


2018

# Corporate Social Responsibility and the Welfare of Nigerian Niger Delta Landowners

Charles Oboh  
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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Charles Aroawode Oboh

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2018

Abstract

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Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Applied Management and Decision Sciences

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## Abstract

The perception by any group of ineffectiveness in the dispensation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) to major stakeholders may result in friction, reduction in productivity, and an overall loss of social and economic capital. The problem addressed in this study, which represented the gap in knowledge and practice, was that CSR initiatives in the Niger Delta region lack a community-centric framework to ensure optimal and sustainable returns on CSR investments for multinational corporations and local Nigerian landowners. The purpose of the study was to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR for Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta, using Freeman's stakeholder theory and Grice's causal theory of perception. Data were obtained through interviews regarding the lived experiences of a sample of 15 participants selected through a purposeful nonrandom sampling from a variety of backgrounds. The data analysis using content and inductive techniques with NVivo illustrated the factors leading to a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR for landowners. The results include expectations from operators, activities of the operators in the Niger Delta, operators' relationship with land owners, and operators' need to take environmental responsibility. The study has the potential to enhance the CSR managerial capacity of operators, resulting in peace and equity for all. The findings may lead to peaceful coexistence between the operators in the area and landowners with increased mutual benefits. The findings may also result in a stable global supply of energy, oil, and gas, as well as a healthier environment for landowners, ultimately resulting in local and global positive social change.

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## Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to the affectionate memory of my parents, Chief William Ozoherebe Oboh and Madam Bridget Helen Oboh. They both instilled in me and my siblings the value of education, perseverance and hard work. Their instructions inspired and steered me through the path of this study.

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background.....	2
Gap in Literature.....	5
Historical Background of the Problem.....	7
Problem Statement.....	9
Purpose of the Study.....	13
Research Question.....	14
Theoretical Framework.....	14
Grice’s Causal Theory of Perception.....	16
Nature of the Study.....	17
Definition of Terms.....	18
Assumptions.....	20
Scope and Delimitations.....	21
Limitations.....	22
Significance of the Study.....	23
Contribution to the Body of Knowledge.....	24
Advance Managerial Practice.....	24
Contribution to Social Change.....	25
Summary.....	26
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	28



Literature Search Strategy.....	29
Theoretical Foundation .....	29
Stakeholder Theory.....	30
Theory of Perception.....	33
Grice Causal Theory of Perception.....	34
Literature Review.....	35
Corporate Social Responsibility .....	35
Categories of Corporate Social Responsibility .....	37
Corporate Social Responsibility and the Environment.....	39
CSR and Crisis in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.....	46
CSR and the Perception of Inequity in the Niger Delta Region .....	51
Oil and Gas and Economic Diplomacy in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.....	55
Corporate Social Responsibility and Development in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria .....	57
Summary and Conclusion.....	64
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	65
Central Concept of the Study .....	65
Research Design and Rationale .....	66
Role of the Researcher .....	67
Methodology.....	69
Participant Selection Logic .....	69
Expert Panel .....	71

Interview Protocol.....	71
Target Population.....	72
Sampling and Selection Procedure .....	72
Instrumentation .....	74
Data Analysis Plan.....	81
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	84
Credibility .....	86
Transferability.....	87
Confirmability.....	88
Researcher Bias.....	89
Ethical Procedures and Protection of Human Participants .....	90
Summary.....	91
Chapter 4: Results .....	93
Central Research Question.....	93
Demographics .....	94
Data Collection .....	95
Data Analysis .....	96
Interview .....	96
Bracketing.....	98
Data Coding .....	98
Transcript Validation .....	98
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	99

Credibility .....	99
Transferability.....	99
Dependability .....	100
Confirmability.....	100
Theme Results or Findings .....	101
Theme 1: Expectations From Operators .....	102
Theme 2: Activities of the Operators in the Niger Delta Region .....	103
Theme 3: Operators’ Relationship with Landowners .....	104
Theme 4: Operators’ Need to Take Environmental Responsibility.....	105
Discrepant Cases.....	106
Summary .....	108
Chapter 5: Interpretation of the Findings.....	112
Key Findings.....	112
Stakeholders and Expectations .....	115
CSR and Environmental Responsibility .....	118
Activities of the Operator.....	121
Operators’ Relationship with Landowners .....	122
Limitations of the Study.....	124
Recommendations.....	125
Implications for Social Change.....	126
Conclusion .....	127
References.....	129

Appendix A: Expert Panel Email Invitation .....	159
Appendix B: Interview Protocol .....	160
Appendix C: Invitation to Participate .....	162
Appendix D: Informed Consent.....	163
Appendix E: Expert Panel Background .....	165
Appendix F: IRB Forms and Approval.....	167
Appendix G: Permission to Use Figures.....	168
Appendix H: Letter of Cooperation .....	171
Appendix I: NIH Certificate .....	172

## List of Tables

Table 1. The Nigerian Niger Delta and National Economy - Key Indices .....3

Table 2. Participant Demographics .....94

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Triple Bottom Line and CSR Sustainability .....14

Figure 2. Matrix Relationship between Research Questions and Interview Items .....77

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This study focused on the practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR) by the managers of oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria as a medium for fostering the welfare potentials of land owners of the area. The volatility in the Niger Delta region is evidenced by economic and socially crippling events reported from the region such as oil and gas pipeline blowouts, kidnapping of oil and gas workers, and social restiveness of the landowners and populace. Many of these incidences were a reaction of the people to oil spillages and environmental pollution and degradation which was the fallout from the operations of the oil and gas companies prospecting and drilling for petroleum resources in the area (Odemene, 2013; Tobor, 2014). These incidences were indicative of an inherent gap that required further research and investigation.

The impact of CSR on the Niger Delta region had a potential for bringing a sense of equity to the local land owners and communities. The local landowners and communities' perceptions were that they had been alienated, exploited, and cheated by the corporations in the oil and gas sector. The perceived ineffectiveness and ineptitude in terms of the managers of oil and gas corporations carrying out their roles and services. Such services included the provision of access roads, portable water supply, medical facilities, and schools to land owners and local communities.

The social implications of this study can result in a drastic reduction in the restiveness of local land owners, as they would embrace peace and cooperation with corporations, leading ultimately to peace, progress, and prosperity for all parties. Progress and prosperity can translate to positive social change both for the local land owners and

other stakeholders in the industry. Such positivity will in turn snowball ultimately to the world oil markets, and eventually lead to stability in supply and prices. Petroleum resources are known to be major catalysts for global industrial growth and development, which in turn serve as catalysts for global positive change. A better, greener environment may be the result of a regime of properly prosecuted CSR.

Chapter 1 includes the overall background of the study, a brief history of the issue and the geographical area of focus, and an introduction to the literature that relates to the scope of this study. Chapter 1 also includes the problem statement, purpose, central research questions, theoretical framework, and an overview of the nature of the study. Other sections of the chapter that follow include definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the significance of the study. The chapter ends with a summary and a brief overview of Chapter 2.

### **Background**

Nigeria plays a major role in the global oil and gas marketplace. Nigeria is the seventh largest producer of oil and gas globally, and supplies 20% of total oil imports to the United States. Nigeria is also gradually becoming a major global supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to international markets. Petroleum accounts for about 40% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 70% of total government income (Ikelegbe, 2013). Oil and gas account for 80.6% of total federal revenues (Ikelegbe, 2013) and are the lifeblood of the nation's economy and the sole reason for the nation's continued existence. Over 90% of Nigeria's external income is derived from oil and gas exports (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012).



Table 1

*The Nigerian Niger Delta and National Economy: Key Indices*

Description	Ranking/Percentage
Nigeria's rank in the oil and gas world	7th
Proportion of supply to the USA	20%
Proportion of GDP from Oil and Gas	40%
Proportion of oil and gas to Total Government Income	70%
Proportion of oil and gas to Total Federal revenue	81%
Proportion of oil and gas to National External Reserves/Income	90%

The people of the Niger Delta live in an area where they are solely dependent on the local ecosystem for their existence. Subsistence farming, fishing, and petty trading are the main occupations of Niger Delta citizens and land owners. The Niger Delta ecosystem has been severely degraded due to the activities of multinational oil and gas companies operating in the region (Adedeji, Ibeh, & Ovabanji, 2012; Kuenzer, van Beijma, Gessner, & Dech, 2014; Okonkwo, Kumar, & Taylor, 2015). Nigeria ranks as one of the most heavily populated countries in Africa (Odemene, 2013; Ojakorotu, 2011).

The region is one of the richest in the world with an abundance of human resources, mineral resources, animals, and a wide variety of plants (Ojakorotu, 2011). The Niger Delta occupies a land mass of about 110,000 square kilometers, or approximately 43,750 square miles, and in the southern area of the country, per 10,000 square kilometers, there are approximately 6,250 square miles of wetlands in the rain

forest areas of Nigeria (Kadafa, 2012; Okolo, 2014). In administrative, developmental, and political terms, the Niger Delta region encompasses all nine states where oil and gas are produced, with a land mass of 110,000 square kilometers. The region has an approximate population of 37 million citizens, which translates to 22% of the national population of Nigeria (Adekola, Mitchell, & Grainger, 2015). The states that make up the Niger Delta region are Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers, and the region brings in 90% of Nigeria's 2.3 million barrels of oil per day. The oil and gas resources derived from states together account for 80% of the total Nigerian national revenue (Ojakorotu, 2011). Local land owners perceive that oil companies have created an environment of poverty, exposure to health hazards, loss of homes and lands, community clashes, social unrest, and kidnappings. The activities of companies have further compounded the incidences of perennial flooding and severe climate variability and transformation leading to ecological destabilization and increased vulnerability of local communities (Agumagu & Todd, 2015).

The general perception of local land owners in the Niger Delta is that the woes of the host communities are largely to be blamed on the neglect of their needs (by the oil and gas companies in the area) leading to an imbalance against what is exemplified by the management principles of the triple bottom line and CSR expected from the oil and gas companies in the area (Lugard, 2013; Takkar, 2015). Kadafa (2012) asserted that multinational oil companies continuously receive billions of dollars at the expense of their host communities who lack food, water, and shelter due to the fact that the environment is ravaged by the effects of oil spillages and gas flaring.

Ejumudo, Edo, Avweromre, and Sagay (2012) recommended that firms that pollute the environment strategically devote sufficient resources to CSR for the benefit of their host communities. Ejumudo et al. specifically recommended an enhancement of the CSR agenda of operating companies in the area in order to redress the economic, developmental, and environmental problems of the area and reduce violence and conflicts. The local landowners' perception is that the oil and gas companies operating in the area fail to effectively use CSR to positively impact their lives and the environment in which they operate (Ottuh, 2013). Oil and gas companies perceive that they are providing sufficient resources to communities to alleviate social and environmental problems. The researcher evaluated the perceptions of landowners by conducting interviews with 15 people drawn from both the industry and host communities in order to obtain their lived experiences regarding social economic development in the Niger Delta region.

### **Gap in Literature**

Odemene (2013) reviewed current issues including kidnappings, insecurity, restiveness, riots etc. in the Niger Delta from the start through the formation of various protest groups, some of which resorted to kidnapping oil and gas workers for ransom in order to drive home their grievances. Odemene did not address the impact of effective use and application of CSR or the lack of it by the operating companies' managers relating to the matters leading to the crisis.

Tobor (2014) investigated the Urhobo, a major tribe in the Niger Delta, and the Niger Delta amnesty program in the region. Tobor centered his research on the various widespread crises that ravaged the area, the palliatives and proffered solutions to the

restiveness of the region, and the effects on the local cultures. Tobor did not mention any impact of CSR on the people and their culture. The key difference between this study and others is that this study looked into how proper management practice of CSR could be brought in to assuage the frayed nerves in the Niger Delta region. Literature on the subject of CSR in the Niger Delta, did not address the issue of perceptions of landowners regarding ineffectiveness of the practice of CSR in the Niger Delta area by managers of oil and gas operating companies. Little or no effort was made to gain a deeper understanding of what it truly means to experience CSR.

The lack or insufficiency of a deep understanding of what it means to experience CSR among Nigerian Niger Delta landowners is a gap. This study filled the gap regarding understanding what it really means for the landowners to experience CSR. By gaining this understanding, the study will ultimately attempt to proffer better and more reasonable solutions that would likely be more acceptable to the landowners based on the new understanding of their experience of CSR. This study may provide insights into determining ways to bridge the gap in knowledge, and would likely provide better explanations on why the landowners of the region currently perceive the practice of CSR by the operating corporations in the area as ineffective. The study may also provide insights into how to facilitate the opening of their sub-conscious minds toward pointing out what efforts are needed to bring a resolution to the long-standing Niger Delta question.

## **Historical Background of the Problem**

Korten (2014) and Wald (2015) said that depletion and neo-utopian existence still remains largely unaddressed worldwide today. These are applicable to the situation present in the Niger Delta region. Tobor (2014) said that proper application of CSR must be holistic, participatory, and people centered. The impact on the environment is a key factor in measuring the overall effectiveness or ineffectiveness of CSR.

The problem of a perceived inequity still appears to persist and thrive. Amadi and Abdullah (2012) said that in spite of the massive wealth of Nigeria, with over 90% of external revenue derived from oil resources, over 70% of the population survives on less than one US dollar per day. The inequity pervading the region leads to a society bereft of a will to pay back to the people and environment from which so much wealth is tapped.

There is a perceived failure of oil and gas corporations in the Niger Delta area to effectively use CSR to enhance the welfare of the people positively and optimally. The use of CSR is what the researcher investigated. This gap indicates either a total lack of presence of CSR, inadequacy of its presence, or the selection and provision of the wrong benefits of CSR to citizens by multinational companies operating in the area. The impact of the failure of operating companies to ensure compliance with proper completion and commissioning of CSR related projects offered and awarded to communities requires further study. Amadi and Abdullah (2012) said that Royal Dutch Shell, which operates in the Niger Delta area, has provided sufficient infrastructural amenities for the landowners of the Niger Delta area, and those efforts should be complemented by the government. Amadi and Abdullah suggested that Royal Dutch Shell has been sufficiently generous in

its practice of CSR. Kasim (2012) focused attention on the environmental impacts and fall out of the operations of oil and gas companies. Kasim sought ways to secure alternative energy sources as a means of reducing or eliminating global dependence on oil and gas products of which byproducts have adversely affected environmental conservation and global CSR. Kasim did not directly answer the question of how this would positively impact the lives and welfare of the citizens of the areas from which those resources are explored, exploited, and produced. CSR is the way that managers of businesses take into consideration the economic, ecological, and social impacts of their decisions and actions in their activities (Takkar, 2015).

George et al. (2012) stated that the multinational oil corporations operating in the Nigerian Niger Delta area contributed to the underdevelopment and unrest currently prevalent in the region. George et al. termed the overall action of the multinational companies (MNCs) operating in the area under study as corporate social irresponsibility (CSI), which is in direct contrast with CSR. George et al. further argued that CSR was abused by the MNCs in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Niger Delta region is presently made up the states of Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, and Cross River, with Ondo state recently gaining prominence in terms of oil and gas resources and joining the league of oil producing communities.

The situation in the region calls for attention from both local and international stakeholders. The social and economic unrest rampant in the area appears to be linked to issues relating to CSR, or irresponsibility due to operating companies reportedly exploiting and polluting the environment (Oguejiofor, 2006; Osuji, Ndukwu, Obute, &

Agbagwa, 2006). The perceived weakness, paucity, or total lack of relevant national or regional regulatory laws may have contributed to the problem. Both researchers claimed that inept leadership and inability to institutionalize and implement relevant laws and regulations concerning social responsibility in the region may have further helped in causing and deepening some of the perceived concerns.

A state of near total neglect, culminating in untold hardship suffered by the landowners resulting in disease and many times avoidable deaths, is what is perceived by the landowners to be prevalent in the host communities of the Niger Delta region. The most important subsystem expected to provide CSR in the Niger Delta region is MNC organizations. The manner and system of practicing and prosecuting social responsibility for operating companies in the face of government regulations appears to have negatively impacted overall systems results (Chadwick-Coule, 2011).

### **Problem Statement**

The problem addressed in this phenomenological qualitative study is that CSR initiatives in the Niger Delta lack a community-centric framework to ensure optimal and sustainable returns on CSR investments for MNCs and local Nigerian citizens. The landowners perceive that not enough is done for them in terms of social responsibility (Ottuh, 2013; Tobor, 2014). Management would seek to address the inherent perceptions of landowners about CSR managers' ineptitude. Overall corporate leadership and management would hence attempt to have CSR managers deal with the perception that they are ineffective in demonstrating their corporate social responsiveness, particularly with respect to the welfare of the landowners of the oil-rich Niger Delta area. The unit for

analysis in the problem was the manager in the oil and gas organization and how they react to claims of ineffectiveness. As a result, a need remains to explore and define how proper management practices regarding CSR can be brought in to assuage frayed nerves in the Niger Delta, because the existing research is inconclusive. The welfare of the landowners in the Niger Delta region is of paramount importance to all stakeholders. Perceived ineffectiveness of managers in performing their CSR functions including delivering welfare to landowners in the Niger Delta area is a major concern for management, and it was the primary focus of this study.

It is the perceived condition held by the citizens relative to their contributions to the sustenance and profitability of the oil and gas companies operating in the area. Well-being implies the experiencing of high-quality feelings and mindset. Welfare, or well-being, in the context of this study is measured by the amount of those conditions perceived to be felt or enjoyed by the citizens of the Niger Delta of Nigeria.

Oil and gas are the main sources of income for the Nigerian economy. Ojatorotu (2011) said the Niger Delta region was among the richest areas on earth. The Niger Delta region alone provides 90% of Nigeria's 2.3 million barrels of daily oil production, and that accounts for 80% of the total national income (Ojatorotu, 2011). Oil also acts as a major stabilizing force for the global economy and technological advancement. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, as cited in Ojatorotu, 2011) reported that the Nigerian oil sector in 2012 generated 95% of the foreign exchange revenue.

This study of landowners' perceptions of CSR by officers of oil and gas companies in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria due to their likely poor understanding of



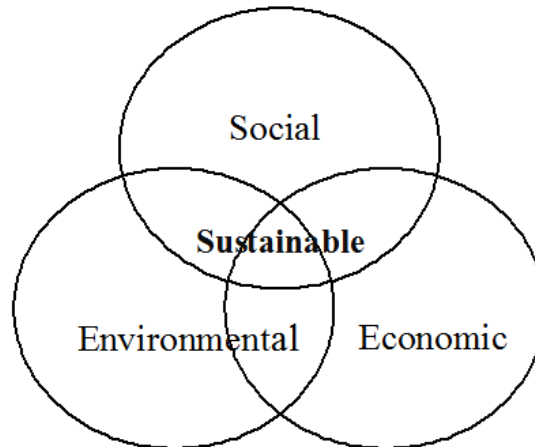
what it means to experience CSR relates closely to the subject of triple bottom line (TBL) and how it affects the people, environment, and finance of the corporation (Ajiake, 2015; Sfeir-Younis, 2009). The term TBL was based on outcomes of a survey by international experts in CSR and sustainable development (SD) (Henriques & Richardson, 2013). This overarching management principle amplifies the intricacy of management (Anderson et al., 2015) and has further helped in giving management a more humane face.

The TBL principle in management relates closely to CSR as it seeks to strike a balance between the social, environmental, and economic spheres of business operations. It is a reliable, objective, and justifiable model for the transformation and administration of businesses (Ajiake, 2015). TBL ensures that businesses account for their impact on the larger environment, economy, and society. The principle focuses exclusively on the company's financial accountability and answerability in relation to the environment in which it operates, as well as other stakeholders beyond the investors of the business (Akporien & Udeh, 2016). TBL involves the necessity for businesses to achieve the social, environmental, and economic needs of the enterprise in order for it to be considered as sustainable. This model helps managers to accomplish a balance between external interests such as those for the Niger Delta landowners on one hand and investors' benefits on the other (Ernst & Young LLP, 2011.) See Appendix G for permission to use Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows an overview of how the three components of TBL interact to create a comfortable and sustainable business atmosphere for all stakeholders to enhance CSR. TBL not only deals with financial risks and benefits but also reconciles external

sustainability with investors' interests as it expects to strike a balance between social, environmental, and economic performance (EY.com, n.d.) as depicted in Figure 1.

### **The EY Triple Bottom Line Model**



*Figure 1.* Conceptual model of TBL, CSR, and sustainability.

The subject in the discussion by Sfer-Younis (2009) garners much agreement and support from Korten (2014, 2015) on the negative impact of exploitative operations of corporations on the environment and earth in general. These authors dealt with issues of global resource depletion due to the exploitative nature of mankind using corporations for selfish profit reasons without reasonable recourse and a true will toward replenishment and giving back to the earth. Korten (2015) and Wright (2010) identified a degraded and degenerated global environment following corporate operations in the forms of oil spillages, depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, and other negative conditions and consequences synonymous with global ruin and self-annihilation. Korten (2015) and Wright (2010), recommended that all manner of ways should be sought to support the

sustainability of nature. These researchers raised important questions regarding what would become of our natural resources after the continuous exploitation by the corporations.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR for Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta. The focus of this study was to explore how managers of oil and gas corporations operating in the area may become more socially responsive to landowners in the Niger Delta region. This study had the potential to bring a sense of equity to all stakeholders, which included citizens, local landowners, and communities. The expectation was that results of this study would help in bringing about closure to purported notions of landowners regarding alienation, exploitation, and cheating conducted by operating corporations in the oil and gas sector. The participants in this study were the citizenry or landowners in areas where oil and gas organizations operate.

