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## Corporate Social Responsibility of Medium Scale Enterprises on the Community and Environment of Operation in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria

**Christabel D. Brownson**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences,  
Akwalbom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Oruk Anam, Akwalbom State, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

*Corporate Social Responsibility has been recognized as one of the key factors for business sustainability. Majority of corporate social responsibility research focuses on large corporations. Paucity of data and limited research exists on the corporate social responsibility of medium scale enterprises despite their enormous contribution to the world economy and their impact on the social and natural environments. It is in this regard that this study seeks to examine the extent which medium scale businesses implement corporate social responsibility to the community and environment of their operation. Using a descriptive analysis, 100 respondents were examined in Uyo and the findings indicate that majority of Medium Scale Enterprises in Uyo Metropolis practice CSR on their community (89%) and environment (76%) of operation. The CSR practices on the Community involve provision of electricity (33%), provision of pipe born water (24%) and provision of scholarship schemes (15%) among others while that practice on the Environment involves Waste Management (24%), executing environmental friendly projects (15%), controlling of environmental hazards (12%) among others. The study adds new knowledge to the entrepreneurship literature especially as it concerns the context of the study and recommends awareness creation for more Medium Scale Enterprises to practice CSR and the need to encourage those who are already engaged in the practice to do more.*

**Keywords:** Community of operation, corporate social responsibility, Environment of operation, Medium scale enterprises

### **1. Introduction**

They have been a worldwide call for greater incorporation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into business strategy to enable corporation help address wider social, community and environmental issue to improve the conditions of society at large (Curran *et.al*, 2000; Jenkins 2006; Blomback & Wigren, 2009). This has seen the involvement of various corporations of various sizes actively engaging in CSR activities and reporting their social and environmental performance (Ogrizek, 2002, Zu & Sony, 2009).

Various researches have shown that CSR can increase profitability sustainability, integrity and reputation of any business that includes it in its policy (Davis, 1960). Much research has been carried out in the area though much emphasis has been on large corporation (Moyeen & Courvisanos, 2012). Despite the important contribution that medium scale businesses make in the world economy and their impact on both the social and natural environments, the issue of CSR in medium scale businesses has not yet received adequate research attention (Lepoutre & Heene 2006; Fassin, 2008; Blomback & Wigren, 2009). Furthermore, much of the existing literature on CSR in medium scale businesses is either prescriptive or normative without being extensively empirically grounded (Dahlsrud, 2008).

With much emphasis on the application of CSR by large companies, this ignores the role investigation of how such firms actually perform CSR activities (Dahlsrud, 2008). It could be argued that Medium size businesses can design appropriate CSR strategies to address issues in local communities' cos medium scale businesses operate within these communities and subsequently are more aware of community and environmental issues than their larger counterparts (Davis, 1973). Tilley (2000) have suggested the need for more research on CSR in medium scale businesses not only because it will help achieve the wider knowledge of CSR, but also to explore how CSR can be promoted among Medium Scale businesses. It is in this regard that this study seeks to examine the extent to which medium scale businesses implement CSR to the community and environment of their operation.

#### **1.1. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

CSR involves the commitment shown by companies to contribute to the economic development of a Local community and the society at larger. It is a business approach that contributes to sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits to all stakeholders (Sarbutts, 2003). Holme & Watt (2000) see CSR as the continuous commitment by businesses to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as the local community and society at large. Secchi (2007) and Lee

(2008) cited that CSR definition has been changing in meaning and practice. Ismail (2009) pointed out that the present day CSR is a concept whereby business organizations consider the interest of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities and other stakeholders as well as their environment.

