
**ATTITUDE OF HOST COMMUNITIES TOWARDS DEPLOYING CORPORATE
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO MANAGE CONFLICTS IN THE NIGER DELTA,
NIGERIA**

Ogbemi, Ogbiten Brickins (Ph.D)

Department of Mass Communication
Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku, Delta State.

ABSTRACT: *Conflict is multi-faceted and as it is inevitable in human interaction. It could be productive or counter-productive, depending on how effectively it is managed. The perennial conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have arguably yielded unproductive outcomes to the host communities, the oil producing companies and the country's economy. To the host communities, violent and non-violent reactions have resulted to incidents of ecological devastation, poverty and low level of development, which oil exploration activities have created in the region. The oil companies have been victims of destruction of oil facilities, kidnapping and killing of oil expatriates, all negatively affecting their business. Considering the fact that attitudes of host communities is very important to the success of CSR programmes, this study examined the attitudes of host communities towards deploying CSR programmes to manage conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted and structured questionnaire was utilized to gather data from 527 respondents selected through the multi-staged sampling technique. Findings showed that CSR programmes executed by oil companies towards conflict management significantly influenced attitudes of members of the host community. And that they were to a large extent satisfied with the CSR programmes executed in their areas. The study therefore recommended among other things that oil companies should carry out regular consultations to find out the needs of their host communities.*

KEYWORDS: conflict, conflict management strategies, Niger Delta, CSR

INTRODUCTION

The Niger Delta is the geo-political spread with distribution of oil fields which covers Rivers, Delta, Akwa-Ibom, Cross Rivers, Edo and Bayelsa states of Nigeria. There are, however, other oil producing states in the country like Abia, Imo and Ondo which are also in the region.

Oil was first discovered in 1956 at Olobiri in the present Bayelsa State. Since then, it has become the main stay and largest revenue yielding source for the government, accounting for more than 90 percent of the country's revenue (Cornelius & Kogut, 2003; Okoko & Nna 1998; Prahalad, 2004). Before oil was discovered in the area, it was abundantly blessed and endowed with various agricultural and other natural resources such as fishing ponds, farms and so on which the people depended and survived on. Common among the people were also traditional medicine practice and subsistence occupation (Whiteman, 1982).

Despite its generous contributions to the Nigerian economy, the region has not benefitted sufficiently, instead the area has become a domain of crisis of instability as a result of conflicts between the oil producing communities and oil companies owing to the activities of the companies. Such activities have resulted in environmental degradation, abject poverty, lack of job opportunities, low level of social development, oil spillages, destruction of aquatic life and crops and other such depravations. The effect is that there have been protests in Eket in Akwa-Ibom State and other oil bearing areas of Delta, Rivers, Edo and so on for the same purpose (Human Rights Watch, 2001; ICE Case Study, 1997). All these and other problems led to a strained relationship between the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta and the oil producing companies. It is instructive to note that maintaining peaceful interaction and co-existence with members of the community where a business operates is essential for the success of the enterprise. An organization that is constantly faced with crises and conflicts will no doubt find it difficult to survive. To ensure business sustenance and survival, oil companies employ various strategies in managing conflicts in the region. One of such strategies is the deployment of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the various communities by the oil companies. The idea is to build a harmonious relationship with the communities and mitigate further crisis. However, one wonders if such strategy could help in resolving the many crises between the host communities and the companies.

Therefore, this study is focused on the attitudes of host communities towards the deployment of CSR to manage conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It also looked at different strategies employed in managing conflict in the region, analyzing their strength and weaknesses.

Research Problem

The exploration activities of oil companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have negatively affected the host communities in the area. Reactions from these communities have been expressed through violent protest. This resulted in destruction of operations of the oil companies, kidnapping of their staff, destruction of oil facilities in the area, and clashes between members of the host communities and security operatives. To manage this conflict, oil companies in the region have introduced CSR programmes. Extant studies have focused on host communities perception of the CSR programmes deployed by oil companies in the Niger Delta without clear consideration of CSR as conflict management tool. This study examines the attitude of host communities towards the deployment of CSR as a conflict management tool by oil companies in the Niger Delta.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To examine the influence of the CSR programmes executed by oil companies towards conflict management on attitudes of host communities in the Niger Delta towards the programmes.
2. To ascertain the extent to which the host communities are satisfied with the CSR programmes intended for conflict resolution in the Niger Delta.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. what is the influence of CSR programmes executed in the Niger Delta by oil companies for conflict management on attitudes of host communities towards the programmes?
2. to what extent are host communities satisfied with the CSR programmes of the oil companies in resolving conflicts in the Niger Delta?

Theoretical Framework: Social Conflict Theory

The modern Social Conflict theory propounded by Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) is considered as relevant to the study. Marx as a revolutionary thinker and writer strongly believed in the “irrepressible unanimous power of the masses in redressing their social conditions of existence”. He is of the opinion that social classes identify a particular way of relating with themselves and social class arises from the relations of production in which case “people come to rectify classes and as a result these classes come to have life of their own that constraints the actor” (Aritt, Ibrahim, & Othman, 2007).

