

# **Corporate Social Responsibilities of Tertiary Educational Institutions to Host Communities in Delta South Senatorial District of Delta State of Nigeria**

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(Received: 30-5-12/ Accepted: 26-6-12)

## **Abstract**

Delta State of Nigeria is located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria which is a hot bed of agitation for corporate organizations to meet their social responsibilities to the communities where they operate. These agitations have gone beyond the oil corporations and virtually affect all organizations operating in the region including educational institutions. Many tertiary institutions are located in Delta State especially in the south senatorial district. The study was purposed to determine the type of corporate social responsibilities schemes provided by tertiary institutions, the challenges faced by them and the perception of the management of these institutions and the leadership of their host communities on the types of social responsibilities needed by the host communities. The findings showed that there was agreement between the host communities and management of tertiary institutions on the type of intervention needed by the host communities, and there were high ranking of types of corporate social responsibilities intervention, signifying that there was agree in both perceptions. Based on the conclusion, it was recommended that there should be more synergy between tertiary institutions and host communities for the betterment of both parties.

**Keywords:** Corporate, Responsibilities, Host, Communities.

## Introduction

The philosophy of Nigeria education is based on the belief that education is the vehicle for effective human and national development. Ward (1883) says “education is essential motive force for progress”. He stressed that educational institutions are centre for human betterment for the progress of society. Nations all over the world are concerned about education both at the national and international levels as a way of fostering human and national development. According to UNESCO (2000) the gathering of some 189 nations at the world education forum in Dakar marked a global resurgence in the recognition of the indispensable role education and educational institutions play in social and economic development thus reaffirming the perception of education as a social function.

Educational institutions, especially the tertiary ones ought to bear some levels of social responsibilities to the society that sustains their existence and operations. Social responsibility in the words of Nichols, McHugh and McHugh (1997) is the concern corporate institutions have for the welfare of the society which sustains their operations. The ability of most tertiary educational institutions to deliver on these subsidiary objectives defines their social responsibility.

The idea of corporate social responsibility has been around for a long time, beginning with the work of writers such as Bowen (1953 – cited by many as the ‘father’ of corporate social responsibility) and carrying on through the work of Davis (1960, 1973), Johnson (1971), Jones (1980, 1983) and more recently Carroll (1991, 1999). The idea really exploded however in the period following the East summit in 1992, since which event corporate social responsibility has become a veritable industry in its own right with its own ‘practitioners, journals and conferences’ etc.

WBSCSD (2000) in reviewing the evolution of corporate social responsibility argued that it has been successfully main streamed and that “partnerships and alliances that are firmly rooted in social responsibility ground are flourishing. Among them are a range of collaborations which promote such initiatives as good employee relations, community empowerment, educational awareness and supply chain/customer engagement. Sensible organizations dare not embark on major decisions without having first undertaken well organized dialogues with their stakeholders”.

On the other hand, corporate social responsibility is perceived by critics as little more than public relations exercise designed to give the appearance of social responsibility and changing commercial practice whilst in reality doing nothing to change corporate priorities or operating practices. Aids (2004) a major critic, described it as “a completely inadequate response to the sometimes devastating impact that multinational companies can have in an ever-more globalised world ... it is actually used to mask that impact. Those who suffer the most are the poor and vulnerable poor in developing countries and the environment in which they live”

There is no gain saying that there is an increasing interest in the activities of corporate bodies which goes beyond the mere achievement of their primary objectives. The focus on the performance of these organizations in terms of their social contributions and environmental impacts is occupying a centre stage. In the past, many corporate organizations in less developed countries enjoyed the privilege of operating rationally and globally to the extent that matters relating to their corporate public image and social responsiveness did not command reasonable expediency and urgency (Okoh and Ojoh 2008). Corporate social responsibility sometimes referred to as corporate citizenship or corporate social performance is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a corporate model. According to Wood (1991) it functions as built-in, self regulating mechanism whereby corporate bodies would monitor and ensure its support to law, ethical standards and international norms. It follows therefore that corporate entities would embrace responsibilities for the impact of their activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public sphere. Every corporate social responsibility focused organization would proactively promote the public interest by encouraging community growth and development, and eliminating practices that harm the public regardless of legality. Corporate

social responsibility is therefore about the deliberate inclusion of public interest into corporate decision-making and the honour of a triple bottom-line: people, planet and profit.

The criticisms of corporate social responsibility in recent times notwithstanding, it has been redefined over the years to mean an aid to organizations' mission as well as a guide to what the organization stands for and also what it upholds to its stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Goodpaster and Atkinson, 1992).

