

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Stakeholders Engagement: The Role of Community Participation in Nigeria

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Abstract

CSR is becoming a strategic approach in fostering long-term commitment with stakeholders, building trust, and addressing pressing socio-economic and environmental challenges. This study employs a quantitative research approach to examine CSR and stakeholder engagement among Nigerian firms listed on the NGX. The research focuses on 40 community leaders and 5 non-financial firms, drawing 42 respondents, which makes the population and sample size 82 respondents, which implies a purposive sampling technique. The population and sample size ensured a complete and statistically motivated analysis of CSR implementation and community participation. The study utilises the quantitative techniques, this technique allows the study to provide empirical insights into how firms participate with local communities in CSR decision-making and the overall efficiency of the participating strategies. The study findings revealed that there is low confidence in CSR, as the firms' openness about CSR strategies is still questionable to a large extent. Also, the study result indicates that community-specific resource allocation, firms' corporate transparency, and trust-building efforts must be strengthened to ensure that communities can play a meaningful role in CSR initiatives. The study concluded that CSR initiatives are widely implemented, but community involvement in decision-making as regard CSR remains inconsistent, with many firms adopting top-down approaches which tend to limit community CSR-specific needs and thereby create a lack of genuineness for stakeholder influence. It was recommended that community participation in CSR; therefore, firms should ensure communities are involved in their CSR initiatives, thereby showing transparency through proper communication.

Keywords: Community, Corporate Sustainability, CSR, Stakeholders.

1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has grown in dimension beyond philanthropy, thus has developed as an indispensable pillar of corporate sustainability and social impact in the present-day system of firm operations (K. M. Amaeshi et al., 2006; Carroll & Shabana, 2010). It is noticeable that most businesses are striving to integrate social responsibility into their core operations, making CSR a strategic approach in fostering long-term commitment with stakeholders, building trust, and addressing pressing socio-economic and environmental challenges (Frynas, 2005). In summary, a critical aspect of CSR is stakeholder engagement,



particularly involving in community participation, which plays an essential role in ensuring that corporate initiatives align with the needs and aspirations of the communities they are engage in and in which they aim to support (K. M. Amaeshi et al., 2006; Idemudia, 2009). The participation of local communities actively in CSR processes gives the community a sense of inclusion, thereby prompting firms to create more meaningful, sustainable, and impactful interventions that go beyond short-term corporate goodwill (Adegbite et al., 2020; Chapple & Moon, 2005).

In Nigeria for instance, industries such as oil and gas, manufacturing, and telecommunications have variously implemented CSR programs aimed at improving education, healthcare, infrastructure, environmental sustainability, and economic empowerment (Idemudia, 2009). These efforts of the firms are particularly essential in a country where many communities are faced incidental challenges related to poverty, resource scarcity, and environmental degradation (Eze & Bello, 2016; Frynas, 2005). Nevertheless, despite the increased focus on CSR from some firms, the extent to which communities genuinely participate in decision-making processes remains a significant question that needs genuine answers (Adegbite et al., 2020). It has been claimed that most firms adopt a top-down approach. The top-down approach is a situation where CSR projects for communities are developed without sufficient input from the communities such projects seek to benefit, leading to ineffective or misaligned interventions (Amaeshi et al., 2006).

Even though proper engagement of CSR projects by the firms with the communities breeds a positive atmosphere for all stakeholders, some firms are still in the habit of using the divide and rule syndrome to surprise communities. Consequently, a truly trusted community engagement in CSR requires more than just financial donations or corporate-sponsored projects; it demands active dialogue, co-ownership of initiatives, participatory planning and transparency amongst all stakeholders. This implies that firms should prioritise community involvement in their activities, as it connects CSR, as this will foster mutual trust, reduce resistance, and enhance the long-term sustainability of CSR efforts. This article aims to explore the role of stakeholder engagement in CSR, thereby assessing the challenges and benefits of community participation in CSR in Nigeria's corporate landscape and examining how firms can enhance inclusive practices for better social impact and business success.

Yet, existing studies on CSR in Nigeria mostly focus on corporate initiatives and their social-economic outcomes, while giving limited attention to how community involvement shapes the design, implementation, and sustainability of these programs. This gap underline the need to explore not only whether companies are engaging in CSR, but also how inclusive their approach is in involving local communities as true partners, not just as passive beneficiaries. Addressing this gap is crucial in understanding how stakeholder participation influences the effectiveness of CSR and corporate legitimacy in the context of developing countries.

