

Original Article**CSR as a Public Relations Strategy for Peace and Development in the Niger Delta****Zubair shah****Usman Khan**

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**Abstract**

This research examined corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a proactive public relations strategy that could be implemented to address peace and development issues in oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta. The research was built upon the frustration-aggression hypothesis, and descriptive analysis was employed in its execution. Based on the research findings, it is evident that both the foreign oil companies and the federal government operating in the oil-rich region have yet to implement tangible strategies that could foster sustained prosperity and harmony. Moreover, the host communities demonstrate a steadfast dedication to enduring harmony and progress. Consequently, the research suggests that in order to foster employment for both current and future generations, the government, the Niger Delta Ministry, and oil companies operating in the region should broaden their corporate social responsibility endeavors to encompass factories and enterprises.

**Key words:** frustration-aggression hypothesis, descriptive analysis, oil companies operating

## Introduction

Philosophy pertains to a system or set of beliefs that is sanctioned by a particular group or school of thought. It consists of a logical examination of issues pertaining to knowledge, ethics, a phenomenon, and existence. Social science researchers espouse the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR), which aims to proactively address crises, foster harmonious coexistence, and facilitate long-term progress among all stakeholders in society. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be defined as the practice of a corporation allocating a portion of its profits back into the region where it was generated, with the intention of reinvesting those earnings. It is asserted that the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) originated during the twentieth century. Large corporations that were antisocial, powerful, and excessive in size were subject to severe criticism at the time [1]. Furthermore, they were charged with participating in anti-competitive practices, prompting the implementation of legislative and regulatory measures aimed at preventing corporate hegemony. Subsequently, a limited number of progressive and forward-thinking corporate executives counseled the business community to channel its influence and power towards more constructive and significant objectives, as opposed to profit-driven self-interest. Numerous business leaders responded favorably to this appeal, and CSR emerged [1]. Heald asserts that a considerable portion of the fortunes of affluent industrialists and executives, including the steelmaker and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, was donated to charitable organizations. In addition, Henry Ford, the progenitor of Ford Motors and other automotive enterprises, implemented paternalistic initiatives to attend to the recreational and health

requirements of his employees, thereby advancing the well-being of the less fortunate and society at large. Two fundamental concepts that form the basis of corporate social responsibility are stewardship and charity, which emerged from these early ideas. Although it appeared advantageous, this viewpoint was not prevalent among merchants. One school of thought holds that the sole purpose of investors and entrepreneurs in establishing businesses is to generate profits; they have no inclination to make any kind of societal contribution. Opponents argue that corporations are obligated to contribute a portion of their profits back to society. This philosophy is inevitably gaining traction among the general public, and as a result, corporate social responsibility is expanding in prominence. Okiyi posits that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is accompanied by both advocates and opponents. Advocates argue that high expectations of society are unwarranted in regards to businesses, while detractors contend that "social responsibility is far too costly and is seldom subjected to cost-benefit analysis" [2]. Notwithstanding the existence of divergent perspectives regarding corporate social responsibility (CSR), contemporary Nigerian administrations are unanimously advocating for corporate participation in governance as a means to foster sustainable development and promote the advancement of the local communities. Consecutive administrations have disregarded the Niger Delta region, the oil-hosting communities, and the reservoir of Nigeria's national wealth. Consequently, persistent unrest, abductions, and disruptions to oil company operations have ensued with the intention of alerting the federal government to the plight of these individuals. Based on the report, the Niger Delta would

experience advantageous outcomes through the proactive execution of suitable corporate social responsibility initiatives that foster the intended calm and development.

## **2. The aims of the research**

- 1) Evaluate the significance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in consideration of the Niger Delta's historical disregard.
- 2) Advocate for enhanced corporate social responsibility initiatives among the Niger Delta Ministry, the Nigerian government, and multinational oil corporations, with the aim of promoting development and harmony in the oil communities of the Niger Delta.

## **3. Methods**

This paper employs a descriptive evaluation of secondary sources as its methodology.