The study examined how proper application of CSR may positively impact the lives and welfare of landowners in the Niger Delta. As posited by Odemene (2013), properly managed crises such as those which exist in the Niger Delta region could result in a near perfect business environment in which every stakeholder would be happy and contented. Ottuh (2013) acknowledged that poverty has become pervasive in the Niger Delta due to the social malaise of discrimination, denial of rights, and oppression against the poor citizens of the region. Ottuh suggested that government and corporations could better empower citizens by creating jobs, providing scholarships and credit facilities, and

engaging more in the development and establishment of more infrastructures and amenities. These actions would eventually translate to positive social change and provide benefits for all stakeholders, including local landowners, inhabitants, and operating companies.

The fact that petroleum is a major catalyst for industrial growth and development and also serves as a catalyst for global positive change is commonly accepted knowledge. A better and greener environment will be the definitive product of a properly prosecuted and dispensed CSR regime. The probable benefits from this study can make it a very significant one in the quest for equity for landowners in the Niger Delta area. The likely outcome will also be an overall better and greener environment (Hassan & Kouhy, 2015). This benefit in turn may also lead ultimately to local and universal positive change.

### **Research Question**

The following was the primary research question used in this research. The research study plan was fashioned in a way to provide answers to the primary question from data collected during interviews and analyses. *RQ*: What are the experiences of CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Two theoretical frameworks were used for this study. They were Freeman's stakeholder theory and Grice's causal theory of perception. These two theories were a useful foundation to relate the benefits enjoyed by landowners in the Niger Delta and the belief upon which CSR was thought to be carried out by managers of the oil and gas companies operating in the region.

**Freeman's Stakeholder Theory** Freeman's stakeholder theory brings to preeminence the stakeholders around whom the activities of the business and the idea of CSR revolve. Stakeholder theory states that effective management demands a balanced thoughtfulness of and attention to the rightful interests of all stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). A stakeholder is defined as an individual or organization that qualifies as having a stake or claim in the firm or enterprise (Hasnas, 2013). Stakeholders have been interpreted to include any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the corporation (Schiller, Winters, Hanson, & Ashe, 2013). In its more familiar interpretation, stakeholder groups can be narrowed down to include shareholders or owners, employees, customers, and the indigenous community. Modern corporate behaviors are built around the principles of stakeholder management of the enterprise or corporation.

Stakeholder theory affirms that in order for a business to survive, the various components that can be identified as holding a stake in the business must be given due and adequate consideration. In order to achieve this, stakeholder-friendly policies must be evolved and adopted. Such policies would produce the optimal balance between the various stakeholder theories. Such behavior would give the corporation a perceived human face, thereby attracting enough attention for business activities. Practical legitimacy in stakeholder claims goes a long way in assisting managers to make choices regarding appropriate and dependable CSR activities (Brown & Forster, 2013).

Based on the inclusive viewpoint of the stakeholder theory, an enterprise exists at the meeting point of a variety of interests, pivoting the relationships between

stakeholders' interest against sustainability management. This theory depicts an intricate web of social relationships of dependency, expectation, and sustainability (Hörisch, Freeman, & Schaltegger, 2014). Overall, corporate success from management's viewpoint is determined solely by the level of satisfaction enjoyed and displayed by the various sections and components of the stakeholder group. This demands that stakeholders are properly identified and treated appropriately and respectfully to ensure optimal satisfaction for the various segments of the stakeholder group. The major task of management is to identify stakeholder groups, especially those who share a common interest, determine their level of power, and treat them appropriately with a view to winning them in totally and giving them maximum satisfaction (Carroll & Buchholtz 2014).

### **Grice's Causal Theory of Perception**

The second element to form the structure for the theoretical framework for the current study is Grice's causal theory of perception. Perception connotes the addition of meaning to a sensation through the assistance of historical experience. Perception is typically viewed as a subjective action. When perception arises from an effect from the action of another person or object, such perception is regarded as causal perception. Causal perception leads the perceiver to have a perceptual experience of the person or object. Ibe, Wang, Kwek, and Daniel (2015) identified two perspectives of perceived CSR. The first illustrates perception as it relates to stakeholders' assessment of CSR proposals or programs in relationship to the intended goal attainment. The second is motive driven as it illustrates CSR in terms of the ascriptions on the motives behind its

foundation or the reasons for which the CSR proposal was established. In a departure from prior studies, my aim in this study was to examine how proper management practice of CSR can be brought in to assuage the frayed nerves in the Niger Delta. There will be an expansion on this framework in Chapter 2.

### **Nature of the Study**

In conducting this study, the research approach was qualitative. The design was phenomenological, which entailed utilizing interviews to make a detailed description of the lived experiences of selected individuals who had personally had or felt the impact of CSR by managers of the companies that produce oil and gas in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Phenomenology, as posited by Merriam (2014), entails studying people's real life and conscious experiences. As against other designs such as descriptive or exploratory case studies and others, the design used in this study was interpretive phenomenology, using a detailed description and narrative of the lived experiences of selected individuals examining their experiences with actions of managers of the oil and gas companies in the discharge of their CSR functions. Phenomenological studies are normally tailored to offer a basis for a dependable expression of the interviewee's personal understanding of the subject matter being studied (Van Manen, 2014). The phenomenological posture of the study dictated that the interview respondents let the situation show themselves as they have been observed or felt (Van Manen, 2014).

The intentions in this fundamental research was to seek various ways and means to resolve the problem, using the results from data gathered resulting in a better understanding of the position of main factors of the problem being studied (Cherry,

2012). The use of interviews, which was affirmed by Seidman (2013), as the foremost way by which a researcher can study a situation or a problem, was applied. Interviewing was not meant to test hypotheses or make any evaluations, but was aimed at understanding the lived experiences of other people and what meaning they make out of those experiences. The interview system is considered to be the best and most appropriate way to obtain the needed data to draw an objective inference on the problem being investigated. In order to simplify interpretation and the distillation of the essence of what participants mean in their responses, data reduction becomes necessary. In phenomenological conventions, investigators and researchers reduce data by eradicating repetitive statements and data that are immaterial to the phenomenon being studied (Roulston, 2014).

### **Definition of Terms**

*Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):* Carroll (2015) defined CSR as a phenomenon that broadly includes the legal, economic, philanthropic, and ethical anticipations placed on business organizations by the public. CSR has become a valuable framework for investigating corporate-stakeholder dealings. The concept of CSR is an instrument utilized by businesses to structure their attitudes, approaches, and relationships with their internal and external stakeholders. CSR is a means of bridging the trade-off existing between economic growth in material terms and the wellbeing of the society on one hand and the environment on the other. CSR demands a need to sustain equilibrium between both sides. Carroll and Buchholtz (2015) asserted that CSR is a corporate act which considers the impacts of organizational activities on society. CSR



also brings to the fore the popular necessity to satisfy the economic, social, and environmental needs, also known as the Triple Bottom Line (Sfeir-Younis, 2009). Palazzo, Schrempf-Stirling, and Phillips (2015), while discussing CSR, opine that corporations must be held accountable for actions everywhere throughout the organizational value chains.

*Perception:* Perception is a phenomenon of apprehension and getting an awareness of an objective reality composed of objects that exist independently of an individual's sense of self based mainly on visual consciousness (Marchi & Newen, 2016). Perception relates to conceptions held by individuals that diverge from realism in patterns which can be detected for reasons that are understandable (Jervis, 2015).

*Protest Groups:* The Niger Delta region has been awash with a series of crises and these emanate from various dissenting communities and groups. The crisis levels have advanced to high international levels and have become common knowledge globally (Odemene, 2013). In order to assuage these voices of dissent and the violent uprising by the militants, the federal government set up the amnesty program in 2009 (Tobor, 2014). This program has helped in large measure to douse and reduce the tension and level of militancy.

*Social Responsibility:* Social responsibility is a moral presumption that an entity, be it a business or person, has an obligation to operate to the benefit of society at large. Social responsibility is also a duty that individuals have to perform requiring them to reflect on their actions in general and hold the corporation responsible.

*Social Transformation:* Social transformation is the practice whereby a person changes the socially recognized social status of their progenitors into a socially accomplished status for themselves (Macionis & John, 2010). It can also be defined as a large scale social change in terms of cultural reforms. The first definition refers mainly to occurrences with a human entity, while the second refers to occurrences in a social system. The individual transformation is in three steps. Social transformation is done by associational embracement, associational distancing, and the distinct presentation of self through social mobility (Macionis & John, 2010). Social transformation in terms of a social system requires a complete swing in communal awareness of the general human population at all levels be it local, state, national, or global. Such transformation spells a total refinement of reality by compromise.

### **Assumptions**

The main focus of this study was to research how CSR affects the welfare of the landowners and citizens of the Nigerian Niger Delta. The researcher is assuming that study participants who participate in interviews will be unbiased and free from any forms of subjectivity as they will be informed and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The study, as can be seen from the theoretical framework, relies on the stakeholder and perception theories. The study was directed at reconciling the perceived assumed difference inherent among the opposing groups through the administration and analysis of interviews. The study was carried out with the highest level of objectivity, allowing respondents total independence to express their views and feelings exactly as they experienced them. Such objective responses to interviews were recorded, analyzed,

and reported exactly as it was. These actions went a long way in ensuring the avoidance and elimination of any perceived researcher bias. In order to prevent researcher and other biases, transcript validation, triangulation, and bracketing were deployed where needed and when necessary. Interviews were conducted using an interview protocol as a guide to conducting the interviews.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

In this study, I examined the perception that oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria had largely failed to effectively utilize CSR in the area. The study includes the perceptions of the landowners that they are not experiencing sufficient CSR and feel that the oil and gas companies in the area have not been socially responsive enough to their welfare. I also studied the relationship of CSR to the livelihood of the landowners of the area and how it related to the environment. The issue studied is one that has a potential to bring a sense of equity to the local land owners and communities and closure on the perception that they have been alienated, exploited, and cheated by managers of the corporations and authorities in the oil and gas sector. I interviewed 15 landowners. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 35 minutes. In conducting the interview, I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) as a guide. The content of the interview protocol was designed to seek the opinions of respondents based on their lived experiences as landowners of the area being studied.

In carrying out qualitative research studies, purposeful samples are used. As long as the general problem to be investigated is identified, the task of selecting the sample becomes easier (Merriam, 2014). With myriad sites and activities to visit and observe

respectively, materials to be read, and individuals to be interviewed, the need to carry out a selection from all that is available of just a few reliable ones becomes vital. A choice has to be made of what, where, when, and whom to observe and interview (Merriam, 2014). Purposive sampling was used in this study to select the participants to be interviewed which was tailored in line with the interview protocol in Appendix B.

The main delimiting factor in this study was derived from the researcher's choice of the problem for investigation (Simon & Goes, 2013). The choice of problem was about the fact that that CSR initiatives in the Niger Delta lacked a community-centric framework to ensure optimal and sustainable returns on CSR investments for multinational corporations and local Nigerian citizens. Investigations on CSR are capable of being directed toward achieving a variety of objectives. The scope of this research was limited to determining how deeply the landowners of the Niger Delta region understand what it means to experience CSR.

Another area of delimitation was my choice to study CSR as it affects the land owners and not as it relates to or impacts on the governance of the people by the various levels of government. The study was delimited by the choice to study only CSR by the oil and gas producing companies rather than other companies in other industries in the area. Other areas of delimitation were the exclusion of executives of the oil and gas companies, along with the actions and positions of the various levels of government and agencies as they related to the entire study of CSR.

### **Limitations**

Using a phenomenological qualitative research approach, I investigated the relationship of CSR to the welfare of Nigerian Niger Delta landowners. The general

requirement is that the researcher has to put himself to the ways similar to being of the forms that things exist and operate in the world (Van Manen, 2014). The purpose was to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta. In conducting this research study, there were certain limitations. The limitations included the rough and rugged terrain of the mangrove area. The search for interviewees representing the right population was challenging as with many qualified respondents available, choosing the most appropriate ones with the most objectivity was the right thing to do and as such required some rigor. Other likely limitations included the objectivity of respondents, validity and reliability of data, and information obtained. These are similar to any likely limitations from the methodology and study design and limitations in access to certain people, data, and documents (Simon & Goes, 2013). There were no unknown extraneous factors that showed up in the course of the study and interviews. The expectation is that the results of this investigative research will be transferable to other similar situations (Noble & Smith, 2015, Shaw, 2013). There is a possibility that the results may not be transferable to another situation.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study may be noteworthy in many ways. The results may benefit a good number of stakeholders, mainly the citizens of the area of study and also the managers of the corporations prospecting for oil and gas in the area. The major areas of significance would include contribution to body of knowledge, managerial significance, gaps in literature, and contribution to social change using existing literature.

### **Contribution to the Body of Knowledge**

In line with the position of Patton (2015) on the need for research studies to build upon existing knowledge, the researcher will rely on the work of other researchers on the subject matter and then investigate and bridge an existing gap. The study was aimed at contributing to the body of knowledge in the oil and gas industry and the areas of operation. This study may also help to further educate all stakeholders on the benefits of a properly managed CSR regime both to the land owners of the area and the corporations. This study has the capacity to promote social change by helping to propel the citizenry and related corporate management toward better positive concepts for the mutual benefit of all parties (Fontane, 2014). The Walden University Faculty Handbook affirms the definition of positive social change as a “deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies. Positive social change results in the improvement of human and social conditions” (Faculty Handbook, 2011, p.4). It is implicitly accepted as a relatively rapid and wide-ranging transformation of societal compositions and establishments, without which the world would be static, with no advancement to human development and general being (Silbereisen, & Tomasik, 2015).

### **Advance Managerial Practice**

The study results and outcomes may contribute to resolving the ongoing confusion and debates surrounding the Niger Delta question, one which may affect continued existence of the land owners of the area and the sustenance of the environment. The

Niger Delta question is one which has for decades defied answers and beleaguered the Nigerian state. Being focused at answering a major management question, the study may be of noteworthy managerial significance because of understanding why there are perceptions by the land owners that the managers of the oil and gas production companies in the Niger Delta area are not socially responsive to their welfare. The results of the data analysis will be used to attempt to achieve a balance upon which an agreeable level of harmony is expected to be struck in the interest of the land owners and all other stakeholders.

### **Contribution to Social Change**

The issue studied is one which can have a potential for bringing a sense of equity to the local land owners and communities, and likely bring closure to the perception that they have been alienated, exploited, and cheated by the corporations and authorities in the oil and gas sector. Empirical evidence by authors and researchers sustaining the perception that the local land owners and communities are likely short-changed by the operating corporations and authorities in the oil and gas sector abounds. Among such authors and researchers are Ottuh, (2013), Odemene (2013), and Tobor (2014), who respectively point to the notion that poverty and under-development in the Niger Delta is as a result of unjust and oppressive actions by the major players of the oil and gas industry. The authors claim a perception that the oil and gas prospecting and producing companies in the area may not have effectively demonstrated sufficient social responsiveness toward the welfare of the citizens of the area.

In this study, I examined the discipline embedded within the eight aspects of social change. These aspects are scholarship, systems thinking, reflection, practice, collaboration, advocacy, political/civic engagement, and humane ethics (Walden University, 2014). The study also aids in the pursuit of the triple bottom line of economy, people, and environmental sustenance (Anderson et al., 2015). Triple bottom line is an overall welfare principle which seeks to secure the interests of all stakeholders and is a hallmark principle in management.

The intention of this research study was to seek ways that can lead to peace, progress, and prosperity for all parties and stakeholders in the oil rich Niger Delta region. These can also likely translate to strings of positive social change both for the citizens and all other stakeholders. Petroleum and oil are acknowledged to be major catalysts for industrial growth and development at all levels, which also serves as a key catalyst for global positive change. A better, greener, and healthier environment is more likely to be the product of a regime of properly designed and well managed schemes of CSR delivered to the citizens of the Niger Delta region.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta. This study provides an understanding of the lived experiences of the landowners as they relate to the performance of CSR managers of oil and gas companies operating in the area. This study unravels the perception that managers of the oil and gas corporations operating in the Niger Delta of Nigeria appear to have failed to effectively demonstrate CSR for the



welfare of the landowners of the area. This phenomenological qualitative study was based on the framework and concepts of Freeman's stakeholder theory and Grice's causal theory of perception. The scope of the study covers the perception that the management of the oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria have not put into effective use the practice of CSR to bolster the welfare of the citizens of the area.

Purposive sampling was applied in selecting respondents to be interviewed.

Limitations to this study included the terrain and the challenges of selecting the most qualified respondents for data gathering in the area. The study can be significant in its contribution to the body of knowledge, managerial significance, and identification of the gap on literature and in seeking ways to bridge or close the gap. Most importantly, the study has a potential of contributing to social change. Chapter 2 is a review of related literature and current studies on the subject matter.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The issue of CSR affects the lives of the landowners and citizens in the Niger Delta region. There exists a problem that CSR initiatives in the Niger Delta lack a community-centric framework to ensure optimal and sustainable returns on CSR investments for MNCs and local Nigerian citizens. The perception is that the impact of CSR and operating corporations in the area is either not felt or not felt enough. For that reason, the focus of this study was to investigate why these perceptions of landowners exist and what steps could be taken to correct the situation. The purpose of this study was to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta.

The review of literature is a focused examination of studies involving CSR and current and emerging trends. The review was also an examination of literature dealing with the influence of stakeholders and how citizens of the area interpreted the effectiveness of CSR in the area. The study was an attempt at resolving the unending Niger Delta question using the CSR perspective, and the general perception among the citizens of the Niger Delta area that managers of oil and gas companies operating in the region must deal with the conception seemingly held by the people that they are ineffective in demonstrating their corporate responsiveness to the landowners of the area.

Chapter 2 includes the relevant literature for this study. The chapter also contains a restatement of the theoretical foundation, and information about theories upon which this study is based. The chapter ends with a summary of the major themes in the

literature. The summary contains a transition to Chapter 3 connecting the identified gap with the methods described in the chapter.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The information used for the literature review was drawn from various sources. Primary and major information and data were sourced from databases dealing with management, psychology, business, and human behavior. Internet and electronic databases were mostly used for sourcing information.

Various databases in the Walden University Library were used as sources. The materials included related dissertations and peer-reviewed journal articles from EBSCOHost, EBSCO eBooks, ABI/INFORM Complete, ProQuest, Business Source Complete, Expanded Academic ASAP, Dissertations and Theses, Dissertations and Theses at Walden, DOIs, Google Scholar, and books on related subjects. Other common databases used were PsychINFO, Lexis/Nexis Academic, SocINDEX, PsychARTICLES. These were used to search for relevant dissertations, theses, and articles relating to the subject of CSR and stakeholder and perception theories relating to the Niger Delta issue. The major search terms and combinations of search terms used for this study were as follows: *social responsibility, corporate social responsibility, stakeholder, perception, Niger Delta, environmental impact, citizens, indigenes, and national index.*

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Due to the nature and purpose of this phenomenological study, two main theories were employed in clarifying the outcomes of the research. The two theories used for the

theoretical frameworks of this study were Freeman's stakeholder theory and Grice's perception theory.

The problem of the study revolved around the perceptions of the citizens of the Niger Delta region in relation to how socially responsive the management of the main stakeholders, who are the oil and gas corporations, are toward citizens' welfare. The study was based upon the grounding of these two major theories.

### **Stakeholder Theory**

The stakeholder theory is a highly-disputed theory, and the contestability makes it very challenging and problematic. The theory is not a single theory, but a combination of diverse narratives. Miles (2015) pointed out that the affluence adduced to the stakeholder theory also is a major drawback. Miles further stated that the problem of conceptual perplexity inherent in the theory has been used to hurt the reputation of the stakeholder theory.

The stakeholder theory was first postulated and detailed by Freeman in 1984. All the activities of the business and the whole idea of CSR revolve around the owners of business and all others who have an influence on the business. Stakeholder theory states that successful business management demands a balanced thoughtfulness of, and attention to, the rightful interests of everyone who holds a stake in the business (Freeman, 1984). A stakeholder is defined as an individual or organization that qualifies as having a stake or a claim in the firm or enterprise (Hasnas, 2013). As indicated by Stieb (2009), stakeholder theory has gained so much prominence that consideration was being given to reclassifying stockholders in business to stakeholders. Since Freeman's book, stakeholder

management has gained popularity in academic and business circles. In the two spheres, the demand for the incorporation of stakeholders in business decision making has reverberated extensively (Fifka & Adai, 2015). Hasnas (2013) viewed the stakeholder theory as normative and therefore very ethical, stating that the business enterprise is expected to be focused on continually making attempts to satisfy the stakeholders. Enyinna (2013) said the stakeholder theory does not qualify as normative because the idea of morality embedded in the theory is merely hypothetical and not real. Stakeholder theory encourages ethical standards in business. Enyinna posited that this is essentially strategic and only normative by chance.

The term stakeholder has been interpreted to include any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the corporation (Eweje, 2014). Stakeholder groups can include shareholders or owners, employees, customers, the indigenous communities. Modern corporate behaviors are built around the principles of the stakeholder management of the enterprise or corporation. The stakeholder theory affirms that in order for a business to survive, the various components that can be identified as holding a stake in the business must be given due and adequate consideration in the affairs of the company. In order to achieve this, stakeholder friendly policies must be evolved and adopted. Such policies would give the corporation the much-needed perceived human face, thereby attracting enough attention for business activities.

