



## **Business Social Responsibilities as Predictor of Large Scale Firms Involvement in Employability Skills Acquisitions Programmes in Anambra State**

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### **Abstract**

The objective of this research paper was to determine the extent to which business social responsibilities predict the involvement of large-scale firms in employability skills acquisition programmes in Anambra State. To achieve this objective, two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated. An ex-post facto correlational survey design was adopted for the study, as the researcher aimed to predict the dependent variable based on the independent variables. A self-developed questionnaire was employed for data collection. The study population comprised 291 business development managers or their equivalents, and the entire population was used as the sample through purposive census sampling, given the manageable size. A researcher-structured questionnaire titled Employability Skills Acquisition Programmes Checklist (ESAPC) and Corporate Social Responsibilities Questionnaire (CSRQ) was developed and utilized for data collection. The instrument was face-validated by three research experts from the Department of Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education, Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was employed, yielding a high correlation coefficient of 0.85. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions, while simple regression analysis was employed to test the null hypotheses. The findings revealed, among others, that business social responsibilities significantly predicted the involvement of large-scale firms in employability skills acquisition programmes in Anambra State. It was recommended that private sector organizations should intensify their financial participation in skills acquisition programmes.

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## Introduction

One way in which large-scale business organizations typically make their presence felt in society is through corporate social responsibility (CSR). Until fairly recently, most large businesses were driven almost exclusively by a single goal: maximizing profits. Over the past few decades, however, more business leaders have come to recognize that they have responsibilities beyond simply generating returns for shareholders and executives. They now acknowledge a broader obligation to act in ways that benefit not only their companies but also people, the planet, and society at large. This realization has led to the emergence of companies that identify as socially responsible. But what exactly is corporate social responsibility, and in what forms can it manifest?

According to Davies (2022), corporate social responsibility also known as corporate citizenship or corporate conscience—is a voluntary practice that helps companies remain accountable to their stakeholders while promoting ethical behavior. Businesses use their resources to evaluate and address social, environmental, and economic issues. Through such initiatives, companies can create a positive impact on society. CSR is essentially a self-regulatory framework that encourages businesses to operate ethically and sustainably. There are several key areas that companies may focus on when engaging in CSR activities.

Johnson (2022) noted that a company may engage in activities that support marginalized groups, protect the environment, or provide financial donations to important causes. Instead of focusing on a single type of CSR, many companies adopt a multifaceted approach. Depending on how they structure their efforts, CSR can take several different forms. As a self-regulating business model, CSR enables a company to be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public. By practicing CSR, businesses become more conscious of their social, economic, and environmental impact. These practices not only help enhance societal well-being but also improve the company's reputation and strengthen its brand through initiatives such as

philanthropy, volunteerism, and sustainability programs.

George (2021) observed that a socially responsible company holds itself accountable not just to shareholders but also to the broader community. CSR is a strategy often employed by large corporations, especially those that are highly visible and successful. Such companies are seen as having a greater obligation to set ethical standards for their peers, competitors, and the industry at large. According to Ido and Bassey (2015), corporate social responsibility refers to strategies implemented by companies as part of their corporate governance framework to ensure that their operations are both ethical and beneficial to society.

CSR is founded on the belief that businesses have a responsibility to the society in which they operate. The online course *Sustainable Business Strategy* describes CSR as a form of self-regulation that may take the form of initiatives or structured strategies, depending on an organization's specific goals. Many organizations communicate their CSR efforts through formal reports shared with internal and external stakeholders. The meaning of "socially responsible" can vary from one organization to another, but many are guided by the concept of the *triple bottom line*—a framework that emphasizes the importance of people, planet, and profit. This principle, often summarized as the "three P's," captures the essence of sustainable and responsible business practice.

Ultimately, CSR enhances an organization's public image and contributes to the well-being of society. It also provides opportunities for companies to engage their customers and employees in meaningful ways. Understanding corporate social responsibility can help individuals and organizations design and implement impactful CSR initiatives. In this article, we explore the different types of CSR and the benefits each offers.

Most firms embrace corporate social responsibility (CSR) due to moral convictions, which can result in numerous benefits and meaningful social change. CSR initiatives can serve as powerful marketing tools, helping a company position itself favorably in the eyes of consumers, investors, and regulators. These

initiatives can also enhance employee engagement and satisfaction—key factors that drive retention. Moreover, they can attract potential employees whose personal values align with those of the organization.