Conflict is no doubt a common feature in human existence. As long as people live together, there must be one form of conflict or the other. According to Isika (2012), conflict has become an on-going and regular phenomenon in human existence. It is unwittingly in most cases the determinant factor and what limits the conditions for human existence. Conflict theorists have distinguished two types of conflicts, namely conflict of interest and conflict of values of belief. The conflicts between oil producing communities and oil producing companies can be described as a conflict of interest which is a result of scarcity. The primary interest of the oil companies is to make profit, while the oil producing communities feel cheated and want to perfect their interest of being well compensated for the natural resources in their area. This is usually the primary cause of their conflicts. Although such conflicts have led to destruction of oil facilities, kidnapping and in some cases loss of lives, it cannot be necessarily described as such aggressive conflict behavior, most blatantly in religions and ideological war.

The theoretical approach to social conflicts according to Isika (2012) from the Marxist – based social conflict paradigm is “launched on the argument that individuals and social classes have differing amounts of natural resources and that the powerful groups use their power to exploit those with less power” (p. 158). The argument is that “from brute force and economics, society is created from on-going class conflicts (p. 58). To throw more light on this, Marx’s conflict theory has been explained by Lukacs (1968) through the following propositions:

1. Human beings are naturally or fundamentally self-oriented and therefore likely to pursue personal interests and are divergent at the expense of others.
2. Human beings are continually involved in constant confrontation within society as a germane condition for social change.
3. Everyday life results to conflict as human beings with different interest relate with each other in pursuance of the capitalist resources and opportunities in life.
4. Conflict settles itself when people continuous fight and negotiate for peaceful co-existence.

The preposition of conflict theory said that a social society is exposed to constant erosion and change. In other words, social change is constant as a result of the fundamental nature of conflict

embedded in society itself. Conflict is therefore unavoidable between individuals and groups. As the Niger Delta is made up of individuals and groups, specifically oil bearing communities and oil producing companies, conflict is inevitable. The bone of contention being the oil resources, going by the shareholders and the stakeholders' theories, the managers want to protect the interest of the investors that is shareholders, while they also want to be responsible by making provision for corporate social responsibility programmes to present themselves as good corporate citizens. The result is conflicts from various dimensions and these have to be resolved and managed.

Marx's social conflict theory is relevant here in the sense that the oil producing companies are agents of oppression, exploitation, domination, coercion and underdevelopment, especially in the area of sustainable development goals that affects the people. From the foregoing, the social conflict theory identifies the roots of conflict and its existence in society due to man's natural inequality, thereby not clearly providing the dimensions of conflicts between host communities and oil companies and how local people could express their grievances when situated. It points to the fact that conflict is inherent in individuals and groups. Frustration wherever it exist gradually leads to aggression which is a component of conflict.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict: Meaning, Nature and Types

Conflict can be described as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community, leading to injury, death, physical harm or deprivation" (WHO, 2002 p. 15). Prior to the occurrence of any conflict (violent and non-violent conflict) there are usually indicators or catastrophic signals exhibited by the factional and opposition leaders in the conflict. These signals include aggressive, unfriendly attitudes and uncompromising posture, which could normally be identified among the parties engaged in any conflict (Akpuru-Aja, 2009). When such warning signals are discovered in the beginning stages, they could normally develop into violent crisis and genocides characterized by destruction.

Coser (1968), is of the opinion that when resources are available, which people assume are scarce, it puts them in opposition to one another in order to possess the resources they need, or attain a certain level of power at the expense of a rival group. In other words, conflict creates room for unhealthy competition or intra-group/inter-group rivalry that often develop in clannishness and other forms of divisive strategies which are aimed at downplaying the success of other groups. Hardly is there any conflict situation where belligerent parties are not concerned with better ways of winning or making the other party loose on assumed incompatible goals. Conflict is a part and parcel of a modern society, and it is necessary for social survival. What this actually means is that conflict does not necessarily have a negative effect, although it can have both functional and dysfunctional implications. In the view of Folarin (1998), it is generally agreed amongst scholars that there is hardly any societal development anywhere in the world without some elements of conflict. Developments are modernization (changes) of existing infrastructures and cultures, which could be resisted.

According to Rousseau (1987), the peaceful state of nature was disrupted by human greed and desire. This implies that human selfish-interest and greed is tantamount to conflict. Furthermore, Otite (2001), asserted that conflict starts when persons or a group of persons in a particular environment pursue different desires, interests, objectives, goals and aspirations. The development of a change in the environment of any society such as the discovery of new natural resources usually raises a fertile environment for conflict. The development of conflict in any society makes it important for stakeholders to take conflict management as a necessity. By engaging in conflict management, stakeholders take steps towards enforcing a mechanism and strategic responses aimed at achieving goals of conflict resolution as an important part of the agenda of mutual and peaceful coexistence. Such a move could involve negotiations, confidence building and conflict-sensitive programmes at different levels. Conflicts show themselves in different ways depending on the circumstance. Some may involve groups struggle over resources, while others are busy struggling for power and other economic benefits, either for self-actualisation, selfishness or to meet their unlimited desire for basic human needs. Conflicts can also be caused by the continuous drama of political power domination and economic oppression, particularly those that involve minority and majority ethnic nationalities. Conflict can occur when two or more people/groups fight over some matter of interest. One issue that must be pointed out is that the way parties to any conflict see it has the potential of either escalating or reducing it.