The leaders of the corporation or enterprise are invariably the major stakeholder component. Smudde and Courtright (2011) viewed stakeholder management from a holistic perspective and affirmed that leaders are a component of practically all structured

life, stake-holding inclusive. De Vita, Lagoke, and Adesola (2015) declared that the theory guiding stakeholders evaluates the identity of stakeholders on the foundation of the possession of one or a combination of any of three correlation characteristics. The relational attributes are legitimacy, urgency, and power.

Based on the inclusive viewpoint of the stakeholder theory, an enterprise exists at the meeting point of a variety of interests. The theory portrays a position in an intricate web of social relationships of dependency and expectation. Overall corporate success from management's viewpoint is determined solely by the level of satisfaction enjoyed and displayed by the various sections and components of the stakeholder group. This viewpoint demands that stakeholders are properly identified and treated appropriately and respectfully to ensure optimal satisfaction for the various segments of the stakeholder group. Affirming this view, Crilly and Sloan (2012) identified attention to stakeholders as a strategic management issue which has the capacity to potentially affect the achievement of overall corporate goals either positively or negatively depending on how matters relating to stakeholders are handled. CSR, as pointed out by Khan, Latif, Jalal, Anjum, and Rizwan (2014), places the overall superior responsibility to the business's stakeholders by the managers of the business. The analogy by the aforementioned authors portrays the attribution of complete business supremacy of management control on the shoulders of the major stakeholders who are the owners of business.

The major task of managers, therefore, is to identify stakeholders and stakeholder groups, especially those who share a common interest. It is important to determine their level of power and treat them appropriately with a view to winning them to

management's side totally and giving them maximum satisfaction by harnessing a balanced link between the business and the natural, social and financial environments (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2014). Stakeholder theory in management is closely and inseparably attached to the theory, principles, and practice of CSR in every organization, and particularly in the oil and gas companies operating in the Nigerian Niger Delta.

### **Theory of Perception**

The second theoretical framework for this study was the Grice's causal theory of perception. Perception implies the addition of meaning to a sensation through the support of past experience. Philosophically, perception relates to the nature of sensitized experience of data, beliefs, and knowledge of the world. Searle (2015) identified and defined perception as seeing things as they are. Searle struck a difference between perception and hallucination stating that for an object, perception is satisfied while hallucination is not satisfied. Both may bear the same content, but they can have an object in one case and none in another. Bennett, Hoffman, and Prakash (2014) posited that a proper and acceptable theory of perception should present information that is significant to the basic characteristics of perception as defined by Searle.

All perceptions of the human mind are made up of two clear classes, which are impressions and ideas, the only difference in the two being that impressions are livelier and come with more force than ideas (Pitcher 2015). Perception is characteristically viewed as a prejudiced action. When perception arises from, and results from the action of another person or object, such perception is regarded as causal perception. Such perceptions lead the perceiver to have a perceptual experience of the person or object. Ibe

(2015) pointed out that there are two general perspectives of perceived CSR. The first demonstrates perception as it relates to stakeholders' assessment of CSR suggestions or plans in correlation to the intended purpose and its accomplishment. The second is motive driven, as it exemplifies CSR in terms of the ascriptions on the motives behind its foundation or the reasons for which the CSR proposal was set up.

### **Grice Causal Theory of Perception**

Grice causal theory of perception (CTP) (Grice, 1961) most fittingly represents the grounds upon which this study was built. In spite of wide-ranging philosophical debates and complexities related to deriving a clear definition for perception, it is the strong opinion of Arstila and Pihlainen (2009) that the chief approach for dealing with the issue of perception went back to Grice. CTP holds that the perception of a material thing is causally clarified by allusion or connection to circumstances, one of which must require a reference to the item perceived. This theory holds that the occurrence of an event is thought to be causally responsible for the coming into being or development of another or other events. Causal perception comes about when the perception arises from and takes effect from the action of another individual or thing, such perception is regarded as causal perception.

According to Fendt, Wilson, Jenkins, Dimmock, and Weeks (2014), phenomenology provides the most appropriate philosophical alignment to explore the lived experiences of people. The authors reported that despite its increasing adaptation in varying contexts, the use of phenomenology in studies has remained limited and continues to present conceptual, theoretical and applied challenges to investigators.



Qualitative studies are usually presented with the lack of linkage between the methodology used and a distinct statement of the theoretical foundations that should guide the method used (Lopez & Willis, 2002). The Causal Theory of Perception deals with the process of understanding individuals and the meanings they hold to interactions with other individuals and the environment. In this study, I wanted to determine how the general perceptions of the citizens of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria influenced their thinking and impressions of their level of satisfaction with the effectiveness of the corporate responsiveness of the management of the various oil and gas companies operating in the area.

## **Literature Review**

### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

Husted (2015) stated that the history of CSR has thus far been erroneously limited to the 20th century, focusing mainly on the United States. Husted revealed that the practice of CSR dates back from the 19th century through the First World War in a variety of countries including the UK, United States, Japan, Germany, and India. McClerklin (2013) traced the history of CSR and how it has developed to its present prominent position for the public, academic circles, and business world. McClerklin stressed the need for organizations to show adequate concern of the social and environmental needs of geographical locations in which they operate.

Peloza and Falkenberg (2009) defined CSR as business activities conducted with stakeholders as partners to address social and environmental issues. As affirmed by Poplawska, Labib, Reed, and Ishizaka (2015), CSR has become a useful framework for

exploring corporate–stakeholder relationships, as the concept of CSR is a means by which businesses frame their attitudes, strategies, and relationships with their stakeholders. CSR aids in bridging the trade-off existing between profitability by the corporation and the wellbeing of the society on one hand and the survival and sustenance of the environment on the other. Khan et al. (2014) viewed CSR as a concept which operates with different activities connected with a variety of stakeholders of a business. CSR can be viewed from both the internal and external approaches as developed by Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, and Ganapathy (2007).

Modern businesses place a very high premium on their level of social responsiveness. Usually the corporate mission, vision, culture, and value-system of every organization reflects the direction of its social responsiveness. Therefore, for any company to expect support and a positive attitude from society, it is expected to have aimed at fostering and practicing all globally acknowledged standards of corporate socially responsive conduct (Juscus & Snieska, 2015).

The foremost rationale of CSR invariably is for businesses to go further than the concerns for profitability and seek for the larger welfare of the society in which the business operates (Adeleke, 2014). It demands that the need sustains equilibrium between owners' profitability and stakeholders' welfare. With recent heightened global sensitivity toward social issues and those of the environment, corporations have progressively become more socially and environmentally concerned and responsible to the communities and localities where they operate (Eweje & Sakaki, 2015). This current position goes to further emphasize the popular management principle stressing on the

necessity to satisfy the economic, social, and environmental needs, also known as the Triple Bottom Line (Sfeir-Younis, 2009). The Triple Bottom Line principle seeks an equitable balance between profitability, the environment, and the people. It states that a truly successful and responsible organization must ensure that the environment in which it is operating and making its profits must not only be sustained but actually replenished and enriched. It must also positively reflect on the lives of the citizens of the area in which it is carrying out its business. While most studies on triple bottom line and management have been focused on developing economies, Ralston et al. (2015) studied this subject in more developed economies called the BRICs, which include Brazil, Russia, India, and China. They investigated this phenomenon at the macro-level reviewing the socio-cultural and business ideological factors of the triple-bottom-line of CSR all over the BRICs. The theory of CSR rests well upon the popular framework of the Triple Bottom Line, and it is very apt in this study as it researches how the practice of CSR by the managers of the oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria impacts on the welfare of the citizens of the area. Triple bottom line, also referred to as the three Ps (planet, people, and profits), is an accounting framework which views and measures the performance of businesses from the three dimensions of social, environment, and finance (Slaper & Hall, 2014).

### **Categories of Corporate Social Responsibility**

Giarni, Orji, and Worgu (2015) viewed CSR from the perspective of accountability and referred to CSR as corporate social accounting and for that reason classified CSR into various genres as identified both in the upstream and downstream sectors of the oil

and gas industry in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Giami et al. (2015) declared that the various types of CSR prevalent in practice in the area are classified into multiple facets. These aspects or facets of CSR are deliberated.

Redemptive CSR is aimed at redeeming a struggling and dishonored corporate image and usually arises from fallouts of a crisis situation and not usually voluntary on the part of the company. Advocacy CSR is usually connected to advocacy and promotional campaigns by organizations, associations, and societies not affiliated or related to government. Community-participatory CSR is usually initiated by the community and so it is people oriented and rests on community support. Mass media-induced CSR comes about due to criticisms, sarcasm, and pressures from mass media publications on the social irresponsiveness of the operating companies in the area.

Reactive CSR is a crisis-provoked type of CSR. This type of CSR is induced and rushed into due to a crisis propelled by prolonged corporate irresponsiveness. Reactive CSR is a fire-brigade approach. A typical example is the Amnesty Program of 2009 in the Niger Delta region. Accommodative CSR is a strategy employed to pressure corporations to accept and deploy services that are ordinarily above and beyond their acceptable corporate limits (Kreitner, 1995). Defensive CSR is a strategy employed by corporations to legally maneuver and reduce their responsibilities to the citizens by deploying less than adequate services toward the welfare of the people. Proactive CSR, as the name suggests, is that in which CSR policies are collaboratively formulated at the start of corporate operations along with representatives of the host communities that would improve the socioeconomic and welfare standards of the citizens. Seasonal CSR is that type of

strategy where the corporations shy away from their social responsibilities the majority of the year and show up once or twice a year to do one or two things for the citizens.

Attitudes of this sort often result from crisis situations and lead to reactive CSR eventually.

In quoting Kreitner (1995, p. 136), Giambi et al. (2015) explained ten common must dos in order for CSR by the operating corporations to be acceptable as effective and efficient in the Niger Delta area. The commandments include multiple facets. The manager must:

1. Take remedial action before it is required.
2. Work to institute industry wide standards and self-regulation.
3. Work with the affected populace to resolve shared problems.
4. Get involved in apposite social programs.
5. Freely and openly own up to their faults.
6. Help correct environmental and ecological problems.
7. Make every effort to make profits on a constant basis.
8. Institute and make mandatory a corporate code of conduct.
9. Take desired public standards on societal issues.
10. Keep an eye on the varying social atmosphere.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility and the Environment**

One of the central issues that CSR seeks to address is that of the environment. For many decades there has been abundant initiatives directed at the preservation of the environment (Nedelko & Potocan, 2014). There are three fundamental features of CSR as

perceived by citizens. These features are environment, economic, and social. While studying the impact of seismic and production activities on the mangrove systems of the Nigerian Niger Delta, Osuji et al. (2006) provided evidence of the immense devastation brought upon the environment and the ecosystem of the region. Similarly, Allen (2014) and Olaniyi and Omo-Irabor (2016) stressed the fact of this impact as immediate evidence for the urgent need for oil and gas prospecting and producing companies to do more in repairing the environment in which they operate. The level of environmental degradation in the area signifies to a larger extent the failure by government to enforce environmental policies on oil and gas formulated for the attainment of sustainable development (Allen, 2014). So far, there appears to be a perception by the landowners that not much seem to have been done in the direction of striking a balance between corporate profit goals and environmental and societal sustenance by the oil and gas corporations.

Proper CSR practice stresses the need to strike this balance as such negligence would amount very well to corporate irresponsibility (George et al., 2012). Akpan (2006) discussed the consequences and benefits of CSR practice in Nigeria's oil province in the face of responsibility and rhetoric. Akpan pointed out that the consequences to the environment are dire and ominous, while the benefits are enormous. The view of Akpan is that the practice of CSR by organizations operating in the oil and gas industry in the Niger Delta area must not be an option. It should be considered a compulsion and not a choice to all businesses operating not only in the Niger Delta area, but also globally. It is the ethical thing to do if the target region must survive and not become systemically

endangered. In light of this, the Nigerian Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act (1992) was enacted with the sole objective of making the sustainability of the environment a fundamental premise in Nigerian national developmental plans. Nonetheless, the act does not guarantee the scope of commitment of the stakeholders to the sustenance and furtherance of local traditions and customs in the Nigerian environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures (Nzeadibe, Ajaero, & Nwoke, 2015). This lapse has made it possible for the oil and gas multinationals to possibly evade the dictates of the spirit of the EIA Act.

There has been widespread reports of extensive environmental degradation occasioned by a continuous series of oil spillages and flaring of gas at almost all drilling and production locations. Some of these have resulted in frequent spontaneous acts of crisis in many localities of occurrences. Amanze (2011) gave an account of a looming crisis in Ellu community of the Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State in a protest over toxic waste materials dumped in the town by Agip Oil Corporation. Similarly Ken Saro-Wiwa while leading his MOSOP group in peaceful protests against the environmental pollution and degradation in Ogoni land that he led, resulted in his death by hanging along with eight other martyrs. Referred to as the Ogoni nine, these people were reportedly murdered by the Nigerian military government on November 10, 1995, in perceived collaboration with the Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company, who later agreed to and paid out the sum of \$15.5 million on June 8, 2009, over the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight friends (Berkeley Citizen, 2011).

Agbagwa and Ndukwu, (2014) observed that about 495 hectares of forest lands were cleared and 9,642,000 trees were felled to make provision for the laying of pipelines in the area. They further stated that about 219 species of plants in 66 families and 125 different fauna species from 64 families were documented in these areas and about a quarter of them are threatened based on a conservation estimate. In addition to the deforestation situation, the flaring of gas has gained significant global acknowledgment as a major agent of environmental contamination. This fact has led to the founding of the Global Gas Flaring Reduction (GGFR) scheme, which suggests an objective way of watching the activity of gas flaring (Anejionu, Blackburn, & Whyatt, 2015). Compliance to the GGFR initiative by oil and gas corporations operating in the Niger Delta area is a distinctive aspect of social responsibility. Nevertheless, the extent of compliance by the companies matters for the most part, and that can only be determined by the Nigerian national oil and gas regulatory body, the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR).

The effectiveness and efficiency of the DPR in enforcing the regulations is also paramount in meeting global environmental control standards. In the opinion of Anejionu et al. (2015), the paucity of reliable data on gas flaring activities and its environmental impact has recently necessitated by the GGFR to make recent efforts to detect gas flares by means of satellite imagery on a global scale. Anejionu et al. further reported that the Niger Delta of Nigeria has been identified by the GGFR initiative as a noteworthy global hotspot of gas flaring activities contributing to an escalation of global environmental concerns. The need to enforce compliance by the regulatory bodies for oil and gas



production on the operating companies as a major aspect of CSR to the citizens of the Niger Delta, and indeed the larger global society, has consequently become imperative.

In a related study on stakeholder environmental accountability relationship in the Nigerian oil and gas industry, Hassan and Kouhy (2015) identified that even stakeholders identified and classified as Green Stakeholders make little, unimposing, and not-noteworthy efforts at efficiently carrying out their environmental responsibilities and accountability. The factors identified as working against the effective performance of the stakeholders consist of legal powers of regulatory environmental stakeholders that are not strong and stringent, lack of recognition afforded to the host communities as dominant environmental stakeholders, and failure to recognize the Nigerian public as lawful environmental stakeholders. In order to realize national and global standards, there must be conscious, persistent, and consistent efforts to comply with the legal and regulatory industry dictates and stipulations to maintain and sustain a clean environment.

In his study on the subject of environmental impacts by the operations of oil and gas companies in the Niger Delta region, Oguejiofor (2006) reviewed some aspects of accelerated development in the face of excessive gas flaring in Nigeria and its consequences on the environment. Gas flaring has both severe economic and social consequences on the region as the environment, in his opinion, is slowly slipping into and accelerating the danger of ozone layer depletion. This phenomenon has resulted in the scorching of the abundant greenery for which the region was originally famous. Oguejiofor found that operations by the oil and gas prospecting companies have either

directly or indirectly led to severe environmental damage in the entire Niger Delta region in great measures to the land, air, streams, and natural mangrove vegetation of the area.

Anejionu, Ahiaramunnah, and Nri-ezedi (2015) revealed that every stage of the mining of oil and gas, from initial seismic survey through refining, leads to a substantial negative impact on the immediate environment. With Oil Mining and Oil Prospecting Licenses (OMLs and OPLs) granted oil mining and prospecting companies by the Nigerian government, the firms have approval for unrestricted right to operate on every land and water within the areas covered by the license in their quest for oil and gas.

Anejionu et al. (2015) observed that the delta, being one of the world's major wetlands and the most important one in Africa, is an enormous floodplain built over centuries of amassing of deposits brought along the downstream towards the Atlantic Ocean by the Rivers Niger and Benue, which are the two major rivers in Nigeria and prominent in Africa. The Niger Delta area, which is largely unprotected and very vulnerable, is home to a wide range of common coastal and estuarine fauna and flora, which supports more than 60% of all types in Nigeria and has been significantly affected by continuous oil and gas exploration and mining operations which started as far back as 1958 with the first oil well drilled at Oloibiri in Rivers State (World Bank, 1995).

While arguing for environmental rights in Niger Delta, Samy, Lokpobiri, and Dawodu (2015) stated that oil spills and gas flaring have continuously occurred for over 50 years from the operations of oil and gas companies working in the area. These unwholesome occurrences have led to the contamination of the environment and water bodies in the area. Farmlands upon which the local citizens depend for subsistence have

been much degraded, and crops no longer do well. The lack and absence of an established governmental legal regime on environmental rights has rendered it difficult and almost impossible for citizens of the area to seek out legal redress against the companies on the multiple environmental breaches committed against them.

The persistent exploitation of oil and gas in the wetlands of the Niger, and the enormous financial gains it brings to the corporations and the Nigerian state, comes at the expense of the livelihood and well-being of the impoverished citizens living in the area who are profoundly reliant upon the marshlands (Adekola et al., 2015). In reality, the citizens of the Niger Delta achieve a significant component (about 80%) of their earnings directly from the marshlands of the Delta. They are perceived to be more dependent upon the delta than other wetland societies in Africa.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (2013) stated that as a result of the continuous activities of the oil and gas firms in the area with non-commensurate levels of CSR to the environment and citizens, the inhabitants and environment of the area have had to bear the burden of the corporate actions and inactions. As a result, the area has been declared one of the most imperiled and jeopardized environments globally. The area has consequently been categorized as a high conservation concern in the West African sub- region (Anejionu et al., 2015).

These findings are justifications for the necessity to make certain that corporate managers of oil and gas firms operating in the region deal with the perception that they are not effective in demonstrating their corporate responsiveness, not only with respect to

the welfare of the citizens, but also to the sustenance and enhancement of the environment.

### **CSR and Crisis in the Niger Delta of Nigeria**

In an attempt to determine the causes and offshoots of the tension and crisis in the Niger Delta region, Vines (2005) observed that dissent and anger against governmental authority and those of the multinational companies operating in the area is a major cause of the problems in the region commonly referred in government circles as the Niger Delta Question. Vines declared that the growing dissent and tension in the area has resulted in the proliferation of light weapons in the Niger Delta and West Africa. These are being used by the restive youth to vent their frustration and anger in the form of terror. Vines (2009) reported that the youths are aggrieved due to their perception that not enough corporate responsiveness is happening in their areas as against what they give up and suffer due to the operations of oil and gas companies in their areas.

This is corroborated by Nwankwo (2015), who indicated that there is a nexus between CSR and conflict. In Nwankwo's view, the environmentally unfriendly activities of the oil and gas companies operating in the area have the capability to constantly trigger off conflicts and crisis in the region. It is the opinion of Vines (2005) and Nwankwo (2015) that better results leading to lasting peace and progress can be derived majorly through the inclusiveness of the citizens in CSR by having constructive dialogues with all stakeholders, while pressuring the managers of the multinationals to be more socially responsive to the citizens and environment.

In a similar study in his United States Institute of Peace (USIPS) sponsored article, Smock (2009) examined the effects of the operations of the oil and gas corporations in the Niger Delta region. Smock studied the economic, political, and environmental situation in Nigeria and the Niger Delta. This study fell short of mentioning the role that corporate social responsiveness or irresponsibility by the oil and gas exploring and producing companies may have been perceived to have played in causing the prevalent crisis and the tide of agitations and confrontations in the region. The picture and opinion Smock painted made it appear that the problem in the area had no real direct relationship to the perception held by the citizens that the managers of the oil and gas multinationals operating in the area are not effective in their cooperate social responsiveness to the host communities and the environment.

More recent researchers hold a different view from those of Smock (2009) and stressed more upon the older findings of the study carried out by Vines (2005). Tobor (2014), while studying the case of the Urhobo people's culture and the amnesty program in the region, centered his investigation on the various widespread crises that ravaged the area and the palliatives and proffered solutions to the restiveness of the region and the effects on the local cultures. Such palliatives included the amnesty program of President Jonathan's government which ended in May 2015. No practical mention of the effect of CSR or lack of it on the people of the region and their culture was mentioned. There is a need to look into how CSR can be brought in to assuage the frayed nerves on the Niger Delta imbroglio. Tobor (2014) pointed to the near lack of infrastructure in the region even though the area contributes up to 90% of the oil revenue to the nation and

everything to the prospectors. In an effort to further press home his position, Tobor stated that although multinational corporations exploit the Niger Delta for oil, the area itself suffers for a need of development.