#### 1.1.1. Corporate Social Responsibility on Community of Operation

A Community in this aspect is a place where business operation is carried out. It represents the group of people in the immediate surroundings of a business. A key stakeholder of a business is the community within which the company operates (Porter and Kramer, 2006). The first benefit that flows from CSR of a firm is its improved relationship with the community in which it operates (Arnold, 2010). Firms can gain approval from its immediate community if it displays socially responsible behavior which may allow it to operate in the community unperturbed (Diviney & Lilywhite, 2007). Moreover, responsible behaviors of the firm may inspire people in their surroundings to do same (Ksiezak, 2016). Gołaszewska-Kaczan (2009) pointed out that corporate involvement in the problems of the community creates better ambiance in its surroundings such as, seeing that corporations care for communities' good makes everyone feel safer which could decrease corruption in the society significantly (Ksiezak, 2016). CSR activities to the community are sometimes either direct or indirect and they include: provision of financial assistance to educational institutions, hospitals, libraries, clubs within the community of operation (Nibusinessinfo. co. uk, 2022); creation of employment opportunities (Masum *et al*, 2020); provision of social welfare and health care facilities for the local community, improving local infrastructure; engaging in charitable donations or sponsorships (Rotolo & Wilson 2006); and assisting in the overall development of the locality.

#### 1.1.2. Corporate Social Responsibility on the Environment of Operation

Corporate social responsibility implies that a business's performance is measured not only in terms of profit, but in how well it addresses its social and environmental impacts (Spanne, 2021). CSR on the environment refers to the belief that organizations should behave in as environmentally friendly a way as possible (Stobierski, 2021). It is the duty to cover environmental consequences of a particular company's operations, products and facilities (Zafar, 2020). It aims to reduce any damaging effects on the environment from the business processes (Nibusinessinfo, co.uk, 2022). CSR on the environment consist of the following initiatives: Reducing pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, the use of single-use plastics, water consumption, and general waste (Montgomery, 2020); Increasing reliance on renewable energy, sustainable resources, and recycled or partially recycled materials; Offsetting negative environmental impact; for example, by planting trees, funding research, and donating to related causes (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Zafar, 2020; Stobierski, 2021; Nibusinessinfo, co.uk, 2022).

#### 1.1.3. Medium Scale Enterprises in Nigeria

Medium Scale Enterprises (MSEs) are regarded as the engine of economic growth and equitable development in developing economies (Lalkaka, 1997). MSEs are perceived as the key to Nigeria's economic growth, poverty alleviation and employment generation (Agwu and Emeti, 2014). Nigeria has over 37.07million micro, small and medium scale enterprises and they account for more than 84% of total jobs in the country. They also account for about 48.5% of the gross domestic product (CDP) as well as about 7.27% of goods and service exported out of the country (Udo, 2016). MSEs are characterized by dynamism, innovations, efficiency and their small size allows for a faster decision making process. They are generally referred to as enterprises with up to 250 employees (Ibid.). The engagement of MSEs in CSR is very important in the economy since they help to create employment opportunities, drive economic growth among others (Inyang, 2013). Although limited research exists on the CSR practices of Medium Scale Businesses (Inyang, 2013), Studies undertaken within the African context provide support for MSEs being instruments of social transformation of the rural communities through their social responsibility actions (Viviers & Venter, 2007; Dzansi, 2011; Oguntade & Mafimisehi, 2011). Extant evidence from the literature suggests that MSEs' benefit from their involvement in social responsibilities and for them to ignore it may affect their long-run survival, growth and viability (Friedman, 1962; McGuire *et al*, 1988; Jones *et al*, 2000; Orlistzkey *et al*, 2003). Oghojafor *et al* (2009) in their study found that MSEs in Lagos, Nigeria are actively involved in social responsibility in the areas of community affairs, environmental affairs among others. They found that socially responsible firms outperform the firms that were not socially responsible. Efiong *et al* (2013) found a low level of awareness of CSR among MSEs in Cross River, Nigeria citing that CSR does not exist in its formal form in MSEs, but in an informal form. They also found a high level of involvement of the firms in Environmental activities and employment activities in the community with low involvement in Education, infrastructure development and health issues. Inyang (2013) in his study pointed out that MSEs show concerns for the environment by designing environmentally friendly products or production process, energy conservation, an efficient use of resources to minimize wastages, reduction of pollution among others. He posited that MSEs have a strong identification with the community as they engage in community related activities such as sports, health, education and other philanthropy giving.