Conflicts in Niger Delta, Nigeria

Conflicts are common occurrences in Niger Delta, Nigeria. These conflicts are mainly among the oil rich communities and the multinational oil producing companies. However, there are also conflicts within and between communities which can be referred to as intra and inter communities conflicts. Some of these are principally as a result of the struggle between groups for the ownership of land where there are oil deposits, and the issue in dispute is usually about who collects the compensation or other benefits from the oil companies. The result of such disputes or conflicts is the shutdown of oil facilities, wanton elimination of lives, destruction of property, kidnapping and total breakdown of law and order.

Some of the reasons that have been advanced by members of the host communities to justify their actions include total neglect by the oil producing multinationals in the area of provision of infrastructures, good roads, Scholarship for students from the areas and so on. Others, include lack of adequate compensation, payment of compensation to wrong persons, lack of consultation before projects are carried out degradation adverse problems created by their operations on the oil producing areas and environment, exploitation by the oil companies, non-provision of employment opportunities for qualified, community members lack of portable water, lack of contract opportunities for community members and so on.

However, most of the oil producing companies have argued that their efforts to provide facilities and execute projects have been hampered by several of difficulties which include false host community representation who pursue selfish interest to the detriment of the host communities, insistence by the host communities to engage unqualified members of the community even when there are qualified and competent people for the execution of projects, which result in poor quality jobs being done and cases of misappropriation of funds. Others include intra-community dispute

in the project location site, endless demands and shift in the requirements of the communities, requests that are at times impossible to fulfil and government neglect which is perceived to be the responsibility of the tax paying companies (Igben, 2008).

Nations all over the world survive one way or the other and have some sources of foreign exchange. For some it is tourism while for others it is either agriculture or one form of mineral or the other. At a time Nigeria relied on the export of groundnut, cocoa and some other agricultural products. That has become history since the discovery of oil in 1956 at Olobiri in Bayelsa State. Presently, the economy relies on oil and gas. This development has put the nation among the league of top oil producing countries in the league of nations and a prominent member of the Organization of Petroleum Exploring Countries (OPEC). The petrol dollars earned by the country has changed things to the extent that a former Nigeria military Head of State said that Nigeria's problem is not money but how to spend it. This "blessing" is however not without its negative effects. While the people at the seat of power are spending recklessly and looting the nation's resources the oil producing areas are bearing the brunt of oil production. What they experience daily are oil spillages, damage to economic crops, environmental degradation, constant pollution of sources of potable water, serious hazards to the health and well-being of the people, destruction of fish pods, low standard of living and object poverty.

According to Okoko and Nna (1998) the oil and gas industry in Nigeria is concentrated in the Niger Delta region, which has "distribution of oil fields in the geo-political states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers" (pp. 45 – 54). Before now, the area had other resources which include fertile agricultural land, rubber and palm trees and other economic crops. Unfortunately, the new found "gold" oil and gas brought with it constant crisis of instability and object poverty. "The host communities have accused the oil companies of lack of concern centered on the problems occasioned with spillages of oil such as: the cleanup of spilled oil delay in assessment of affected areas the failure to pay compensations for damaged valuable economic crops and fishponds. From Okolobi to Ogidigben; Ogbotobo to Bonnu; Ogoni to Iko; Gbaram to Obaji; Umuechim to Peremabiri; Egbema to Edagberi etc., protest of vary degrees of manifestations have become a frequently occurring phenomenon. In some instances these grievances have led to outright violence and seizure of oil facilities, abduction of oil company officials, destruction of oil companies properly and total disruption of operations (Rim-Rukeh, Ogbemi & Imide, 2008 pp. 645 – 646).

There is no doubt that the frequent occurrence and reoccurrence of conflicts between oil producing communities and multinational oil producing corporations in the Niger Delta has brought negative attention and a lot of economic losses to the oil producing companies and Nigeria in particular. Due to its importance, the attention of local and international scholars has been consequently drawn to it. There have, therefore, been a lot of studies and findings from such studies on the subject. For instance, Watts (2014) said that more of the works dwelt on politics of oil and gas, degradation and disempowerment of the indigenes of the Niger Delta. The focus has also been on the operations of the multinational oil producing companies with little or no emphasis on how the people who are at the receiving end of their activities feel. Amodu (2012) found that the degree of violence in Nigeria's Niger Delta area has become very serious and persistent characterized by 33

cases of kidnapping of oil workers recorded between the period of January 2006 and February 2007, with more than 200 victim which are mostly expatriate oil workers. About 12,770 cases of vandalism, particularly oil pipelines and installations were also recorded in Nigeria between 2000 and 2007 with most of them taking place in the Niger Delta (Nwankwo & Ezeobi, 2008). These certainly confirms the fact that the oil companies are doing little or nothing to justify the huge sums of money that they are making from the natural resources in these area.