Many of the views held by Tobor (2014) were a year earlier expressed by Ejumudo (2013) in his review of the Niger Delta crisis, with a focus on the ecological implications. Ejumudo (2013) noted that while the operations of the multinational oil and gas companies result in a boom to the economies of the states and the Nigerian nation, the devastating effects from spillages, air and water pollution, and other adverse incidences have only further impoverished the local citizens of the region. Accordingly, the incidences and impoverishment has often been perceived to cause disaffection among the people and led to pockets of skirmishes, civil disobedience, and crisis by the local citizens of the Niger Delta region.

Odemene (2013) reviewed the current issues in the Niger Delta from the start through the formation of various protest groups, some of which resorted to kidnapping oil workers in order to drive home their grievances, to the present post amnesty times in the region. Lugard (2013), while corroborating the views of Manby (2011), indicated that the entire Niger Delta area has been devastated by the operations of Shell and the other multinational oil and gas corporations exploiting the resources of the region. He also stated that Shell has admitted culpability for the purchase of arms and ammunitions for government security agents to secure and safeguard their investments in the area. Odemene (2013) laid out how properly managed crisis such as exists in the Niger Delta region could result in a fairly egalitarian society, leading to almost every stakeholder

being happy and contented with fewer parts of the population crying foul as it appears to be now.

George et al. (2012) chronicled the entire history of the oil and gas industry in Nigeria and concluded that the multinational oil companies operating in the area contributed immensely to the unrest in the region. The authors termed the overall action of the multinational companies (MNCs) operating in the Nigerian Niger Delta as Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSI), the direct opposite of CSR. They claimed that CSR was actually abused by the MNCs. George et al. explained how the practice of CSR by the MNCs led to militancy and other negative occurrences in the Niger Delta. The authors thus opined that the oil and gas production companies operating in the area have behaved irresponsibly toward the welfare of the citizens of the communities where they operate. They claimed that the corporations have not positively impacted on the people through their acts of philanthropy. The authors further stated that the companies have not treated the local host communities fairly, as they have not accepted and partnered with them as true partners and actual stakeholders.

In explaining the situation in the Niger Delta region, Ogula, Rose and Abii (2012), stated that the Niger Delta region produces 90% of the nation's earnings, and in contrast presents communities that are among the poorest in the world. They reported in their study that the region lacks basic amenities like running water, health care facilities, good schools, and presents a high rate of unemployment. There is little wonder then why the crisis level in the area is escalating. The crisis levels in the Niger Delta region have advanced to high international concern levels and have become common knowledge

globally (Odemene, 2013). In order to assuage the voices of dissent and the violent uprising by the militants and dissenting groups, the federal government of Nigeria set up the amnesty program in 2009 (Tobor, 2014). This program has helped in large measures in dousing and reducing the height of the tensions and the level of militancy in the Niger Delta region. The sustenance of the peace gained is at the present time perceived to be in doubt at the moment with the defeat of the President Jonathan's incumbent federal government in April 2015 because the new President Muhammad Buhari's government may present new policies regarding the resolution to the Niger Delta problem.

Ighodaro (2005) dwelled on the politics and economic structure and almost total dependence on oil and gas by the Nigerian nation. Ighodaro fell short of giving attention to the importance of CSR by the oil majors and the other smaller companies and the lack of it in the area as a foremost cause of the incessant crisis in the region. CSR is commonly referred to in both academic and business circles as the bedrock of development and a relief giver to the yearnings of the population of the oil rich but poor Niger Delta region.

The finding by Samy et al. (2015) that Nigeria does not possess constitutional environmental laws regulating the oil and gas industry makes the options of the citizens who bear the environmental, social, and economic brunt of the damage done to the environment by the operating companies precariously few. The official connotation of this condition is that any legal actions brought by them in connection with the provisions of the Nigerian constitution on this and related matters will not be justifiable, and therefore cannot be heard or entertained by any Nigerian court of law. It follows that even



the government's constitutional responsibility to protect the environment cannot be judicially enforced. In the face of this, aggrieved landowners and citizens would have no other options available to them than to take the law into their own hands leading to violence and seizing oil installations to press for attention and reprieve. This is one principal cause of the persistent violence in the Niger Delta region.

### **CSR and the Perception of Inequity in the Niger Delta Region**

There has been a general perception among the citizens of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria that they are not getting what they should get out of the resources taken out of their grounds. This perception seems to be widespread among the local citizens and some stakeholders in the region based on literature that has been reviewed in the course of this study. The result of such notions held by the populace is the brewing of a sense of mistrust between the citizens and the managers of the prospecting and producing oil and gas conglomerates operating in the region. This state of mistrust further lends to a feeling of the citizens that the multinationals do not either care or care very little about their welfare and the sustenance and protection of the environment, and so are only about their profitability rather than rendering a fair and equitable treatment to them (Ejumudo, 2013).

Oil and gas have brought several regimes of boom to the Nigerian nation. In spite of the boom, the resultant effect to the people of the Niger Delta has been a paradoxical curse, principally due to the socioeconomic dislocation of the citizens of Niger Delta. In spite of the boom in the national economy, the destructive effects of the extensive oil and gas exploration and production activities in the area by the oil majors (multinational oil and gas corporations operating in the area) have only deepened the impoverishment of

the local citizens (Ejumudo, 2013). The spirit of fairness and equity is perceived to be lacking, thereby leading to threats and crisis in the region.

Ottuh (2013) acknowledged that poverty has become pervasive in the entire area due to the social malaises of discrimination, denial of rights, and oppression against the poor citizens of the region. Ottuh suggested that government and the corporations benefiting from the operations in the region could better empower the citizens by creating jobs, providing scholarships and credit facilities, and engaging more in the development and establishment of more infrastructures and amenities. In Ottuh's opinion, the poverty level in the area could be alleviated if leaders can be fair and just in the protection and reflection of the interest of the poor citizens in their economic plans. Due to a deep perception of inequity felt by the majority of the citizens of the Niger Delta, there has been an upsurge of dissent and militancy in the region. The dissent has gone to the extent that pipelines and well-heads are blown up, and oil and gas workers kidnapped for ransom by militants just to drive home their grievances and attract as much attention to the plights of the people as possible.

While reviewing the management of the complexity of the politics of petro-violence in the context of oil and gas, and the rate and level of insurgency in the Niger Delta, Obi (2011) affirmed that the acceleration in the level of related violence in the area had brought the region notoriety for being crisis ridden to the attention of global energy bodies and security organizations worldwide. Obi (2011) analyzed the origin, dynamics, and political views supporting oil-related violence in the Niger Delta region. He paid much attention to the factors stirring up the conflict, along with the manner in which the

problem has affected the economy. The problem as pointed out by Obi has impacted negatively on the ability of the various ethnic groups to cohabit harmoniously as they usually should. Obi also addressed the link between petroleum, security, and the need for improvement in the lives of the citizens of the region. It is only under a peaceful and congenial environment and condition that the full benefits of CSR can be derived from the oil and gas corporations and enjoyed by the citizens of the Niger Delta from whose soil the resources that oil the wheel of the Nigerian national economy are derived.

On the issue of equity between the corporation, environment, and citizens, Schwab and Sala-i-Martin (2008), Sfeir-Younis (2009), and Slaper and Hall (2014) reviewed more in-depth the issue of the financial theory referred to as the Triple Bottom Line which encompasses social, profit, and environment. Similarly, Anderson et al. (2015) corroborated their postulations by stressing much on the importance of the pursuit of the Triple Bottom Line of economy, people, and environmental sustenance. This position, in the judgment of Anderson et al., will help in the effort toward securing the stability, equity, and growth of the business and general welfare of people and environment of operation. In the opinion of Anderson et al., the three main areas of performance must be reflected upon in order to determine the true financial and comfort position of a business. The authors provided an insight into the dangers of not looking out for and striking a balance between the triple bottom lines of social, profit, and environment. Based on the general perception of the Niger Delta citizens as understood from most of the literature for this study, a situation of imbalance among the Triple Bottom Lines appears to be the current situation in the Niger Delta region. In this study, I will strive to dig deeper in line

with a view to verifying or nullifying the positions of the scholars and authors earlier mentioned.

In an attempt to understand the interactions between the different stakeholders in the oil and gas industry as they relate to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, Umejesi and Thompson (2015) determined that the state, international oil and gas corporations, and local companies, environmental pressure groups, and the local citizens make up the kernel of the stake-holdership. Umejesi and Thompson found that the state and the multinational oil and gas companies along with the local companies have continually colluded metaphorically as the elephants on one hand in this case to marginalize and impoverish the land owners and continuously neglect and degrade the environment.

While tracing the origin of the fallouts of perceived inequity in the Niger Delta region, Langer and Stewart (2015) stated that in the Niger Delta region, the Ogonis and the Ijaws, which are major tribal groups in the region, have continuously rebelled against the multinational oil and gas companies and the Nigerian federal government. This is due to the prevalent perception of inequity following perceived poor or nonexistent evidence of demonstrating CSR by responsible managers of those stakeholders operating in the area.

Langer and Stewart (2015) classified the Niger Delta region as the center of oil and gas production which should ordinarily be comparatively rich. Conversely, poverty is very high and the citizens believe that they have continuously been short-changed and denied of their privileges from the oil and gas wealth derived from the region. Where developmental initiatives are commenced in the region, corrupt practices by a few

privileged people who serve as middle men between the corporations and the citizens in the region would prevent the real citizens and landowners from enjoying it, as these few greedy and richer middle men would appropriate much of it for themselves.

In order to assuage the issue of the perception of inequity among the citizens of the Niger Delta region, the Nigerian federal government has for some years now utilized a three-pronged approach to deal with it, with a view to reducing incidences of dissent leading to conflicts in the area (Nwankwo, 2015). The three tactics consist of the derivation rule, the setting up of developmental institutions, and the location of military personnel to the area. The derivation rule has over the years grown from 1.5 % to 13%. Conversely, at the time when income from agricultural produce was the bastion of the national economy, the derivation rule was 50% of income from the producing state. With the coming stream of flourishing oil revenues, the sharing ratio of national incomes was altered, with government arguing that oil and gas are a geographical accident. The perception of inequity among the land owners and people of the oil rich Niger Delta still appears too persistent as established by the study just discussed.

### **Oil and Gas and Economic Diplomacy in the Niger Delta of Nigeria**

Oil and gas in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has become a major attraction and rallying point for diplomatic maneuvering by major economies of the world. While originally major European economies like Britain, France, Germany, and others along with the United States held on to the plum and main stakes in the industry, other emerging economies like China and India have become major forces in the new exploit for the black gold in the region (Gupta & Arora, 2015). Oil and gas resources are direly

desired by the United States and China to fuel their power plants, industrial units, automobiles, aircrafts, and even their military trucks, vehicles, and arsenals. This wide-ranging economic and trade quest by the super powers and diversification on the Nigerian economy has tended to have given quite a boost to the national economy. The question of how much of this fortune if any gets translated to the local citizens is another major issue altogether.

On oil and gas diplomacy and related matters, Taylor (2014) provided an outlook into China's oil diplomacy in Nigeria and Africa, and the entry of Chinese multinationals into the region for exploration, economic diplomacy, and intended regional development. In Taylor's opinion, these investors should be advised and also made to understand that they will be held accountable for their actions or inactions in the region. Taylor posited that by measuring the impact of their operations versus their actions the investors should ensure that the people of the area and the environment are well catered for, adequately compensated, and the area developed. Taylor advised that only a well-planned regime of CSR can bring about peaceful, productive, and profitable operations that would benefit all stakeholders including the local owners and citizens of the Niger Delta area.

In his review on the historical perspective of the Nigerian economic diplomacy landscape, Salami (2015) examined the economic diplomacy of Nigeria from self-rule in 1960 to the military government of General Babangida, who came into power in 1985. Salami asserted that in spite of the fact that the oil and gas economic diplomacy started back in 1960, General Babangida's regime gave a new life of vitality and a different and more purposeful meaning to the economic and diplomatic policy of the country. Salami

concluded that even though the policy is not a totally new idea in Nigeria foreign policy decision formulation, General Babangida made it become a convenient element for foreign policy initiatives. The government of Babangida gave the much needed force for the efficacy of the policy, thereby boosting the economic strength of the country.

With oil and gas resources being the main source of revenue to the Nigerian nation, policies must be made and enforced to protect the resources from being stolen and siphoned through any unwholesome and unscrupulous means. Boris (2015) revealed the reverse. This study led to the exposition of the nefarious activities of various persons, business interests, and groups that were involved in oil theft and activities of illegal bunkering. Wide ranging corruption was the main factor blamed by the author for the persistence of oil theft in the Niger Delta. The significantly high level of youth unemployment, which is a fallout of the perceived ineffectiveness of the managers of the oil and gas companies to demonstrate corporate social responsiveness, has created an army of oil thieves in the area who consistently blow up oil pipelines and siphon oil resources selling to unscrupulous buyers from around the globe for their own personal gains.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility and Development in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria**

CSR has progressively been advanced as a key instrument for promoting economic and social development objectives in developing nations (Pillay, 2015). The main purpose of a successful regime of CSR in the Niger Delta region will be to bring about enhancements in the social, economic, and infrastructural development of the area

and environment in which the oil and gas companies carry out their business. The real need for CSR would be lost if this goal is not the focus of all CSR activities by operating companies in the oil and gas rich Niger Delta region.

Idemudia (2011) examined the concept of CSR and developing countries. He anchored his discussion on the dire need to move the critical CSR research agenda in Africa forward. Idemudia observed that so far, very little study has been carried out in the area of CSR in Africa and a lot more research still needs to be done. In his opinion, not enough is written or spoken in terms of CSR in the West African sub-region and the African continent at large. CSR in his opinion is a subject that has been placed at the back-burner by many corporations and governments and needs to be brought out to the forefront in the entire African continent, not only in a particular sub-region of the continent.

In their review of the role of CSR in the process of alleviating poverty among the citizens of the Nigerian Niger Delta, Amadi and Abdullah (2012) decried the failed policies of the various levels of government. Amadi and Abdullah acknowledged the inactions of government and declared that the failed governmental policies have left the area as one of the poorest in the sub region. They observed that the failure of government to play their role in developing the region necessitated agitation from the local citizens for the oil and gas companies operating in the area to step in and bring development as part of their social responsibility to the area. Accordingly, Shell Petroleum Developing Company (SPDC), the Nigerian subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell, through their CSR department has so far in some areas demonstrated verifiable commitments to the



diminution of poverty and enhancement of development in the area. In the same vein, Onweazu (2012) noted that in spite of the fact that the Niger Delta is the financial mainstay of the nation, the rich natural endowment of the region has not transformed into any tangible development. Onweazu further posited that while the resources continue to be exploited, the region remains with a retinue of human and infrastructural predicaments that also remain largely unattended.

Other oil and gas companies operating in the area such as Chevron, Agip, Total, and others are demonstrating their commitment toward CSR in the region. Given the sheer size of the population of the citizens of the region living in abject poverty, a noticeable improvement would likely be an uphill task. In spite of CSR commitments to the enhancement of welfare and living standards in the area by oil and gas corporations in the region, there is little verifiable improvement to the living standards of the citizens. Amadi and Abdullah (2012) recommended that more of CSR efforts still need to be made by government and other stakeholders as a complement to those from the oil and gas corporations. In their opinion, the perception of the citizens that the managers of the oil and gas corporations operating in the region have not effectively demonstrated their corporate responsiveness may be partly valid, but not totally true.

In their analysis of the relationship between CSR and community development in the Niger Delta, Imomotimi and Collins (2014) observed that oil and gas companies operating in the area usually score conspicuously low in the fulfillment of CSR programs in comparison to the enormous earnings they make from the region. Imomotimi and Collins used the case of community development in selected host communities in Bayelsa

State versus the Nigerian Agip Oil Company. They declared that the living standard of the local land owners is still very low and in deplorable conditions. Imomotimi and Collins indicated that the oil companies operating in the area often fail to implement their side of the memorandum of understanding entered into between them and the host communities.

Such failures by the companies negate the promotion of community development, which they had initially agreed to support and carry out. In order to prevent such behaviors from operating companies, Imomotimi and Collins (2014) recommended that the laws governing the oil industry in Nigeria will need a review compelling oil firms to respect their MOUs and carry out social responsibility activities as a matter of policy. This would give the oil producing communities a sense of belonging and that will help to close the curtain of strained relationship between oil companies and their host communities.

Agricultural development was the focus of Chilaka and Nwaneke (2015) in which they mapped the results of agricultural intercession based on the resulting effectiveness, efficiencies, and functionality of the capacity building procedure in Shell Petroleum Development Company's (SPDC) agricultural intervention program in the Nigerian Niger Delta area. Chilaka and Nwaneke observed that 31.25% of the intervention was functioning. The analysis of the data obtained from the study produced a result indicating that 75% of the respondents needed practical capacity building for efficient project administration and upkeep. Over half (64.6%) of the respondents on the other hand received guidance on various aspects of management of the agricultural project. The

results of the findings of this study support an urgent need for participatory assessment of strategies geared toward the enhancement of capacity building process service and delivery.

Idemudia (2014) signified that the concept of CSR is not new to Africa. There has been a continuity of various types of corporate-community involvement practice in several locations within Africa, and the Niger Delta region is prominent among such. Idemudia further stated that there has been a steady growth in literature on CSR as practiced in the sub- region. The steady growth of CSR literature, in Idemudia's view, is as a result of the interdisciplinary style to the academic investigations of the subject matter which has made room for insights from various social science disciplines. In spite of all the efforts, the extent to which CSR schemes have been able to fulfill the anticipation and yearnings of local citizens by positively contributing to sustainable growth and development have fallen far short of the expectations.

Effective CSR as observed by Enuoh and Inyang (2014) is not absolute. Rather it depends on the peculiarity of the locality for it to be possible for the companies in the area to achieve expected CSR outcomes. Enuoh and Inyang identified the deficiency of efficient planning and execution of CSR schemes by the oil and gas companies as a major contributor to the persistent crisis in the area. Enuoh and Inyang also observed that the concerns of oil pipeline vandalism, abduction of oil workers, crude oil theft and general insecurity, and oil-related confrontations and conflicts among local communities have so far defied the expected solutions. Enuoh and Inyang recommended that developmental initiatives for the citizens of the oil and gas producing areas must be stepped up in order

to assuage the aforementioned issues. The strategy recommended must include emphasis on basic infrastructure and initiatives for sustainable livelihood and should adopt a community participatory approach.

Idemudia (2014) scrutinized the degree to which multinational oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria can be both money makers and peace makers. Idemudia found that there is a budding general agreement that business entities can be used both for money making and peacemaking as an integral part of the social responsibility charter of the businesses. With respect to the Niger Delta of Nigeria, Idemudia argued that the conflicting tension intrinsic in the peacemaking attempts, which is a major aspect of CSR, by the oil and gas multinational companies and oil extraction/production which is their core business causes great limitations to their desire, drive, and inducement to pursue the CSR aspect of peace-making. This further brings to the forefront the reason why further investigation should be carried out on the subject of the practice of CSR of the managers of the oil companies in the Niger Delta region to determine their effectiveness and social responsiveness to the citizens.

The issue of the failure by multinational oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta region to integrate the citizen's perceptions and diverse cultures in social impact assessment remediation as fallout of their operations is a huge drawback to developmental initiatives (Nzeadibe et al., 2015). Whereas the majority of environmental impacts assessments in the country have been focused on oil and gas projects in the oil rich Niger Delta region, mainly in the area of the biophysical setting, socioeconomic aspects and those concerning culture remain marginalized. This stance by the companies

negatively impacts the infrastructural and socioeconomic development of the area, with little or no physical positive impact on the local citizens. Nzeadibe et al. observed that in spite of claims to conformity with regulatory requisites for environmental impact assessments and various professed developmental schemes by multinational oil and gas companies, the Niger Delta area is still faced with a multitude of challenges to sustainability. Nzeadibe et al. recommended in this study the citizen's perceptions of neglect and relegation of their cultural diversity must be assuaged by upholding the principles of participatory development in the Niger Delta area. It is only by doing so that the citizens would feel a sense of belonging and recognition, thereby accepting and appreciating all developmental initiatives and activities brought to them.

In an attempt to determine whether or not oil and gas discovery, exploration, and production was a curse or blessing to the citizens of the Niger Delta, Osaghae (2015) examined the developmental result of resource profusion when the focus of analysis swings between the national level and the subnational or local level. The local level in this case would be the local communities of the Niger Delta region where the resources are in abundance. These local communities where the local citizens live are expected to have the greatest impact of development.

