. This study has shown that there is scope for the engagement of host communities to identify their perceptions and expectations, thereby ascertaining the means to implement sustainable CSR initiatives (Rwabizambuga, 2007).

5.4.2 *Adoption of ethical values throughout Corporate Social Responsibility planning and implementation*

The findings have revealed that there is scope to adopt an overall ethical standard throughout CSR planning and implementation. In the context of this study, this involves

identifying and implementing a merit-based system for the selection and recruitment of beneficiaries, thereby minimising manipulation in the selection process (see p.175, respondent SAGE). There was dissatisfaction among stakeholders about to the recruitment and selection process due to nepotism and favouritism. If ignored, this is likely to have adverse effects on both internal and external stakeholders of the firm, and consequently affect reputation and perhaps productivity in the long term. Research suggests a direct correlation between condoning corruption, nepotism, favouritism and a negative approach towards declared CSR value by employees (Vveinhardt & Andriukaitiene, 2014).

To tackle the issue of nepotism businesses are required to implement defined rules and procedures which are clear to all employees, while stating the consequences of unethical behaviours. Organisations require strong anti-nepotism policies, which should include the education of leaders and ethical intervention programmes (Jones & Stout, 2015). Unfortunately, studies also indicate that these phenomena cannot be totally eradicated, although they can be minimised on an organisational level while evaluating ethical aspects (Hildreth et al., 2016). For instance, biological social systems (Christodoulou, 2008) and socio-cultural inclination (Hooker, 2009) are identified as factors reinforcing the presence of nepotism. The implication is that it is widely perceived as the norm to indulge in such practices. According to Chervenak and McCullough (2007) and Ferlazzo and Sdoia (2012), there is a notion of a moral excuses for nepotism and favouritism, which remain relevant due to interpretations and arguments about the necessity or benefit for firm performance. Nonetheless, organisations who declare a commitment to CSR should consider different stakeholder groups expectations' regarding nepotism in managerial processes and all factors likely to impact on CSR performance (Sroka & Vveinhardt, 2018). Arguably, effective strategic CSR initiatives need to align with ethical values throughout their design and implementation phases. The study concludes about the importance of giving community members the necessary support (for instance, preliminary

classes and adequate information regarding participation in the initiative to meet up their stipulated percentage); however, CSR initiatives need to be reflective of CSR values.

5.4.3 Evaluation of the implementation process for Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives

The findings indicated that there is scope to evaluate the effectiveness of an ongoing CSR initiative by adopting an effective implementation process. Ideally, the firm should be required to evaluate the stakeholders' perceptions and expectations to ensure they are aligned and consistent with the intended CSR outcome. Such an evaluation should be expected to take into consideration the fact that over time, priorities change as they apply to different stakeholders (see pp.178 respondent FCWAI). Arguably, the quest for the alignment of priorities can be daunting as conflict among stakeholders' interests is inevitable. Nonetheless, concessions are expected, with priorities put into context to attain the best possible outcome (Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). The notion of evaluation, realignment or adjustment of strategy is consistent with the strategic implementation process (Daft, 2010, p. 216; Vitolla et al., 2017). Vitolla et al. (2017) highlights these similarities between the themes of integration of CSR and corporate strategy. Having presented a supporting tool for assessing strategic CSR from a dynamic perspective, these authors assert that the implementation process of CSR, like strategic management processes, requires identifying the point of analysis, diagnosis, and assessment of the realised CSR. The idea of evaluating the outcome of strategic CSR is also consistent with the visibility dimensions in Burke and Logsdon's (1998) framework. This study has shown that at a certain point, even with a seemingly ideal initiative, stakeholders' perceptions of benefits may diverge. While the general perception from the firm's perspective suggests that the initiative has achieved its expected outcome, other

stakeholder groups (i.e. the community) believe that the benefits to them are insignificant when compared to the benefits which accrue to the firm. Given the notion that the initiative is designed to be mutually beneficial, it is pertinent to assess and realign priorities.

5.5   Summary

Given the context of this study, the provision of social welfare practice by oil MNCs in the NDR is perceived by some stakeholder group (host communities) as an ethical obligation of the firm. CSR initiatives which address social issues directly linked to the organisation's value chain activities and/or competitive context are likely to make business sense for the firm. However, achieving significant social and economic impacts requires active stakeholder engagement in the planning and execution of strategic CSR initiatives. The conclusion chapter recommends an implementation process following the identification of common grounds in stakeholders' assumptions.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.0 Overview

This chapter summarises the study presented in this thesis. The chapter reiterates the purpose of this study and further presents the key findings. Going forward, the implications for the theory of strategic CSR and practitioners in the NDR are discussed. Some limitations and finally some recommendations are presented.