Based on the study, the following research objectives were formulated, which seek to address several key areas. The research aims to assess the extent to which firms in Nigeria involve local communities in CSR decision-making processes. It also examines how community participation influences the effectiveness of CSR programs. Additionally, the study seeks to identify the challenges firms face in engaging communities as active stakeholders. Finally, the research evaluates the impact of community involvement on corporate reputation and business sustainability.

The theoretical framework outlined above emphasizes the relationship between corporate responsibility and stakeholder theory, yet its practical application in Nigeria reveals a complex reality. Despite existing literature underscoring the importance of dialogue and

joint decision-making, many CSR practices remain symbolic, serving reputation goals rather than driving genuine social transformation. This tension underscores the need to reexamine CSR not only as a moral obligation or compliance-driven duty but as a relational process evolving through continuous negotiation between companies and their stakeholders. By linking CSR strategies to inclusive governance and accountability mechanisms, companies can shift stakeholder engagement from mere obligation fulfillment to a driver of fair development and corporate legitimacy.

2. Literature Review

CSR has grown in dimension beyond benevolence as it were in time past, giving that CSR has been incorporated as an integral part of sustainable business practices. In Nigeria for instance, firms across various sectors are now implementing CSR initiatives in order to foster stakeholder engagement, particularly through community participation but the extent to which community actually participate in CSR input is still sketchy. However, the effectiveness of the CSR initiatives depends largely on how local communities are involved in CSR decision-making across all sector. Various research studies have indicated that firms adopting inclusive approaches of CSR experience stronger trust and collaboration from stakeholders.

In general, literature indicates that the effectiveness of CSR in Nigeria is greatly influenced by the level of community involvement. Meanwhile, Amaeshi et al. (2016) and Eweje (2006) highlighted the discrepancy between Western CSR models and local needs. More recent studies, such as Aturu-Aghedo & Patience (2024), emphasize the importance of contextual adaptation and co-design with communities. This indicates a paradigm shift from a top-down approach to a bottom-up approach in CSR implementation. While Adeyanju (2012) is in support of this claim, the researchers stated that CSR projects often reflect corporate branding efforts rather than considering the genuine needs of the community, which has led to low acceptance and participation among stakeholders. In all, firms should show utmost good faith in their engagement and participation in CSR and directly involve the communities.

Community involvement in CSR projects will lead to significant influence to a large extent thereby providing a bedrock for effective of CSR programs. According to Idemudia (2009) the author stated that, the absence of meaningful CSR engagement by community stakeholders will often results in CSR failures, particularly in the extractive industry, where projects are imposed on communities rather than co-developed with local stakeholders. It was further stated by Jenkins (2004) that CSR initiatives will usually succeed when communities feel a sense of ownership, as this will fosters collaboration, maintenance, and sustainability. In another vein, Aturu-Aghedo & Patience (2024) found that firms integrating community discussion into their CSR design report a 30% increase in positive stakeholder feedback, reinforcing the argument that co-design of community project will lead to better project outcomes which will foster sustainable peace amongst stakeholders. In essence, local community involvement in projects will enhance social acceptance, corporate-community relations, and measurable improvements in economic well-being for both the community and the firms.

Despite CSR inclusivity advantage to firms and community to coexist in a conducive atmosphere. Some firms in Nigeria are still face with several barriers to effective stakeholder engagement with their host community. K. M. Amaeshi et al. (2006) identify corporate confrontation to transparency as a major challenge, with firms dreading that full disclosure of CSR hoards could invite condemnation. While Frynas (2005) asserts that there exists a

regulatory gap which has contributed to CSR inconsistent practices, where firms operate without stringent responsibility mechanisms. Further, Chen (2024) asserted that, there is a weak governance framework; the researchers enumerated amongst others the lack of trust, and conflicting interests that frequently hinder corporate-community partnerships. In the part of Oguntade & Mafimisebi (2011) they assert that financial constraints are another limiting factor experienced by some firms, they argue that several firms lack suitable resources to scale up community-focused CSR efforts. Going forward, incapacitating these challenges requires stronger wheel to regulatory oversight, long-term corporate guarantees, and strategic engagement frameworks that will build trust between firms and local stakeholders.