Additionally, CSR initiatives often compel business leaders to re-evaluate their hiring and management practices, the sourcing of products or components, and the processes they use to deliver value to customers. In some ways, corporate social responsibility may be viewed as a public relations strategy. However, it extends far beyond that, as CSR can significantly improve a firm's competitiveness. The business advantages of CSR include:

- Enhancing a company's reputation and brand equity.
- Creating customer loyalty, as customers often feel they are contributing to positive social causes by supporting a socially responsible company.
- Driving operational efficiency, which leads to cost savings and reduced environmental impact.
- Increasing employee loyalty and commitment, as employees take pride in working for an ethically conscious organization.
- Attracting investors who prioritize ethical and sustainable business practices.
- Strengthening relationships with regulatory bodies, potentially reducing the company's regulatory burden.

One major avenue through which large-scale business organizations promote CSR is the Skill Acquisition Training Program. This program empowers students with valuable skills, fosters responsible citizenship and ethical conduct, promotes economic self-reliance, and enhances social cohesion among participants. Graduates of such programs are expected to become proficient in independently producing goods or offering services, thereby He enumerated the guidelines for the sustenance of skill acquisition programme to include the followings:

- Provision of training that gives the trainees the opportunities to acquire skills that are appropriate for preparation in a field of trade for gainful employment.

achieving economic empowerment, reducing recidivism, and contributing to community development. Moreover, skill acquisition programs aim to improve social harmony and mutual understanding among participants, while fostering greater confidence and personal growth.

Skill acquisition can be defined as a form of training provided to individuals or groups that leads to the development of knowledge and abilities necessary for self-sustenance. It involves training in various trades under a formal agreement between trainers and trainees, conducted over a specified duration and under agreed conditions.

Ochiagha (2022) defined skill acquisition as the process of demonstrating consistent, active thinking or behavior in a specific activity. He further described it as the ability to perform or carry out an activity related to meaningful tasks, work, or employment. According to him, for skills to be effectively acquired, individuals must learn appropriate knowledge, develop positive attitudes, and form habits and qualities of character that prepare them intellectually, emotionally, and morally for a successful future.

Similarly, Donli (2014) viewed skill acquisition as the application of ideas and knowledge gained through training, aimed at fostering the entrepreneurial spirit necessary for meaningful development. He emphasized that when individuals are given the opportunity to acquire skills relevant for self-reliance in the economy, it enhances their charisma and adaptability in any work environment. He also noted that skill acquisition fosters both competition and cooperation among people.

In the same vein, Magbagbeola (2020) posited that skill acquisition involves accumulating various abilities that improve task performance through the integration of both theoretical and practical knowledge.

- Provision of definite skills that relate to each trade that makes one a professional in one field instead of the others.
- That training have to be done by competent, experienced and qualified instructors

- Skill acquisition requires much practice, patience, interest, ability, aptitude and personality traits.
- Skill acquisition requires conducive environment.
- Training requires constructive human relationship, business skills, imitation and constructive ideas.
- The principles guiding training in a particular field in terms of attitude, customer relationship, productivity, efficiency, supply and demand needs to be appreciated. From the above scenario, it can be stated that skill acquisition requires a holistic approach in the realization of creative ideas. It helps in the transformation of knowledge and skills into creative venture.

In recent years, in order to achieve the desired goal, different training programmes were instituted by large scale business organizations in order to imbibe in the youths the culture of creativity and entrepreneurship. These training programmes are:

- i. Workshop and seminars: In this case, the directorate organizes workshops and seminars on different trades and invited the youths to participate in such exercises. Papers were invited from

### **Types of Empowerment and Skill Acquisitions Programmes by large scale business organizations**

Empowerment according to Kogi State Government (2021) is a way of changing the attitude and potentials of individual's to positively re-direct them to gain control over their life or situation they are in. This involves making individuals to create and produce goods and services that will help them economically. The various youth empowerment programmes so far discussed can be classified into the four main types namely, economic empowerment, productive empowerment, marketing empowerment, and skill acquisition empowerment.

- **Economic Empowerment**

Economic empowerment according to Ogburn, (1996) is the way of motivating individuals in the society to be productive and

both private and public sectors to enable the trainees acquire skills and knowledge that will be relevant to them in future.

