UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PERFORMANCE OF SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of university social responsibility and performance of selected South-South Nigeria Universities. In order to achieve this, the study focused on key measures of university social responsibilities such as ethical responsibility, research and development, as they relate to university performance. Anchoring the study on related theoretical frameworks (Stakeholders theory), the study reviewed some empirical studies that aided the discussion of the findings. This study adopted the cross-sectional design and conducted survey using 399 respondents sample size drawn from six (6) selected Universities in states in the South – South region of Nigeria. Primary data were obtained through self-structured questionnaire distributed to 399 respondents. The questionnaire instrument was validated using the construct validity and the Cronbach Alpha reliability value obtained was averaged at 0.7746 approximated at 0.8. Out of the 399 copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, a total of 388 copies of the questionnaire were duly completed and returned. Data collected was analyzed using both
descriptive statistics such as Mean and Standard Deviation for the specific objectives and inferential statistics such as the multiple regressions to test the hypothesis. The study reveals that changes in university performance can directly be influenced by ethical responsibility, and research and development responsibility. The study discovered that the university social responsibility programme has the capacity and capability of improving and expanding the university developmental goals and objectives and concluded that there should be good existing working relationship between the students, staff and the universities communities at large to achieve its social responsibility. The study recommended that students and staff of the university community should be involved in university-initiated project geared towards transforming the overall interest of the university.

**Keywords:** Ethical responsibility, Research and Development, Performance, University, South – South Nigeria.

### INTRODUCTION

In the recent happening in Nigeria where Nigeria Government has embarked on the proliferation of private universities through the Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC), these private institutions of higher learning have had tendency to be commercialized and face out their competitors in order to attract students and teachers coming to their universities. Hence, social responsibility is a goal that public universities uses to achieve retention of existing students / staff and also to boost high student enrollment, service quality, image / reputation and trust (Ataniyazova, Friedman, & Kiran, 2022). Today the responsibility of modern universities is not limited merely to education and research disciplines, but also to make meaningful contribution to the immediate environment that comprises students / staff as well as local communities. The integration of social responsibility content into educational programs can create an environment for superior performance based on promoting the image of universities positively. (Vazquez, Aza, & Lanero, 2014).

It may be claimed that organizations do not function in a vacuum; their actions have an effect on the people and environments around them, including their internal and external stakeholders, the general public, and other impacted parties. Knowing full well that universities, as hubs for knowledge creation and exchange, play a significant role in addressing global issues by taking social responsibility for both the present and future of her stakeholders. The goal should be to meet today's requirements without sacrificing our ability to meet needs in the future and to create chances for tomorrow. This is what is meant by a sustainable tomorrow. This pertains to the idea that universities should be socially conscious of both their internal and exterior environments in order to gain their trust. (Alshuwaikhat and Abubakar, 2008; Haden, Oyler & Humphreys, 2009; Hoffman & Woody, 2008).

In order to compete in the changing education industry and also to fulfill its mission in a world with perpetual transformation, higher education institutions must recognize that their own actions should reflect the values and norms which they claim to embody. This means deepening their commitment to social responsibility at the operational level as well as the academic level, mostly by curricular activities. This will not only be beneficial to the institution itself, but also, will be beneficial to the society in general. This participation has in no way, cast any doubt that social responsibility has become a key target of many organizations because of the benefit they get from the social engagement within and outside their surrounding (Kamaludin, Ibrahim,
Sundarasen, 2022). Regardless of type of organisation, either business or education, the importance of building, cultivating, maintaining and fostering social responsibility and creating its awareness cannot be overemphasized. Due to the numerous threats that the global community is currently facing, including climate change, child labor, pollution, unethical behavior, unsafe working conditions, etc., social responsibility has become a common practice for all organizations. (Ataniyazova, Friedman, & Kiran, 2022).

In the today’s world, universities are playing key roles in “social responsibility” awareness transfer; concept development, spread of social activities, and engagement in the society. (Seriki, 2020, Tamvada, 2020, Smith, & Rhiney, 2020). Universities engaging learning – teaching process regarding to social responsibilities; and how universities partner with other organizations and local community to bring their students, learners and scholars great opportunities to have profound knowledge of social responsibility as well as directly involving in socially extracurricular activities. Hence, students and learners are not only taught about basic understanding in social responsibility but they also take part in social programs held in local communities in order to strengthen their awareness of their role in societal contribution (Agbaeze, & Ebirim, 2020). Universities also apply social responsibility even in campuses so that their students can follow their footsteps.