## **4. Composition of Thought**

The foundation of this article is the frustration-aggression theory [3]. The objective of this study is to examine the factors that motivate prominent environmental beneficiaries, including the Nigerian government, international oil corporations, and the Ministry of Niger Delta, to promote disorder, underdevelopment, and environmental degradation in the host communities. The widespread environmental hazards and insecurity experienced by Niger Deltans, whose livelihoods are entirely reliant on their interactions and connections with their surroundings, are the cause of this. The security of the Niger Delta region has historically been influenced and determined by its interaction with the surrounding environment. Unwarranted obstructionism or intervention in this matter

comprises a violation of security and a menace that exacerbates animosity and violent strife. Sigmund Freud, the progenitor of psychoanalytic theory, holds that human behavior is predetermined by inclinations, specifically the sexual instinct. Freud, Ramirez emphasizes, was acutely aware that impeding the expression of these impulses invariably results in the formation of an aggressive urge. It is noteworthy to mention that a cohort of psychologists, spearheaded by Dollard, embraced this captivating theory and developed it into the renowned Frustration-Aggression Theory (FAT) [3]. As per the widely acknowledged FAT, encountering a barrier in the pursuit of an objective engenders frustration, which has the potential to escalate into aggression [3]. Consequently, dissatisfaction resulting from duplicity, obstruction, neglect, failures, deprivation, inconsistency, or the disparity between needs and expectations and achievement is classified as conflict [4]. Faleti referred to this equation as the "want-get ratio." In "Why Men Rebel" [5], Gurr establishes a connection between Relative Deprivation and the disparity that exists between an individual's value capabilities and the expectations he has of others. "People have a tendency to become aggressive when what they receive falls short of their expectations," according to Ademola [6]. This provides an explanation for the opposition raised by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, towards the unwarranted interference of the MNOCs and the NG in Ogoniland's harmonious coexistence with the environment. The aforementioned engagement, as per the account, reached its apex with the unlawful seizure of Ogoni land for the purpose of conducting oil extraction and substantial damage to the environment (violence) [7]. As per Junger's account, MOSOP

expeditiously filed a petition against Shell and the other MNOCs in reaction to NG's contempt. In addition to environmental restitution and \$10 billion in cumulative royalties, MOSOP desired a greater voice in future oil exploration. Okumagba [8] identifies the frustration-aggression hypothesis's distinctive approach to conflict analysis as the "transferred aggression" or "frustration displacement" theory. This motivates the youth residing in the Niger Delta to establish unauthorized refineries throughout the area with the intention of capitalizing on the resources that have been entrusted to them by God [9]. The International Crisis Group elucidates this mechanism with regard to the Niger Delta conflict by asserting that opportunists from the delta were encouraged to pursue softer targets further west due to heightened security measures implemented by the delta's oil companies and military pressure exerted by the Joint Task Force (JTF), which comprises the army, navy, and police [8]. As per this theoretical framework, a feeble victim often concentrates his animosity on soft targets that are intimately connected to or consequential to the offender. In support of this, Okumagba asserts that "frustration displacement" frequently occurs in the Niger Delta due to the relative dominance of the Nigerian state—government face—off. Militia groups therefore target the government and other local organizations that are not frequently affected. This explains why oil installations are targeted by militants in the Niger Delta: they are critical to the aggressors, most prominently the Nigerian government and MNOCs. According to Major Jasper Adaka Boro's observation in 1966, the Niger Delta youth and militants employed covert refineries and assaults on oil infrastructure as a means of expressing their discontent with their subjugation

to the international community. Foreign oil employees became vulnerable to abduction, hostage-taking, and hijacking due to their position amidst the militants' frustrated displacement strategies and intentional hostility. Notwithstanding its terrorist nature, this strategy yielded substantial benefits by inciting the international press to advocate for the Niger Delta and bring attention to the disappearance of their fellow citizens. In contrast, a thorough analysis of MEND's methodology unveiled that, in contrast to the assertions made by Ibaba and Okonta, the organization did not partake in hostage-takings with the intention of demanding ransom. On the contrary, they strategically employed such incidents to garner international attention, specifically from the nations where the abducted foreign oil workers were situated [11] [12] [13]. Akahaluopoenes asserts that the militants presently possess what Kenule Saro-Wiwa toiled away in silence. A frustration-aggression thesis supported Horowitz's claim that a bloodied phenomenon cannot be analyzed using a bloodless theory. To put it another way, Saro-Wiwa perished when a bleeding phenomenon was misapplied a theory that did not account for blood. This further justifies the utilization of this theory as the analytical framework for the study [14].

## **5. Evaluation of Relevant Literature**

### **5.1. The Peace and Development Struggle in the Niger Delta**

In light of apprehensions regarding the responses of the oil industry and government to their cries, the oil-producing communities were compelled to develop means of expressing their feelings. Their responses manifested in diverse ways and endured for over five decades. The initial step was Adaka Isaac

Boro's 1966 advocacy for an independent state. The Ken Saro-Wiwa administration witnessed a significant international focus on the environmental and socioeconomic degradation of the Niger Delta, which prompted a struggle against the government and oil corporations involved. In the years that followed, the Kiama Declaration was introduced by the Ijaw Youth Council. Subsequently, a sequence of violent confrontations ensued among militant adolescents, predominantly of Ijaw heritage, which expanded the movement's reach in opposition to what the oil communities perceived as social injustices perpetrated by oil corporations with the support of succeeding governments.