The trend is that communities are increasingly getting aware of their rights and demand that corporate entities meet their social responsibilities to them. The host communities are demanding that tertiary educational institutions in their domain should grant them some concessions in employment, admission of students and the award of contracts as part of their social responsibilities to them. They also expect these institutions to contribute directly to the development of their communities either financially or through donations of manpower and technical know-how. They equally expect contribution to the management of community security; provision of extra mural education programmes and the development of community infrastructure.

Delta State of Nigeria is made up of three (3) senatorial districts namely, Delta North, Delta Central and Delta South. Each one of these districts plays host to a number of tertiary educational institutions. A sizeable number of these tertiary educational institutions are located in Delta South Senatorial district of the State, and it is expected that they would naturally have some operational impacts on their host communities which demand corporate social responsibility interventions.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Tertiary educational institutions in Delta South Senatorial district of Nigeria may have some negative operational impacts on their host communities which demand some level of social responsiveness on their part as a way of cushioning some of these impacts. Some of these negative impacts include the fact that these host communities may have to live with increase in crime rates and cultism; compulsory acquisition of their land without adequate compensation and increase in the cost of living due to higher demand pull. There are also the gradual, but sustained erosion of highly cherished community social values and culture and the continuous threat to community security amongst others. Regrettably, not much is known of the involvement of these institutions in corporate social responsibilities schemes to cushion the effects of these impacts.

The trend remains that communities are increasingly getting aware of their rights and are demanding that corporate bodies operating in their domains meet their social responsibilities to them. There is therefore, a strong agitation for social responsibilities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria which is not limited to oil companies or business organizations alone, but has extended to other sectors which include tertiary educational institutions and other non profit organizations. What is yet to be ascertained is the level of involvement of tertiary educational institutions in corporate social responsibilities programmes in their respective host communities in Delta South Senatorial district.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the level of corporate social responsibility interventions of tertiary educational institutions in Delta South Senatorial district of Nigeria in their host communities.

Specifically, the study determined:

1. the type of social responsibility schemes that the tertiary educational institutions are providing for their host communities;
2. the challenges faced by tertiary educational institutions in discharging their corporate social responsibilities to host communities and;

3. the perceptions of the management of tertiary educational institutions and their host communities' leadership on the types of corporate social responsibility interventions needed by the host communities.

## Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions have been raised:

1. What type of corporate social responsibilities schemes are tertiary educational institutions in Delta South providing for their host communities?
2. What are the challenges faced by tertiary educational institutions in discharging their corporate social responsibilities to host communities in Delta South?
3. Is there any significant difference between the management of tertiary educational institutions and their host communities' leadership in their perceptions of the types of the corporate social responsibility interventions needed by the host communities?

## Null Hypothesis

- Ho. There is no significant difference between the management of tertiary educational institutions and their host communities' leadership in their perceptions of the type of corporate social responsibilities interventions needed by the host communities.

## Significance of the Study

The importance of any research work depends to a large extent on its contribution to the advancement of knowledge (Ndaji 1984). Since this study is focused on the corporate social responsibilities of tertiary educational institutions to host communities in Delta South Senatorial district of Nigeria, it will therefore be valuable as it will present the true state of corporate social responsibility interventions in host communities in the district. The findings of this study will also be valuable to the individuals in those host communities, the management of the tertiary educational institutions, host community leaders, the government of Delta State and the Federal Government of Nigeria.

This research work will assist all stakeholders in the communities and education sector in the State to ascertain namely: the social responsibility interventions needed by host communities; assess what the tertiary educational institutions in their communities have been doing?, and the challenges faced by these institutions in their quest to be socially responsible.

## Methodology

This study employed the survey design method to carry out the study. The population for the study comprised all fifty (50) Principal Officers of the ten public tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria and the various host communities' leadership made up of five (5) Obi/Ovies, including one hundred (100) first class chiefs and five (5) community heads. There are three (3) tertiary educational institutions in the district namely Delta State University, Oleh, Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro and the College of Marine Technology, Bomadi.

The total sample size of this research is eighty (80) subjects. The sample size was made up of all management staff of the selected three (3) tertiary educational institutions numbering twenty-five (25), while fifty-five (55) prominent community leaders were randomly selected from the three host communities. The stratified random sampling method was used in selecting the samples. Three tertiary educational institutions were randomly selected for study, each representing a type of tertiary educational institution viz: Universities', Polytechnics', and Others (Monotechnics'). The distribution of the samples is shown in the table 1:

**Table 1:** Distribution of Sample Size of Subjects

S/N	Institution	Communities' Leadership	No. of Principal Officers
1.	Delta State University, Oleh	20	10
2	Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro	20	10
3.	Delta State College of Marine Technology, Bomadi	15	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>25</b>

Source: Field work.