- ii. On the-job training: New employees of the directorate are usually assigned to specific jobs or work in shops, offices and mechanics workshops, to enhance their creative ability. Effective on-the-job training depends primarily on qualified and competent hands employed to train the youths. This type of training according to Ochiagha (2022) is helpful because it makes the trainees to master the job easily.
- iii. Off-the-job training: This type of training enables the trainees to leave their job and obtain an additional training which enable them to be acquainted with new ideas in the work environment. The training programme according to Magbagbeola (2004) was initiated by the directorate because of the intensiveness of the training. It is believed that after the training, the trainees get accustomed to their work easily because of past experience on the job and empowers them economically.

self-dependent by inculcating into the individual's entrepreneurship skills such as personal business initiatives and basic skills in business development. In fact, the best foundation for any business success is to have several possibilities for creating profits. However, profit creation is determined by the choice of the business, self-concept, interest, resources, and aspirations which in turn would enable the person to achieve self-development, self-actualization and self-fulfillment.

- **Production Empowerment**

Production empowerment according to Idachaba (2018) is a basic focus of entrepreneurship initiatives. It is determined by what the person trained wants to produce, how to produce and to whom those goods are produced. Personal trait and initiative will instigate in the person on what to produce which depends on the resource available.

How to produce the goods depends on the factors of production available to him? Finally, to whom such goods are produced depends on the market. Knowledge of the factors of production which determines how the goods are to be produced and to whom they are to be produced can be imbibed mostly through training and marketing strategies.

- **Marketing empowerment**

Marketing of goods and services produced in any economy according to Agbaegbu (2019) is one of the crucial attributes of a businessman. This is because it creates in businessmen or women the ability to convince a customer that what have been produced is the best. Acquisition of adequate marketing skill through training enables the entrepreneurs to market their product easily. Usually, different marketing strategies are learnt and are applied to convince the customers of the need to purchase the products. The marketing strategies include effective communication, self confidence and self-esteem.

- **Skill Development Empowerment**

Skills are acquired as ability for individual or group of individuals to acquire more skills for the resolution of a particular situation. Youth empowerment as an act of skill development therefore signifies different creative measures of developing basic ideas through training in skills that are relevant to the social and economic survival of the nation (Ochiagha, 2020). The above empowerment strategies are expected to imbibe in the youths the spirit of craftsmanship and entrepreneurship which makes them job creators instead of job seekers. However, most youths in the country fall short of this empowerment either because they fail to participate in the youth empowerment schemes or because of the flaws in the implementation of the empowerment schemes which may include the following:

### **Statement of the Problem**

Business organizations are expected, by virtue of their corporate social responsibilities, to engage in employability skill acquisition initiatives because they understand the various skills required for effective operations. These efforts are often aimed at bridging the gap between the skills students acquire in school and those needed in

the workplace, thereby addressing the issue of skill mismatch. According to Benson (2023), many business organizations have deviated from this promising venture, possibly due to economic challenges and other external factors. A significant number of business organizations have abandoned these noble initiatives, which has often led to students acquiring skills that do not align with job requirements or industry standards. This mismatch contributes to high unemployment rates, a loss of available job opportunities, and, by extension, a lower standard of living.

It is also disheartening to note that the employability skills taught in tertiary institutions often do not align with those required by large-scale business organizations even when students participate in the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) in their third year. It was against this backdrop that the present research was conducted to address this gap.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main objective of this research was to determine if the corporate social responsibilities of large scale business organizations can predict their involvement in employability skills acquisitions programmes in Anambra state. Specifically, the study sought to determine the relationship between;

- Corporate social responsibilities and firm's involvement in organizing employability skills workshops and symposiums to VTE students.
- Corporate social responsibilities and firms involvement in organizations of employability skills on the job training to VTE students.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were asked by the researcher to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between corporate social responsibilities and firms' involvement in employability skills workshops and symposiums to VTE students?
2. What is the relationship between corporate social responsibilities and firms' involvement in employability skills on the job training to VTE students?

**Research Hypotheses**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Corporate social responsibilities of firms do not significantly predict their involvement in employability skills workshops and seminars to VTE students in Anambra State.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: Corporate social responsibilities of firms do not significantly predict their involvement in employability skills on the job training to VTE students in Anambra State.

**Research Methodology**

**Area of the Study**

This study was conducted in Anambra state, South East, Nigeria. The Anambra people are part of the Igbo speaking tribe in Nigeria. The researcher's interest in Anambra spans from the fact that the area is a home to several large scale businesses whose involvement in employability skill acquisitions programmes are not really spelt out.

**Design of this Study**

The ex post facto correlational design was adopted for this study. This is because the researcher had no control over the variables in which the independent variable was used to predict the dependent variables.

**Population of the Study**

A total population of 291(234 managers of large scale businesses and 57 final year students of office management students of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka) were used for the study.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample size of 291 subjects were selected through census sampling technique which was purposively utilized because the population was small and manageable by the researcher.