Conflict Management Strategies in Niger Delta, Nigeria

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a strategy for conflict management strategy based on peaceful mutual agreement of parties involved in a dispute, as midwived by a third party. According to Miller (2005) the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) method deals with conflict in such a way that the result would be generally agreeable to the parties in disputes. The truth is that “it takes two parties which are willing to actualize a win-win outcome for a conflict to be successfully resolved” (Onyima & Iwuoha, 2015 p. 50). Two ways through which conflict can be resolved are either through confrontation or arbitration. Confrontation involves the direct expression of a party or person’s idea, thoughts or feelings as it affects the conflict situation. It could involve the bringing together of those involved in the conflict together and giving them the opportunity to state their cases. This will involve exploring and clarifying issues about the conflict but could be aggressive. Physical and emotions/attack or verbal exchanging can come in (Etekpe, 2012; Miller, 2005; Okolie-Osemene, & Okanume (2012). This method is what the federal government initially employed in solving the Niger Delta crisis by deploying troops to the area to protect oil installations and workers but yielded little or no results. Confrontation has always failed in resolving conflicts. At the end, this conflicting parties are forced to come together to resolve issues amicably. This is the only way to find long lasting solutions to conflicts.

Another form of alternative dispute resolution strategy is third-party intervention. Usually involves a third-party intervention. Arbitrators are pointed either by the disputants or an impartial interested party who genuinely want the dispute resolved. The third party or arbitrator takes evidences from the parties, addresses the source of the conflict and comes out with a solution or settlement plan that is acceptable to the parties involved in the dispute or conflict. According to Okolie-Osemene and Tor (2012) third party decision making methods occur when the intervening parties acting on behalf of the greater society such as a properly constituted court of law pronounces mandatory judgment to settle the conflict. When it involves an arbitration tribunal or court, the award or judgment is usually binding on all parties involved. Most organizations, particularly the oil producing multinationals in the Niger Delta region, have come up with ways of handling conflicts. Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), according to Ogbemi (2014) has its procedure of handling community disturbances and this involves; “discussing the community’s demands and problems, using local and government arbitrators, pursuing amiable settlement of the dispute shutting down if peaceful operation is not possible, follow-up and discussions and restarting operations only with the community’s consent” (pp. 78-79).

Corporate Social Responsibility

The idea of CSR is to present the organization as a good and responsible corporate citizen and to create mutual and cordial existence between the organization and the oil bearing community where the business concern operates. Well planned corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies will encourage the Niger Delta indigenes to adequately participate in their own affairs through dialogue, in the formulation or planning process and implementation (e.g the Niger Delta Master Plan) policies that affects them and adequate communication channels will enable the people to move from being passive recipients of externally generated initiatives to being initiative advocates and facilitators of strategies to resolve conflicts (Asak, 2008; Ochonogor & Njoku, 2006).

There is no doubt that there is great link and relationship between corporate social relationship and conflict. Undoubtedly, the unfriendly environmental operations of the multinational oil producing companies in the area are major contributory factors to most of the conflicts. Consequently, the genuine execution and involvement in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities can prevent and quell conflicts. As Banfield (2005) rightly observed, conflict prone organisations and their management symbolize a necessary part of a combined effort to get a more peaceful world. In other words, if the oil producing companies in the Niger Delta honestly carryout well planned corporate social responsibility activities with the involvement of members of the host communities, there will definitely be cordial relationship with the host communities. In addition, this will certainly affect changes or the result of conflicts in the local communities and society generally. It must be noted that positive and concrete CSR reduces considerably the negative impact of business activities and consequently the likelihood of conflicts. It also increases the advantage of good neighborliness and mitigates the negative result of business operations on the environment. Of course, society has and deserves the right to a healthy and decent environment. Society also has a right to a clean, safe and healthy environment and this is an undisputable human right. Oil producing companies therefore have a responsibility to ensure this right to prevent conflict between them and the oil producing areas where they operate.

Ineffective implementation of CSR programmes is a major cause of the constant clashes between the Ogoni people in Rivers State, Nigeria and Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) which culminated to the killing and eventual hanging of some prominent Ogoni sons by the then Abacha Military junta. Up till now, SPDC has not been able to operate in the area. The unfortunate thing is that the oil producing companies only take part in one or two CSR projects when they have a major project like the building of a pipeline and as soon as the project is completed they forget the community. As Idemudia (2010) argued, the problem with CSR projects in the Niger Delta is that the people are only remembered by the oil companies when there is a major project to be carried out. The oil companies try to placate the communities so that the project can be completed. Frynas (2005) supports this view and pointed out that most multinational oil producing companies carry out CSR for selfish reasons just to maintain a stable and conflict free working environment. It can therefore be inferred that CSR projects are not necessarily carried out in the area as obligations of the oil producing companies but just to calm the people. In other words, CSR is just a measure of managing conflict in the region. From the foregoing, there is enough evidence indicating a direct link between CSR and the management of conflict.

Several studies have been carried out to confirm the importance of CSR in conflict management in Niger Delta, Nigeria. For instance, Oteh and Eze (2012) and Okonta (2006) found in their respective studies that the crisis of under development and ecological devastation in the Niger Delta region have been the root causes of crisis and that the oil producing companies have not carried out enough corporate social responsibility programmes to placate the people. Oil producing communities such as Ologbo and Gelegele in Edo State, Okrika, Bodo, Obrikom and Rumucrushu in Rivers State and Beniside and Imiringi in Bayelsa State and Oleh and Koko in Delta State have been engaged in claims and counter claims with oil companies concerning their corporate social responsibility initiatives. The UNEP (2011) report stated that the United Nations survey conducted confirmed that ecological devastation of the Niger Delta area and its serious lack of infrastructures such as electricity, portable water, and health facilities are responsible for the volatile nature of the area. The report further stated that Ogoni people in the area “suffer from the enormous negative externalities engendered by oil extraction and production, including oil spills and gas flaring that will take about 30 years to remediate” (p. 89). The situation in Ogoniland deteriorated to the extent that prominent Ogoni sons lost their lives in the process of fighting for their people. Up till date, oil production has been suspended by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in the area as a result of the unsafe environment to operate.