## **2. Methods**

Using descriptive method with a purposive sampling of 100 MSEs, 100 structured questionnaires were distributed to the owners and staff members of the MSEs in Uyo Metropolis and all the questionnaire were returned and found fit to be used in the analysis.

### 3. Analysis

The study sought to examine the CSR activities of Medium Scale Businesses in Uyo Metropolis on the Community and Environment of their operation. Below is the analysis of the findings from the respondents:

#### 3.1. Corporate Social Responsibility on the Community of Operation

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	89	89
No	11	11
Total	100	100

*Table 1: Respondent Responses on the Organization's Performance of CSR on the Community of Operation*

Table 1 above shows if the MSEs investigated perform any CSR on the community of their operation in Uyo Metropolis. The analysis on table 1 above shows that 89 respondents responded in the affirmative indicating the highest percentage (89%) of responses that the MSEs investigated do practice CSR on the community of their operation, while only a few (11) of the respondents were of the opinion that their MSEs do not practice CSR on their community of operation indicating the lowest percentage (11%) of responses. Given the highest percentage (89%) of affirmation, it, therefore, implies that majority of MSEs do practice CSR activities on their community of operation in Uyo Metropolis.

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
Free medical services	12	13
Scholarship schemes	13	15
Employment opportunity	10	11
Pipe borne water	21	24
Electricity	29	33
Sport centres	4	4
Total	89	100

*Table 2: Responses on CSR Activities Performed by Respondents' Organization on the Community*

Table 2 above shows the responses of respondents on the CSR activities performed by their organization on the community of their operation. The analysis on the table shows that 12 respondents indicating 13% of the responses affirmed that their firm provides free medical services as part of their CSR activities to their community of operation, 13 respondents indicating 15% of the responses admitted that their firm provides scholarship schemes to members of the community as part of their CSR activities to their community of operation, 10 respondents representing 11% of the responses affirmed that their firm provides employment opportunity to the members of the community of their operation, 21 respondents representing 24% declared that their firm provides pipe borne water as part of their CSR activities on the community of their operation, 29 respondents indicating 33% of the responses confirmed that their firm provides electricity to the community of their operation, while only 4 respondents representing 4% of the responses affirmed that their firm provides sport centres to the community as part of their CSR activities.

#### 3.2. Corporate Social Responsibility on the Environment of Operation

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	76	76
No	24	24
Total	100	100

*Table 3: Respondent Responses on the Organization's Performance of CSR on the Environment of Operation*

Table 3 above shows if the MSEs investigated perform any CSR on the Environment of their operation in Uyo Metropolis. The analysis on table 3 above shows that 76 respondents responded in the affirmative indicating the highest percentage (76%) of responses that the MSEs investigated do practice CSR on the Environment of their operation, while only a few (24) of the respondents were of the opinion that their MSEs do not practice CSR on their Environment of operation indicating the lowest percentage (24%) of responses. Given the highest percentage (76%) of acknowledgement, it, therefore, implies that majority of MSEs do practice CSR activities on their Environment of operation in Uyo Metropolis.

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
Waste Management	24	24
Respect the law	11	11
Control environmental hazard	12	12
Environmental friendly project	15	15
Repairing of roads	8	8
Placing of safety signs	6	6
Total	76	100

*Table 4: Responses on CSR Activities Performed by Respondents' Organization on the Environment*

Table 4 above shows the responses of respondents on the CSR activities performed by their organization on the environment of their operation. The analysis on the table shows that 24 respondents indicating 24% of the responses affirmed that their firm provides waste management services as part of their CSR activities to their environment of operation, 11 respondents indicating 11% of the responses admitted that their firm respects environmental laws as part of their CSR activities to their environment of operation, 12 respondents representing 12% of the responses affirmed that their firm helps to control environmental hazards as part of their CSR activities to their environment of operation, 15 respondents representing 15% declared that their firm carries out environmentally friendly projects as part of their CSR activities on the environment of their operation, 8 respondents indicating 8% of the responses confirmed that their firm aids in repairing roads as part of their CSR activities on the environment of their operation, while only 6 respondents representing 6% of the responses affirmed that their firm aids in the placing of safety signs as part of their CSR activities on the environment of operation.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