6.1 Purpose of this study

The concept of CSR has increasingly gained popularity and acceptance in theory and practice. The discourse on the phenomenon in the mainstream literature has transformed over the years from a controversial normative concept to a strategic tool for creating competitive advantage for the practicing firm. In recent times, studies have laid more emphasis on concepts such as sustainable development and triple bottom lines, alluding to a business case for CSR. Typically, researchers attempt to justify these concepts by assessing the impact of adopting such initiatives, especially on business performance. Interestingly, these studies often adopt the perspective of the firm and are mainly focused on financial performance. Hence, little has been done to measure the social impact of CSR initiatives on society (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). The importance of observation and input from both internal and external stakeholders on the impact of a strategic CSR initiative cannot be overemphasised, as this underpins the very concept of strategic CSR (Burke & Logsdon, 1999).

Despite the apparent improvements in CSR practice and literature in Nigeria over the last few years (albeit due to the impact of MNCs on local environments and society, especially in the NDR), there is little concern with the business case for CSR. To date, there has been scarce research conducted explicitly with regards to the strategic implications of CSR. Although some research has been conducted on sustainable development initiatives, the focus of such research is mainly the impact on the community, with little regard to the value accrued to firm.

The aim of this study was to determine how to effectively deploy strategic CSR in the context of the NDR. To achieve this, semi-structured interviews were carried out with twenty internal (employees) and external stakeholders (community members) of the firm who were all from host communities in the NDR. The research sought to understand their perceptions and expectations of CSR in the shape of a capacity development initiative adopted by MPNU.

6.2   Key findings of this study

Our findings suggested that there is indeed a disjuncture between how communities in the NDR perceive the nature of MNCs' obligations with regards to CSR and the mainstream literature. This implies that the general assumptions underlying CSR are not aligned with community expectations of CSR. While the provision of social welfare is considered a discretionary obligation by organisations, most participants in the study believed it was an ethical obligation for the firm to provide to the host communities. In the context of this study, community perceptions and expectations were informed mainly by the socio-cultural norms of host communities, and further reinforced by the negative externalities brought by the oil MNCs. Interestingly, there are high expectations attached to CSR practice within the oil industry, given its high level of negative externalities when compared with other industries. Community understanding of CSR also influenced how

individuals perceived the impact of the CSR initiative under study. This finding further gives credence to the notion that CSR is context specific phenomenon.

Our findings also revealed that the motivation for the adoption of the initiative was perceived differently along group lines. The internal stakeholders considered the capacity development programme to be a conscious effort by the firm to create opportunities by addressing social issues and thereby improve the firm's capability. On the other hand, the external stakeholder group perceived the adoption of the initiative as a response to community agitation in relation to the issue of participation of host community members in the firm, and hence as reactive. Given the characterisation of proactive and reactive CSR initiatives and our findings, the thesis argued that a seemingly reactive CSR initiative, if aligned with the opportunities offered by the value chain and/or competitive context, will create optimum value for all.

The findings also suggested that the adoption of the capacity development initiative by ExxonMobil, as a CSR initiative in the context of the NDR, is strategic in nature. This is predicated upon the notion that as a voluntary programme, the adoption of the initiative is a conscious attempt to leverage opportunities provided by addressing social issues that are directly linked to the organisation's competitive context. The result is mutual benefits for both organisation and host communities. The strategic CSR programme (a capacity development programme) led to cost reduction, improved availability of human resources, and improved organisational reputation and licence to operate.

Furthermore, the thesis suggested a stakeholder engagement approach towards implementing strategic CSR in the NDR. Following the perception of factors inhibiting the significant social impact of the initiative, the thesis argued that for strategic CSR initiatives to be effective, external stakeholder involvement in the design, planning and implementation of the CSR initiative is required. Also, it was argued that it is pertinent to adopt and adhere to consistent ethical values throughout the planning implementation

process. Furthermore, the periodic evaluation of CSR programmes was necessary to ensure consistency with the intended stakeholders' priorities, thereby reaffirming community perceptions of mutual benefit.

6.3   Implication for theory

This study adopts in-depth interviews, observation, and documentary evidence to provide insight into the community perspective on the social impact of strategic CSR programme initiated by MPNU in the NDR. Prior studies have suggested the need to investigate the social implications of strategic CSR (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). Distinctive about this study is that it explores CSR from the perspective of the benefactors of a CSR initiative, a view mostly ignored by prior studies but crucial in ascertaining whether a CSR initiative is indeed strategic. Given that community perspective on the social impact of strategic CSR to the best of our knowledge is not an area of extensive examination, this study provides preliminary steps into a more focused investigation of the social impact of strategic CSR in extractive communities characterised by continuous unrest.