Barriers such as lack of transparency and low trust (Frynas, 2005; Chen, 2024) not only impede collaboration, but also impact corporate reputation (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Consequently, the literature demonstrates a strong relationship between the quality of community engagement, CSR effectiveness, and long-term business sustainability. The corporate reputation and business sustainability have been widely examined in terms of the impact of community engagement in CSR projects. According to Carroll & Shabana (2010) they asserted that firms with ethical CSR policies will experience greater customer loyalty and brand differentiation. While Chapple & Moon (2005) in their study noted that firms that actively engage in community CSR efforts report higher investor confidence and profitability. Kolk & van Tulder (2010) in their investigation found that CSR-driven partnerships usually lead to better regulatory compliance, thereby protecting the firms from reputational damage. In a study conducted by Adegbite et al. (2020), the researchers suggested that firms that integrate social impact metrics into CSR agendas demonstrated greater long-term sustainability, with high prevalence of reduced operational risks. These various studies evidence reinforces the premise that community participation in CSR engagement will fosters corporate legitimacy, that will enhance consumer trust, and strengthen overall firm performance.

The study has shown that prevailing literature has affirmed that stakeholders' engagement in CSR will enhance social impact, firms' corporate reputation, and improve sustainable development. However, Nigerian firms as continually faced challenges due to their ingenuity in community involvement in CSR, which calls for necessary, stiff and stronger regulatory frameworks to increase CSR transparency, and deeper long-term corporate commitments to participatory CSR strategies.

3. Methods

This study employs a quantitative research approach to examine CSR and stakeholder engagement among Nigerian firms listed on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX). The research focuses on 40 community leaders and 5 non-financial firms, drawing 42 respondents, which makes the population and sample size 82 respondents, which implies a purposive sampling technique. This paper utilized the technique of purposive sampling to target respondents with direct involvement and knowledge of CSR activities in their communities and companies. Five non-financial companies listed on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) were chosen based on consistent CSR reporting and engagement with local stakeholders. Forty community leaders were identified through local government offices and community associations in the areas where these companies are located. This sampling process ensured that only participants with relevant CSR experience and insights contributed to this study, thereby enhancing the quality and contextual accuracy of the responses provided.

The population and sample size ensured a complete and statistically motivated analysis of CSR implementation and community participation. The study utilises the quantitative techniques, this technique allows the study to provide empirical insights into how firms participate with local communities in CSR decision-making and the overall efficiency of the participating strategies.

A research questionnaire was designed to carry out the survey, which was adopted to capture CSR practices, stakeholder engagement, and community participation among Nigerian firms. The study questionnaire is aimed at collecting data on CSR from managers, employees, and community representatives to evaluate community engagement levels, perceptions, and challenges. A total of 82 valid responses were obtained, comprising of 15 CSR or sustainability managers, 27 employees involved in CSR implementation, and 40 community representatives. The respondents were selected from five selected companies operating in the states of Lagos, Delta, and Anambra. This distribution provides a balanced representation between corporate and community perspectives, enabling comparative analysis of stakeholders' views on CSR involvement and participation. The study responses are measured using a four-point Likert scale, confirming that stakeholder experiences and community participation in corporate sustainability initiatives are quantified systematically.

The research instrument underwent content validation and reliability testing. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by two academic experts in the field of corporate social responsibility and one CSR practitioner. A pilot test involving ten respondents was also conducted, and the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was found to be 0.82, indicating strong internal consistency. In addition, incomplete or inconsistent responses will be removed before analysis to maintain data integrity and validity.

The data analysis used in the study was the mean and standard deviation, being the primary statistical tools to evaluate the responses gathered from the structured questionnaire. The mean was used to determine the average perception of respondents regarding CSR and stakeholder engagement, providing insight into the general trends in community participation within Nigerian firms. The standard deviation assessed the dispersion of responses, helping to identify variations in stakeholders' perceptions and levels of engagement.

The statistical measures were applied in the study to quantitatively interpret the designs in CSR practices among Nigerian firms quoted in the NGX. The Mean values indicate the general propensity of CSR managers, employees, and community representatives concerning corporate engagement, whereas the standard deviation emphasises significant differences in responses from respondents. This approach ensured a robust and reliable analysis, allowing for data-driven conclusions on the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement in CSR decision-making.

