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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AS A COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT TOOL BETWEEN REDEEMER'S UNIVERSITY AND THE HOST COMMUNITY IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Organizational, Corporate Social Responsibility CSR, or community service, is one of the university system's pillars, along with institutional training and courses, and it serves as a mechanism for improving communication between the institution and the host community. This has been shown to be crucial for development and to help the community's ties with essential stakeholders. The study examines the impact of Redeemer's University of Nigeria (RUN) intervention programs in Ede, Nigeria, and its role in CSR, focusing on how these programs have positively impacted the host community and the university system's development. The study uses a descriptive survey research design, involving in-depth interviews and field observations, to explore the potential of corporate social responsibility in enhancing communication, community empowerment, and employment. The Redeemer's University of Nigeria, despite its religious affiliation, significantly contributed to development with its CSR program in Ede, demonstrating its importance in fostering peaceful cooperation and trust. CSR attracts support, growth, and development through face-to-face interactions, mobile sensitization, scholarships, and job provision. CSR enhances the university image, encourages community development which must be embraced by government and stakeholders, and addresses corporate social responsibility issues. This study guides communication development and community development.

Keywords: community service, communication, development, corporate social responsibility, Redeemer's University.

Introduction

It is the norm for every institution to be involved with its host community by rendering corporate social responsibility to it, through community service. This is an indicator that the institution is concerned with its community. Institution just like any organization is profit-oriented, but it needs to give back to its community through corporate social responsibility, it shows that it has the interest of the public at heart. Universities need to improve their image, and always engage in corporate social responsibility so that they can win the goodwill of their stakeholders, Asemah et al (2013)

The study was on the institution's CSR strategy and the opinions of the community service on the questions raised which were used to generate data that addressed the objectives of the study.

When firms started engaging in philanthropy and altruistic giving in the early 20th century, CSR began to develop historically. However, it wasn't until the growth of social and environmental movements in the 1950s and 1960s that the idea of social responsibility started to take shape, Bruce (2023). CSR in Nigeria may have its roots in Western MNC-driven activities in the oil and gas industry in the Niger Delta. According to Kenneth et al. (2011), Shell, for instance, has over the years referred to its CSR activities in a variety of ways to align with its intended strategies at each point in time. These terms include corporate philanthropy and sustainable development.

Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR is the term used to describe the morally required social and charitable actions taken by organizations to better the conditions of life and the amenities in the places where they conduct business. The economic benefits that communities anticipate from corporate companies working in their area are what CRS fundamentally refers to.

As part of its vital position as developing communication in any society's sermon, knowledge and information must be positively communicated to entities to be treasured in growth, effective communication is a precondition for satisfactory growth. Development is supported as a noble purpose and measured total, foreseeable, and collective, irrespective of the culture, traditions, resources, society, and people, Badiora (2022).

Organisations or institutions alike differ in nature, but they have the purposive attribute of belonging to various host communities and using communication development tools, which include corporate social responsibility, and CSR tools to project their image, soliciting support and inclusion to the community and the general public at large. An organization or institution cannot function successfully on its own without having something to do with its host community, irrespective of the religion, tribe, culture, or caliber of stakeholders in the community.

Redeemer's University of Nigeria, RUN is a Christian-owned institution in Ede, a Muslim community, and it is not out of context for it to be socially responsible to its host community. Alongside its mission, vision aims, and objectives, RUN is a reputable citadel of learning that has traversed its image positively, making *Nigeria* proud by emerging as the best-rated

university among 15 prestigious universities selected from West and Central Africa, beyond sentiment, it also has a cordial relationship as a stakeholder with its host community.

The institution bases its Corporate Social Responsibility on the assessment of the needs of the people, which was identified and analyzed, monitored, and evaluated. It understood the people, the community, the culture, and the value system. Though it knew that challenges existed in certain areas of the community, it used communication development to take care of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the community, Sanusi (2023).