## Development of Instrument and Method of Data Collection

An instrument titled: "Questionnaire on Stakeholders Opinion on Corporate Social Responsibility of Tertiary Educational Institutions in Delta South (QS0CSRTEIDS)" was used for data collection; to be able to answer research questions and test the hypothesis formulated, one of the instruments was specifically marked for the community leaders, while another was marked for the Principal Officers of the tertiary education institutions selected for this study. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A was for general information and Section B consisted of 10 items that addressed the two research questions. The subjects responded to the statements on a four-point scale. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field to ensure both face and content validity. For reliability the instrument was administered to 6 management staff of two other tertiary institutions and 20 communities leaders in the locality who were not part of the main study. A split-half method was used to determine the reliability by using Spearman Brown formula and a reliability coefficient  $r$  of 0.78 was obtained. The researchers personally administered the questionnaire and this lasted for about two months.

## Data Analysis

In analyzing the data collected, the mean( $x$ ) and Standard deviation (SD) and the t-test were the statistical tools used. The mean ( $x$ ) of 2.5 was for decision, such that a mean rating on any item by the respondents equal to or above 2.5 was taken as "Agree" while any mean lower than 2.5 was taken as "Disagree". The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## Findings

**Research Question one:** What type of corporate social responsibility schemes are tertiary educational institutions in Delta South Senatorial district of Nigeria providing for their host communities?

The answer and result of this research question are provided in table 2:

**Table 2:** Mean Ranking of the types of corporate social responsibility provided for host communities

S/N	ITEM	MEAN (X)	SD	REMARKS
1.	<b>Tertiary educational institutions in Delta State contribute to the health needs of their host communities.</b>	2.50	0.70	Agree

2.	<b>Tertiary educational institutions in Delta State help to create and promote cultural awareness in their host communities.</b>	2.56	0.71	Agree
3.	<b>Tertiary educational institutions in Delta State help the communities on physical infrastructural development</b>	2.90	0.63	Agree
4.	<b>Tertiary educational institutions in Delta State assist in creation of wealth and jobs for people in their host communities on a regular basis.</b>	2.99	0.68	Agree
5.	<b>Tertiary educational institutions in Delta State contribute to the educational needs of their host communities.</b>	3.20	0.34	Agree

In response to research question 1, table shows that the respondents agreed with the types of incorporated social responsibilities schemes provided for the host communities as their mean ranking ranged from 2.50 to 3.20 in all five items ranked. In other words tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria are socially responsible to their host communities by providing the following services in this ranked order: education needs; wealth and job creation; physical infrastructural development; creating and promoting cultural awareness and; health intervention

**Research Question two:** What are the challenges faced by tertiary educational institutions in discharging their corporate social responsibilities to host communities in Delta South?

The answer and result of this research question are provided in table 3:

**Table 3:** Mean Ranking of the types challenges faced by tertiary institutions in corporate social responsibility schemes to host communities

S/N	ITEM	MEAN (X)	SD	DECISION
6.	<b>Youths restiveness sometimes militate against corporate social responsibility projects of tertiary educational institutions in their host communities in Delta State.</b>	2.70	0.72	Accept
7.	<b>Delay in the release of funds/subventions by the government to tertiary educational institutions sometimes militate against corporate social responsibility projects in these host communities in Delta State.</b>	2.80	0.81	Accept
8.	<b>Host community hostile attitude sometimes affect corporate social responsibility schemes of tertiary educational Institutions in host communities.</b>	2.85	0.48	Accept
9.	<b>Some greedy community leadership have had negative impact on corporate social responsibility schemes in your host</b>	2.93	0.83	Accept

	<b>community.</b>			
10.	<b>Inter community agitations and strifes affects corporate social responsibility schemes in communities.</b>	3.00	0.82	Accept

In response to research question 2, table 3 shows that the respondents agreed with all the 5 items to show that tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria face challenges in discharging their corporate social responsibilities to the host communities. All 5 items mean scores ranged between 2.70 to 3.00. The items were ranked in the following order: intercommunity agitations and strifes (X 3.00); greedy community leadership (X 2.93), negative attitude of host communities (X 2.85); delay in release of funds by government to tertiary institutions (X 2.80) and youth restiveness (X 2.70).