### **5.2. Isaac Adaka Boro and the Self-Determination Struggle**

The Niger Delta's historical trajectory was profoundly impacted by the self-determination movement spearheaded by Isaac Adaka Boro from 1965 to 1966. After considering the detrimental effects on the environment and the inequitable allocation of resources, AdakaBoro, who were of Ijaw heritage, came to the conclusion that subjugating the larger ethnic groups was no longer essential. The predominant ethnic group, commonly known as the main ethnic group, comprises individuals of the nationalities Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. After a lengthy tenure as an educator, Boro subsequently enlisted in the Port Harcourt police force. He matriculated into the chemistry program at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka subsequent to his dismissal from the police force subsequent to his employment as an instructor at the Man O'War Bay Character and Leadership Centre in Western Cameroon. Without success, Boro's attempt to establish a Cuban embassy in Ghana with the intention of gaining support for his mission

was unsuccessful. He was obligated to enlist and organize approximately 150 youths into the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), an organization that subjected them to firearms and explosives training. By the conclusion of the second month of 1966, he effectively directed the assault of an NDVF team on a Yenagoa police station. They executed a series of oil pipeline explosions using their recently obtained arsenal of armaments subsequent to seizing their armory. He received a hanging sentence subsequent to his apprehension, trial, and conviction for treason. However, he was granted amnesty under the leadership of Gowon [15] [16] [17].

### **5.3. The Battle of the Niger Delta and Kenule-Saro-Wiwa**

The Ogonis, led by Kenule Saro-Wiwa, initiated a new phase of social dialogue with the government and oil corporations in an effort to exact restitution for the ongoing environmental devastation in the region [18]. SaroWiwa, an author and dramatist, utilized psychological tactics rather than physical ones to convey their distress at the United Nations headquarters while operating under the banner of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). Davis asserts that Ken Saro-Wiwa's endeavors culminated in the creation of the Ogoni Bill of Rights in 1990. This document demanded that the federal government guarantee the Ogonis appropriate representation, religious freedom, and the right to environmental protection. It would appear that the Ogoni Bill of Rights exerts a multiplicative influence on the region as it inspires numerous ethnic groups in the Niger Delta to adopt comparable ideologies. The Kaiama Declaration can be seen as a continuation of the Ogoni Bill of Rights. It represented the aspirations of young individuals in the Niger Delta to obtain



the oil resources, as evidenced by their campaign slogan "100 reasons why we want our resources." The Warri Accord, originating from Delta State's Itsekiri ethnic group, sought to guarantee that the Itsekiri ethnic nationality would benefit the most from oil production. Lastly, Akwalbom State's Oron Bill of Rights advocated for economic self-determination. Consequently, rather than manifesting as a unified, region-focused social movement, they took on fragmented forms adorned with micro-interest coloring that failed to adequately represent the entire region.

#### **5.4. Social Movements and Pressure Groups in the Niger Delta**

Social movements and pressure groups emerged in opposition to the oil-rich communities, aiming to advance the cause of rectifying the social and economic inequities linked to oil extraction and exploration in the region. The pressure groups, comprising primarily individuals of Ijaw and Urhobo descent, have not only generated global apprehension but also accelerated macroeconomic transformations in the region to a considerable degree. A significant radicalization of the hydrocarbon communities occurred from 1998 to 1999. This prompted widespread mobilization against Sani Abacha's regime at the time and a succession of violent demonstrations in the vicinity, with the Ijaw Youth Council serving as a pivotal organization. Between 1998 and 2003, an estimated 400 incidents of pipeline vandalism transpired in the region, according to one study [21]. The report indicates that the federal government incurred a loss of N500 billion during the specified period as a result of government-owed organizations' income loss. The adverse economic repercussions of the