In recent times, higher institutions of learning have been responsible for the significant influence over a large population of future leaders. This influence is not limited to teaching and research, but it extends to include the need and ability to maintain its long-term performance better than its competitors (Latapí, Jóhannsdóttir, & Davídsdóttir, 2019). There has been a growing need among institutions of higher learning to recognize USR as a core component of the function of universities, rather than as a separate consideration. Higher education institutions that participate in USR initiatives have begun to align their key performance indicators by actively incorporating social activities into their core policies and social performance metrics. (Bharadwaj, & Yameen, 2021, Latapí, Jóhannsdóttir, & Davídsdóttir, 2019).

In Nigeria, we have seen that while business corporations undertake social responsibility with expectations of improving their reputation and competitor advantage; universities, aside the profit-making expectations, have some other targets when taking part in social responsibility. These institutions are places where knowledge is transferred because of the desire to develop new generation of people who can be trusted by and/or loyal to their society, possessing the required ethics and standard practices to fit into every sector of the society (Ataniyazova, Friedman, & Kiran, 2022). Higher institutions of learning help create awareness of social responsibilities, besides other necessary skills and knowledge. Furthermore, they assist in building communities which consists of people having interest in social understanding of the persisting problems of the society. Considering the relevance of universities in the South-South Nigeria, to what extent has their social responsibility affected their performance? It is against these backdrops, therefore, that this study wants to investigate the effect of university social responsibility on performance of selected universities in South-South Nigeria, looking at the mediating effect of student trust and service quality in these universities.

Statement of the problem
The survival and growth of any organization or institution of learning is largely dependent on the positive responses of the community or environment of such organization which consists the interacting factors that can either make or mar it. Before now, Universities are not seen as
organizations that are established for business purposes and so they tend not to embrace Social responsibility, but in recent time, they do because of the dynamism of some recent private and public universities with strategic social responsibility programme which has enhance high volume of student enrollment.

Universities now have a vital social responsibility role to play in society, especially in their local communities, as a result of socioeconomic difficulties. Due to this crucial role, it’s now a necessity among academics to rethink the objectives of these institutions towards achieving the goal of university social responsibility (USR). The USR of these universities stands as atopic worthy of study, and its existence is justified by its public nature and its intrinsic responsibilities to the university community and the society at large. Universities management are now oriented toward fulfilling these obligations of social, environmental, and economic responsibilities considering the expectations of improving their reputation / image, quality service, gaining student trust and as well as having competitive advantage over others.

There is great need to strengthen the universities social responsibility by creating awareness on social responsibilities to their immediate communities, assisting them in providing charity service and disaster relief materials, supporting disadvantage student and staff, train and enhance human capital development and involve in sensitization on critical environmental issues, to expand human knowledge through quality research and education for the nation and humanity. It is pertinent for this study to examine how universities in South – South Nigeria have been able to achieve some of these social responsibilities.

It's true that the universities in Nigeria are currently being developed to be a profiting organization like other business entity and seem to invest moderate amounts of money and effort into socially responsible activities, implying that there are moderate performance benefits to gain. Part of the gap this study intends to fill is to provide universities management a better insight into USR implementation efforts and how they may add value to their universities image / reputation before the student / staff. This study, therefore, examine the effect of university social responsibility on performance of selected universities in South-South Nigeria, looking at the mediating effect of student trust and quality service in these universities.

**Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study was to investigate the effect of university social responsibility and performance of selected South-South Nigeria Universities, Specific objectives are to:

i. examine the effect of ethical responsibility on Performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities

ii. examine the impact of research and development on Performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities

**Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between ethical responsibility and performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between research and development; and performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Universities have tried to incorporate university social responsibility in their vision and mission statements. In a broader sense of social responsibility, schools and institutions should treat all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulatory mandates as chances for progress rather than mere compliance. Schools and institutions should stress ethical behavior in all stakeholder interactions and transactions. The schools and institutions should demand and police highly ethical behavior (Shawyun, 2011). In light of this, it makes sense to define USR as a concept whereby a university integrates all of its functions and activities with the needs of society through active engagement with its communities in a morally upstanding and open manner with the intention of meeting the expectations of all stakeholders (Esfijani, Hussain, Chang, 2013). To put it another way, by encouraging students and academic staff to support sustainable development in their community and by attempting to adapt the goals, viewpoints, and values of higher education system, USR refers to providing educational services with an ethical perspective, disseminating knowledge responsibly with good management, and respecting and cultivating a sense of responsible citizenship.