In a study carried out by Okoro (2014), it was found that in the Niger Delta where most of the oil wealth of Nigeria is derived with several oil multinational corporations operating in the area claims of CSR programmes by these oil producing companies have been questioned severally by different researchers and commentators. The study further found that 87.92 percent of the local community members had fear of being exposed to diseases, while 90.11 percent would prefer being part of the decision making process concerning their communities and that community engagement should be straightened as part of the CSR approach. Ogbemi and Imide (2008) and Ogbemi (2003) reported, among other things, that members of the host communities of Eket and environs preferred given paid employment than their community being provided with infrastructures. Most of the residents of the area are unhappy and dissatisfied and this resulted to a lot of conflicts and restiveness.

In their study, Kpolovie and Sado (2016) found out an overwhelming discrepancy between companies’ staff and indigenes of oil producing areas for each of the seven CSR indicators. Respondents from the host communities interviewed said they strongly favour carrying out of CSR as a viable strategy for ending the crisis and ensuring ultimate peace in the Niger Delta. On the contrary, staff of the oil companies interviewed held a diametrically opposite view by to members of the host communities. A similar study by Amodu (2012) found, among other things, that the constant conflicts between members of the host communities and the oil producing companies portend serious implications for the parties involved in the conflicts and that community relations strategies adopted by the selected oil companies were grossly inadequate in helping to prevent and resolve conflicts in the area.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted by this study. Validated self-structured questionnaire was utilized as data collection instrument administered on respondents. There are

nine states in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria with a total population of (31,277,090). The states and their population according to the 2006 National Census are as follows: Akwa-Ibom (3,902,051), Bayelsa (1,704,515), Rivers (5,198,716), Cross Rivers (2,892,988), Delta (4,112,445), Imo (3,927,563), Ondo (3,460,877), Abia (2,845,380) and Edo States (3,233,366).

Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select a sample of 527 respondents from the population. The first stage involved purposively selecting three states from the nine Niger Delta states which are Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross-Rivers, Delta, Imo, Ondo, Abia and Edo states. The states purposively selected were Delta, Rivers and Edo. The second stage involved purposively selecting one senatorial district that is oil producing from each state, since all the senatorial districts are not oil producing. In Edo state, the senatorial district that were selected is the only oil producing one, which is Edo South. For Delta state, Delta South was selected, in Rivers State, Rivers South West was be selected. The third stage involved purposively selecting two oil producing local government areas from each of the senatorial districts. For Delta South senatorial district, Warri North and Isoko South were purposively selected. For Rivers South West Senatorial district, Gokana and Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government areas were selected, while in Edo Central senatorial district, Ikpoba-Okha and Ovia North East local government areas are selected. The fourth stage involved selecting four oil producing communities through simple random sampling technique (balloting) from each of the six local government areas earlier selected from the three senatorial districts purposively selected from the three oil producing states. From Delta South, senatorial districts of Delta State, Koko, Ogheye, Benin-River and Egbema were selected from Warri North local government, while Oleh, Emede, Igbide and Olomoro were selected from Isoko South local government. From Rivers South West senatorial district of Rivers state, Omoku, Ebochia, Obite and Obrikom were selected from Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government council, while Bodo, Kogbara-Dere, Kpor and Bomu were selected from Gokana local government area. From Edo South senatorial district of Edo state, Ologbo, Obayanstor, Ikara and Ajoki were selected from Ikpoba-Okha, while Gelegele, Ughoton, Ogheghe and Ikoru were selected from Ovia North East Local government areas. In order to calculate the sample size, the formula developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) was adopted.

1st Stage: $p\% \times q\% \times \left[\frac{1.96}{5}\right]^2$

P% in this formula indicates the estimated percentage of participants that have the characteristics of the study; while q% represents the proportion of respondents that may not have the characteristics under investigation. Based on this, p% is estimated to be 60%, while q% is estimated to be 40%; this is due to the fact that a large proportion of the population in the oil producing communities was reasoned will be aware of the CSR being used as a conflict management tool by oil producing companies. Therefore:

$$60\% \times 40\% \times \left[\frac{1.96}{5}\right]^2 = 368.7 \text{ approximately } 369$$

2nd Stage: This stage factors in the earlier calculated value of n (369) into the next equation considering the population 1,592,397.

$$n = \frac{n}{1 + \left(\frac{n}{\text{population}}\right)} \text{ where } n \text{ is } 369$$

$$n = \frac{369}{1 + \left(\frac{369}{1592397}\right)} = 369$$

3rd Stage: This stage was adjusted by the anticipated response rate which was estimated by considering the characteristics of the participants. Hence, the response rate was reasoned will be 70% because participants were most likely to be willing to take part in the study.

$$\text{3rd Stage: } n^a = \frac{n \times 100}{re\%}$$

$$n^a = \frac{369 \times 100}{70} = 527$$

Therefore, the sample size was 527.