pressure groups encompassed an additional \$28 billion in losses resulting from unproduced oil in 2008, in addition to the seizure of \$6.3 billion worth of oil [6] [9] [23]. The establishment of NDVF by Isaac AdakaBoro seems to have had an impact on contemporary pressure organizations. Two of the most influential pressure organizations were the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the Movement for Niger Delta Emancipation (MEND). After the 2005 apprehension and confinement of Mujahid Asari Dokubo, the commander of the NDPVF, MEND's activities garnered considerable attention. The implementation of MEND initiatives in 2006 resulted in an approximate reduction of 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) in oil production, thereby inflating the global crude oil price per barrel [24]. MEND proclaimed a "oil war" across the entire region in 2008. A declaration of war of this nature would imply that oil pipelines, production facilities, and the Nigerian military would all be targeted. To voice their discontent with the Federal Government and oil corporations with vested interests in Niger Delta oil production, MEND resorted to oil production cessation, abduction of oil personnel, and an open military confrontation with the Nigerian government. Despite the prevailing belief that the Federal Government was compelled to implement the amnesty program due to MEND's activities, this chapter continues to highlight concerns regarding inequitable resource allocation and inequality. Two prominent militias in the Niger Delta, MEND and NDPVF, are embroiled in a military conflict with the government regarding the inequitable distribution of the area's abundant hydrocarbon resources.

### **5.5. CSR and Government Relations in Oil-Rich Communities**

In response to the discontent of the oil-producing communities, the government implemented several development-oriented platforms that, at different points in time, seemed to address the socioeconomic requirements of the Niger Delta. As stated by Igben [18], the government employed a combination of "carrots" and "sticks" in this particular circumstance, wherein the carrots represented incentives and the sticks represented penalties. Major sticks implement a military strategy with the intention of addressing the region's expressed discontent regarding its prolonged socioeconomic neglect [18]. In an alternative formulation, Idowu asserts that soldiers unexpectedly pay them a visit when they demand compensation and reparation [21]. Hamilton concurs that "coercion and threat" have characterized "the government's response to the demands of the oil communities." As of the present moment, the value of imported firearms utilized to incite violence and militancy has escalated to \$6.8 billion [22]. The establishment of development commissions and, subsequently, the amnesty program are two "carrot" initiatives that seem to underpin the facade of robust public relations. The government's inclination to address the challenges faced by the Niger Delta region was bolstered by external pressure sources such as the United Nations and oil-producing communities. Reactions were more superficial and reactive rather than proactive due to the structure of the lip service [1] [4]. Furthermore, it was asserted that none of the numerous initiatives possesses the requisite infrastructure to support the growth master plan for the region. As per a 2006 assessment by the United Nations Improvement Program, the establishment of peace is an

essential precondition for any significant advancement. The study claims that the previous approach to development in the Niger Delta was inadequate and required a fundamental change in order to accommodate the region's requirements for progress. As a focal point for the integration of all stakeholders in the region, including oil companies, governments of all levels, the development commission known as the NDDC, and others committed to the region's progress, the report identified a seven-point agenda to guide the development process in the Niger Delta [28] [29]. As a prerequisite for progress, the promotion of peace is the initial item on the seven-point agenda. 2) Government should prioritize people; 3) economic diversification; 4) enhanced access to social services; 5) promotion of a sustainable environment that safeguards people's means of sustenance; and 6) facilitation of a coordinated HIV/AIDS response.

### **7) Retaining a collaborative endeavor to enhance human capital**

Despite the fact that this research was conducted in 2019, very little tangible activity had been performed, despite the fact that all of these excellent agenda items remained in textual form [30]. One of the other instruments that would have contributed to shaping the thought towards the promotion of peace, development, and an environmentally friendly region is the Banjul Charter, which is based on Article 24 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and canvasses for a friendly environment for meaningful development [5] [10] [16]. In response to the obvious issues of the oil-rich communities, the colonial administration established the Willink Commission in 1957, with the purpose of devising a