University Social Responsibility (USR)

Conventionally, University equips students with essential knowledge and educational background in various fields. Nevertheless, nowadays, universities have also interacted with other sponsors or stakeholders, having taken charge of social responsibilities. Universities provide social knowledge to their students as well as local business owners, entrepreneurs, etc. University is known as an initial foundation for social development, involving in creation process of social awareness (Bharadwaj, & Yameen, 2021). Education is the root of everything, thus, it is more important than ever to raise an awareness, to pay attention to and to undertake University Social Responsibility (USR). The bottom line of USR is that USR can boost social knowledge. Similar to CSR, USR is also about ethic, organizational accountability, social responsibility, sustainable responsibility. USR is still a significantly new concept nowadays (Latapí, Jóhannsdóttir, & Davídsdóttir, 2019, Ghielen, De Cooman & Sels, 2021). There is not so many literatures and books related to USR concept; as well as there is a fairly deprivation of USR studies while there are countless articles and books about CSR. Dr. Teay Shawyun (President Southeast Asian Association for Institutional Research - SEAAIR) claims “Universities have been in existence for centuries as the foundation of education and the development of human sustainability, a key question is the relevance of social responsibility of the university which can be termed as USR- University Social Responsibility“ “The changes and challenges universities face with regard to operations are discussed by Vukasovic (2008) & Felt (2003) relating to the mass expansion of higher education (increasing access to higher education), globalization, student access and mobility, reduction in public investment, diversification and commercialization of higher education, and the impact of information and communication technology.

University today has been broadened more than before since it refers to the contribution of universities to politics, economics, technology, society, human well-being and development, social dimensions, education, research and ecology. The understanding of the shifting context that affects how different stakeholders perceive and anticipate universities remained the unifying denominator, though. More than ever, educational institutions that are dedicated to developing the next generation of leaders and business professionals must prioritize having a
beneficial environmental impact. Universities need to review their roles, take on social responsibility, and promote sustainable development. (QS top universities, 2014). Thanks to universities, more and more students who will be leaders of companies will take social responsibilities while running their businesses (Nayak, Jena, & Patnaik, 2021). This will lead to the better world where human beings are more conscientious, peace loving, and caring for the environment. One of the most important traits of USR is to provide students and learners an insight into social responsibility, including both theoretical and practical aspects. Universities do not give lecture of social responsibility only, but also reach out to local communities and maintain connection with local communities. Doing so, students are strengthened their awareness of their role in community contribution. Universities also apply social responsibility even in campuses so that their students can follow their footsteps (Paul, & Parra, 2021).

Today, Universities have had tendency to be commercialized and facing with their competitors in order to attract students and teachers coming to their universities. Hence, social responsibility is a goal universities make effort to achieve in order to boost their reputation. On QS Top universities online website, they grade the level of taking social responsibility of a university through 5 aspects which are “community investment and development” at the first place, followed by “charity work and disaster relief”, “regional human capital development” and “environmental impact”.

Performance

Performance is an essential outcome in business. This is because the continuous existence of any establishment depends on its performance (Mills & Konya, 2019). Organizational performance is defined as the record of achievements made by an organization over a given time, and measurable through several indices (Zeb-Obipi, 2015). These records of achievements include records on market share, growth and survival. Organizational performance involves analyzing a company’s performance against its objectives (Mills, & Konya. 2019). Performance also refers to metrics describing how a particular request is handled or the act of performing; employing knowledge in a way that goes beyond merely possessing it. It is the outcome of any organization's strategy and operation. Luxmi (2014). There is no static rule to measure performance of any organization, it depends on the study’s topic (Tarurhor, 2017., Tarurhor & Olele, 2020)

The ultimate variable of interest for an organization is its performance, which the university as an organization focused on improving its performance (Richard, Devinney, Yip, & Johnson, 2009). The pursuit and the transmission of knowledge have traditionally been the primary objective of universities. The rising emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness has naturally led to a need for a thorough understanding and examination of University Performance. Universities form part of those organizations where non-financial measures are primarily utilized in determining the levels of their performance. University Performance can be measured in several ways (e.g. financial, teaching performance) (Uluskan, Godfrey, & Joines, 2017).