The next stage was the proportional distribution of the participants across the selected study areas as follows in Table 3.4.

Table 1: Proportional Distribution of Participants across Selected Oil Producing Communities

S/N	STATES	SEN. DISTRICTS	LG AREAS	COMMUNITIES SELECTED	Population	Proportion (%)	Sample	
1.	DELTA	Delta South	Warri North	Koko	98239	6.17	33	
				Benin-River	26231	1.65	9	
				Ogheye	24691	1.55	8	
				Egbema	32610	2.05	11	
			Isoko South	Oleh	151631	9.52	50	
				Emede	92121	5.79	30	
				Olomoro	96112	6.04	32	
				Igbide	55915	3.51	19	
2.	RIVERS	Rivers West	South	Ndoni/Ogba/Egbe ma	Omoku	126405	7.94	42
				Ebochia	56819	3.57	19	
				Obrikom	102214	6.42	34	
				Obite	66210	4.16	22	
			Gokana	Bodo	56220	3.53	19	
				Kpor	36506	2.29	12	
				Bomu	43218	2.71	14	
				Kogbari-Dere	46291	2.91	15	
3.	EDO	Edo South	Ikpoba Okha	Ologbo	134216	8.43	44	
				Ajoki	52108	3.27	17	
				Obayantor	125102	7.86	41	
				Ikara	31514	1.98	10	
			Ovia North East	Gelegele	68291	4.29	23	
				Ikoro	19367	1.22	6	
				Ughoton	28862	1.81	10	
				Ogheke	21504	1.35	7	
Total					1592397	100	527	

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Data Analysis**Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variable	Frequency (n)		Percentage (%)
Age	18-28	124	23.5
	29-39	209	39.7
	40-50	172	32.6
	51-61	10	1.9
	62 and above	12	2.3
	Total	527	100.0
Gender	Male	249	47.2
	Female	278	52.8
	Total	527	100.0
Highest Educational Qualification	SSCE/WAEC/GCE and A Levels	222	42.1
	Diploma/ND/HND/HNC	148	28.1
	B.Sc/B.A/B.Ed	30	5.7
	Masters Degree/M. Sc./M.A./MBA	127	24.1
	Total	527	100.0
Marital Status	Married	272	51.6
	Single	239	45.4
	Separated	6	1.1
	Widowed	10	1.9
	Total	527	100.0
Employment Status	Government Employee	151	28.7
	Private Sector Employee	104	19.7
	Self Employed	133	25.2
	Unemployed	139	26.4
	Total	527	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Study 2018.

Table 2. depicts that majority of the respondents were between the age range of 18years and 39years (63.2%), while those of 62 years or older were in the minority (2.3%). This implies that majority of the study participants were either young or approaching midlife. Slightly above half of the respondents were females (52.8%), while their male counterparts constituted 47.2 percent of total number of participants. There were more respondents with lower educational qualifications of SSCE/WAEC/GCE and A Levels (42.1%), compared to those with higher qualifications of B.Sc/B.A/B.Ed (5.7) and 24.1 percent were holders of Master's Degree (M. Sc./M.A./MBA). These suggest that participants were literate and could read and write. Half of the respondents were married (51.6%), 45.4 percent were single while few were separated (1.1%) and widowed (1.9%). There were more government employees (28.7%) than private sector employees (19.7%) among the study participants. Those who were self-employed constituted 25.2 percent of the study participants while 26.4 percent were unemployed.

1. **Research Question One:** What is the influence of CSR programmes executed in the Niger Delta by oil companies for conflict management on attitudes of host communities towards the programmes?

Table 3a. ANOVA & Model Summary Testing Significant Influence of CSR Programmes Executed on Attitude of Host Communities towards CSR Programmes

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	161.876	1	161.876	693.979	0.000^b
	Residual	122.461	525	0.233		
	Total	284.337	526			
R= 0.755						
R Square = 0.569						
Adjusted R Square = 0.568						

Table 3b. Simple Linear Regression Testing Significant Influence of CSR Programmes Executed on Attitude of Host Communities towards CSR Programmes

Construct	β	R	t	Sig.
(Constant)	13.476		45.281	0.000
CSR Programmes Resolving Conflict	0.358	0.755	26.343	0.000
Dependent Variable: Attitude of Host Communities towards CSR Programmes				

Tables 3a and 3b show the ANOVA and model summary, and simple linear regression test of significant influence of CSR programmes executed by oil companies towards conflict management on attitude of host communities in the Niger Delta towards the programmes. Results indicate CSR programmes executed by oil companies towards conflict management significantly influenced attitude of host communities in the Niger Delta towards the programmes ($F_{(1, 525)} = 693.979$, $p < 0.05$; $\beta = 0.358$, $r = 0.755$). The correlation coefficient indicates a strong positive significant influence of CSR programmes executed by oil companies towards conflict management on attitude of host communities in the Niger Delta towards the programmes. This implies that increased CSR programmes executed by oil companies towards conflict management improved attitude of host communities in the Niger Delta towards the programmes. In addition, the model indicates that CSR programmes executed by oil companies towards conflict management explained 56.9 percent ($R^2 = 0.569$) variation of attitude of host communities in the Niger Delta towards the programmes.