## Hypothesis

Ho. There is no significant difference between the management of tertiary educational institutions and their host communities' leadership in their perceptions of the types of corporate social responsibilities interventions needed by the host communities.

**Table 4:** t-test of difference in perception between the management of tertiary educational institutions and their host communities on types of corporate social responsibilities interventions needed by the host communities

GROUPS	N	MEAN	SD	DF	t-cal	t-tab	Decision
Community leaders	47	16.62	12.46				Accept
Principal Officers	24	15.54	7.74	69	0.38	1.96	

$$\alpha = 0.05, P < 1.96$$

Table 4 reveals that there is no significant difference between the management of tertiary educational institutions and their host communities' leadership in their perceptions of the types of corporate social responsibilities interventions needed by the host communities. The calculated t-test value of 0.38 was less than the table-t value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level denoting that management of tertiary educational institutions and their host communities leadership agreed on the types of corporate social responsibilities interventions needed by the host communities.

## Discussion of Findings

From the responses to research question 1 on the types of social responsibilities schemes tertiary educational institutions in Delta State of Nigeria are providing for their host communities, respondents agreed with all the five items indicating that they were engaged in the provision of services like health needs, promotion of cultural awareness, development of physical infrastructure, creation of wealth and jobs, and contribution to the educational needs of their host communities. This agrees with WBSCD (2000) which states that among the interventions that make corporate bodies to flourish are the provisions of such initiatives as community empowerment, educational awareness and supply chain/consumer engagement. As Nigeria's oil rich region, which is very volatile, it would be suicidal for any corporate

organization to operate there without meeting its social responsibilities to the host community. The demand for more socio-economic interventions is ongoing and it would be wise for tertiary institutions to partner with their host communities for peaceful co-existence for the attainment of their corporate goals and objectives.

Table 3 showed the mean ranking of the type of challenges faced by tertiary institutions in the provision of their corporate social responsibilities schemes to their host communities. The ranking was such that agitations and strives ranked highest. This suggest awareness of host communities of their rights apparently been sensitized by the environmental of the oil exploration in the area without commensurate development on the host communities. This agrees with Aids (2004) position. This ranking was closely followed by the greed of community leadership; next was negative attitude of host communities perhaps based on past experiences. On the part of the corporate institutions, they ranked delay in the release of fund for the intervention project as 4<sup>th</sup> while youth restiveness took the 5<sup>th</sup> position. All these are in agreement with Freeman (1984) position that corporate social responsibility has been redefined over the years to mean an aid to organization's mission as well as guide to what the organization stands for and what it will uphold to other stakeholders. Among the other stakeholders are the host communities who bear the direct impact of the operation on their environment.

The null hypothesis which states that tertiary educational institutions in Delta State of Nigeria do not differ significantly with their host communities on the types of corporate social responsibility interventions needed by the host communities was retained. This agrees with Wood (1991) that corporate social responsibility is about deliberate inclusion of public interest into corporate decision-making and the honour of a triple bottom-line, people, planet and profit. This agreement between the corporate entities and their host communities indicated a synergy of interest in their relationship. The kind of partnership is what are needed in the community.

## **Conclusion**

Tertiary Educational institutions in Delta State obviously have operational impacts on their host communities leading to some corporate social responsibilities expectations by the affected communities. These expectations are as a result of the needs created by the operational impacts of these institutions and they have been met to a reasonable degree.

Over the years, tertiary educational institutions in Delta South Senatorial district of the State seem to have risen to the needs of their host communities especially in the areas of education, health services, job creation and promotion of cultural awareness and physical infrastructural development. This to some extent has created a level of harmonious working relationship between the host communities and tertiary educational institutions in their domain even though tertiary educational institutions were confronted by some challenges which they need to overcome to optimize their intervention schemes in host communities and operated maximally to achieve their corporate objectives.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion of this study the following recommendations were made:

- Tertiary educational institutions in Delta South Senatorial Districts of Delta State of Nigeria should develop more deliberate schemes to meet their corporate social responsibility needs of their host communities.
- The management of tertiary educational institutions in Delta South should adopt a more collaborative approach in the initiation and implementation of corporate social responsibility schemes in host communities. This will help to eliminate some of the challenges faced by tertiary educational institutions that bother on youth restiveness and other hostile agitations during schemes implementation.



- Adequate enlightenment should be given to host communities on the objectives of corporate social responsibilities schemes of any tertiary educational institution in their communities to eliminate suspicion and promote trust and enhanced institutional goodwill.

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