Ethical Responsibility

Ethical responsibility, which focuses on an organisation’s duty to do what’s right even when this is not required by the law (Omran, 2015; Crane & Matten, 2007). An organisation succeeds at implementing this duty by viewing itself and operating as living citizen that provides a service that benefits, but not damages society. In a specific sense, this responsibility is exercised by setting and following ethical standards that promote doing the right thing for the good of the
organisation, its members, those it serves and society at large (Toukabri, Ben Jemâa, & Jilani, 2014; Crane & Matten, 2007).

According to Vallaeys, De La Cruz, & Sasia (2009), the USR is a policy that promotes ethical performance in higher education institutions through responsible management in the areas of teaching, research, extension, and university management. In order to pursue sustainable development, USR creates a participative dialogue with society (Linares, Godoy, & Sáez, 2012). Likewise, USR is the university capacity to disseminate a set of ethics and values, leading to effective implementation of their social mission into its entire management field (Vallaeys 2008; Domínguez 2009).

Ethics theories address issues such "what is the good life for man?" and "how ought men to behave?" (Popkin & Stroll 1993). As a result, ethics describes a system of values that guide people's behavior. Mehrdad, Mojtaba, & Mohammadreza (2012) Ethics is "a good way of being" for a sensible course of action, causing the least amount of harm to people and the environment, achieving the greatest net benefit to society and economy, and enhancing the capacity of the system in which it is operating. It also includes being fair in all its dealings with proximate and remote stakeholders, being ready to correct bad habits, and maintaining virtuous corporate character overall. Deductively, corporate ethics as the interpretation, recodification and implementation of social ethics through processes and products for the attainment of corporate goals and objectives. It refers to a set of principles that guide businesses dealing with such questions as, “how ought businesses to behave”, “what is the good way of doing business for man in his society that will give him good pleasure.

By carefully taking into account environmental laws, cultures, and behaviors while incorporating, processing, creating, and presenting products to fulfill the needs of target markets, these definitions indicate, firms are able to attain performance goals. The idea of corporate social responsibility and systems theory gave rise to corporate ethics. According to systems theory, an organization generally consists of four basic components: inputs, a method for transforming them into outputs, those outputs, and feedback (Jaja & Zeb-Obipi, 2005). The philosophy that underscores this is that organizations do not exist or operate in a vacuum or in isolation but in a society with extant laws, rules. The organization’s process of receiving inputs, transformation inputs into output, and receiving feedback must be done in a manner that agrees with the ethics (rules) of that environment. Thus, Baadom (2003) described corporate social responsibility as, Management decisions and activities that at least partially go beyond the direct economic or technical interests of the firm. This means the responsibility of business toward the society within which it exists and operates to guarantee its peaceful existence and performance.

Similarly, Boone, & Kurtz (2011) states that business ethics are now in the spotlight as never before, as companies increasingly realize that they have to work harder to earn the trust of their publics, and many have taken on the challenge as if their very survival depends on it. Corporate ethics encompasses marketing, finance, accounting, production, human resource, environment and insurance.

**Research and Development**

Development is impossible without the pursuit of information, new ideas, and ways to establishing gaps that could obstruct social and economic advancement. It is through this pursuit
of information and expertise that policymakers are able to choose the suitable policies to develop and put into practice for effective development planning. Without thorough research, it is likely that appropriate development policies won't be in place, or if they are, they may not be executed to the benefit of the appropriate stakeholders. Because the failure of research could impede development, research and development cannot be separated from one another. (Namanji, & Ssekyewa, 2012)

Research must inform management so that the right policies are used for sustainable development since it is thought of as the methodical process that enables the formulation of desired answers to given challenges. Unfortunately, there are times when the strategy used excludes those who would actually carry out many development projects. This is typically brought on by the fact that top officials fund research and so choose the direction of that study. When this happens, research can neither be appropriate nor a source from where management can be well informed to take sound development programs.

Research in the development field is a difficult reality. Better concepts will ultimately lead to economic growth and progress. Sustainable development is impossible without strategies to boost capital productivity. Researching suggestions for raising output is also necessary. It is impossible to do study in isolation and accomplish development. (Chambers, 2010:13). (Namanji, & Ssekyewa, 2012) (Khawaja, Rabail, Dilnaz, Umar & Shakil, 2022)

**Stakeholder Theory**

The concept —stakeholderl according to its first usage refers to groups whose support, the organisation needs, so as to remain in existence. The concept was developed to a theory and championed by Edward Freeman in the 1980s (Freeman and Reed, 1983, p. 89, cited in Amodu, 2012, p.52). Stakeholder theory is a corporate ethics and organizational management theory that deals with morality and values in running an organization. The groups that make up a corporation's stakeholders are identified and modeled by Freeman (1983), who also discusses and suggests ways that management can take those groups' interests into account. In short, it attempts play to address the "Principle of Who or What Really Counts.