Consequently, the hypothesis that CSR programmes executed by oil companies towards conflict management significantly influence attitude of host communities in the Niger Delta towards the programmes was accepted.

Research Question Two: ascertain the extent to which the host communities are satisfied with the CSR programmes intended for conflict resolution in the Niger Delta.

Table 4. Extent to which Host Communities are Satisfied with the CSR Programmes of Oil Companies in Resolving Conflicts

Items	VHE F (%)	HE F (%)	LE F (%)	VLE F (%)	NA F (%)	\bar{x}	SD
I am satisfied that skill acquisition programmes sponsored by oil companies helped to increase support for oil companies during conflict resolution	349 (66.2)	51 (9.7)	127 (24.1)	-	-	4.42	0.85
I am satisfied that donation of books and writing materials by oil companies to members of host communities created an atmosphere of trust needed for conflict resolution	245 (46.5)	255 (48.4)	27 (5.1)	-	-	4.41	0.59
I am satisfied that award of scholarship by oil companies to members of host communities helped in the resolution of conflicts	262 (49.7)	226 (42.9)	27 (5.1)	12 (2.3)	-	4.40	0.69
I am satisfied that electrification of host communities by oil companies reduced friction between host communities and oil companies, during conflict resolution	35 (6.6)	492 (93.4)	-	-	-	4.07	0.25
I am satisfied that donation of block of classrooms by oil companies to host communities helped to find solutions to issues causing problems between host communities and oil companies	35 (6.6)	470 (89.2)	22 (4.2)	-	-	4.02	0.33
I am satisfied that sinking of boreholes by oil companies in host communities helped to reduce negative feeling towards oil companies during conflict resolution	-	517 (98.1)	10 (1.9)	-	-	3.98	0.14
Average Weighted Mean						4.22	0.47

Source: Researcher's Field Study 2018

Key = Very High Extent =VHE, High Extent =HE, Low Extent =LE, Very Low Extent =VLE, Not at all=NA;*Decision Rule: if mean is less or equal to 1.49= Not at all, 1.5 to 2.49 =Very Low Extent, 2.5 to 3.49= Low Extent, 3.5 to 4.49= High Extent, 4.5 to 5= Very High Extent**

Table 4. shows that generally, host communities were satisfied with the CSR programmes of the oil companies in resolving conflicts to a high extent ($\bar{x} = 4.22$). Specifically, host communities were to a high extent satisfied with the following: skill acquisition programmes sponsored by oil companies helped to increase support for oil companies during conflict resolution ($\bar{x} = 4.42$); donation of books and writing materials by oil companies to members of host communities created an atmosphere of trust needed for conflict resolution ($\bar{x} = 4.41$); award of scholarship by oil companies to members of host communities helped in the resolution of conflicts ($\bar{x} = 4.40$); electrification of host communities by oil companies reduced friction between host communities and oil companies during conflict resolution ($\bar{x} = 4.07$); donation of blocks of classrooms by oil companies to host communities helped to find solutions to issues causing problems between host communities and oil companies ($\bar{x} = 4.02$); and respondents were satisfied to a high extent that sinking of boreholes by oil companies in host communities helped to reduce negative feeling towards oil companies during conflict resolution ($\bar{x} = 3.98$). These suggest that host communities were satisfied with skill acquisition programmes, donation of books and writing materials, award of scholarship, electrification, donation of block of classrooms and sinking boreholes as tools for conflict management employed by oil companies. From the foregoing, research question two of this study that to what extent are the host communities satisfied with the CSR programmes of the oil companies in resolving conflicts in the Niger Delta has been answered.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Attitude of Host Communities towards Conflict Management In The Niger Delta

Attitude, as a concept although commonplace, is the most complex psychological process in human society. According to Oskamp (1977), the construct is considered as a person's predisposition or tendency to evaluate a person, group, organization, object, issue or an idea in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner. In the context of this study, it is the predisposition or tendency of the host communities to evaluate CSR as a conflict management tool by oil companies in the Niger Delta. In line with this, the study as presented in Table 3a & b found that respondents agreed that they had positive attitudinal disposition towards CSR programmes of oil companies towards conflict management. For instance, they have positive feeling towards the oil companies in the area of scholarship award 275 (52.2%) and other CSR programmes. This suggests that CSR programmes of the oil companies helped in conflict management. This supports the finding of Nwaneke (2011) that respondents have a good perception of the CSR practices of oil companies in the Niger Delta region where the study was carried out. The study was conducted to explore the extent of CSR practices of oil companies and the way they affect infrastructural development capacity building and welfare provision in the area. The initiative that oil companies now engage oil bearing communities in most of the community development projects through Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) gives absolute control of community development projects to the Regional Development Committee (RDCS) this positively affects the attitude of the host communities to CSR as conflict management tool.

Findings from Igbara, Eti, Ndubisi, Alobari and Naenwi (2014) that members of host communities abandoned some projects because they were not properly involved in the planning and execution

of such projects showed that some host communities have negative attitude to some CSR programmes as conflict management tool and does not support the findings of this study.