**Instrumentation**

The researcher made use of checklist titled "Employability skills Acquisition

Programmes Checklist (ESAPC)" and "Corporate Social Responsibilities Questionnaire (CSRQ) to elicit responses from respondents.

**Validation of the Instrument**

The research instruments were validated by three research validates from the faculty of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) whose criticism, observations and recommendations were incorporated into the final draft.

**Reliability of the Instrument**

Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. The instruments were administered to students and managers in Enugu state Nigeria. A high reliability score of .85 was gotten for the study which was high enough for the study.

**Administration of the Instrument**

The researcher together with a research assistant who was briefed helped in administration and collection of the research instruments. A collection rate of 100% was achieved.

**Data Analysis Technique**

Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to answer the research questions while simple regression analysis was used to analyze the null hypotheses.

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between corporate social responsibilities and firms

involvement in employability skills workshops and symposiums to VTE students

**Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of CSR and Seminars. N=291**

Variables	EX	EXY	EX <sup>2</sup>	Rcal	Decision
	EY		EY <sup>2</sup>		

CSR (X)	1423	12580	0.76	6432	Strong positive relationship
Seminars (Y)	1654		8650		

Data analysis on Table 1 had shown that computed r value of .76 was higher than .45. This shows that corporate social responsibilities relate positively strong with firms' involvement in employability skills through workshops and symposiums.

**Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between corporate social responsibilities and firms' involvement in employability skills on the job training?

**Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of CSR and on the Job Training N=291**

Variables	EX EY	EXY	EX <sup>2</sup> EY <sup>2</sup>	Rcal	Decision
CSR (x)	.986	6549	7175	.68	Strong positive relationship
OJT (y)	895	13,570			

Data analysis on Table 2 had shown that the r cal value .68 was strongly positive. This implies that corporate social responsibilities relate positively strong with firms' involvement in employability skills acquisitions through on the job training to students of VTE in Anambra state.

**Research Hypothesis 1**

Corporate social responsibilities do not significantly predict firms' involvement in employability skills workshops and symposiums to VTE students in Anambra state.

**Table 3: Regression analysis of csr predicting involvement in organizing seminars N=291**

Variables.	B.	SSEB.	Beta.	t.	P	Decision
CSR.	.765	.329	.756	4.364	0.01	Significant
S&S.	.689	.0543		8.231	0.00	Significant

R= 0.65. Adjusted R2=0.77. F(1,289)=197, 167

From the data analysis on Table 3, it can be seen that the beta value of .756 was highly positive which shows that corporate social responsibilities significantly predicts firms' involvement in employability skills acquisitions through organizing workshops, seminars and symposiums to students of VTE.

This has made the null hypothesis to be rejected.

**Research Hypothesis 2**

Corporate social responsibilities do not significantly predict firms' involvement in employability skills acquisitions through on the job training to students of VTE.

**Table 4**

Variables	B	SSEB	Beta	t.	P	Decision
CSR.	.755	.236	.863	5.342	0.01	Significant
OJT.	.681	.276	8.335		0.00	Significant

R=.76. Adjusted R2= .832. F(1, 189)=175,188.

Data analysis on Table 4 had shown that the beta score is .863. This shows that

corporate social responsibilities significantly predict firms' involvement in employability

skills acquisitions through on the job training to students of VTE.

### Summary of Major Findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

- Corporate social responsibility is strongly and positively related to firms' involvement in employability skill acquisition through seminars, workshops, and symposiums for students of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE).

### Discussion of Findings

Data analysis presented in Tables 1 and 3 revealed a significant and positive relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and firms' involvement in employability skills acquisition through the organization of seminars, workshops, and symposiums targeted at students of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE). This finding underscores the strategic role that CSR initiatives can play in bridging the skills gap among graduates, particularly those enrolled in vocational training programs. It demonstrates that socially responsible firms are more likely to invest in activities that foster human capital development, especially by providing platforms where students are exposed to real-world industrial expectations, job readiness experiences, and market-driven competencies.

The outcome of this study aligns with the perspective of Johnson (2023), who posited that workshops and seminars are essential avenues for cultivating job-relevant skills among graduates, as they provide both theoretical insights and practical exposure to industry requirements. Similarly, Ido and Bassey (2015) emphasized the corporate obligation of firms in nurturing a competent future workforce by collaborating with educational institutions to transfer industry-specific knowledge and expertise. Therefore, CSR, when properly harnessed, becomes a tool for sustainable talent development and youth empowerment.