The stakeholder theory of CSR is based on the assumption that organisations, whether private or public), have obligations to several groups that make up the society. These constituents are referred to as stakeholders- individuals and groups that are critical to the existence of the organisation; they influence what the organisation does, or they are being influenced by organisational actions. As an integral part of the normative CSR theories, the stakeholder theory stipulates that management has a moral duty to protect not only the corporation but also the legitimate interest of all stakeholders. Therefore, it is imperative to always maximize the interests of all stakeholders. In this approach, when a organization invests in society, it is anticipated to benefit from it in the form of a better reputation and greater comprehension of what happens when things go wrong, as well as to maximize even the owners' profit motive in the process. (Green, 1997, cited in Olutunji, 2013). Olutunji (2013, p. 34) further avers that: The stakeholders’ concept enables management to address the divergent needs and interests of critical groups, including owners of capital, employees, customers and suppliers, additionally to the requirements of newly emergent groups including authorities, rivals, customers, supporters, environmentalists, special interest groups, and the media. The objectives of these organizations must be taken into consideration because they do play vital roles in the success of the business enterprise.
Empirical Review

Maarouf, (2012) aimed to identify the role of education colleges in Palestinian universities in local community service according to the views of its teaching staff members. Maarouf used the descriptive method through a prepared questionnaire that consisted of 52 paragraphs and was distributed over many axes. The study sample was all teaching staff members in the College of Education at the Palestinian University in Gaza. The results of the study showed that the level and role of the College of Education in promoting community service issues was (62.2%).

A study done by Mortaji (2011) aimed to determine the function of the education colleges at Palestinian universities in directing postdoctoral students toward concerns of community service in the Gaza province. The Islamic University was the subject, and the descriptive method was used for a sample of (567) titles of master theses from the departments of education origins, curricula and teaching methods, and psychology. The results showed that the theses from the department of psychology were more closely related to the requirements and affairs of community service, and educational subjects were more frequently studied than other economic and cultural issues.

The study of Jaber (2011) aimed to determine how colleges can help students develop their ideas of social responsibility. (445) students from Al-Azhar and Gaza Universities, as well as (549) male and female students from the University of Halwan, were chosen at random for the study. The "social responsibility scale"'s descriptive methodology was applied. The study's findings showed that responses from the study sample on paragraphs about social responsibility, where the average was (3.28) with a standard deviation of (0.91), had significantly increased. Additionally, there is some similarity in the awareness among Palestinian and Egyptian students of the concept of social responsibility, which appears through some paragraphs that have obtained high average ratings between (3.10-3.84).

Yung-Fu Huang & Manh-Hoang Do (2020) conducted research on social responsibility in higher education. This essay seeks to conduct a thorough analysis of the university social responsibility (USR) implementation from empirical studies that were published between 2004 to 2020. Design/methodology/approach – The bibliometric method has been employed to review prior empirical research on higher education social responsibility topics. Findings – These synthesis results demonstrated the effectiveness of USR efforts as a tool for sustainability and improved university performance across the globe.

Khawaja, Rabail, Dilnaz, Umar. & Shakil (2022). investigates how service quality, student satisfaction, university reputation, and student trust play a moderating role in the relationship between university social responsibility (USR) and university performance (UP). A sample of 586 university students from Pakistan and 311 students from China provided the data. Universities in Pakistan found that USR significantly and favorably affects UP. However, this relationship was found to be insignificant in China. The findings from the overall sample revealed a significant and positive influence of USR on the intervening variables. All other components in the sample from Pakistan, China, and the total sample were shown to have a substantial intervening influence in the link between USR and UP, with the exception of student trust in Pakistan and student happiness in China.