Table 1. Questionnaire

S/n	Items	SA	A	D	SD	M	Std.	Decision
Objective 1: Firms in Nigeria involve local communities in CSR decision-making processes								
1	Nigerian firms actively seeks community input before designing CSR initiatives.	14	09	23	36	2.01	1.12	Weak Agreement, High Variability
2	Community representatives participate in CSR planning meetings and discussions.	32	29	11	10	3.00	0.92	Strong Agreement, Moderate Variability
3	Local stakeholders significantly influence the selection of CSR projects.	25	29	15	13	2.94	1.01	Moderate Agreement, High Variability
4	The firm provides platforms for continuous dialogue with community members.	27	31	18	06	2.97	1.02	Moderate Agreement, High Variability

S/n	Items	SA	A	D	SD	M	Std.	Decision
5	Community feedback is incorporated into CSR implementation.	15	19	31	17	2.30	1.08	Weak Agreement, High Variability
6	Decisions regarding CSR programs are made collaboratively between the firm and community representatives.	37	33	05	07	3.09	0.88	Strong Agreement, Moderate Variability
7	Transparency exists in how firms communicate CSR objectives and community involvement strategies.	13	15	25	29	2.13	1.17	Weak Agreement, High Variability
Objective 2: Community participation influence the effectiveness of CSR programs								
8	CSR projects designed with direct community input are more successful than those planned solely by the company.	39	38	03	02	3.39	0.68	Strong Agreement, Low Variability
9	Community participation ensures that CSR initiatives address the most pressing local needs.	41	34	04	03	3.36	0.72	Strong Agreement, Low Variability
10	The effectiveness of CSR programs increases when community members take ownership of project implementation.	23	25	24	10	2.68	0.99	Moderate Agreement, Moderate Variability
11	Long-term sustainability of CSR initiatives is better when communities are actively engaged.	24	27	19	12	2.73	1.00	Moderate Agreement, High Variability
12	Local knowledge and expertise contribute to the success of CSR programs.	25	26	18	13	2.71	1.01	Moderate Agreement, High Variability
13	CSR initiatives that involve community participation have a greater social and economic impact.	32	30	11	09	3.02	0.94	Strong Agreement, Moderate Variability
14	The firm monitors and evaluates CSR projects by incorporating feedback from local communities.	19	26	20	17	2.53	1.05	Moderate Agreement, High Variability
Objective 3: Firms face challenges in engaging communities as active stakeholders								
15	The firm struggles to build trust with communities for CSR projects.	27	24	17	14	2.72	1.02	Moderate Agreement, High Variability
16	Lack of transparency in corporate decision-making negatively affects community participation in CSR.	23	25	18	16	2.69	1.03	Moderate Agreement, High Variability
17	Limited financial resources prevent firms from fully involving communities in CSR programs.	19	26	19	18	2.55	1.07	Moderate Agreement, High Variability
18	Political or social conflicts within communities pose challenges to stakeholder engagement.	21	23	16	22	2.49	1.10	Weak Agreement, High Variability

S/n	Items	SA	A	D	SD	M	Std.	Decision
19	Some communities lack awareness of CSR initiatives, which affects participation levels.	20	23	21	18	2.51	1.09	Moderate Agreement, High Variability
20	Bureaucratic bottlenecks and regulatory challenges hinder effective community engagement in CSR projects.	23	24	19	16	2.66	1.04	Moderate Agreement, High Variability
21	Firms struggle to balance business objectives with community interests when designing CSR programs.	18	20	21	23	2.41	1.12	Weak Agreement, High Variability
Objective 4: Community involvement in CSR has an impact on corporate reputation and business sustainability								
22	A firm's reputation improves when communities actively participate in CSR initiatives.	32	29	11	10	3.00	0.92	Strong Agreement, Moderate Variability
23	Firms that engage communities in CSR experience better brand loyalty from local consumers.	29	28	12	13	2.98	0.94	Moderate Agreement, Moderate Variability
24	Positive CSR-community relationships enhance investor confidence in the firm.	31	29	12	10	3.00	0.92	Strong Agreement, Moderate Variability
25	Community involvement in CSR contributes to long-term business sustainability.	33	32	11	06	3.10	0.89	Strong Agreement, Moderate Variability
26	Effective CSR engagement strengthens the firm's position in regulatory and industry compliance.	22	29	16	15	2.78	1.00	Moderate Agreement, High Variability
27	Local community endorsement of a firm's CSR efforts leads to increased consumer trust.	32	31	10	09	3.02	0.93	Strong Agreement, Moderate Variability
28	CSR-driven community partnerships provide firms with better opportunities for market expansion.	31	30	10	11	3.00	0.92	Strong Agreement, Moderate Variability