The institution, with the credibility and reputability of the Visionary Overseer, Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye, has members of staff who are dedicated and committed to the University's vision, mission, and goals, and as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility, engages the community in development projects such as awarding scholarships to beneficiaries from the community, sensitizing the community periodically on any health-threatening issues: such as was done during Covid 19, distributing palliatives to members of the community as the need arises, and engaging the artisans in the community on construction work as well as employing some of the residents of its host community into the services of the institution, an act that has increased its value.

Similar to corporations, the question of what motivates universities to commit to their social responsibilities exists. However, in the lack of any specific law obliging universities to consider social responsibilities as their core policies and any incentive for considering social practices for university performance measurement, the social practices of universities seem to be more voluntarily based and still unexplored.

Universities, as the centers of knowledge generation and sharing, play a very important role in solving the world's problems by ensuring a sustainable tomorrow. However, it is questionable whether universities are concerned about corporate social responsibility performance. Most universities tend to focus only on teaching social responsibility in terms of corporate social responsibility initiatives and do not go beyond this by attempting to improve their communities (Atakan and Eker 2007).

Organizations have adopted the trend of "Communication Development". The word "transformation" is frequently used synonymously with "economic development," "progress," and "transformation." The phrase is generally regarded as positive and advantageous for social interaction in general and the community in particular. Development has always been one of the goals and aspirations of all human cultures. Given that it makes an effort to meet everyone's basic needs, particularly those of the most marginalized elements of society, it has a crucial functional value for enhancing the socioeconomic level and way of life of the general public.

As the work is documented, the study acts as a basin of knowledge from which future scholars can easily draw. The study also provides a tool for the management of Nigerian universities and other higher institutions, as well as those throughout the world, to understand the

importance of CSR performance and may also provide guidance for policy creation. Further, the study is significant because it makes insightful recommendations on how colleges and other higher institutions can improve their CSR efforts to gain the trust and support of their stakeholders.

Review of Literature

Although universities have served as the basis for education and the advancement of human sustainability for centuries, a critical question is the importance of the social responsibility of the university, which can be referred to as USR, it highlighted the corporatization of the universities and the increased demand as a respectable corporate citizen, Nagy and Robb (2008).

Shwayun (2011) contends that managing social responsibility necessitates the employment of appropriate tools and personnel for those activities. To ensure ethical behavior in all contacts between students and shareholders, colleges and institutions need to actively discuss how their current and future actions will affect society. To practice good citizenship, university administrators, faculties, departments, employees, and students identify, support, and strengthen their important communities. They provide performance metrics to confirm that social obligations and perceptions are in line with basic needs and projections for serving stakeholders.

The administration of the institution or organization must promote corporate social responsibility for it to be effective in fostering community cohesion and enabling individuals to work together toward shared goals and objectives, Dahan and Senol (2012).

Apart from organizations or institutions involved in corporate social responsibility, all entities are expected to work together, and the government and the host community should also be accountable for the development of communities throughout its states (Ite, 2004).

Development Communication and the Environment

No matter where an organization is located, its decisions and actions always affect the environment. This is consistent with how development communication functions. These effects could be brought on by how the company uses both living and non-living resources, as well as how the company's operations, goods, and services affect natural ecosystems. Development communication can be considered a tool for environmental responsibility, which is necessary for human life and prosperity. Consequently, it is significant in terms of social duty. Human rights, community development and involvement, and other social responsibility core topics are directly related to environmental issues and development communication.

Community involvement and communication development are essential components of overall sustainable development. Individual or group involvement in the community that aims to further the common good contributes to the development of civil society. Organizations that interact with the community and its institutions respectfully represent and uphold democratic and civic principles. The term "community involvement" includes not just

identifying and involving stakeholders with respect to the effects of an organization's operations, but also community support and identity. Above all, it requires recognizing the importance of the community. The awareness that an organization is a community stakeholder with major shared interests with all community members should be the catalyst for an organization's involvement in the community.

Overview of Corporate Social Responsibility and Host Community

Corporate Social Responsibility according to Wood, (1991) is an organization's configuration of social responsibility principles, social responsiveness procedures, and policies that are visible in program results as they relate to the societal interactions of the firms. Corporate Social Responsibility is a method of decision-making that takes into account environmental and social factors. This mandates that businesses have social and environmental goals in addition to their financial goals for profitability, Mirfazli, (2008).