A study by Eze (2021) examined how Bowen University used corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies as a crisis management tool to resolve the crisis. With 203 respondents as the sample size, a survey approach was used for the study and the populations of Iwo and Olupona.
To gather data for the study, simple random, stratified, and purposive sample approaches were used. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the data, and the results were shown in tables and percentages. Three significant conclusions came from this investigation. For universities to be successful in the very competitive educational sector, they must first embrace CSR and improve the environment in which they operate. The second reason for Bowen University's crisis, which lasted from 2012 to 2015, was its inability to improve the environment in which it functions. Thirdly, the university's adoption of CSR practices as a crisis management tool to handle the issue was successful. The study concludes that tertiary institutions should cultivate the environment where they operate so as to enjoy the goodwill of the host community.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

The design chosen for this study is a Cross Sectional research design. The population of the study consist of the entire participant in the chosen universities in south – South Nigeria which sum up to 227,960 (see table 1 below). The study was carried out in the chosen universities in the South-South Nigeria. The South-South Nigeria Universities is made up of Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa –Ibom and Cross Rivers States. Sample size of 399 was derived using the Taro Yamene's formula. Hence, the sample size for this study is 399 for the selected universities in south-south Nigeria. For the purpose of representativeness and to be unbiased with data collection, the probability sampling technique was employed to select the sample unit, using the probability random sampling. This sample technique gives equal chances to all elements selected for the study.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Computation /Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>University of Benin</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>(70,000/227960)*399= 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Delta State University</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>(22,000/227,960)*399= 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Niger Delta University</td>
<td>20,300</td>
<td>(20,300/227,960)*399= 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>University of Calabar</td>
<td>40,460</td>
<td>(40,460/227,960)*399= 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>University of Port Harcourt</td>
<td>44,500</td>
<td>(44,500/227,960)*399= 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>University of Uyo</td>
<td>30,700</td>
<td>(30,700/227,960)*399= 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>227,960</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, 2023

**Instrument for Data Collection**

The questionnaire for this study consist of two sections (A and B). Section A elicited responses on personal information while section B elicited information on the thematic questions with 28 items which is answered by the respondent. A quantitative research method, using five- point Likert scale to address the formulated hypotheses (Dankaew & Silpcharu, 2020., Tarurhor, 2021). The researcher adopted the face, content, and construct validity. Face validity is the degree to which a procedure, especially assessment, appears effective in its stated aims. Content validity refers to the extent to which a measure represents all facets of a given construct. In testing for the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire instrument was validated using the construct validity and the Cronbach Alpha reliability value obtained was averaged at 0.7746 approximated at 0.8 greater than 0.7 being the minimum threshold for reliability. The Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive statistics such as Mean and Standard Deviation for the specific objectives and inferential statistics such as the multiple regressions to test the hypothesis 1 to 5 while hypothesis 6 was tested using the Structural Equation...
Modeling Technique. These analyses were made possible through the use of STATA version 13 as the statistical package for data analysis.

**RESULTS**

The distribution of respondents based on socio-demographic characteristics show that more than half of the respondents, representing 57.5%, were between the ages of 38-57 years while a little below 5% were 78 years and above. 10.8% and 26.8% of the respondents accounted for those between the ages of 18-37 years and 48-77 years respectively. The implication of this result is that more than two-third of the participants are in the youthful age and the age bracket may likely have influence on the outcome of this results. On the distribution based of sex, the result shows that the female participants (58.5%) were more than the male participants (41.5%). This distribution is in line with Nigeria’s actual population distribution based on gender. Respondents were further distributed based on their marital status. More than half of them, accounting for 53.4%, were yet to be married while 44.3% of them were married. 2.3% of them were neither single nor married.

The study collected respondents’ information based on their highest educational attainment. It was surprising to see that more than one-third (39.9%) had bachelor’s degrees and equivalent. However, less than 10% had master’s degrees and Doctorate degrees and equivalents respectively. 32.2% of the respondents had Senior Secondary Certificate Results. This result implies that the participants are well educated enough to provided quality and reasonable answers to the questions before them. Hence, the fear of respondents not having adequate knowledge of the questions has been overcome. The staff status of respondents was also surveyed.

**Table 2**

Responses on the University Social Responsibility Involvement of the selected South - South Nigeria Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USR1</td>
<td>The University is committed to prevention of pollution on all major environmental aspects</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>Highly Involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USR2</td>
<td>The University offers financial support to employees / students for extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>Highly Involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USR3</td>
<td>The university has projects by which it gives humanitarian aid to people hit by disaster</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>Highly Involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USR4</td>
<td>The university has programme for sending students to share positive experience with the community</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>Highly Involved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

CSR > Criterion Mean (3.00)

Table 2 presents the mean response of the questionnaire items designed to elicit information from respondents on University social responsibility involvement in the south – south Nigeria universities. As indicated in the results, all items obtained mean scores that were above 3.00 cut off point. Specifically, with a mean score of 4.14 for item USR1, it is clear that majority of the respondents strongly agree that they are committed to prevention of pollution on all major environmental aspects. Similarly, the mean score of 4.22 for item USR2 shows that majority of them engaged in offering financial support to employees / students for extra-curricular activities. Items USR 3 and USR 4 with a corresponding means scores of 4.30 respectively indicates that majority of the respondents use ethical approaches to resolve community issues and provides social services like charity work and disaster relief material to communities. From the above we could imply that respondents involves in corporate social responsibilities like civil
commitment, community outreach, resolving community issues using ethical means and provide social services and relief materials to the communities where their universities are sited.