CSR practices in the NDR is characterised as philanthropy since oil MNCs resort to providing host communities with social amenities (Amaeshi et al. 2006). This study found that community members in the NDR consider the provision of social welfare by MNCs to their host communities as an ethical obligation for the firm. Community perception of such CSR initiatives was attributed to the adverse economic and environmental impact brought upon these communities by the presence of oil MNCs. Interestingly, the provision of social welfare as an ethical obligation of businesses was limited to the extractive industry. This finding further gives credence to CSR as a localised and embedded construct, which is identified in previous studies; Idemudia (2009).

This study contributes to the existing literature on strategic CSR by offering insights into stakeholder's perspectives on the social impact of strategic CSR. The findings suggest that there is scope for oil MNCs in the NDR to leverage the opportunities provided by the firm by addressing social issues linked to its core business activities, thus, creating a win-win situation for the firm and other stakeholders. In the context of this study, the deployment of the technical training school by MPNU led to personal development and employment opportunities for community members while also providing the firm with cost reduction and license to operate, among other benefits. Given the context of the NDR, this finding validates the assertions made by Porter & Kramer (2006) and Sekhar Bhattacharyya (2010) on the strategic implication of CSR.

This study also found that regardless of motive, CSR initiatives will create value for stakeholders in so far as the initiative is directly linked to the firm's value chain activities or competitive context. In contrast to a previous assertion (Gyves and O'Higgins 2008), this study suggests that though responsive to community demands, the strategic CSR initiative investigated accrued value to both the community and the firm.

This study further acknowledges the efficacy of Burke & Logsdon's (1996) dimensions of strategic CSR in assessing when and in what ways CSR initiatives achieve economic and societal interest. Most significantly, this study builds on Burke & Logsdon's (1996) concept of strategic CSR to propose a community involvement approach by exploring stakeholder's perceptions and expectations during the planning and implementation phases of strategic CSR initiatives to achieve significant and sustained value for all stakeholders.

6.4 Implications for practitioners

Studies suggest that CSR programmes not aligned with social and economic goals are uncoordinated and thus have little or no significant impact since they respond to numerous stakeholders, therefore strategic CSR is proposed (Porter & Kramer, 2002; Sekhar

Bhattacharyya, 2008). This study confirms that CSR programmes which address social issues directly linked to the organisations value chain can provide benefits to all stakeholders involved (Porter & Kramer, 2006). In the context of this study, a capacity development initiative with a significant impact on the socio-economic needs of the community, and the technical needs of the firm created a win-win situation for both. The implication to such programme is that the firm is significantly committed to addressing these social issues, given its strategic importance to the firm, therefore ensuring sustained benefits for all. In the context of the NDR, such initiatives would gain popularity and accolades from host communities and contribute to the much needed peaceful environment consistent with the aspirations of the AU agenda. Also, strategic CSR initiatives of this nature are likely to act as a catalyst for sustainable development as it provides strategic opportunities for the organisation while contributing to the socio-economic transformation of the NDR.

Given the context of the NDR, it is of strategic importance to all stakeholders to maintain an environment that allows for the maximisation of oil production. Overwhelmingly, studies have shown that the disjuncture between host community expectations and the MNCs' assumptions about their CSR obligations is a significant contributing factor to the incessant conflict in the NDR (Idemudia, 2007; Ite, 2007b; Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). Attempting to understand host community perceptions and the drivers of their expectations, thereby identifying common grounds for CSR expectations, is a step towards the peaceful coexistence of all stakeholders (Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). Consequently, this study suggests a stakeholder involvement approach towards the adoption and implementation of CSR programmes committed to societal and economic benefit. The notion of multiple-stakeholders participation is fundamental to sustainable development (Vazquez & Lucey, 2016). In this context, this includes the constant evaluation of community perception and expectations throughout the planning and implementation

phases of the CSR initiative. Effective implementation of strategic CSR should accrue a good reputation, thus safeguard the organisation's license to operate.

The importance of a good reputation cannot be over-emphasized in the context of the NDR and perhaps extractive industries in other developing economies with similar antecedents. This study offers insight into the importance of active engagement with stakeholders to forge a symbiotic relationship and, thus, create value for all parties. This study has shown that strategic CSR practice by oil MNC in the NDR can reduce costs in the long-term, by providing an effective, efficient and sustainable pool of skilled workers while also addressing issues of poverty and high unemployment that are consistent with most developing economies. Given the positive outcome of adopting strategic CSR in this context, it is expected that practitioners will be encouraged to pursue CSR strategies that are linked to the firm value chain and competitive context across the board to achieve a significant benefit to all parties involved.