The Niger Delta of Nigeria's oil and gas wealth as observed by Osaghae (2015) appears to be more of a curse resulting in environmental degradation and destruction and virtual dispossession or denial of the gains of the revenues and wealth derived from the region leading to overall marginalization and significant infrastructural under-development. The Isoko tribal areas comprised of two local government areas which

boast of producing about 35% of overall on-shore oil and gas resources in Nigeria reportedly do not have any federal presence in terms of institutions and infrastructures at this moment. This is in spite of other resource distribution injustices and political marginalization. The major means by which the perceived resource curses can be transmuted to resource blessings would depend not on who controls the revenues from the resources, but how the revenues are distributed and applied.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This phenomenological qualitative study was aimed at examining the common perception among the citizens of the oil rich Niger Delta region that managers in the oil and gas corporations operating in the region must deal with the perception that they are ineffective in demonstrating their corporate responsiveness to social, welfare, and infrastructural needs of the citizens of the area. The purpose of a good system of CSR in the Niger Delta region will be the one which will result in enhancements in the social, economic, and infrastructural development of the area. It will be that which will sustain the environment in which the oil and gas companies carry out their businesses. The authentic need for CSR would be lost if these goals are not the focal points of CSR activities by the operating companies in the oil and gas rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The review of literature carried out for this study revealed that existing literature did not adequately address the issue of the perception of ineffectiveness of the practice of CSR by managers of the oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. Chapter 3 comprises explanations of the methods that were used to gather and interpret the data for this study.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR for Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta. I examined the perception among landowner in the Niger Delta region that managers of the oil and gas companies operating in the area must deal with. In this chapter, the research design will be reviewed to justify the rationale for selecting a qualitative phenomenology for this research study. Apart from restating the purpose of the study, the research question, the main concepts, and phenomenon will also be restated and reviewed in this chapter. This chapter contains a detailed explanation of the research design, methodology, and the manner in which the interview respondents were selected and recruited, showing how the data was derived. A definition of the role of the researcher as an observer and participant in this research is highlighted. Issues of trustworthiness and other ethical issues including bias and conflicts of interest are also addressed in this chapter.

The following is the primary research question for this study:

*RQ:* What are the experiences regarding CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta?

#### **Central Concept of the Study**

Experiences regarding the phenomenon of CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta was the central concept and phenomenon of this study. CSR allows modern business, development, and peace-building to be cultivated and thrive. It is important that CSR is well understood and seen to be in place and operational in volatile regions such as

the Niger Delta area. A proactive and well-positioned CSR program with the essence known and well understood by the landowners may lead to a reduction in corporate-community strain and clashes which have been common in the petro-economy of the Niger Delta region (Nzeadibe et al., 2015).

### **Research Design and Rationale**

A single strategy of inquiry was used for this research study. The design was interpretive phenomenology, using a detailed description and narrative of the lived experiences of selected individuals to determine how deeply the landowners understand the meaning of CSR. Phenomenological studies are normally tailored to offer a basis for a dependable expression of the interviewee's personal understanding of the subject matter being studied (Van Manen, 2014). While a descriptive case study would also have been good for this study, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) appears to be most appropriate in relating the perceptions of the interviewees in this study.

IPA is currently an admired methodology in qualitative research. IPA based studies deal mostly with the probing and examination of the ways and manners in which people create sense and significance out of their respective life experiences (Pietkiewicz, & Smith, 2014). In the context of this study, IPA differs from transcendental phenomenology, which is an inquiry that concerns the conditions of possibility that permit us to perceive the world as factual, compelling, and objective (Heinämaa, Hartimo, & Miettinen, 2014). Hermeneutic phenomenological studies endeavor to reveal the world as experienced by the participant through life narratives (Kafle, 13). IPA requires comprehensive scrutiny and analysis of personal experiences of the individuals



to be interviewed presented along with the standard empirical arguments. Considering the fact that this research focuses solely upon the lived experiences of participants whose responses would generate the data to be used and analyzed to generate the final results of the study, IPA is justifiably considered to be the best option of choice for this study. The participants must have had direct or indirect experiences regarding the impact of CSR for companies that produce oil and gas in the Niger Delta region. The shared experiences of these participants may assist in the deduction of the character of the authenticity of the respective experiences of each participant of this study (Maxwell, 2012). This may help in determining the authenticity or general opinions perceived to be held by the local citizens of the Niger Delta. Participants for this investigation included landowners from the host communities of the Niger Delta region who came from a wide variety of trades and professions.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Phenomenology is the study of essences, which affirms that all problems amount to seeking definitions of essences, such as the essence of perception or that of consciousness. It attempts to bring back essences to existence (Merleau-Ponty, 2014). Phenomenology investigates cognitive processing, and pays attention to the subjective structures of the experience (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). Phenomenology studies lived experiences and daily behaviors. Phenomenology also studies sociopolitical perspectives of the daily lives of research subjects. The researcher places him or herself in the position of the subject being investigated (Dixon, 2015). The role of a typical researcher is that of collector of data.

Traditionally, the role of the qualitative researcher is to presume that knowledge is not an objective reality and as a result, it becomes very significant that investigators and researchers should stay unbiased and dispassionate as they find out new knowledge from participants and comprehend the connotations of the life experiences that they have acquired (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The researcher as a participant or observer-participant plays out the strategy which requires the researcher to stride into the role along with the participants (Aitken, 2015). In actuality, researchers are seldom entirely participants or wholly observers. There is rather a mix of roles. Where there is a mix of roles, the investigator could commence as a complete participant, and then withdraw into a role more of a researcher (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2015). In this particular study, the researcher played the role of an observer. The researcher's role included the collection and interpretation of data involving participants' experiences through face-to-face interviews.

This was complemented by Internet and technology-based interviews. In this role, programs such as FaceTime, Skype, and other related programs where the researcher saw the participant live onscreen were used to conduct the interviews in addition to face-to-face interviews. The design chosen for application in this study incorporated triangulation and transcript validation to provide reliability and reduce bias and any perceived conflicts of interest.

## Methodology

### Participant Selection Logic

For qualitative studies such as this, researchers use an assortment of phenomenological methodologies to examine varying experiences. In the face of the multiplicity of these methodologies, there has been little guidance to help the researcher to choose between the varieties of methods to satisfy the specific requirements of the study being carried out. The design adopted for this investigative research study was IPA.

In recruiting the participants for this study, I applied a purposeful nonrandom sampling. Purposeful sampling is a nonprobability sampling procedure that investigators employ to enlist study participants from a precise predefined set in a population (Pettus-Davis, Grady, Cuddeback, & Scheyett, 2011). Purposeful nonrandom sampling is aimed at selecting participants who have particularly been impacted by the phenomenon being investigated. The participants should have the required lived experiences of CSR from within the Niger Delta region as required in this study. Participants were expected to have sufficiently experienced the impact of CSR and the ways and manners in which it is provided by the CSR managers of the respective oil and gas companies operating in the area. The aforementioned quality was a key factor considered in the recruitment of participants. Palinkas et al. (2013) ascribed wide usage of purposeful sampling in qualitative studies for the identification and selection of information endowed cases to the presence of factors related to the phenomenon being investigated. Sufficient relevant CSR experience will partly be reflective of the qualities of the participants who must be

presumed to be relevant to the research study in focus. The participants must be freely willing and available to participate in the interviews.

After selecting and identifying the participants, initial introductory information was communicated to them in the form of letters either by e-mail or post mail stating the purpose of the research study to them. Participants were identified by talking to them either in person or through Skype or similar video-graphic modes, and relevant information such as address was collected as necessary. The participants who were willing to be engaged in the study were required to give their consent and agreement by signing an informed consent form. In the consent form, they agreed and signed that they were willing to voluntarily take part in the study and that they were aware of the purpose of the research study (Tobor, 2014). Characteristics that could expose the identity of any participant interviewed in the study was coded to assure confidentiality.

Phenomenological designs clarify the connotation and individual lived experiences in order to achieve understanding of a trend or phenomenon (Finlay, 2012). This phenomenological approach entailed making detailed descriptions of the experiences of the land owners who were the major players in this study. These key stakeholders consisted mainly of the leaders and citizens of the host communities. The land owners make up the group that is primarily perceived to hold the perception that the managers of the oil and gas companies operating in the area have not been sufficiently socially responsive to their welfare. For this reason, the participants for this study were selected from among them.

## **Expert Panel**

A panel of five experts who were well qualified and experienced in the subject of CSR was convened to evaluate and review the interview protocol and ensure validity. Appendix E shows a selection of the panel of experts for this study. The instrument used in this study utilized a set of questions based upon the primary research question. An interview protocol made up of a set of questions was created for appraisal and reviewed at least twice by the panel of experts. The purpose of the expert panel was to ensure that the interview protocol was tailored to answer the primary research question of this study and that the interview questions were aligned with the problem, purpose, gap in the literature, and research questions.

The expert panel evaluated the interview questions in the areas of lucidity, suitability, and significance or relevance of the set questions. A comprehensive questionnaire covering all the questions that addressed all recognizable issues, both present and anticipated, was drawn up for review and assessment by the panel of experts in order for them to assess for validity of the issues treated in the questionnaire. Supporting documents that were obtained from the expert panel on approving the set of questions will go a long way to validate and provide the credibility of data gathered and analyzed.

## **Interview Protocol**

The interview protocol consisted of questions fashioned to address the main issues of the research problem tailored to the central research question. Heavy reliance was placed on past studies in determining the nature, types, and style of the interviews. The

interview guide, which contained relevant questions, was one with sustainable credibility and dependability. A semi-structured interview system was applied for this study's research questions. Its application left space for participants to provide new dimensions and meanings to the subject matter being investigated (Galletta, 2013). As depicted in Figure 2, a well-articulated application and mix of the central research questions and interview items drawn from the interview protocol has the potential for resulting in reliable and authentic findings (Anney, 2014). See Appendix B for the interview protocol.

### **Target Population**

The target population for this research study included the land owners of the host communities of the Niger Delta region. The main participants in this research were broadly grouped into different categories: farmers, fishermen, teachers, other professionals, and contractors. They were also classified in line with their gender and age brackets. The interviewing method was used for this study. The target population came from land owners of the host communities of the Niger Delta region using purposeful sampling. Homogenous purposive sampling was the type employed, whereby homogenous samples were captured with any variations they may possess in respective strata in line with the categories earlier listed. Each of the strata more strongly constituted a reasonably homogeneous sample (Palinkas et al. 2015).

### **Sampling and Selection Procedure**

A sample frame was first identified and established. The sample frame was the set of individuals who had a good chance of being selected for the study in line with the

selection method that was adopted (Fowler, 2013). An objective number of participants drawn from the target population was the sampling frame for this study. With the purpose of ensuring full representation of the population, the researcher ensured that the sampling frame was current, relevant, precise, and complete in nature (Tobor, 2014). This was accomplished by the researcher personally checking on the prospective respondents using any of the contact methods applied in this study. These were drawn from land owners of the host communities. For this phenomenological qualitative study, the participants were selected using the purposeful, non-random selection method from the target population which was comprised of farmers, fishermen, teachers, professionals, and contractors.

The target population was made up of land owners of the oil and gas areas. Participants were drawn from land owners of the host communities. Seidman (2013) posited that the determination of the number of participants regarded as enough will depend on two major criteria. The first criterion is sufficiency, which reflects the range of participants and sites to observe among others. The second criterion is the saturation of information. Saturation of information requires the avoidance of repetition of the same or similar information or data being derived from multiple participants. By and large, situations of availability of major resources such as time, money, and other realistic exigencies will be the best determinant conditions for the determination of sufficiency.

A sample size of 15 participants was interviewed. Individual participants were contacted through emails or phone calls. The sole purpose of qualitative sampling was to use a small sample of participants for putting together extensive information concerning the issues being investigated (Trotter, 2012). The sample size was set with a view to

avoiding saturation of data that could lead to an over-dose of information relating to the interviews. The interviewees were individuals non-randomly and purposively selected from the local land owners and inhabitants of the area previously stated. For that reason, many of them were drawn into the sampling frame for eventual drafting into the main participant group for interviewing.

The participants were drawn from a group of landowners in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. For compliance reasons, only participants aged 18 years and older were contacted and recruited for the interview. The population sample reflected participants drawn from both genders aged between 35-75 years. Participation in the interview process was completely voluntary.

In using purposeful sampling for this study, a combination of stakeholder sampling and criterion sampling were the variants applied. The utilization of these variations of purposeful sampling aided in the identification and selection of information-rich situations that related closely to the phenomenon of interest under study (Metzger, Norton, Quinn, & Gramling, 2013; Palinkas et al., 2015). Semi-structured interviews were used for participants selected by means of these criteria.

### **Instrumentation**

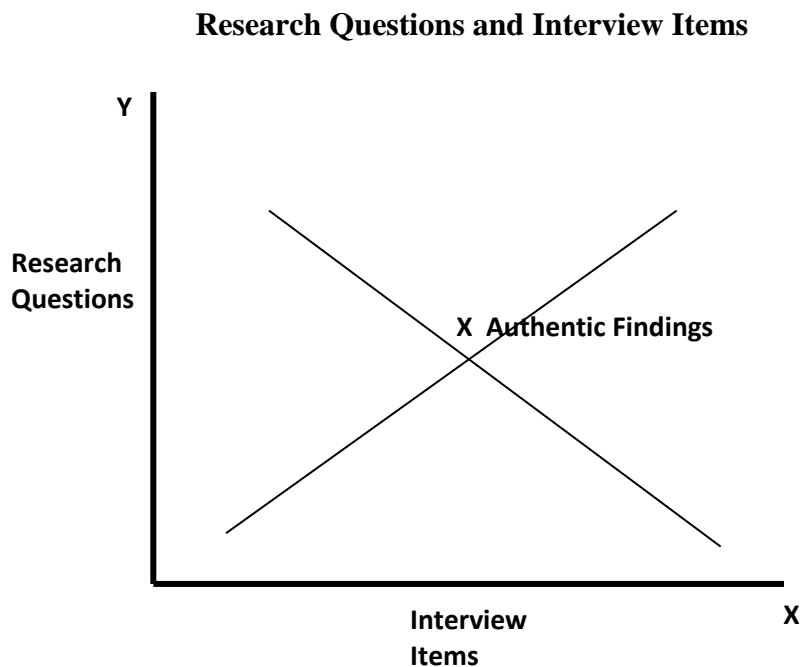
For this study, the data collection instruments and sources were comprised of interview questions drawn from the interview protocol developed by the researcher and validated by an expert panel. This investigator was the main data collection person (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The central research question was based upon, and derived from, the problem being investigated. Discussion interviews were also applied.



Discussion interviews guided by an interview protocol have proven to be some of the most common and best techniques of data collection in qualitative studies (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Such interviews were applied in this research study in order to obtain answers that would help to develop a theme for resolving the research problem and the research question. The development of the research questions for use during the interview requires an organized process to achieve dependable and useful participant responses (Williams, 2016). For this study, unstructured and semi-structured interview questions were drawn from the interview protocol and used as the chief source of the data collection from the participants. The unstructured and semi-structured characteristics of a proficient and well thought out interview is expected to be specific enough to result in expansive and honest memories of related lived experiences of the subject phenomenon being investigated (Knight, 2012). The procedure for developing the research interview questions requires an organized process designed to gain valuable and dependable participant responses (Maxell, 2005). Well-constructed open-ended questions allowed interview participants to describe their understanding of what it means to experience CSR.

The sequence of questions facilitated authentic responses to describe the meanings of experiencing the phenomenon of CSR in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The interview protocol for this interpretative phenomenological study was comprised of both experience/behavior and follow-up or clarification questions, to interpret the meanings of experiencing the phenomenon of CSR in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria based on shared experiences (Patton, 2002). Follow-up questions provided the interviewer a

prospect to re-examine participant responses for deeper understanding (Morse, 2015; Vagel, 2014; Williams, 2016). The interview protocol for this study is in Appendix B. Naturally, a good mix of well-articulated and applied research questions and interview items which tie and relate closely and directly can potentially result in authentic and reliable research findings (Anney, 2014). The potential for a combination of properly articulated research questions integrating with relevant research items is demonstrated in Figure 2.



*Figure 2.* Matrix showing the relationship between central research questions and interview items that relate directly to the research questions (Oboh, 2017).

Audio-tape recording was utilized for the interviews and later transcribed into usable data either manually or through coding by the use of software applications such as the NVivo software. With the adoption of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), information converted to data was derived from narratives received in response to the

questions administered. I utilized follow-up questions to ascertain and establish reliability and validity of the content of the research study where necessary (Knight, 2012). As posited by Yin (2014), data source triangulation in the form of transcript validation was also used to establish the authenticity of the eventual findings of the study.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

I used qualitative data collection requiring interviews with people who were knowledgeable in the subject area of the Niger Delta. A sample of 15 participants was needed to respond to open-ended, semi-structured questions. The questions were designed to investigate the understanding of the meaning of CSR from a phenomenological standpoint by examining the lived-experiences of the people of the Niger Delta. The questions were designed specifically to cover the quality of life, daily challenges of living in the area by the participants, and relationships between the corporations and the communities. They also related to the respondent's perception of CSR as practiced in the Niger Delta region and the perception that the oil and gas companies operating in the area have been negligent in discharging their CSR functions.

With the region covering 7.5% of Nigeria's land mass at approximately 43,750 square miles (70,000 square kilometers) as indicated by Okolo (2014) and Kadiri et al. (2014), getting to cover the entire area to administer study interviews in the swampy, tropical, and equatorial terrain posed challenges. With current technological advancements in the telecommunications realm, the researcher may easily reach out remotely to the respondents. Data collection was conducted at separate occasions, and interview durations spanned between 30 minutes to one hour depending on how much

detail the respondent had to offer. In this study, the researcher acted in various capacities as observer, interviewer, and interpreter. Data and information collected was recorded in a voice recorder and notebook.

The choice of qualitative research methodology signifies the option to probe and inquire deeply into the phenomenon being studied. In doing this, a variety of data collection methods may have to be deployed (Slevitch, 2011). Good listening skills and a good conversational approach as affirmed by Knight (2012) remain the preferred method of collecting data for scholarly research studies. This was the case in face to face and related technology driven procedures that were used in this research study.

In the main, face-to-face interviews were the preferred style. However, when it became difficult to meet participants in person due to variations in time and space, in addition to varying and diverse work or business schedules, other valid means were employed to obtain the needed information. Other such means that were deployed for data collection for this study apart from face to face interviews were the use of Skype and related electronic programs (Odemene, 2013).

Skype protocol was an option which offered a substitute or supplemental alternative to this researcher who transformed from the usual face-to-face interviews. Skype is a program that could be most appropriately used for qualitative research to conduct individual interviews as well as small groups. The use of Skype helps researchers to overcome time and financial limitations, geographical dispersion, and physical mobility limitations (Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014; & Sullivan, 2012). Skype also affords interview participants the opportunity to withdraw from the interview

process in uncomfortable circumstances, by a simple click. One strong advantage of the use of Skype is the suggestion by qualitative researchers that the relative anonymity of online interactions along with the lack of shared social networks could increase self-confidence and authenticity of the participant when compared with face-to-face situations. The advantages of using this modern protocol in conducting interviews in phenomenological studies far outweigh the perceived concerns.

One concern with the use of Skype according to these authors is with keeping respondent's information and data collected confidential. Other perceived concerns according to (Janghorban, et al., 2014) include:

- The “head shot” provided by webcam could produce obstructions in observing the body language of an interviewee.
- Interviewee concentration could be affected if a rowdy and disruptive environment is used.
- Poor access to high-speed internet service, inadequate knowledge of online communication, and having insufficient digital literacy, could adversely affect the interview and likely outcome.

Data collection strategies by interview through any of the afore-mentioned means was planned to properly capture pertinent information which would serve to support the fulfillment of the desired research objectives. The questions were open-ended and developed with a view to encouraging participants to objectively volunteer their lived experiences in answer to the questions posed. Respondents were encouraged to feel relaxed so that they may freely provide useful contributions in the course of the

interview. The interview questions were tendered for expert review and authentication by an expert panel that was made up entirely of experts in the subject matter and related subjects holding doctoral degrees. This was done for the sole purpose of assuring that the quality of the instrument met the needed academic specifications, and sufficiency to answer the central research questions. The expert panel was made up of individuals considered to be experts in areas related to the subject matter being researched. I received verbal consent from five experts. They all held management related doctoral degrees, at least three of whom were university professors teaching management-related courses.

Interviews began with informed consent to enable the respondents to become familiar with the subject and scope of the study. Then the questions progressively moved on where respondents were free to tell their respective lived experiences and suggested opinions in a free and congenial manner and environment. The interviews were audio-taped. Note taking in the course of interviews can generally be a source of distractions and were avoided as much as possible. A notebook was, however, handy and was used for note-taking only when necessary as a complement to the audio taping as long as the interviewee was not distracted. In order to provide effective analysis after the interviews, clear and proper records were maintained from the interview process. The records acquired from the interviews were clearly delineated and labeled with relevant information such as the participant's assigned identification number, interviewer, date, time, location and any other relevant codes allocated to each interviewee respectively for ease of identification.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Qualitative phenomenological inquiry according to Moustakas (1994) should incorporate a rigorous analytical procedure, which shelve the practitioner's personal connotation to bring to light the participants' lived experiences. The suspension of personal interpretation within data collection and analysis must occur continuously in order to reduce incidences of researcher's personal judgment and likely false claims. A collaboration of data collection, analysis, and interpretation activities enhances the quality of research inquiry (Klenke, 2008) and (Smith et al., 2009). Vagel (2014) validated that data analysis should include methods that would reduce biases that are capable of hindering the interpretation of member's remembrance of their experiences. The data analysis plan in this study contained the methods and steps to be used to reduce biases that can obstruct the integrity of participant responses and interpretations of the research to be carried out. In conducting this study, the philosophical foundation of hermeneutic inquiry which emphasizes lived experiences was the main pivot around which the analytical procedures revolved (Munhall, 2012). By this approach the inherent meanings and interpretation adduced by the participants to the social occurrences being investigated were fully brought to bear (Kafle, 2013; Laverty, 2003). The perception that the interpretation of findings in this study was a transformative process should bring to light the actual experiences and extracts of stories of real occurrences relative to CSR in the target region is the basic framework of data analysis deployed (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). In this case, the worldview of the participants was the pivot around which the interpretation revolved. Such interpretations usually generate results that are more

credible, as they are pure, undiluted, and natural, based on the personal lived experiences of the participant.