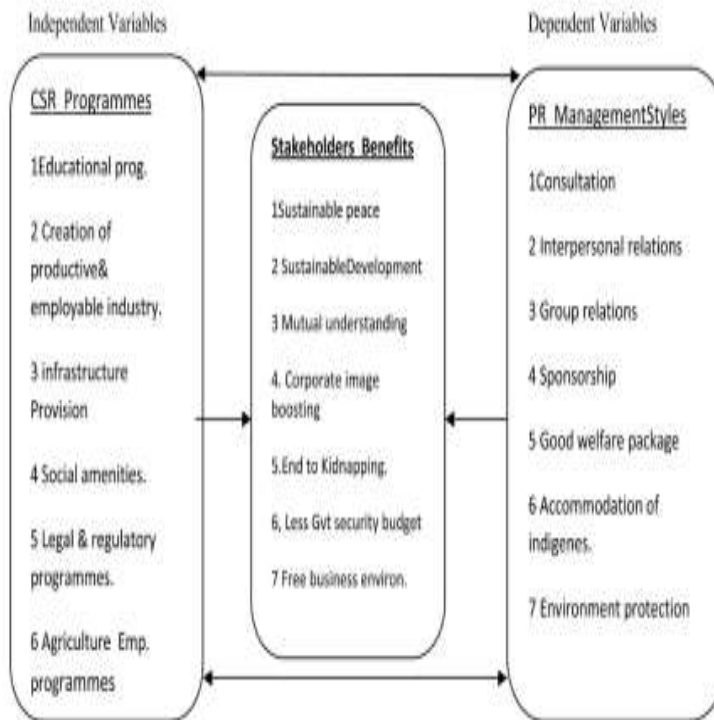
necessary development plan for the area. The 1958 report of the Willink's Commission characterizes the socioeconomic conditions of individuals residing in the marshes and waterways as more challenging than those of those residing in the central region of the Niger Delta. In 1961, in response to one of the commission's suggestions, the government instituted the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB). NDDB was acknowledged as having endeavored but failed to manage the Niger Delta problem. The Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) was constituted in 1976 in reaction to this setback. Furthermore, the collapse of the board gave the government power, permitting the establishment of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC). OMPADEC was founded in July 1979 with the purpose of finding solutions to handle ecological difficulties associated with oil exploration, as well as rebuilding and rejuvenating the Niger Delta, which had been neglected and deteriorating for more than 40 years owing to infrastructure. OMPADEC's aim was to collect and meticulously handle the monthly allotment from the Federation Account in line with each of the nine Niger Delta states' verified share of oil production. Between 1993 and 1997, the Commission received around US\$135 million, but it was evident that it could not claim any practical advantages from its presence in the Niger Delta, despite first having access to 3% and subsequently 6% of the region's revenues. Regrettably, the Commission was poised to close with a legacy of billions of naira in arrears from partially finished but unpaid contracts, as well as willful reckless waste of commission officers' allotted cash. According to the former Commission CEO, OMPADEC's inability to accomplish its objectives was caused by a lack of data, notably

concerning crude oil output, an insufficient budget, and an overwhelming amount of requests [30]. The Obasanjo government formed the Niger Delta Development Commission, or NDDC, in response to OMPADEC's inability to fully address the needs of the Niger Delta people [27] [30]. According to the UNDP report at the commission's inception, the Federal Government charged the commission with achieving the following goals: 1) social and physical infrastructures; 2) economic and environmental cleaning; and 3) human capital development.

The fact that the changes did not have the desired impact suggests that the majority of the changes were limited to renaming the various commissions rather than bringing about significant changes to management, personnel policy, operational, or strategic policies. As the proverb goes, "it is not possible to expect a different result if there is no change in the formula for doing the same thing." This type of growth makes a paradigm shift more difficult to achieve. As a result, as suggested by the CSR model below (Figure 1), this paper is in favor of upgrading CSR projects that have the potential to encourage industrialization in oil communities and thus engage the swarming youth in the oil industries, such as refineries, environmental maintenance, oil facility security, mechanization of farming, and other agricultural businesses.

**Figure 1: CSR Model**





### 5.6. Analyze the Model

A range of useful public relations models would have been used for this investigation. Excellent examples are the Ogbemi CSR paradigm, the Public Relations & Conflict Management model, and the Transfer Process methodology [30]. There is a need to construct another one above because none of them address the issues under examination adequately. The model above depicts the relationships between the independent and dependent variables in the study. It clearly states that CSR

initiatives such as educational programs, the development of profitable and employable industries, legal and regulatory initiatives for environmental, agricultural, and industrial safety, infrastructure improvements, and agricultural empowerment initiatives, among others, may go a long way toward satisfying all stakeholders in the host communities. When public relations strategists stimulate the above independent variables in consultation with community heads, women's organizations, youth, and traditional clan rulers, the result will be sustainable peace, sustainable development, mutual understanding among stakeholders, and a sense of collective ownership of the company's factories and pipelines.

### 5.7. Results

1) According to the research, the federal government, oil companies, or the ministry of Niger Delta affairs in Nigeria presently have no meaningful policies or initiatives in place that have the potential to foster long-term peace and development in the region. 2) The industrialization of the Niger Delta will play an important role in ensuring long-term peace and prosperity. 3) The federal government and multinational oil companies may both make important contributions by pushing their corporate social responsibility efforts to an industrial level and providing jobs for young people.

### 5.8. Conclusion

For decades, people have debated the optimal course of action regarding the link between oil host community development and peace in Nigeria's Niger Delta, as well as the exploration and production of oil and gas. The argument is that a substantial number of stakeholders think that oil companies

have not been sufficiently supportive of their host communities. Individuals, groups, and governments at all levels, as well as the mass media, have urged the federal government, the Niger Delta Ministry, and multinational oil companies to expand their corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects to sectors that can create jobs for both current and future generations.

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