Corporate social responsibility is a strategy that allows businesses to mimic the interests of both internal and external stakeholders while using those interests to create their execution strategy. Organizations must be effective, lucrative, and mindful of shareholder interests.

Unspoken Problem between the University and Community

The problem, however, is the perceptions of some of the community members who think that the Corporate Social Responsibility of Redeemer's University ought to be more than they are doing for the community. They feel that the university is making projects, hence providing more corporate social responsibility activities for the community. Another unspoken problem is the fear of religion, that the Institution owned by a Christian body may convert their Muslim community to a Christian-based one. Ede, a town in the southwest region of Osun state, with one local government and two local council development areas, is predominantly Muslim-dominated, the community initially found it tough to integrate itself into Western civilization, and they show this in their reaction to things that have to do with Redeemer's University before the narrative changed and mutual trust ensued. There is also a bit of a lack of understanding of development communication due to the unspoken problem of entitlement mentality portrayed by some of the residents of the community. Some of the residents, who are unemployed youths wanted to leverage the rights of the host community to make demands, but the management of the University acting in accordance with the institution, guided legally postulated employment to interested youths, and that resolved the demand.

It is important to note that Redeemer's University can today have a smooth working relationship with Ede, it hosts community-based on their consistent Focus Group Discussion, attends town hall meetings, advocacy towards the community's royal father and other stakeholders, alongside accessibility and availability with the show of interest in things relating to the community. The institutions' attentiveness and hand of fellowship resulted in confidence and trust from the community.

The study shows that the university is liberal in its operation, and not religious sentimental, but rather believes in the value system, growth and development of its organization and everything related to its environment, (the community).

The Stakeholder's Theory

Relating the Activities of the Redeemer's University of Nigeria to Stakeholder's theory, the institution's ethics, vision, mission, and objective addresses relationships with stakeholders and the community based on its interest. In short, it applies the principle of who or what counts. The stakeholder theory of Corporate Social Responsibility is based on the assumption that organizations, whether private or public, have obligations to stakeholders or communities that make up society. These elements are referred to as stakeholders' individuals and groups that are critical to the existence of the organization; they influence what the organization does, or they are influenced by organizational actions. As an integral part of the normative Corporate Social Responsibility theories, the stakeholder theory stipulates that the management of institutions or organizations has a moral duty to protect not only the corporation but also the stakeholders, Freeman (1983).

Method

The qualitative research method was adopted in this study. The rationale for using the qualitative research method was to give it an interpretative study, which allows each observer to create reality as part of the research process, which believes in the fundamental differences in human beings and strives for the depth of the study, rather than the breadth of it. The personal interview enables the researchers to gather qualitative data; exploring the need for universities to carry out corporate social responsibility. In this regard, the researchers asked open-ended questions, as this allowed the participants to express their opinions concerning the subject of study.

The Public Relations Officer, PRO of Redeemers University, and the Chairman of Ede Development Association were interviewed on the university's corporate social responsibility performance to its host community.

Analysis of Findings

The findings of this study show that Redeemers University of Nigeria, Ede participates in Corporate Social Responsibility and uses effective Communication Development as a tool for its operation.

Redeemer's University, despite being a faith-based institution is a liberal one, not fanatical, as it admits students irrespective of their religious background.

The host community enjoys Corporate Social Responsibility projects such as scholarship awards to beneficiaries from the community, sensitization, distribution of palliatives, engagement and employment of artisans for construction work, and employment of some of the residents into the services of the institution, as well as grading of roads and carrying out environmental sanitation in parts of the community.

The host community is aware of the Corporate Social Responsibility activities of Redeemers University, and for communication development, they hold period meetings to solidify their relationships.

The impact of the Corporate Social Responsibility carried out by the University is commendable.