Leverly (2003), in stressing the significance of interpretation affirmed, that "Hermeneutic research is interpretive and concentrated on historical meanings of experience and their developmental and cumulative effects on individual and social levels" (p. 15). This was further corroborated by Wright-St Clair (2015) while postulating on the hermeneutical examination of lived experiences of students, teachers, and other occupations. Hermeneutics as stated by Galehbakhtiari (2015) can be regarded as a presumption, interpretation, or viewpoint of analysis of what a research process entails and means. Grounded with the historical perspectives of the region, the researcher merges a combination of commonly known experience around the area with the lived experiences of the participants on the subject of CSR as it relates to the area concerning all the stakeholders based on their interpretations. NVivo codes were used to connect interpretations of the data obtained by bringing to light the participants' interpretations of their personal lived experiences (Corbin & Straus, 2014). By a concise re-enactment of the meaning of the premise of this study to the participants, the researcher established a potent framework for understanding the values, meanings, beliefs, and assumptions in line with the philosophy upon which phenomenology and interpretive framework of hermeneutic research is founded (Ogula, Rose, & Abii, 2012).

Content analysis was the data analysis technique used in this study. In analyzing qualitative data, qualitative content analysis is a frequently used technique (Elo et al., 2014). It was applied to determine the usage of certain words, phrases, and concepts



within the text and transcribed data to be collected. Open-ended questions were asked for ease of the application of conventional content analysis. This was in order for the researcher to analyze the relationships and connotations of the concepts and words presented to enable a reasonable conclusion to be drawn from the analysis (Tobor, 2014).

Manual analysis of qualitative data often proves to be extremely arduous. In this study, the researcher utilized NVivo, which is software designed to shape and manage the information gathered from interviews in order to make sense out of the unstructured information. In doing this, the focus was to look for themes and patterns that can tie to the central research questions. The software was used to sort and classify the answers of the interview members into thematic data parts. The software was used to assess the premises, insights, themes, and opinionated judgments of the participants that were believed to have the perception that the managers of the oil and gas companies operating in their respective areas have not demonstrated sufficient social responsibility towards the welfare of the landowners.

Transcript validation was conducted as a first step in the data analysis plan. To do this, the transcripts of the interviews were reviewed and approved by the respective participants prior to being sorted with NVivo. This is aimed at establishing the authenticity and credibility of the data collected (Harper & Cole, 2012). I also carried out the summation of respective interviews and the interpretation of the themes and shared experiences of participants, particularly noting statements and words that were repeated by multiple respondents.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

The quality and creditability of a research work assists with ascertaining value within the objectivity of research functions and methodology adopted (Vagel, 2014). The institutionalization of trustworthiness in qualitative investigations requires a dialogue concerning the processes that provide (i) dependability, (ii) creditability, (iii) confirmability, and (iv) transferability of member cases (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). It is a common belief that the evaluation of concerns of trustworthiness strengthens data collection and analysis of participant issues. While the terms validity and reliability are more often used in the discussion of the quality of quantitative research, the term trustworthiness is used in the same sense for qualitative research. Morse (2015) opined that the decisive factors for the determination of trustworthiness in qualitative research were initiated by Guba and Lincoln in the 1980s when the expression was replaced by them for the attainment of rigor, reliability, generalizability, and validity, with the terms dependability, credibility, and transferability. The main thrust of trustworthiness in research studies rests on the bid for assurance to users that the research results accurately represent the data obtained and analyzed in the course of the study. Rigor is synonymous with trustworthiness.

In the evaluation of qualitative studies, the foremost point to note is that the researcher is only an interpretivist. A researcher is not wholly objective if he or she is actually a part of the research process. A research study where the researcher is a part of the process is therefore never totally objective value free (Farrelly, 2013). The trustworthiness of a qualitative research is often presented by the use of terms like

credibility, confirmability, dependability, authenticity, and transferability. Most narrative studies fall within the principle of verisimilitude which is the appearance of being true or real, and it is a variety for checking the value or quality. In most cases, this condition can not entirely or overtly deal with the problem of rigor or quality. In the opinion of Loh (2013), matters concerning trustworthiness, verisimilitude, narrative truth, and utility must be treated adequately in order for narrative studies to adequately guarantee their quality and value. Reliability in a qualitative study such as this one is dependent upon how much of confirmability, credibility, transferability, and dependability is present in the study (Tobor, 2014).

The need for rigor arises in the research process due mainly to the intrinsic descriptive and interpretive nature of the study. The approach by which a researcher is able to demonstrate the competency, integrity, and authenticity of the research procedure and modus operandi in its entirety is referred to as rigor (Loh, 2013; van der Riet, 2012). Morse (2015) suggested various strategies for achieving rigor in qualitative research studies. By and large, the evidence of the presence of credibility, confirmability, dependability or authenticity, and transferability in any qualitative inquiry establishes the fact of trustworthiness of the participants and ultimately of the study results (Vagle, 2014).

The validity or trustworthiness of any qualitative study could be threatened ~~in~~ by the absence of credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity (Elo et al., 2014). I assuaged the issues of validity and trustworthiness discussed previously by the application of triangulation, peer debriefing, persistent observation, and

transcript validation. I also made use of audit trail, reflexive journal, and thick description. In addition to the threats earlier listed is the possibility of personal bias. Any personal biases must be mediated and eliminated in order to ensure that the outcome of qualitative studies retain and maintain a high standard of trustworthiness (MacInnis, & Hodson, 2012).

### **Credibility**

Credibility or internal validity can be defined as the extent to which presumptions put forward in a research study are precise and well-substantiated (Polit & Beck, 2012). It entails the establishment from the perspective of the participants in the study that the outcomes of the qualitative research are convincingly reliable, credible, true, and realistic. This can only be ascertained from the eyes of the participant, because the objective of qualitative research rests with the description or understanding of the phenomenon in focus in the study as observed or experienced by the participant. The participants are therefore the sole individuals who possess the legitimacy to evaluate the integrity of the consequences or outcomes of a research (Farely, 2013).

In order to demonstrate credibility, there must be evidence of sufficient research rigor in the process of data collection, verification, analysis, and interpretation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Ihantola and Kihn (2011) emphasized that the chief focus of validity in a qualitative study is for the researcher to spotlight the lived experiences of the study participants and to report them realistically and dependably in such a convincing way that points toward an exhaustive conception and comprehension of the phenomenon under study. Normally, a qualitative study exemplifies the observable fact

being studied. This is because it illustrates the experiences of the people who actually experienced it. To that extent, I established credibility by guaranteeing that the results of the study are dependent upon views and remain consistent with the perceptions and convictions of the participants along with the substance contained in the documents evaluated (Ajiake, 2015). When necessary, this was done through participant review of interview transcripts. In my representation of the responses of the study respondents and participants, every possible effort was made to report their experiences as accurately as possible in order to ensure that the highest level of credibility and validity of the study is presented.

### **Transferability**

Farrelly (2015) stated that the term transferability refers to the extent to which the outcomes of a qualitative study can be generalized, or are transferable, to other circumstances or situations. Transferability is enhanced when the qualitative researcher does a comprehensive work in the description of the research framework, perspectives, and the postulations that are vital to the research study. This is what I did in this study in order to ensure transferability. The determination of the sense in any transfer and its responsibility can only be determined by the researcher who wishes to do the transfer of the outcomes of a particular research to the context of a different research study.

Providing some level of audit trail in the data collection and processing procedure is an essential part of ensuring trustworthiness (Miles et al., 2014). This is done through transferability. My use of notebooks and audio and sometimes visual applications in my data collection process provided the needed back-up and audit trail to enhance

transferability. The transferability value of this research work was independent of my own determinations and was open to external assessors for any verification of my study results where necessary, while applying a similar methodology (Ajiake, 2015).

### **Dependability**

Dependability or reliability is the idea in research studies which puts much emphasis on the need for the study to account for the ever-shifting situations and contexts within which a particular research study takes place. The research study takes responsibility for the description of any changes that may happen in the situation and how such variations influence the manner in which the investigator approaches the research study (Farely, 2013). If in the course of this study the conditions change, such changes will be documented in order to capture the ways in which they are likely to impact upon and affect other similar research in order to ensure dependability reliability (Ajiake, 2015).

### **Confirmability**

It is a common tendency for qualitative researchers to assume that every researcher comes along with a distinctive perception to the study being carried out. The process of confirmability refers to the extent to which the study outcomes might be authenticated by other researchers. Strategies of confirmability include the ability of the researcher to document the processes for the scrutiny and rechecking of the study data all through the research duration and where a different investigator takes a devil's advocate position concerning the outcomes of the study and documenting that process. Such researchers can enthusiastically seek out and describe any adverse occurrences which are

contradictory to earlier annotations. Judgment to determine a potential for bias or misrepresentation can be made by the use of a data audit to inspect the data gathering and analysis of procedures of the study (Farely, 2013). In order to ensure confirmability, I recorded the document procedures for confirming, corroborating and substantiating the research findings of the study (Ajiake, 2015).

### **Researcher Bias**

Systematic errors in sampling lead to bias in research. Bias usually occurs at any stage of the research, but mostly in the processes of sampling and selection. Bias occurs if for any reason one outcome is encouraged over others (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2011).

The various types of biases identifiable by most authors are grouped into the following:

- Pretrial bias, which includes those biases during the study design, selection, and channeling.
- Clinical trial biases include interview bias, chronology bias; recall bias, transfer bias, those from misclassification of outcomes, and performance bias.
- Bias after a trial would incorporate citation bias and confounding which leads to surprise or confusion.

Biases in research are avoided and corrected by the application of validity.

Validation could be both internal and external. While internal validity refers to the study results, reliability and accuracy, reflecting the researcher's level of confidence that bias has been reduced to the barest minimum, external validity treats the extent to which findings can be generalized to the overall population (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2011).

Penwarden (2015) signified that biases can be created inadvertently by the survey creator or researcher when the study questions are formulated or created in a certain way. These ways include when the wrong questions are asked, the wrong people are surveyed, an exclusive data collection method is deployed, and data results are misinterpreted.

The avoidance of the aforementioned would result in reduced occurrences of bias in the research study. I took notice of both the types of biases and the way I framed my questions, and the types of questions that were asked. Writing inclusively and objectively, keeping from generalization, providing sufficient evidence, and being self-aware of assumptions and beliefs and notions based on personal experiences helped reduce elements of bias from the results of the study. The researcher remained objective and utilized sensitive language that aided in the avoidance of bias (Walden Writing Center, 2015).

### **Ethical Procedures and Protection of Human Participants**

In order for any academic research study to be successful, addressing ethical considerations as they may affect human participants in the research study is essential. The guidelines as provided by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) have to be wholly abided by and complied with. Stringent codes of conduct were adhered to in the course of gathering and analysis of information obtained from participants (Maxwell, 2012; Odemene, 2013). The need to ensure the inclusion of measures to enforce the safety of participants is paramount in every research study. The informed consent of participants was obtained prior to deployment of interviews at the point of disclosure of the purpose of the study. This also covered their expected levels of involvement, duration of process,



any possible benefits or consequences to the participants, in addition to any other likely conditions. They were given verbal and written assurances which guaranteed that any information given by them would be treated in strict confidence. There was an assurance of the freedom to exit from the study at will whenever they so desired. Participants were assured that any information that they may wish to know in relation to the research study would be given to them at any time when needed.

### **Summary**

In this study, I used a single strategy of inquiry. The design was descriptive and interpretive phenomenology, utilizing a description of the lived experiences of selected individuals. The participants must have had or felt the experiences of the impact of CSR from the oil and gas companies operating in the area. Participants for this study were drawn from land owners from the host communities living either within or outside the communities. They were expected to have the required experience and were selected from a variety of backgrounds. The target population for this research covered the landowners who are the main stakeholders of the subject matter in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Participants were selected using the purposeful sampling method from the target. The researcher played the role of an observer, which included the collection and interpretation of data. The data collection instruments and sources comprised interview questions developed by the researcher. Interviews were face-to-face or through technological programs such as Skype and others. E-mails, phone calls, text messaging, documents, and any other reliable sources that would offer compelling and pertinent information were also used, especially during transcript validation process.

The issues of trustworthiness such as conformability, dependability, reliability, credibility, and transferability were paramount in this study. Because this study is phenomenological and based upon lived experiences (Merriam, 2009), every aspect of it is easily confirmable and can be corroborated by the people, some of whom fell among the participants selected for interviews. The potential for bias and any distortion of facts were reduced to the barest minimum if not totally eliminated in this study, as the conditions leading to these were guarded against. The results of this study are open to general views and observations. Triangulation, prolonged observation and checks, and peer review among others were the methods used to assure internal validity and credibility. These also helped in resolving issues of dependability. Reflexivity by continuous examination of the relationships between cause and effects of the issues being studied were employed to establish conformability. For the establishment of external validity or transferability, strategies like thick description and variation in participant selection was used. This chapter concluded with a look at the strategies applied to enforce ethical procedures and protection of human participants and the techniques adopted to achieve this in the study. In Chapter 4, the details, particulars and interpretations of the findings of this study will be classified and sorted through the application of NVivo 11 which is the latest version.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR for Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta. The central research question was: What are the experiences regarding CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta? The interview system used in this study assisted in creating a research design that helped to extract information from the participants for classification and sorting using NVivo 11. The phenomenological qualitative research design used for this study allowed a comprehensive overview of a particular phenomenon. This chapter contains the research question, setting, demographics, data collection, analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and results of the study.

### **Central Research Question**

In this study, the interpretive phenomenology, using a detailed description and narrative of the lived experiences of selected individuals, provided information that answered the central research question:

*RQ:* What are the experiences regarding CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta? Questions posed and discussed during the interview sessions were drawn and formulated from this central research question (see Appendix B). The answers obtained from the interviews provided information about how deeply Niger Delta landowners understood the meaning of CSR.

The data collection and analysis of 15 land owner participants drawn from a variety of backgrounds and educational levels provided extensive information that

described the depth of their understanding of the meaning of CSR. The participants were individuals drawn from a pool of sociocultural associations and cooperative societies in the Niger Delta region. They were people who had spent a reasonable amount of their childhood and adult years living in the area. Data analysis and presentation of results in this chapter consist of charts, tables, figures, and direct quotations of statements made by respective participants during the interview processes. Table 2 depicts the demographics of the 15 participants who took part in this study.

### **Demographics**

Table 2

*Participant Demographics*

Characteristics	Frequency
<i>Generation</i>	
Boomers (1946 – 1964)	8
Generation X (1965 – 1976)	6
Generation Y (1977 – 1995)	1
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	13
Female	2
<i>Educational Level</i>	
HS Diploma / Assoc. Degree	2
First Degree	4
Masters	6
Doctorate	3
<i>Occupation (ISCO-08)*</i>	
Managers	3

Professionals	8
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	2
Service and sales workers	2

\* International Standard Classification of Occupations, 2008 version (ISCO-08)  
(International Labor Organization, 2010)

### **Data Collection**

For this study, a total of 15 interviews were conducted. The interviews were carried out over a period of 2 months, from August 13 to October 1, 2017. Approximately 50% of the interviews were one-on-one face-to-face interviews. Face-to-face interviews were held at places that were convenient for the participant, such as offices or public libraries. On average, each interview with study participants lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Ahead of the interviewing process, prospective participants were sent letters of invitation to participate by email (see Appendix C). Through that email, each participant was duly informed of the nature and structure of the research to be undertaken. The respective participants were individually given a consent form (see Appendix D) after the introduction to read and sign, thereby permitting me to conduct the interview.

The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and another supplementary digital device with a voice recording application. The recorder served as the principal source of recordings that served for transcription. The supplementary recorder was used as backup for loss and retrieval purposes. The participants responded to all questions in the course of their respective interviews. I observed that participants largely lost concentration when I tried to take notes. Due to this observation, I resorted to taking

minimal notes, and noted down on a pad keywords and phrases. These were mainly the words and phrases commonly repeated by various participants. Such words and phrases formed the various themes that were derived for the study. The individual recorded interviews were saved and transferred into a computer. The data collection process happened as planned and presented in Chapter 3. The sample of this study was made up of landowners of different categories. The plan was to have a sample size of 15 to 20 participants interviewed. However, after interviewing 15 participants, it was determined that saturation had occurred, as the responses to a majority of the interview questions continued to be repeated by respondents with no new themes or classifications occurring. According to Mason (2010), sampling saturation takes place when participants stop providing new themes and categories. For reasons of privacy and identity protection, each participant was assigned a unique number. The numbers ranged from 1 to 15. After individual data collection, transcription, and reporting sessions, interview members' folders along with digital recording devices were securely locked in a filing cabinet.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Interview**

The interview data analysis process incorporated all the procedures applied to collect, code, and condense data for thematic report making. The responses of respective participants were assembled into various categories and themes. This process created the possibility for me to more easily identify sections of the interviews that addressed the core purpose of this research study. In conformity with the data analysis process described by Merriam, the researcher's process included the consolidation, reduction, and

interpretation of information from interviews and observations. This process also permitted me to use the content and inductive techniques which are the two frequently used data analysis techniques applied in qualitative studies.

I organized my data by categorizing, coding, delineating the categories, and identifying similarities by applying the regular comparative method adapted by Boeije. My comparative analysis of the data exposed several noteworthy related statements made by the participants.

### **Transcription**

In this section I will discuss how the following procedures of transcription, bracketing, and data coding and analysis were implemented. The software that I used to classify and sort the interview transcripts was the latest qualitative data software NVivo 11. The interviews were conducted in English language and the transcriptions were also done in English language. The transcription process required me to listen to the respective audio recordings of the respective interviews. The transcription process was a time-consuming exercise as I had to listen, type out the words over and over again until I was sure that I got it the way it was said and meant. Each interview was transcribed into documents using the Microsoft Word program. An average interview took approximately 2-3 hours to transcribe into a Word document. All transcribed information was saved in my computer hard drive or an external hard drive. Copies of the transcripts were printed for more review and to enable me to undertake manual coding of the data. All printed copies were stored in a locked file cabinet.

**Bracketing**

The process of bracketing reduces the researcher's judgments that may be capable of interfering with data collection and analysis (Sorsa, Kiikkala, & Astedt-Kurki, 2015). I used journaling to bracket ideas and personal conceptions to reduce biases as much as possible. The process of bracketing aided me with self-awareness and sufficient reflection that facilitated a genuine interaction with the respective participants. The bracketing process helped in minimizing the overload of information (Williams, 2016).

**Data Coding**

For this study, coding occurred in various stages, the first of which took place while the transcribed data was initially reviewed. The speech tone and form of the respective participants' responses assisted me with becoming familiar with the keywords generally used by the majority of the participants. In doing the coding, keywords were highlighted, and notes made when necessary to further buttress certain keywords that came up over and over again. The initial coding arrangement was transferred and further built up in the qualitative data application NVivo 11.

**Transcript Validation**

Transcript validation process was applied in the validation of the exactness of the various participants' interview transcripts along with notes that I made in the course of the interviews. In doing this, I emailed the transcripts to the respective participants for their validation. Participants were given one week to review the information provided in the transcripts and then accept or make any changes that they felt were needed. The acceptance of the transcript by a participant with or without any corrections from the



participant marked the end and the completion of the interview process for that participant (Burmester, 2017). This process was done for all 15 participants and such changes or corrections were added to NVivo11 for sorting.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

#### **Credibility**

Credibility for this study was instituted through extended contact, triangulation, and saturation (Silverman, 2013). Through triangulation it became possible for me to reduce the impact of biases. The respective data collection sources, such as participants' responses, observations, and field notes, made it possible for me to obtain a holistic view of the subject, with each cancelling out any inherent weakness in the others (Agbigbe, 2016).

#### **Transferability**

The term transferability refers to the extent to which the outcomes of a qualitative study can be generalized, or are transferable, to other circumstances or situations (Farrelly, 2015). In the course of this research study, I tried to enhance transferability by ensuring that a comprehensive work in the description of the research framework, perspectives, and the postulations which are vital to the research study are done. These were all done in order to ensure the transferability of the results of this study to similar studies. I ensured that there was adequate level of audit trail in the data collection and processing procedure being an essential part of ensuring trustworthiness (Miles et al., 2014). The transferability value of this research work was independent of my personal

determinations and was open to external assessors for any verification of my study results where necessary.

### **Dependability**

The dependability or reliability of the outcomes of this study were enforced by taking full responsibility for the description of any changes that may have happened in the situation and how such variations influence the manner in which the research study was approached (Farely, 2013). Any changes that may have occurred in the course of the research study were documented to enable me to capture the ways in which they were likely to impact upon the outcomes and affect other similar studies in order to ensure absolute dependability and reliability in the results of this study. Common themes were examined within the interview question construct. Transcript validation process was deployed to provide assurance that information received in statements recorded during the interviews was included, and not missed during the processes of both manual and structural coding. This process ensured member assurance, thereby enhancing dependability.