This study sought to examine the extent to which medium scale businesses implement CSR to the community and environment of their operation in Uyo metropolis. From the analysis above, the study shows that MSE in Uyo metropolis do implement CSR activities on the community and environment of their operation. This finding indicates that MSEs in Uyo metropolis have heeded the call to engage in CSR activities given their importance in the economy (Inyang 2013). The finding contradicts the study of Efiog *et al* (2013) who found low level of awareness of CSR among SMEs in Cross River State. The findings are further discussed below:

##### 4.1. CSR on the Community of Operation

The analysis indicated that, to a large (89%) extent, the MSEs investigated in Uyo metropolis do carry out CSR activities on their community of operation. This finding aligns with the Oghojafor *et al* (2009) who found that SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria were actively involved in CSR activities on the community of operation.

##### 4.2. CSR Activities on the Community of Operation

The analysis shows that the firms carried out the following CSR activities on the community:

- Free medical services (13%),
- Scholarship schemes (15%),
- Employment opportunities (11%),
- Pipe borne water (24%),
- Electricity (33%) and
- Sport centres (4%)

These findings align with the study of Masum *et al* (2020) and Efiog *et al* (2013) on MSEs' involvement in the provision of employment opportunities on the community of their operation; the findings align with the work of Rotolo and Wilson (2006), Inyang (2013) and nibusinessinfo.co.uk (2022) on MSEs' involvement in the provision of free medical services, scholarship schemes, local infrastructures (electricity, pipe borne water), social welfare and clubs (sport centres), among others. As such the involvement of these MSEs in the CSR activities of the community of their operation may make them gain approval of the community with their continuous existence and their business activities.

##### 4.3. CSR on the Environment of Operation

The analysis indicated that to a large (76%) extent that the MSEs investigated in Uyo metropolis do carry out CSR activities on their Environment of operation. This finding aligns with the Oghojafor *et al* (2009) who found that SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria were actively involved in CSR activities on the environment of their operation.

##### 4.4. CSR activities on the Environment of Operation

The analysis shows that the firms carried out the following CSR activities on the Environment:

- Waste management (24%),
- Respect for Environmental laws (11%),
- Controlling environmental hazards (12%),

- Environmental friendly project (15%),
- Repairing of roads (8%) and
- Placing of safety signs (6%)

These findings align with the study of Montgomery (2020), Zafar (2020) and Stobierski, (2021) on MSEs' involvement in waste management, controlling of environmental hazards, repairing of roads and involvement in environmentally friendly projects on the environment of their operation.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the extent to which medium scale enterprises implement CSR to the community and environment of their operation in Uyo metropolis. From the result of the analysis, it can be concluded that Medium Scale Enterprises in Uyo Metropolis do practice CSR in their Community and Environment of their Operation. The descriptive analysis indicated that Medium Scale Enterprises Practice Community CSR in the following ways:

- Provision of electricity (which is highly provided by the firms - 33%),
- Provision of pipe borne water (24%),
- Provision of scholarship schemes (15%),
- Provision of free medical services (13%),
- Generation of employment opportunity (11%) and
- Creation of sport centres (4%)

The analysis also indicated that Medium Scale Enterprises practice CSR on their Environment of Operation in the following ways:

- Waste Management (24%)
- Environmentally friendly projects (15%)
- Control of environmental hazards (12%)
- Respect for environmental laws (11%)
- Repairing of roads (8%)
- Placing of safety signs (6%)

The above findings add new knowledge to the entrepreneurship literature especially as it concerns the context of the study. It also contributes to the study of corporate social responsibility of medium scale enterprises which had received limited research attention given that majority of researchers had focused on Large corporations. The study shows that medium scale enterprises not only practice CSR but that more of such businesses still need to be made aware of the benefits accrued to them if they practice CSR. On this note, the government still has a lot to do in providing the enabling environment for medium scale businesses to flourish which could motivate more to practice CSR in their community and environment of operation.

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