The management of Redeemer's University with its objective of having a peaceful co-existence with the host community is aware of the corporate social responsibility programmes, and conveniently uses communication development for the understandable transaction(s).

The Redeemer's University of Nigeria has a long-term plan for itself, and it also accommodated Corporate Social Responsibility to its host community in its agenda.

The institution, though faith-based, is also profit-oriented and has no intention of forcing its religion on anyone in the community.

The institution was able to use Corporate social responsibility and other development tools to communicate effectively with its host community in Osun State.

The host community is comfortable with the institution and a good working relationship exists between them. Redeemer's University of Nigeria despite its religious affiliation played a considerable role in using CSR as a development tool to Ede with the aid of communication with its host community.

Corporate Social responsibility has contributed to the development of Ede community.
Religion did not cause a barrier between the co-existence of Redeemer's University and Ede, the host community.

Conclusion

One cannot overstate how important it is for universities to participate in CSR to foster goodwill. This study has convincingly shown that universities must practice CSR to gain the support of their host communities and other key stakeholders. As 21st-century organizations, universities should implement corporate social responsibility initiatives. Redeemer's University is an example of a CSR Ambassador. According to the report, universities should focus on several issues, including economic responsibility, philanthropic duty, and environmental responsibility. It positively supported the Ede community with its developmental intervention programs. The study therefore concludes that, in addition to colleges around the world always engaging in corporate social responsibility to win the respect of the stakeholders, they must also be mindful of the religion and culture of their host community.

Recommendations

1. Universities should make an effort to practice corporate social responsibility because it is one approach to earning the support of their stakeholders.
2. Universities are to make use of communication development as a tool to create cutting-edge knowledge to solve the issues and problems in their host communities and society at large.

3. Universities engaged in corporate social responsibility via communication development to garner economic sustainability should publicize the contents.
4. Universities should improve on their social responsibility to win the goodwill of their stakeholders while involving them in their activities.
5. Supporting the government in the provision of an enabling environment, Universities should have open-door policies that will accommodate more Corporate Social Responsibility programmes for the host communities.
6. Universities should not make Corporate Social Responsibility a one-time affair but should be futuristic about it, through continuity.
7. The government(s) should further equip institutions for communication development activities for Corporate Social Responsibility in the interest of the communities, states, and the nation's development.
8. Residents and stakeholders of the community are advised to pay closer attention to and appropriately execute communication development intended to foster growth and development in the community, state, and country at large.
9. Universities should document their corporate social responsibility activities carried out to develop their communities for reference purposes.

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APPENDIX I
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY BY REDEEMER'S UNIVERSITY TO ITS HOST COMMUNITY:
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- What is your organisation's business operations?
- What is your understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?
- Does your institution engage in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?
  Please, give reasons for your answers and where possible cite examples
- How would you rate the awareness and practice of corporate social responsibility in Ede, your host community?
- What do you think are or could be the main drivers of (reasons for) CSR in the host community?
- Please, give examples of CSR activities in Ede Community and what they are meant to address
- In your opinion, how has the CSR carried out by your institution been able to impact the host community?
- Were there any challenges in carrying out the CSR to the host community?
- What other contributions do you think the institution can give the community?
- Did the CSR aid the development of the community?
- What advice would you give your institution as regards future CSR?
- Did religion cause any issues between the institution and the community?

APPENDIX II
HOST COMMUNITY REACTION TO REDEEMER'S UNIVERSITY CSR:
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- What is your understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) that Redeemer's University is contributing to your community?
- Did religion cause any barrier to the corporate social responsibility implemented by Redeemer's University?
- How would you rate the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)in Ede, your host community?
- What do you think are or could be the main drivers of (reasons for) CSR in your host community?
- Please, give examples of CSR activities in Ede Community and the town has benefited?
- In your opinion, how has the Universitys CSR carried out in your host community been able to impact it?
- Were there any challenges in carrying out the CSR to your host community?
- What other contributions do you think the community can benefit from the institution?
- What advice would you give your institution as regards future CSR?
- Did the CSR contribute to the development of your community?
- Did religion cause any issues between the community and the institution?