6.5   Limitations of this study

The limitations to this research lie mainly in the methodological approach. This study was an exploratory case study which investigated internal and external stakeholder groups related to MPNU in the NDR of Nigeria. Hence, the findings cannot be generalised. Notably, the implications for practitioners, especially outside of Nigeria, need to be treated with caution due to the context-specificity of the phenomenon and methodology adopted.

As a piece of qualitative research, this study utilised a snowball sampling technique. The challenges associated with these aspects are that qualitative research is subjective in nature, since it includes the researcher as an instrument of research. Hence, there is a likelihood of researcher bias in conducting the research. Snowballing as a sampling technique increases the risk of a homogenous sample. In this research, the internal

stakeholder group was made up mainly of beneficiaries of the capacity development programme, who are a close group of employees considering their antecedents.

Another limitation to the study lies in the aspect of data collection. Data collection via in-depth interview was conducted exclusively in the host communities of Akwa Ibom State, the operational site of MPNU. This involved internal and external stakeholder groups as participants. As earlier mentioned in the literature review section, CSR is argued to be context-specific. This implies that perceptions and practice may different from country to country and even between industries. This study investigated the oil industry in Nigeria, and as such, there is a need for comparative studies in other countries and developing economies.

In addition to the interviews with employees, who are beneficiaries and internal stakeholders, the research also relied on secondary data to garner information on the firm's perspective. Information sought included the meaning, motivation and expectations of CSR and its strategic implications. However, a top-level management perspective may have yielded additional information. This is based on the notion that top management may be better informed on the strategic implications of CSR initiatives for the firm.

6.6   Recommendation for further studies

This research explored host community perceptions of the social impact of a capacity development initiative adopted by MPNU in the NDR. It has contributed to understanding community perceptions and the reasons for their expectations of oil MNCs in Nigeria, thereby suggesting an effective approach towards implementing CSR strategies. Following the findings of this study, recommendations for future studies are put forward.

This research was conducted in the NDR, which has particular challenges compared to other regions in the country. It is likely that host communities of businesses in other

regions may yield differing opinions. Therefore it is recommended that future case study research should be conducted in other regions. In the same vein, it is recommended that this case study research should be extended to other industries in Nigeria. The nature of the oil industry was clearly a contributing factor to community perceptions of the oil MNC's CSR practices. Typically, host community expect more from extractive industries due to the negative externalities often associated with such industries.

While this study has focused on oil MNCs in the NDR of Nigeria, it is recommended that future case studies should explore the strategic implications and social impact of capacity development initiatives implemented by extractive industries in other developing nations.

This research focused on a capacity development programme adopted by MPNU. The essence was to allow for thorough investigation to better understand community perceptions and expectations, including the factors responsible. It is recommended that future research evaluate the impact of a range of CSR practices of a firm, to determine the best overall approach to CSR and its strategic implications in the context of the NDR.

6.7 Proposed implementation process for strategic CSR initiatives

Following the findings of the thesis, an implementation process of strategic CSR initiative is proposed. The implementation process identifies four stages required to implement strategic CSR initiatives as shown below. Underpinning the implementation process is stakeholder engagement. In a sense, stakeholders' perception is required to be evaluated at all stages of the implementation process. The aim is to consistently align with stakeholder's expectation of the outcome, to achieve significant impact of the CSR initiative. Given the strategic connotation to the strategic CSR initiatives, the following four steps are proposed

   (a) Scan the organisational environment to identify pressing social issues

(b) Identify the those social issues which are related to the firms value chain activities and/or competitive context

(c) Choose and implement a program with the most significant impact on the organisation and other intended beneficiaries

(d) Evaluate the economic and social impact of the initiative.

Though presented in a linear fashion, the process is repetitive, based on the outcome of stakeholder's perceptions and expectation at every/or all stages of implementation. Stakeholder's perceptions and expectations are required to realign with the expectations set out by the firm or at least achieve common grounds before moving forward, while still evaluating other stages.

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APPENDIX   A: Semi-structured interview schedule

Interview questions with members of host communities

1. Are you familiar with the term CSR? If so, how would you define it?

2. What do you think about the school as a CSR initiative?

3. Tell me about the relationship between your community and the firm?

4. How is the selection process of potential students to the school in your community handled?

5. What sorts of impact (both negative and positive) has the school had on the community so far?

6. In what ways have the benefit of the school met your expectation?

7. What would you expect the firm to do differently from the current objectives of the school?

8. What are the barriers restricting the full extent of the benefit which should accrue to the community from the school? How do you feel these barriers can be mitigated?