**Analysis of responses on Ethical Responsibility as a measure of University Social Responsibility Involvement**

Table 3

**Responses on Ethical Responsibility as a measure of University Social Responsibility Involvement of the selected South - South Nigeria Universities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ETR1</td>
<td>The university has a comprehensive code of conduct</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETR2</td>
<td>The university tries to perform in manner consistent with expectations of societal and ethical norms</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETR3</td>
<td>The university prevents ethical norms within the university from being compromised in order to achieve corporate goals</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETR4</td>
<td>The university behaves with honesty, transparency and fairness in all its activities and relationships with others.</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

**ETR > Criterion Mean (3.00)**

Table 3 presents the mean response of the questionnaire items designed to elicit information from respondents on Ethical Responsibility as a measure of University Social Responsibility Involvement of the selected South - South Nigeria Universities. All items obtained mean scores that were above 3.00 cut off point. The mean score of 4.21 for item ETR1 shows that respondents strongly agreed with the university having a comprehensive code of conduct to operate with. This above was further strengthened by the 4.22 and 4.12 recorded for item ETR2 and ETR3 respectively showing that this same university, aside recognising and respecting new or evolving ethical norms adopted by communities, prevent them from being compromised in order to achieve its corporate goals. Therefore, as a sign of corporate social responsibility, the university make efforts to keep and abide by law governing the communities (ETR4:3.97). By implication, corporate social responsibility involvements of university in their located community are not only directed at transforming the communities but making sure that ethical norms meet societal expectations and are maintained without compromises.

**Analysis of responses on engaging in Research and Development as a measure of University Social Responsibility Involvement**

Table 4

**Responses on engaging in Research and Development as a measure of University Social Responsibility Involvement of the selected South - South Nigeria Universities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAD1</td>
<td>The university has development programmes, such as conferences, workshops and TETFund training sections to upskill members</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAD2</td>
<td>The university arranges for links with industry to develop skills in students</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAD3</td>
<td>The university encourages and empowers students to undertake research that creates social and economic impact</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAD4</td>
<td>The university encourages scientific research on social problems and knowledge generation</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

**RAD > Criterion Mean (3.00)**

Table 4 presents the mean response of the questionnaire items designed to elicit information from respondents on Research and Development as a measure of University Social Responsibility involvement of the selected South - South Nigeria Universities. All items
obtained mean scores that were above 3.00 cut off point. The score of 4.03 for item RAD1 shows that respondents strongly agreed that university has development programmes like conferences, workshops, and TETFund training sections to upskills members. As part of the development programmes, the university provides admission quotas/slots to deserving members of the community who are ready to further their education (RAD2: 3.93). Also, the university arranges for links with industry to develop skills in students (RAD3: 3.95) and they encourages and empowers students to undertake research that creates social and economic impact (RAD4 :4.60). This implies that the university social responsibility involvements in scientific research on social problems and knowledge generation. This also includes training and workshops geared towards upskilling of the people.

Test of Hypotheses
Hypothesis 1:
Ho: There is no significant relationship between ethical responsibility and performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities.

Model 1: \( PER = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{ETR} + \mu \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Number of obs = 388</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>36.1139063</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36.1139063</td>
<td>F(1, 386) = 448.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>31.073021</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>.080500054</td>
<td>Prob &gt; F = 0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67.1869273</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>.173609631</td>
<td>R-squared = 0.5375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adj R-squared = 0.5363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Root MSE = 0.28373</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PER       | Coef.      | Std. Err. | t    | P>|t|   | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|-----------|------------|-----------|------|-------|---------------------|
| ETR       | .3549739   | .0167594  | 21.18| 0.000 | .3220229 , .387925  |
| _cons     | 2.641741   | .0696552  | 37.93| 0.000 | 2.50479 , 2.778692 |