### **Confirmability**

In carrying out this study, I had a focus on ensuring that its confirmability was never in doubt. Confirmability was achieved for this study for the reason that I followed and properly documented the processes for data collection, analysis, and reporting. I also ensured the scrutiny and rechecking of the study data all through the research duration. The document procedures used were recorded in order to mitigate bias, if any, and boost the duplicability of the findings in this study. I maintained consistency by applying

strategies such as keeping field notes and memos; using multiple sources of data; ardently observing participants' spoken opinions and appearances; working with discrepant data; providing rich, thick description; and reducing researcher prejudices (Agbigbe, 2017). In order to further ensure confirmability, I recorded the document procedures for confirming, corroborating and substantiating the research findings of the study (Ajiake, 2015). In furtherance of my desire to avoid the potential for bias or misrepresentation I made use of data audit to inspect the data gathering and analysis procedures of the study.

The central research question which this research sought to answer was: What are the meanings of experiencing the phenomenon of CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta? The results obtained are veritable attempts to fill the gap in knowledge of developing a deeper understanding of what it really means for the landowners to experience CSR. The results and findings as indicated in the themes, indicate a deep understanding by the landowners of the meanings of the experience, and understanding of the phenomenon of CSR among them.

### **Theme Results or Findings**

The emergent themes mentioned previously revealed four primary concerns for participants. Key players involved in these concerns were operators, land owners and the Niger Delta region. Operators referred to the oil and gas companies and organizations either doing business in the region or running an operation of some kind in the region. The participants themselves represented the land owners in the Niger Delta region, and the Niger Delta region was used to refer to the environment itself.

The four emergent themes were then summarized as Expectations from operators, Activities of the operators in the Niger Delta region, Operators' relationship with land owners, and Operators need to take environmental responsibility.

### **Theme 1: Expectations From Operators**

Analysis of this emergent theme revealed that participants were highly concerned with their expectations that were either placed on the operators or that the operators volunteered to take upon themselves. Participants 13 and 14 (P13 & P14) expressly referred to these expectations as 'promises' on the part of the operators. Participants were of the opinion that the operators voluntarily took the expectations upon themselves, though some recognized expectations being raised by the local community. The consensus among participants was also that the operators were failing to meet those expectations. As P12 shared, a formal agreement typically exists between operators and land owners, which the participant referred to as a GMoU (Global Memorandum of Understanding). P12 asserted that the GMoU expressed the expectations that the operators placed upon themselves, stating "this [GMoU] is a cash responsibility given to the communities." P12 further asserted that "[the GMoU] has to do with human capacity building." This was explained as either establishing or providing projects to build and advance the community to the benefit of the land owners.

Participant 4 shared that the expectations from land owners were high, stating "there would be [the expectation of] industrialization in the area which would give rise to new businesses, employment opportunities and also education for the people." P4's understanding was shared by other participants. Beyond the GMoU from the operators,

land owners remained in high expectation of future development for everyone; that the operators would hold themselves accountable and that in exchange for local resources, the operators would contribute to the betterment of the community. From the participants' responses and the earlier disclosed sentiment analysis, a conclusion could be drawn that the landowners feel that operators have not met those expectations.

Participants 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13 explicitly acknowledged that the expectations of operators fell short of what were the participants' own expectations. The interpretation was that landowners themselves based much of their dissatisfaction on their own expectations and not necessarily the GMoU or any declaration from the operators.

### **Theme 2: Activities of the Operators in the Niger Delta Region**

Analysis of this emergent theme revealed the areas in which participants felt that the operators expressly fell short. Participants placed a strong emphasis on giving or providing something to the host community. For P9, these shortcomings were not to be taken lightly. As P9 stated, "It means a lot to me to experience corporate social responsibility, because anything worth doing is worth doing well." These sentiments were echoed in the responses of other participants as well. Participants also expressed that a portion of the problem lies with the operators dealing directly with traditional rulers as opposed to the individual landowners. P5 revealed that a great deal of CSR is wasted dealing with traditional rulers. CSR is often provided in the form of funds given in some way to the community by way of the traditional ruler, who may end up squandering the funds and not actually bringing forth the development individual landowners needed.

P2 introduced a larger issue, out of the scope of the CSR, but relevant due to its effects on land owners. P2 stated, “land ownership in the Niger-Delta area is not properly articulated by government.” This larger issue confounds CSR in the sense that operators may or may not know the specific landowners to deal with and as such are left to deal with traditional rulers or government. Participants acknowledged that either scenario can sometimes lead to their property being unjustly seized, at least in the eyes of the landowners. Operators will then engage in whatever business they had and the landowners themselves will have felt left out of the entire process and whatever benefit they may have reasonably been theirs. An extension of the land owners’ concerns was communities and projects being abandoned by operators. P7 shared their dissatisfaction, stating that “the activities of the operators are more or less like taking out the oil and developing other bigger and larger cities in the country, where as the area where the oil is being taken from is left or abandoned completely.”

### **Theme 3: Operators’ Relationship with Landowners**

Analysis of this emergent theme revealed the desire by land owners for operators to interact with them better and more directly. P9 summarized the majority of participant sentiment on the issue, stating that one of their primary expectations was for the operators to “actually establish relationships with the various publics.” ‘Publics’, in this sense, referred also to the host communities and the larger ethnic societies to which each host community belonged. P9 further noted that sporadic episodes of hostility arise from such poor relationships between the operators and the land owners. In the eyes of the land owners, it was considered the responsibility of the operators to reach out to the

community and build such relationships. As P9 expressed it, “they are supposed to communicate with them,” but communication ends up with dealing traditional rulers, rather than the land owners directly. P11 supported the sentiment shared by P9, stating that operators “should go to these communities, look around, have dialogue with them, ask them questions like ‘how can we best assist you?’ P11 further expressed that such action on the part of the operators will create a more harmonious relationship between them and the host community.

#### **Theme 4: Operators’ Need to Take Environmental Responsibility**

Analysis of this emergent theme revealed participants’ primary concerns with respect to the environmental impact of operators’ activities in the Niger Delta region. The term oil spills was the most recurring term in the emergent theme. As the participants expressed, oil spills damage not just the environment, but the way of life of the host communities themselves, and to many participants oil spills are not being addressed. P2 shared that “when there is an oil spill, the operators do not show up to say ‘let’s contain and recover this land.” Other participants shared a similar sentiment as P2 in that they remained of the opinion that operators are abandoning both the communities and the region after destroying it. P8 shared that the oil spills have “made the economic life of the area and of the people very miserable ... and the earning capacity of the Niger Delta people has been badly affected.” P9 supported by sharing that the impact is simply negative and “nothing to write home about.”

Participant 2 stated that more effort needs to be made on the part of the NNPC (Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation). P2 believed that NNPC is responsible for

reprimanding all of the operators as they are the ones who should be policing the actions and activities of the operators in the Niger Delta region. Participants also recognized that land owners had a responsibility, which was to work with NNPC by reporting operator violations to them.

### **Discrepant Cases**

The identification of discrepant cases occurs after the processes of data collection and analysis have been completed (Booth, Carroll, Ilott, Low, & Cooper, 2013). Despite the fact that the purposeful non-random sampling method that I used on the target population assisted with curtailing disconfirmation within sample data, unanticipated features would stipulate additional exploration of the experience of the participant (Williams, 2016).

A particular discrepant case I had in my data collection and analysis related to P3 who showed a position that was markedly different relative to the rest of the participants. While the other 14 participants generally indicated adverse positions with regards to their understanding and experience of corporate social responsiveness of the oil and gas companies operating in the area, he reported his experience as being very positive. For instance, when asked to tell me about his experience as a land owner in the Niger Delta, he volunteered as follows:

I have a good experience as a landowner in the Niger Delta because without the creation of good schools by the companies, how would our children be able to attend good schools? Most of the schools don't have chairs and they



provided chairs and desks for the pupils in the schools. Also, good roads were constructed that pass through my land.

Also, when asked to tell me what his expectations from the managers of the operating companies were when he first got to know about their operations and activities, he made the following response:

Initially we were having doubt because we didn't think they were going to do anything good to the community. So, when we found out they are doing a good job by building schools, we were interested in them and wanted them to continue with the good job they are doing.

The responses provided by this participant cannot be considered representative of the general population. The other discrepant case which was another distinctive feature was that P14 was the only participant with a negative polarity score. He had very little or no positive remarks on the activities of the oil and gas companies operating in his area. When similarly asked to tell me about his experience as a land owner in the Niger Delta, he stated the following:

We have been so relegated to petty jobs and projects. Environment is bastardized etc. For instance, for the barrels of oil tapped from my place the company makes over 100 million Naira daily, and we get nothing from these proceeds. I feel so bad and it pains me each time I see our elders, our farms, flood, oil spillages, rivers, and creeks. I feel bad and I feel it is nothing to write home about.

While the other 14 participants generally rated as good and very good the impact CSR activities of the companies operating in their localities have had on their welfare and on the environment, P14 generally rated them as “below average and very poor.”

He stated the following on their welfare, environment and development projects:

The impact is very poor. I would have sent you video clips of the flair in my area. The environment is damaged. They have not met our expectations. A GMOU (General memorandum of Understanding) was signed in 2014 and as I talk to you, the budget for 2014 has just been brought for implementation in 2017.

The discrepant cases in this research study provide profundity to the participants’ narrative of their knowledge and experience of CSR, and their relationships with the oil and gas companies operating in the area. Future comparative investigations of CSR within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria may help to further determine and enhance positive relationships fostered between the various parties and stakeholders involved in the production of oil and gas in the area.

### **Summary**

The focus of this study was to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta. Fifteen participants who were land owners in the Niger Delta region drawn from a variety of backgrounds and educational levels provided extensive information that described the depth of their understanding of the meaning of CSR. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by video calls with the audio recorded using digital voice recorders for transcription.

Their responses revealed three distinct features of polarity. The first (where most participant responses fell) was indicative of weak positive sentiment, the second was a marked positive sentiment that got the participant labeled as an outlier while the third distinctive feature was of a participant with a negative polarity score.

The major themes that I derived from this study confirms that the landowners of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have a good understanding of the meanings of experiencing the phenomenon of CSR in the area. For example, it was seen as “promises” on the part of the operators or some way operators “actually establish relationships with the various publics.” Operators here are the companies and organizations doing business in the region while publics referred to the host communities and the larger ethnic societies to which each host community belonged. P12 further added that it “has to do with human capacity building” i.e. providing projects to build and advance the community. Another participant shared his experience of CSR as industrialization in the area which would give rise to new businesses, employment opportunities and also education for the people

Approximately all participants established the fact of gross negligence of the Niger Delta region in terms of CSR and its various dividends. The majority of the participants were in agreement that elements of corruption loomed large as a major hindrance in the provision of CSR benefits to the land owners. Though CSR is often provided in the form of funds given indirectly to the community via the traditional rulers, most actually end up squandered without actualizing the developmental projects for which they were intended. The continued recourse by the CSR managers and officers to the use of chiefs and traditional rulers as middle-men instead of meeting and talking to the actual landowners

and the masses was spoken about by about 90% of the participants who referred to this practice as corrupt and retrogressive. They saw this practice as an irrelevant tool that only stagnated economic development and social change in the area, and so it was at best seen as a questionable practice. While roundly criticizing this practice, P9 stated as follows:

They don't talk to the masses. They just talk to the chiefs in the community to enable them to carry on their operations. The chiefs after they take their own share, they leave the masses dry.

Thus, nearly all the participants indicated adverse positions with regards to their understanding and experience of corporate social responsiveness of the operators.

However, a discrepant case was that of a land owner (P3) who said:

I have a good experience as a landowner in the Niger Delta because without the creation of good schools by the companies, how would our children be able to attend good schools? Most of the schools don't have chairs and they provided chairs and desks for the pupils in the schools. Also, good roads were constructed that pass through my land.

I conducted the interviews with the participants individually, and personally did the transcription of the recordings using technology and Microsoft Word. I also triangulated the interview data and carried out transcript validation and bracketing to lessen possible researcher biases. The transcribed interview data were imported into NVivo 11 application to determine common patterns, address my central research question, and spot out thematic categories. Four different themes emerged from the content analysis of the interview data. These are:

Theme 1: Expectations from operators.

Theme 2: Activities of the operators the Niger Delta region.

Theme 3: Operators' relationship with landowners.

Theme 4: Operators need to take environmental responsibility.

Chapter 5 covers my interpretation of the meanings to the findings, limitations to the study, recommendations, implications and conclusion to this research study. The chapter also explores likely areas where extension to the knowledge achieved from this study can be possible with a view towards being a vista for opening up future academic and practical researches on this topic. This approach is recommended in the anticipation of filling any existing gaps in both literature and application on the study of CSR in the Niger Delta region and the oil and gas companies in the region.

## Chapter 5: Interpretation of the Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR for Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta. The study required the exploration of the experiences of landowners in the region regarding the social responsiveness of managers and officers of oil and gas companies operating in the area to landowners and the environment. This study aimed to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR for Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta.

The IPA design assisted in the collection and analysis of data from the lived experiences of 15 participants. This study will help to broaden management knowledge in the area regarding CSR and experiencing it for landowners in the target region. The four major themes that emerged from this study described the perceptions held by landowners regarding CSR in the Niger Delta region.

### **Key Findings**

The emergent themes observed in this study revealed four primary concerns for participants. Participants were operators and landowners in the Niger Delta region. Operators referred to oil and gas companies and organizations either doing business or running an operation of some kind in the region. The participants themselves represented landowners in the Niger Delta region. The four emergent themes were then summarized as such:

#### **Theme 1: Expectations from Operators**

This emergent theme revealed that participants were highly concerned with the expectations placed on the operators or those which the operators volunteered to take upon themselves. Participants referred to these expectations as promises on the part of the operators. From the participants' responses and the earlier disclosed sentiment analysis, a conclusion could be drawn that landowners feel that operators are failing to meet those expectations.

### **Theme 2: Activities of Operators in the Niger Delta Region**

Analysis of this emergent theme revealed the areas where the participants felt that the operators had shortcomings. For example, P5 revealed that a great deal of CSR is wasted dealing with traditional rulers. The CSR which is often monetized is given to the community via the traditional rulers who may end up wasting the funds without achieving the development individual landowners were seeking for. As P2 explained, "land ownership in the Niger-Delta area is not properly articulated by government." This larger issue confounds CSR in the sense that operators may or may not know the specific landowners to deal with and as such are left to deal with traditional rulers or government.

### **Theme 3: Operators' Relationships with Landowners Needs Improvement**

This theme revealed the desire of land owners for operators to interact with them on an individual basis. P9 said that their primary expectation was for the operators to "actually establish relationships with the various publics" (Publics referring to the host communities). P9 further noted that sporadic episodes of hostility arise from poor relationships between operators and landowners. His view was supported by P11 who stated that operators "should go to these communities, look around, have dialogue with

them, and ask them questions like ‘how we can best assist you?’” This, he claimed, “will create a more harmonious relationship between them and the host community.”

#### **Theme 4: Operators’ Need to Take Environmental Responsibility**

This theme revealed participants’ primary concerns with respect to the environmental impact of operators’ activities in the Niger Delta region. Oil spills were the most recurring concern. As they expressed, oil spills damage not just the environment, but the way of life of host communities, making the economic life of the area and people miserable. Many participants were of the opinion that operators are abandoning both communities and the region after destroying it, as oil spills are seldom addressed. With most of the summaries of findings already examined in Chapter 4, they will be applied and referred to where suitable in Chapter 5. This section of this chapter is offered in two facets. They are: Presentation and interpretation of findings by relating them with texts, previous studies, and peer reviewed literature, and Presentation and interpretation of findings in comparison with theoretical framework upon which this study was undertaken.

The results of this study affirmed that there is a strong relationship between management strategies for CSR practiced by the managers of oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta region and the perceptions of landowners regarding what it really means to experience CSR. The results are attempts to develop a deeper understanding of what it really means for landowners to experience CSR. Hasnas (2013) viewed the theory of stakeholders as normative and therefore very ethical, stating that business enterprises must be focused in continually making attempts to satisfy all



stakeholders. My findings point to the fact that all participants were skewed toward the direction of the view held by Hasnas.

### **Stakeholders and Expectations**

Emergent theme 1 of this study revealed that there are several expectations for operators of the oil and gas industry doing business in the Niger Delta region. My findings based on general discussions, perceptions observed from participants, and responses to the research questions posed to them confirmed the position of Hasnas. These also disconfirmed the position held by Enyinna. Almost all respondents agreed that the oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta region must equitably satisfy all stakeholders, among whom are the landowners of the area. In line with Hasnas (2013), P1 related the need of operating companies to satisfy landowners, and said: “It is incumbent on these multinationals who know what operates in other climes, to now take responsibility of providing for land owners in the Niger-Delta region”.

Juscus and Snieska (2015) said that for any company to expect support and a positive attitude from society, it is expected to aim at fostering and practicing all globally acknowledged standards of socially responsive corporate conduct. This stance was supported by about 90% of respondents. P4 said:

My model is always Houston, Texas, which is the oil capital of the world. If you are in the Houston, Texas area you find all the big oil exploring corporations of the world, where their offices are located, Exxon Mobil, BP, Shell, Sunoco, just to name a few. In fact, there's a part of Houston which they call the energy corridor and when you see the piece of architecture and

the planning of the area you will know that some planning and some thought have been put into it. That type of model is my expectation for the communities in the Niger-Delta where oil exploration activities are currently going on.

While discussing the rationale for CSR, Adeleke, (2014), indicated that the real rationale for businesses is to go further than the concerns for profitability and seek for the larger welfare and well-being of the larger society in which the business operates. The findings of this study did not only corroborate and confirm that position, but went further to attempt to do an extension of it. In the same vein the position of Eweje and Sakaki, (2015) on corporations becoming progressively more socially and environmentally concerned and responsible to the communities and localities where they operate was confirmed by this study, along with Sfeir-Younis' (2009) idea of corporations now focusing on the necessity to satisfy the economic, social, and environmental needs, also known as the Triple Bottom Line. This ought to be the standard for CSR everywhere, and the landowners through the responses of the participants appear to have the full knowledge of what it should be, as against what has been practiced in the Niger Delta area. In his response when asked to compare his experiences with the companies operating in his locality with those in other similar areas known to him locally and overseas, P7 said:

The differences are much. I will give you an example; we have companies like Chevron, and companies like Shell. These are oil companies, well-known companies all over the world. If you go to my place where they operate in the

Niger Delta, if you visit where they operate as I speak to you right now, it's an eye-sore. You are likely to cry. My people, the members of the host community don't even have water to drink. The people defecate in the water, and that is the same water that they drink.

While further relating the conditions that their community is contending with in several CSR related spheres in comparison to other oil producing areas around the world, P7 further stated:

Now compare the CSR situation in my hometown to maybe the headquarters of Chevron and Shell corporations where they operate, maybe in America for example, of course they can't do that. If you go there you have maybe good skyscrapers, good bridges and all that, you know, good accommodation, good houses. The people are living well. Therefore, because of that they have no problem but in my area, it's not like that. The people are basically neglected, so it's a major difference. Another difference you see in my area we have the "white man" that comes to our country, to our area, we call them expatriate and they are being paid with hard currency. Now even when you have somebody from that community like mine for example, who happens to be well read and somebody from "abroad" because of the skin, because of the color, even if the person is not well read maybe he is a high school diploma holder, he will be the boss. But because he has been named expatriate, you who is well read because you are a black man, you are still going to be working under that person. Even at that, you are well read and looking for a

job as a member of that host community there is no employment allocated for you. You who is landowner have not been employed, but people come from somewhere else and they get employed.

As indicated in Chapter 4, under the discussion of Theme 1, the majority of the respondents had personal expectations from the operating companies, most of which they fell short of fulfilling them. These expectations in most cases were promises originally made to the landowners by the operating companies, who have reneged on their promises and failed to carry out their promises. P13 said: “At the end of the day the purpose of CSR is not being met and sadly enough, this is still going on till now.”

### **CSR and Environmental Responsibility**

Among the emergent themes from my study is Theme 4 which relates wholly to the need for the oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta region to take environmental responsibility. According to my findings about 95% of participants corroborated and confirmed the positions of Akpan (2014), George et al., (2012), Allen (2014), and Olaniyi and Omo-Irabor (2016), on the neglect of the people and environment evidenced by the failure to strike a balance between corporate profit goals and environmental and societal sustenance by the oil and gas corporations. According to George et al., (2012), this negligence amounted very well to corporate irresponsibility.

P15 reacted to the impact of oil and gas exploration in her area by stating this:

Oh my goodness, the impact negatively has been more than 100%. It's really tremendous. You see these things are all related. When you take from the land, the land is going to revolt. It's not only that they're not having

successful farming and fishing anymore, it's resulted to a lot of floods that never happened before in our area. The environment has been depleted. It's no more how it used to look when we were growing up. In my view, the land is totally destroyed. We used to have fresh vegetation, and beautiful scenery. It's not like that anymore.

P1 in his reaction on the impact on the environment and rating of the oil and gas corporations' efforts on environmental stability and restoration said:

As I have said before, they have not done anything to put back the environment to where they met it prior to their oil production. On a theoretical scale of 1 to 10, I would put it at a 2 because it's very low. They have not made any attempt to restore back the environment that has been polluted. You may have heard of the United Nations environmental report on Oginiland, and that is one of them. In fact, that report says that the level of benzene on Ogoniland is 900 times more than the acceptable level, so you can imagine what that means to the land. It is nothing to write home about, it is very, very poor.