Key: SA-Strongly Agreed; A-Agreed; D-Disagreed; SD- Strongly Disagreed; M-Mean; Std.- Standard Deviation

Source: Authors Compilation and Computation (2025)

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Firms in Nigeria Involve Local Communities in CSR Decision-Making Processes

The evidence indicate that community involvement in CSR decision-making among Nigerian companies is still weak (Mean = 2.01, Std = 1.12). This suggests that CSR programs are often designed through a top-down process rather than participatory collaboration. The low level of participation reflects institutional gaps and historical distrust between companies and local communities. As noted by Amaeshi et al. (2016), CSR in Nigeria tends to be influenced by external parties, placing more emphasis on compliance and image building rather than genuine involvement. Similarly, Visser & Kymal (2014) emphasize the importance of collaborative decision-making for sustainable CSR, yet companies in developing countries often fail to internalize this principle. The low level of transparency (Mean = 2.13) reinforces

these findings, implying that companies still lack open communication channels with their stakeholders, limiting trust and reciprocal accountability.

The current study findings therefore support K. Amaeshi et al. (2016), as they argued that Nigerian CSR policies are often influenced by external shared interests moderately than proactive, genuine needs of the communities, thereby leading to weak community participation. Likewise, Visser & Kymal (2014) climax that CSR success depends on collaborative decision-making between firms and the community stakeholders, which various firms in developing economies struggle to implement. While Idemudia (2009) claimed that corporate-community relations in Nigeria remain strained due to historical conflicts and distrust, preventing meaningful engagement.

Conversely, it was revealed in the responses from the respondents that approximately features of CSR engagement show moderate-to-strong agreement, as indicated in the study responses, to the extent that there is a moderate-to-strong agreement indicating that decisions regarding CSR programs are made collaboratively between firms and communities, which showed a Mean response value of 3.09 and Std. value of 0.88, indicating an approximate level of partnership in CSR planning involvement. Still, the presence of high variability in responses suggests that community involvement differs across firms and industries, leading to inconsistent engagement strategies.

4.2. Community Participation Influences the Effectiveness of CSR Programs

Current finding signify that respondents strongly agree that community participation enhances the effectiveness of CSR (Mean = 3.39, Std = 0.68). This reflects a growing recognition that CSR initiatives designed with input from the community tend to be more aligned with local needs and deliver sustainable outcomes. These results support the perspective of participatory development, which asserts that stakeholder engagement will lead to greater ownership and social legitimacy (Jenkins, 2004). Frynas (2005) also highlights that CSR projects often fail when local communities are not involved in the planning and monitoring process. Correspondingly, this study underscores the importance of collaborative involvement, where companies and communities work together to design CSR interventions to ensure relevance, accountability, and long-term impact. Several studies have confirmed these findings, as supported by Jenkins (2004), who asserts that CSR projects encompassing active community engagement will result in higher community acceptance and long-term sustainability. According to Frynas (2005), scholars have noted that a lack of local community involvement in CSR often leads to project failure, particularly in the extractive industries. Yet, despite this acknowledgment, the data also indicate that companies rarely delegate actual decision-making power to the local community (Mean = 2.68, Std = 0.99), which points out that participation is still more symbolic than substantive.

The study by Aturu-Aghedo & Patience (2024) acknowledged the positivity of firms collaborating with the host community on their CSR needs with the intention to providing the community's specific needs. These firms are reported to have a 30% increase in stakeholder satisfaction, reinforcing the argument that co-design improves CSR outcomes. Conversely, there was a moderate agreement as observed in extents such as whether CSR programs' effectiveness increases when communities take ownership of project implementation. The response rate in this regard from respondents showed a Mean score of 2.68, and Std. score of 0.99. This result suggests that while stakeholders recognise the benefits of community participation, firms may not always delegate significant decision-making power to local groups. The findings indicate a need for more inclusive CSR planning that actively engages communities in implementation and monitoring.

4.3. Firms Face Challenges in Engaging Communities as Active Stakeholders

The results reveal that Nigerian firms encounter substantial challenges in engaging communities as active CSR stakeholders. The moderate mean score (2.49) and high variability (Std = 1.10) suggest uneven stakeholder engagement practices, largely shaped by contextual factors such as political instability, social conflict, and weak regulatory enforcement. The result of objective 3 indicates that the respondents face significant challenges in stakeholder engagement, with high variability across responses. The variability suggests that there are differences in firms' experiences with community relations. This variability stems from political or social conflicts within communities, poses challenges to stakeholder engagement as indicated with a mean score of 2.49, and Std. score of 1.10, indicating varied perceptions on the influence of political or social instability on CSR participation, as prior studies had revealed various forms of CSR challenges in Nigeria.