Beyond the conventional understanding of CSR as a philanthropic

- Corporate social responsibility is strongly and positively related to firms' involvement in employability skill acquisition through on-the-job training for VTE students.
- Corporate social responsibility does not significantly predict firms' involvement in employability skill acquisition through seminars, workshops, and symposiums.
- Corporate social responsibility does not significantly predict firms' involvement in employability skill acquisition through on-the-job training for VTE students.

gesture, the findings of this study provide fresh insight into how CSR can be reframed as an instrument for strategic educational intervention. Firms that proactively organize capacity-building forums as part of their CSR agenda are not only contributing to societal development but are also shaping the employability profile of the future labor force. This reflects a shift from traditional CSR towards a more dynamic, skills-oriented CSR model that aligns corporate goals with educational advancement.

Conversely, the data analysis from Tables 2 and 4 indicated that CSR does not significantly predict firms' involvement in employability skills acquisition through on-the-job training for VTE students. This result presents a nuanced understanding of CSR practice in the Nigerian business context, particularly as it pertains to experiential learning opportunities like industrial attachment or Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). While on-the-job training is widely recognized as a potent avenue for embedding practical skills and work ethics, this study suggests that firms may not be prioritizing it as a CSR mechanism, perhaps due to financial constraints, operational risks, or lack of structured collaboration with academic institutions.

Nevertheless, the implications of this finding are instructive. It points to the need for deliberate policy frameworks and incentives that can encourage firms to adopt on-the-job training as a core component of their CSR obligations. As Davies (2022) rightly noted, on-the-job training provides a veritable platform

for practical skill transfer and workplace socialization. When firms withdraw from this responsibility, they inadvertently widen the skills mismatch between graduates and labor market demands.

Therefore, the study advocates a recalibration of CSR priorities in Nigeria's industrial ecosystem to include structured and scalable on-the-job training programs for VTE students. It also calls for a redefinition of corporate engagement strategies where CSR is

### Conclusion

The study was inspired by the pressing need to enhance the employability of students through strategic partnerships with large-scale business organizations, given their unique understanding of industry-relevant skills and labor market expectations. Recognizing that these firms are well-positioned to influence the structure and quality of workforce preparation, the study explored the extent to which their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives serve as predictive factors for their involvement in employability skills acquisition programs in Anambra State.

By engaging both final-year students of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) and managers of large-scale enterprises, the study adopted a robust and multi-perspective approach to examining the interplay between corporate responsibility and human capital development. The findings revealed that CSR is not merely a corporate obligation aimed at enhancing public image, but a strategic mechanism through which firms can invest in the future workforce. Specifically, the results demonstrated that CSR initiatives are significantly related to firms' involvement in employability skills acquisition through avenues such as seminars, workshops, symposiums, and on-the-job training. These platforms serve as vital channels for exposing students to practical knowledge, work ethics, and essential technical competencies required in contemporary industries.

Importantly, the study adds to the growing body of literature that views CSR not just as a philanthropic exercise but as an essential pillar of sustainable development. When firms deliberately align their CSR policies with educational support—particularly through capacity-building engagements—they

not only measured by donations and sponsorships but also by the tangible contributions firms make to human capital development through skill-based interventions. By doing so, CSR evolves from a mere act of goodwill to a transformative force capable of driving sustainable employment, reducing youth unemployment, and fostering national development through education-industry synergy.

contribute meaningfully to reducing the prevalent skills mismatch, increasing youth employability, and fostering economic empowerment.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the critical role of large-scale business organizations in shaping the future workforce through deliberate and skill-focused CSR initiatives. It calls for increased collaboration between industries and educational institutions to institutionalize employability training as a shared responsibility. For policy makers and educational administrators, the findings suggest a need to develop frameworks that encourage businesses to invest more proactively in skill acquisition initiatives. Ultimately, integrating CSR with education and workforce readiness efforts presents a powerful strategy for addressing unemployment, advancing vocational education, and achieving inclusive socio-economic development in Nigeria.

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusions reached, the following are recommended;

- i. Universities and other tertiary institutions should intensify the partnership that exist between the citadel of learning with the industries to close the perceived skills gap.
- ii. Large scale businesses should intensify their support to research centers in enhancing and developing employability skills for industrial needs.
- iii. VTE students should endeavour to acquire employability skills through digital means to close the gaps.
- iv. Finally, the SIWES programmes should be closely monitored by the

universities to ensure students get the requisite skills for employment.

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