P4 expressed his disgust and frustration with the entire situation of the environmental degradation caused by the operations of the prospecting and production companies in his hometown as follows:

I don't have any good feelings about what they are doing there. If I had my way, I would want all of them to leave our land and stop the oil exploration activities all together. Until we the people, we the owners of this land are able

to determine exactly how we want to develop our land. Especially, with the oil that has been explored over the years without anything to show for it in the community, and the environment. Therefore, my take is that the oil exploration activities ought to be stopped completely. It ought to stop!

The findings in this study also confirmed the position of The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (2013) which stated that with the continuous activities of the oil and gas operators in the area without commensurate amounts of CSR to the environment and citizens, the people and environment bear the burden of the corporate irresponsibility. As a result, the corporate actions or inactions, the area has been pronounced to be one of the most imperiled environments globally Anejionu, Ahiamammunnah, & Nri-ezedi, (2015), corroborated this pronouncement by stating that the area is categorized as having a high conservation concern in the West African sub-region. As indicated in the responses of 14 out of the 15 participants in this study representing 93% of participants, the issue of pollution of the air, land and water has become an epidemic of epic proportions. There is a perception by the landowners of negligence on the part of the managers of the operating companies in cleaning up and dealing with issues of spillages from their operations. This has become worrisome, as there has been reports of occurrences of strange diseases suffered by innocent land owners believed to be the fallout from the pollution. In this direction, P1 said:

My experience has been that of companies, oil companies, coming to exploit for mineral resources, petroleum products, and then leaving the area devastated, water polluted. You go to catch some fish in the rivers and you

see a lot of dead fish, you see oil floating on the rivers, that is also the source of drinking water for the community.

### **Activities of the Operator**

The activities of operators of the oil and gas companies are supposed to be guided by industry guidelines from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and its subsidiaries which are the government regulatory agency empowered to monitor and regulate all oil and gas operations in the country. For instance, NNPC and its subsidiaries are supposed to operate among several responsibilities to enforce the Global Gas Flaring Reduction (GGFR) policy, which suggests an objective way of watching the activity of gas flaring (Anejionu, Blackburn, & Whyatt, 2015). NNPC through their operating partners and arms is supposed to look out for the interest of not just the government alone, but also the landowners. In the opinion of P2, NNPC is responsible for regulating the actions and activities of the operators in the Niger Delta region and should be the one responsible for sanctioning all erring operators. P7 in his statement indicated the virtual absence of government intervention in the oil and gas operations in the Niger Delta. He stated as follows:

I want the government, to put some type of legislation or law in place; that every company especially the oil and gas companies operating in rural areas where they have their oil, they must as a matter of urgency be able to provide some basic needs or amenities in the community as part of their social responsibility, it's very, very important.

The results of this study largely indicate that the operations of the oil and gas companies operating in the Niger Delta are hardly carrying out the responsibilities that they are mandated to enforce. For instance, in the process of acquisition of land for drilling and other operations, NNPC is supposed to interface between landowners and the prospective operators. However, cases that appear to be similar to land-grabbing were reported by participants as being very prevalent in the region. P2 indicated that “land ownership in the Niger-Delta area is not properly articulated by government.”

### **Operators’ Relationship with Landowners**

The third theme in the findings of this research study indicate that the relationship between the oil and gas companies operating in the area and the landowners needs tremendous improvement. Manby (2011), Lugard (2013), Odemene (2013), Ejumudo (2013), and Tobor (2014), all had their focus on the Niger Delta Crisis and its causes and effects. They all pointed to several factors including the fact that the entire Niger Delta area has been devastated by the operations of Shell and the other multinational oil and gas corporations. Findings in this study confirmed this position and goes further to extend the knowledge in this regard.

A major cause of the restiveness in the region according to the findings of this study stem from the relationship and position which the operating companies have either deliberately or unknowingly placed actual landowners in the scheme of things in the acquisition and exploitation of the lands. Majority of the participants share a common sentiment on the issue of relationship of the companies with them. In quoting Participant 9 who spoke the minds of most of the participants, they stated that one of their primary



expectations was for the operators to “actually establish relationships with the various publics.” ‘Publics’ referred also to the host communities and the larger ethnic societies to which the host community belonged.

All of the participants indicated that instead of the companies dealing with the real land owners, they always opted to take the short cut of approaching and dealing with the traditional rulers who always short-changed the real land owners. This always led to rancor and ultimately crisis in the region. A great deal of CSR is wasted while dealing with traditional rulers who keep most of the benefits to themselves leaving the landowners dry. CSR is frequently provided in the form of funds given in some way to the community through the traditional ruler. In most cases the traditional rulers end up squandering the funds and thereby preventing the actualization of the CSR benefits intended by the companies. In this situation, the companies fail to bring forth the development that individual land owners sought and anticipated. According to P9, sporadic episodes of hostility arise from poor relationships between the operators and the land owners. This participant stated that operators are supposed to communicate with them, “but communication ends up with traditional rulers, rather than the land owners directly.” P11 supported this sentiment by stating that “Operators should go to these communities, look around, have dialogue with them, ask them questions like ‘how can we best assist you?’”

This participant further opined that such actions from the operators will create a more harmonious relationship between them and the host community. This finding is a bridge to a major gap in previous studies.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This research study was limited by a few factors. One of the major factors is the fact that the study had only 15 participants who were interviewed for this study. The search for qualified interviewees representing the right population was challenging. The respondents were drawn from a few socio-cultural organizations and cooperative societies. Another limitation was the rough and rugged terrain of the mangrove area, as I travelled through to meet and interview a few of the participants face-to-face.

The transferability and design of this study comprises a purposeful sampling of members. The few participants interviewed all originated from different parts of the geographical area referred to as the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Some of the organizations from whom the participants were drawn, are located in various parts of the United States of America and Canada. I had a little travel challenge when I had to travel from Washington DC to Chicago to conduct a face-to-face interview with one of the respondents. Owing to the dispersed nature of the locations of the respondents' data obtained, the study findings may not apply in the same pattern to other participants of numerous other locations. Other likely limitations included the objectivity of respondents, validity and reliability of data, and information obtained from the various participants. My expectation as the researcher is for the results of this investigative research to be transferable to other similar situations. There is, however, a possibility that the results may not be transferable to other situations in every case.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations for further research include a deeper and more extensive examination of the impact and influence of traditional rulers in the Niger Delta on the provision, and dispensing of CSR benefits to the local landowners, along with how their influences impact on restoration efforts of the environment by the oil and gas companies operating in the area. This study revealed extensive powers and influence wielded by the traditional rulers and chiefs over the oil and gas companies in their bid to carry out CSR activities in the region. I observed from the responses of about 85% of the participants that managers of oil and gas companies preferred to approach the traditional rulers to discuss and implement their CSR projects. Participants indicated that the managers often opted to do that rather than meet with the actual landowners. By meeting with them the participants opined would enable managers to ask from the landowners what they really wanted to be done for them, in order to satisfy their yearnings and aspirations, rather than simply relying on opinions of traditional rulers who often had corrupt and selfish tendencies in their dealings with the production companies. The situation based on my observation appears to have been going on for a long time. The situation now gives the impression that the oil and gas companies are sitting on a keg of gun powder that could explode at any time in extreme proportions. The local landowners are not consulted for their opinions, and they feel disenfranchised, disenchanting and embittered.

Future research may concentrate on the operational understanding of the managers of the oil and gas companies of CSR in relation to their learned experiences of the area,

and how they can leverage on the gains derived from this study to better serve the land-owners and other stakeholders. I also recommend a wider spread in the selection of participants in future studies of CSR in the area, with some representation from managers of the oil and gas companies operating in the area. This may lead to a more rounded study with more encompassing results.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This study has the potential for bringing a level of equity to the local land owners and communities. It may likely bring closure to the perception that the landowners have been alienated, exploited, and cheated by the corporations and authorities in the oil and gas sector. The intent of this research study was to seek ways that can lead to peace, progress, and prosperity for all parties and stakeholders in the oil rich Niger Delta region. The study was also aimed at the pursuit of the triple bottom line of economy, people, and environmental sustenance (Anderson, Anderson, Chu, Meredith, Asche, & Sylvia, 2015), representing the overall aspirations of all the stakeholders. Triple Bottom Line (TBL) in this sense, is the overall welfare principle which seeks to secure the welfares of all stakeholders and is a trademark principle in management.

The TBL is also expected to translate to strings of positive social change both for the individual landowners, and all other stakeholders in the area. Oil and gas have generally been acknowledged as major catalysts for industrial growth and development globally. They serve as some key catalysts for global positive change. The findings and recommendations of this study have a potential for breeding a better, greener, and healthier environment, owing to the deployment of a regime of properly designed and

well managed schemes of CSR brought to the landowners of the Niger Delta region. A satisfied and contented population of landowners are more likely to be restive. With this, a healthier, better and stronger relationship is very likely to be established between the landowners and the oil and gas companies, leading to a more peaceful environment for their operations for unrestricted steady supply of oil and gas to the global energy markets. It is a win-win situation for all stakeholders and consumers.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta. The focus of this study was to explore how managers of the oil and gas corporations operating in the area may become more socially responsive to the land owners of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This study may address a gap in literature to contribute to the body of knowledge on the practice and dispensation of CSR dividends to landowners of the Niger Delta and similar other places, and the impact of CSR management on the environment and welfare of the citizens.

This study aimed to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to experience CSR among Nigerian landowners in the Niger Delta. The most likely benefits from this study can make it a very significant one in the quest for equity for the land owners in the Nigerian Niger Delta area. It would also lead to peaceful coexistence between managers and operators of the oil and gas companies on one hand and the landowners and communities on another. The resultant effect of this would be higher profits by the companies and likely higher CSR benefits to the landowners. The findings are also likely

to result in a stable global supply of oil and gas, a healthier environment for the landowners, ultimately resulting in local and global positive social change. A major likely global outcome will be an overall better and greener environment in the entire Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This in turn may lead ultimately to local, regional and universal positive change.

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## Appendix A: Expert Panel Email Invitation

Study Title: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Welfare of Nigerian Niger Delta Land Owners.

Dear XXX,

I would like to take this opportunity to respectfully request that you serve as an Expert Panel Member for my doctoral dissertation at Walden University. My research will qualitatively examine corporate social responsibility. Upon your acceptance to serve on the panel, your role will be to review the interview questions and affirm the alignment with the problem statement, purpose of the study and research question. Upon receiving your feedback, I will revise the interview questions and request a secondary review to again ensure alignment. I will then revise the interview questions based upon feedback from the expert panel and request a secondary review to again ensure alignment. If you have any questions, please feel to contact me at [Charles.oboh@waldenu.edu](mailto:Charles.oboh@waldenu.edu) or my dissertation chair, Dr. Robert DeYoung, at [robert.deyoung@waldenu.edu](mailto:robert.deyoung@waldenu.edu).

I look forward to hearing favorably from you regarding your participation as an Expert Panel Member.

Very truly yours,

Charles Oboh

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

The interview questions are as follows:

1. In your own opinion, what is corporate social responsibility?
2. Tell me what it means to experience corporate social responsibility?
3. Describe to me what makes you feel satisfied with the oil and gas companies operating in your area?
4. Tell me about your experience as a land owner in the Niger Delta?
5. Describe how you feel about the activities put forward by the oil and gas companies operating in your area?
6. What were your expectations from the managers of the operating companies when you first got to know about their operations and activities?
7. In what ways did CSR as practiced in your area meet or exceed your expectations?
8. Using your lived experience as a reference; how would you describe the level of CSR benefits derived from the companies in your area?
9. If you were comparing your experiences with the company operating in your locality with those in other similar areas known to you, what would be some of the differences?
10. If you were comparing your experiences with the CSR management style of the company operating in your locality with those in other areas known to you, what would be some of the similarities?

11. Can you share an experience that may have assisted you with developing any perception that you currently hold of the level of social responsiveness of the company in your locality?
12. Describe the procedure used by the CSR officers in your locality in carrying out their activities.
13. Tell me how you would rate the impact CSR activities of the companies operating in your locality have had on your welfare and that of other landowners.
14. Tell me how you would rate the impact of CSR activities of the companies operating in your locality on the environment.
15. From your personal experience, what would you say is an important factor needed to make a higher positive impact from CSR by the oil and gas companies operating in your area?
16. What advice would you give to the CSR officers in the region that would help to build a better and friendlier relationship between the landowners and the oil and gas companies operating in their respective areas?

## Appendix C: Invitation to Participate

Study Title: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Welfare of Nigerian Niger Delta  
Land Owners

Dear XXX,

My name is Charles Oboh, I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Management Department at Walden University. I am conducting a dissertation study as part of the requirements for my management degree specializing in Leadership and Organizational Change, and I would like to invite you to participate within the gathering of Land Owners lived experiences in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

I am studying the land owner's experiences within relationships on their welfare with organizational managers of the oil and gas companies operating in the area. Participants selected must be 18 years and over in age and must be land ownership in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The information gathered will provide a platform to learn and develop methods to assist with developing effective corporate social responsibility (CSR) dispensation in the area.

All information gathered from participants will be confidential. Information reported will provide common themes established from shared lived experiences. If an individual chooses to participate they can contact me at (240) 426-6224 or email me at [charles.oboh@waldenu.edu](mailto:charles.oboh@waldenu.edu). Participants will receive an email explaining the process, and participant rights. A consent form will be attached that must be signed before the interview appointment is scheduled.

I thank you in advance for your time and anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,  
Charles Oboh.



## Appendix D: Informed Consent

### **Consent/Assent Form**

You are invited to take part in a research study of the corporate social responsibility and the welfare of Nigerian Niger Delta land owners. The researcher is inviting individuals of the age of 18 and above who are land owners in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Charles Oboh, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

#### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to collect data regarding your lived experiences as a land owner in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, the procedures are as follows:

- Meet for an interview at a mutually agreed upon time and place or through Skype and other audio-visual electronic technology.
- Attend an interview that will take approximately 60 minutes.
- Agree to audio taping of interview for further analysis.
- Review interview transcripts to ensure that information is authentic.
- If necessary, follow up meeting (face to face, electronic, or telephone) to answer any questions regarding interview process and content.

#### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind at any time prior to or during the interview.

#### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

By the nature of this study, it is believed that being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or well-being. The potential benefit of participating in this study is to provide a platform to express your experiences. The information has a potential to contribute to building effective and cordial relationships between organizations and communities.

#### **Payment:**

No compensation, direct or indirect, explicit or implied or hand-outs will be given in exchange for participation.

**Privacy:**

Any information you provide will be confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research task. Furthermore, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept for a period of a minimum of 5 years, as required by the university.

**Contacts and Questions:**

You may ask any questions you have now. However, if you have any questions later, you may contact the researcher via telephone (240) 426-6224 and/or email charles.oboh@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is \_\_\_\_\_ and it expires on \_\_\_\_\_

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

**Statement of Consent:**

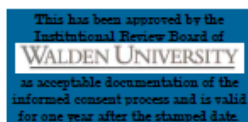
I have read the above information and I feel that I am sufficiently informed about the study to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to this email with the words, "I consent" at the first line of your email, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of consent: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



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### Appendix E: Expert Panel Background

Experts	Academic Profile	Professional Employment
Expert 1.	Doctoral degree (PhD) in Management (Leadership and Organizational Change)	Distinguished Adjunct Professor in Human Resources Management – Ageno School of Business, Golden Gate University, San Francisco, CA. Teaches Master of Science Capstone Course in Human Resources and Organizational Performance Management
Expert 2.	Doctoral degree (PhD) in Management (Finance)	Professor of Mathematics and Business - Stratford University - Stratford University, Baltimore. Professor at Baltimore City Community College. Teaches Mathematics, Business and Finance, Macroeconomics, Developmental Math, and Statistics.
Expert 3.	Doctoral degree (PhD) in Management (Information Technology)	Adjunct Professor in Management and Information Technology - Strayer University. A seasoned information systems and Human Resources management professional, at the United States Postal Service.
Expert 4.	Doctoral degree (DBA) in Business Administration	Professor of Business Management and Academics at Strayer University. Expert in Corporate Social Responsibility.

Expert 5.

Doctoral degree (PhD) in Management, specializing in Information Technology.

CEO and Team Leader. Strategic Business and Management Development Expert. Information Technology & Management Consultant. Enterprise Resource Planner.

## Appendix F: IRB Forms and Approval



Oboh Ethics  
Feedback Form 7-27



Oboh Consent  
Form .pdf

## Appendix G: Permission to Use Figures

From: **Jeanna Doherty** <[jeanna.doherty@ey.com](mailto:jeanna.doherty@ey.com)>  
Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 10:19 AM  
Subject: RE: response to your inquiry  
To: Charles Oboh <[charles.oboh@waldenu.edu](mailto:charles.oboh@waldenu.edu)>

As noted below, for purposes of your research, to leverage this information you should properly footnote and source the information.

Jeanna

**Jeanna M. Doherty** | Partner | Assurance Services

Ernst & Young LLP

Office: [860-725-3835](tel:860-725-3835) | [jeanna.doherty@ey.com](mailto:jeanna.doherty@ey.com)

**From:** Charles Oboh [<mailto:charles.oboh@waldenu.edu>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 07, 2016 10:09 AM  
**To:** Jeanna Doherty <[jeanna.doherty@ey.com](mailto:jeanna.doherty@ey.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: response to your inquiry

Dear Jeanna,

I can't thank you enough for the additional information and materials that you have provided to me on this research.

Kindly email to me a short permission to use the materials.

My institution would only allow such use with your permission.

Your urgent attention to this would be very much appreciated.

Thanks!

Charles Oboh.

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 7, 2016, at 9:46 AM, Jeanna Doherty <[jeanna.doherty@ey.com](mailto:jeanna.doherty@ey.com)> wrote:

Charles,

Attached is an e-copy of the original White Paper we published in 2011. Page 2 further details “the triple bottom line.” For purposes of your research, to leverage this information you should properly footnote and source the information. In addition, I’ve enclosed two links for you to leverage:

- [Climate change and sustainability](#) – Points of view, which houses our library of leading Thought Leadership
- [How sustainability has expanded the CFO role](#) – our online US site with additional information, look under the “Content” tab to the right

<image001.jpg>

<image002.gif> **Jeanna M. Doherty** | Partner | Assurance Services

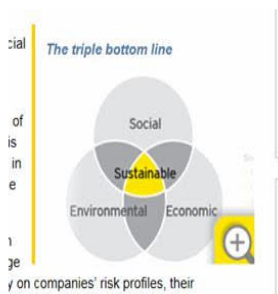
Ernst & Young LLP  
20 Church Street, Hartford, CT 06103, United States of America  
Office: [860-725-3835](tel:860-725-3835) | Fax: [866-860-3801](tel:866-860-3801) | [jeanna.doherty@ey.com](mailto:jeanna.doherty@ey.com)  
Website: <http://www.ey.com>  
Christine Kellie | Phone: [860-725-3953](tel:860-725-3953) | [christine.kellie@ey.com](mailto:christine.kellie@ey.com)

From: Jeanna Doherty <[jeanna.doherty@ey.com](mailto:jeanna.doherty@ey.com)>  
Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 9:46 AM  
Subject: response to your inquiry  
To: "charles.oboh@waldenu.edu" <[charles.oboh@waldenu.edu](mailto:charles.oboh@waldenu.edu)>

Charles,

Attached is an e-copy of the original White Paper we published in 2011. Page 2 further details "the triple bottom line." For purposes of your research, to leverage this information you should properly footnote and source the information. In addition, I've enclosed two links for you to leverage:

- [Climate change and sustainability](#) – Points of view, which houses our library of leading Thought Leadership
- [How sustainability has expanded the CFO role](#) – our online US site with additional information, look under the "Content" tab to the right



**Jeanna M. Doherty** | Partner | Assurance Services

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Website: <http://www.ey.com>  
Christine Kellie | Phone: [860-725-3853](tel:860-725-3853) | [christine.kellie@ey.com](mailto:christine.kellie@ey.com)



## Appendix H: Letter of Cooperation

Study Title: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Welfare of Nigerian Niger Delta Land Owners

Dear XXX,

My name is Charles Oboh, I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Management Department at Walden University. I am conducting a dissertation study as part of the requirements for my management degree specializing in Leadership and Organizational Change. My study will examine the landowners' perception of corporate social responsibility (CSR) of oil and gas companies operating in the Nigerian Niger Delta.

I would like to seek your cooperation in providing me the contact information of some members of your organization for invitation as potential participants in this study. To qualify for selection, participants must be 18 years and over in age and must be land owners in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The information gathered will provide a platform to learn and develop methods to assist with developing effective corporate social responsibility (CSR) dispensation in the area.

All information gathered from participants will be confidential. Information reported will provide common themes established from shared lived experiences. I can be reached at any time at (240) 426-6224 or email me at [charles.oboh@waldenu.edu](mailto:charles.oboh@waldenu.edu). Potential participants will receive an invitation to participate by email. Thereafter, they will receive an email explaining the process, and participant rights.

I thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation.

Please complete and sign the space provided below to indicate your acceptance for me to conduct this study with your organization.

Sincerely,  
Charles Oboh.

-----  
-----

**Statement of acceptance to Cooperate:**

I have read the above letter and I confirm my approval for you to conduct your study with us.

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Held: \_\_\_\_\_

Officer's Name and Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of acceptance: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix I: NIH Certificate