The present finding is aligned with previous research that highlights systemic barriers to effective CSR implementation in Nigeria. Amaeshi et al. (2006) identified corporate resistance to transparency as a major obstacle, reflecting companies' reluctance to disclose CSR investments due to fear of public scrutiny. Similarly, Idemudia (2009) emphasized that weak enforcement of regulations leads to inconsistent stakeholder engagement, while Eze and Bello (2016) linked these challenges to financial constraints and mistrust. Collectively, these structural and institutional weaknesses explain why many companies in this study reported difficulty in sustaining partnerships with communities, underscoring the need for stronger governance and accountability mechanisms.

Financial constraints are another major issue, as limited financial resources prevent firms from fully involving communities, with a mean score of 2.55, and Std. score of 1.07, revealing that most firms struggle to earmark sufficient resources for far-reaching CSR community engagement. Correspondingly, the lack of transparency negatively affects community participation in CSR, as indicated by a mean score of 2.69, which goes to confirm the perception that firms need to improve CSR initiatives through proper communication and show of accountability. The study findings suggest that community-specific resource allocation, firms' corporate transparency, and trust-building efforts must be strengthened to ensure communities can play a meaningful role in CSR initiatives.

4.4. Community Involvement in CSR Has an Impact on Corporate Reputation and Business Sustainability

The discoveries also points to a positive relationship between community participation and corporate reputation (Mean = 3.00, Std = 0.92). Companies that engage with the community in CSR activities are perceived as more legitimate and trustworthy, thus enhancing social license to operate. These findings support Carroll & Shabana's (2010) assertion that ethical and participatory CSR practices drive brand differentiation and customer loyalty. Similarly, Adegbite et al. (2020) observed that when companies integrate feedback from the community into CSR planning, they experience greater business sustainability. Therefore, community engagement serves not only philanthropic goals but also strategic objectives by strengthening the company's relationships with regulators, consumers, and investors. Nevertheless, moderate variability (Std = 0.94) suggests that the level of success varies across different industries, indicating that the CSR implementation framework must be tailored to the specific sectoral realities.

According to Chapple & Moon (2005), firms that engage communities in CSR have been reported to have higher investor confidence their increase their profitability. In another vein, Adegbite et al. (2020) in their study maintain that firms that integrate social impact metrics

into their CSR framework tend to experience long-term business sustainability benefits, thereby reinforcing the significance of stakeholder-driven CSR governance. Consequently, agreement is generally strong, moderate variability suggests that firms experience different levels of success in stakeholders' engagement. Firms that engage communities experience better brand loyalty from local consumers indicated with a mean score of 2.98, Std. score of 0.94 confirming the correlation between effective CSR and market trust. However, Effective CSR engagement strengthens the firm's position in regulatory and industry compliance, as indicated with a mean score of 2.78, and Std. score of 1.00) showing that some firms struggle to align CSR with compliance frameworks.

In summary, the outcomes indicate that although companies in Nigeria acknowledge the importance of community participation in CSR, their current practices are mostly top-down and inconsistent. These findings reveal a gap between awareness and implementation - companies recognize the value of engagement but lack institutional structures to enable it. Bridging this gap requires a stronger regulatory framework, transparent communication, and empowering local communities as creators, not just recipients, of CSR benefits.

5. Conclusion

This research seeks to investigate the extent of community involvement in the implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) among companies in Nigeria. The outcomes indicate that despite the widespread implementation of CSR activities, community participation in decision-making is still limited due to top-down approaches, lack of transparency, and weak regulation enforcement. This situation has led to a lack of trust and sustainability in CSR program outcomes. Hence, the implementation of a participatory CSR framework and transparent communication are crucial to ensure that CSR initiatives truly reflect the needs of the community and make a meaningful contribution to social development.

Practically speaking, companies that adopt an inclusive CSR model have the potential to enhance corporate reputation, stakeholder trust, and long-term business sustainability. Governments and policymakers also need to strengthen monitoring and compliance mechanisms to ensure accountability and inclusivity in CSR practices. Further research is suggested to conduct comparative analyses across industries or regions to assess variations in community engagement in CSR, as well as to explore how the utilization of digital technology can enhance transparency and stakeholder participation in the context of CSR in Nigeria.

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