9. In what significant ways do you think the technical school has addressed the concerns of the community?

Interview questions with direct community beneficiaries of the technical training centre initiative (Employed and unemployed)

Questions

1. How would you define corporate social responsibility?

2. What are your thoughts on the technical school as a CSR initiative?

3. As a beneficiary of the initiative, what were your expectations at first? Have you met this expectation?

4. In what ways has the initiative impacted on you and your immediate society?

5. What are your chances of advancing your career in and outside the organisation?

6. What are the impacts of the school on your community?

7. How have your colleagues who were not offered employment after the program utilised the knowledge and skills gained from the school?

8. How would described the initiative compared to similar programs adopted by other firms?

APPENDIX   B: Participant information sheet

Rhif Adnabod Cyfranogwr:
Participant Identification
Number:

Teitl Y Prosiect: / Project Title: Stakeholder approach to strategic CSR: A Case Study of ExxonMobil and a Capacity Development Initiative in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

Dear Sir/Madam:

My name is Mfon Jackson and I am a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) student under the supervision of Dr Stephen Sommerville and Dr Alex Bell in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, United Kingdom.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. This project seeks to understand the implementation of strategic corporate social responsibility in the Nigeria oil industry. I hope to provide as an important case study the technical training school initiative adopted by ExxonMobil.

Corporate social responsibility is largely perceived as philanthropy. Investments in its initiatives are often considered as cost consequently most initiatives are done on an ad hoc basis. However, there is a growing concern in both business and the academic world on the implementation of sustainable corporate social responsibility initiatives which are likely to impact positively on the bottom line. Such initiatives could be considered strategic corporate responsibility; well thought out practices which take into account the needs of the firm and other stakeholders alike, with the ultimate goal of creating a win-win situation for both parties eventually. It is to the end that I solicit your understanding and contribution to my study.

Attached to this letter is the theme of interview questions which will assess your expectations and perception of the training school initiative with regards to corporate social responsibility. I believe your opinions will be extremely helpful to me.

All recordings and transcript will be kept strictly confidential to the researchers involved and at **NO** time will individual recording or transcript be released to the general public. This gives you a chance to express your views in a confidential and anonymous forum and still be able to make a difference. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary so you can withdraw from the interview at any stage.

The interview should take about 45 minutes to 1 hour to complete, but there is no time constraint. Attached to this letter along with the interview questions is a consent form. As this is a new project, your feedback is also important to me and I would be much obliged if you could also complete the feedback sheet. I

understand that your time is at a premium but your opinions are very valuable to my study.

After careful and precise analysis of the data obtained from the interview, I will be happy to provide you with a copy of the findings at your request. The results of the interview will hopefully enhance my understanding of the implementation of strategic corporate social responsibility in the Nigeria oil sector. The results of the research will be fed back to the research office, University of Wales Trinity St David.

I thank you in advance for your time and participation. If any questions do arise, feel free to contact me at your convenience.

ENW A CHYFEIRIAD YR YMCHWILYDD	NAME & ADDRESS OF RESEARCHER
	Mfon Jackson, 147 Western Street, Swansea. SA1 3JY 08164916351; +447463759098

APPENDIX   C: Consent form

Participant Name _____

Participation Agreement to be interviewed:

Mfon Jackson, University of Wales Trinity St David

Topic of research: Stakeholder approach to strategic CSR: A Case Study of ExxonMobil and a Capacity Development Initiative in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

I agree to participate in this research concerning the Implementation of strategic corporate social responsibility in ExxonMobil Nigeria. The purpose of this study is to examine my understanding of the implementation of strategic corporate social responsibility in the Nigerian oil industry. The interviewer hopes to provide as an important case study, the adoption of a technical training school by ExxonMobil and how it translates to a sustainable business practice.

I have been given sufficient information about this study. The purpose of my participation as a respondent has been explained and made clear to me. My participation as a respondent is voluntary. There is no implicit or explicit coercion in any manner to participate.

I am aware that this will involve me in 45 minute to 1 hour interview.

I understand that this interview will probably be recorded and transcribed for use only in Mfon Sunday Jackson's thesis, as partial fulfilment of Doctor of Business Administration at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

I have been guaranteed that my name or any reference to my identity will be kept anonymous in this study and for any subsequent publications I will be asked again for my consent.

I have been guaranteed that the recordings relating to this interview will not be used for any other purpose and will be subsequently destroyed immediately after the use intended here.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any point with all records of my contribution removed without reason.

Interviewee Signature

Interviewer Signature

A copy of this agreement should be retained by both interviewer and interviewee.