Source: Researcher’s Computation, 2022

Table 5 above shows the summary of regression analysis result for Hypothesis 1 which stated that there is no significant relationship between ethical responsibility and performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities. The F(1, 386) = 448.62, where the R\(^2\) with the Adjusted R\(^2\) is 0.54, respectively. The obtained coefficient (\(\beta\)) = 0.354 with Std. error = 0.016 and the calculated t-value = 21.18 at p-value < 0.05 = 0.000 where the confidential interval stood at lower bound 0.32 and upper bound 0.38, where observation is 388 with a degree of freedom 387. Decision rule, result showed a positive coefficient with positive t-value and the obtained p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance whereas the whole model explanation function is 53%. Nevertheless, from the forgoing result and given the level of p-value, the stated hypothesis is not accepted. It suffice to state that there is significant relationship between ethical responsibility and performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities.
Hypothesis 2:
H02: There is no significant relationship between research and development; and performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities

Model 2: \[ \text{PER} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{RAD} + \mu \]

Table 6
Summary of Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Number of obs</th>
<th>F(1, 386)</th>
<th>Prob &gt; F</th>
<th>R-squared</th>
<th>Adj R-squared</th>
<th>Root MSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>16.8435399</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.8435399</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>129.15</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.2507</td>
<td>0.2488</td>
<td>0.36114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>50.3433874</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>0.130423283</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67.1869273</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>0.173609631</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 above shows the summary of regression analysis result for Hypothesis 2 which stated that There is no significant relationship between research and development; and performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities. The F(1, 386) = 129.15, where the R² with the Adjusted R² is 0.25 and 0.24 respectively. The obtained coefficient (β) = 0.34 with Std. error = 0.03 and the estimated t-value = 11.36 at p-value < 0.05 = 0.000 where the confidential interval stood at lower bound 0.28 and upper bound 0.40, whereas the observation is 388 and degree of freedom 387. Decision rule, result still maintain a positive coefficient with positive t-value and the obtained p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance whereas the whole model account for the linearity function is 24%. Nevertheless, from the forgoing result and given the lower p-value, the stated hypothesis is rejected. It behooves to restate that there is significant relationship between research and development; and performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities.

Discussion of Results
The study reveals that the ethical responsibility as a measure of university social responsibility involvement in the south – south Nigeria universities is seen to be effective most especially in areas where the university promoting quality comprehensive code of conduct and also the university operating with honesty, transparency and fairness in all its activities and relationships with others. The study shows that there is significant relationship between ethical responsibility and performance. This position is in line with the arguments of prior studies and the finding of (Ataniyazova, et al 2022; Kumar & Singh, 2022; Sumardi, 2019) who noted that any successful USRs must be built on ethical standards that promote doing the right thing for the good of the organisation, its members, those it serves and society at large.
Lastly, the study in essence, reveals that university social responsibility directly impact positively students and staff through conferences, workshops and TETFund training to enhance their proficiency, self-development and effectiveness, also promoting students and staff participation in scientific research on social problems and knowledge generation the finding show significant relationship between research and development, and performance of selected South - South Nigeria Universities. Thus confirming the studies of (Nayak, Jena, & Patnaik, 2021; Amber, Mercedes & Jose, 2020) posited that to achieve meaningful development in any institution, research must be given proper attention, it cannot be done in isolation.

CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above study, it was discovered that university social responsibility plays crucial role in organizational performance at the general level. Specifically, among university students and staff as well as the host community members at large. Aside university involvement in ethical responsibility, research and development as they relate to performance, they also encouraged and sponsored community members in educational pursuit and other activities geared towards self-development. The study also discovered that university try to maintain and improve upon quality of honesty, transparency and fairness in all its activities within and outside the university community without compromising goals and objectives. As part of the USRs, the university focused more attention on the physically disabled and the less privileges in the university community. They also assist in social responsibility that directly impact positively on students and staff through conferences, workshops and TETFund training to enhance their proficiency, self-development and effectiveness, promoting students and staff participation in scientific research on social problems and knowledge generation.

This study made the following recommendations

i. The universities should further encourage students and staff within the university community to get involved in innovative and meaningful activities that can improve their lives and contributing to the society at large.

ii. The university should initiate a program that can lead to self-sustaining and self-reliant, thereby having direct effect on students, staff and host community at large.

iii. In as much as university promote and maintain cultural and ethical practices within the university environment, the students and staff could in return protect the university public image and reputation and provide conducive environment for them to operate.

iv. The university should look beyond the needs of supporting the physically disable and less privileges in the university environment. There are other critical needs such as that the universities can also provide.

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