Extent of Host Communities Satisfaction with CSR Programmes of Oil Companies as Conflict Management Tool

On the extent to which host communities were satisfied with CSR programmes of oil companies as conflict management tool, members of the host communities were satisfied with CSR programmes of oil companies as conflict management tool as shown in Table 4. The result further suggested that host communities were most satisfied with skill acquisition programmes followed by donation of books and writing materials, award of scholarship, electrification, donation of block of classrooms and sinking boreholes as tools for conflict resolution employed by oil companies. This finding is in dissonance with that of Ogbemi (2003) which found that majority of the people in the host community, Eleme in River State, preferred paid employment to other forms of CSR projects. This has also been established by the findings of Ogbemi and Imide (2008) and Amodu (2012) that what the oil companies thought the people needed, in most cases, might not be what they actually need. Findings of this study in this regard did not agree with those of Asemah (2013) which reported that the host communities were not satisfied with the programmes of the companies studied and the extent to which they paid attention to CSR was low. The fact is that the CSR programmes are carried out does not necessarily mean that the supposed beneficiaries are happy. It could however be argued that the findings were different because the studies were carried out in different organisational and community settings, and the methodologies were not exactly the same.

Ensuring that host communities are satisfied with CSR programmes as conflict management tools is very important. This is because if the people the projects are meant for are not satisfied, there is the likelihood that the projects might not be accepted and protected from vandalism. For instance Ogbemi (2014) found that CSR permeates the organization and it is used as a form of social license to court, retain and sustain acceptability by its host communities. This is in line with Dixon (2014) findings that there was a consistent positive relationship between CSR and improvement in organisation's image and shareholders relations.

One of the studies that affirmed the findings of this study is that of Okeke and Gloria (2016) which established that corporate organisations have contributed immensely to rural development in Nigeria through their CSR interventions in various ways. One of the conclusions of the researcher was that CSR is the commitment of business ventures to deliberately contribute to sustainable economic development by partnering with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to contribute to the improvement of their lives in a way that is beneficial for business and for development. Gaining and retaining the satisfaction of host communities by oil companies to their CSR programmes, is one of the ways of caring for the community satisfaction with its CSR programmes is in consonance with Lashgari (2004) view that modern view of CSR demands that organisations have responsibility and social commitment to put the interest of stakeholders which are affected by the business activities first and that is separate from shareholders, all individuals one way or the other affected by the business venture must be addressed and taken care of.

CONCLUSION

The perennial conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have taken different dimensions over the years – from peaceful protests by members and groups of the host community of oil companies to destruction of oil installations, kidnapping and killing of oil expatriates. A number of strategies have been proposed and applied to manage the conflicts. This paper identified the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR), structural techniques, communication, preventive public relations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) as conflict management strategies in the oil production areas of the region in order to manage conflicts between oil companies and their host communities. It is instructive to note that the application of each conflict management strategy should be situational – each conflict situation determines the approach applicable to managing it. Also, the conflict in the region requires a synergistic approach in the application of the conflict management strategy. The planning and implementation of the strategies should be such that one strategy should be used to reinforce the other so that the strength of a strategy would offset inadequacy another. More importantly, a proactive approach to conflict management should be adopted because it is cheaper and more effective. A situation whereby conflicts are addressed after they have broken could be wasteful and more often than not counter-productive.

Recommendations

The study hereby recommends that:

1. The oil company should continuously carry out studies to find out specific needs and attitudes of their host communities towards their CSR programmes and how they are accepted as conflict management tool.
2. Information designation about oil companies CSR programmes is very important to creating positive attitudes of host communities. Oil companies should therefore employ strategic awareness creation measures to build goodwill of the people of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
3. Multi-national oil companies operating in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria should be compared to stop environmentally harmful practices which have long been associated with oil and gas exploration that are detrimental to members of the host communities. This is because that factor accounts for negative attitudes of the host communities towards the oil companies and their host communities.

References

- Akpuru-Aja, A. (2009). Basic concepts in conflict. In Ikejiani-Clark, M. (ed) *Peace studies and conflict resolution in Nigeria: A Reader*. Ibadan, Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Amodu, L. O. (2012). Community relations strategies and conflict resolutions in the Niger Delta: A study of three major oil companies. A thesis submitted to the Department of Mass Communication, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria as partial fulfilment for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) (Unpublished).
- Aritt, M. A., Ibrahim, K. M., & Othman, R. (2007). Determinants of firms: Level of governance: Malaysian evidence in corporate governance. *The international Journal of Business Society*. 7,

- Asak, M. O. (2008). Public relations and crisis management in the Niger Delta region. In Mojaye, A. C. M., Aragba, E., Soola, E., & Oso, L. (eds). *Media dialogue, peace building and reconciliation: A conference proceeding*. Ibadan: Bookwrite Nig.Ltd. 220 -222.
- Asemah, E. S., Okpanachi, R. A., & Edogoh, L. O. N. (2013). Business advantages of corporate social responsibility practice: A critical review. *New media and mass communication*, 18, 45-55.
- Banfield, J. (2005). The corporate responsibility debate. *African business*, 30-31.
- Cornelius, P.K. & Kogut, B. (2003). Cooperate governance and capital flow in a global economy-amazon.com.search: Oxford University Press.
- Coser, L. A. (1968). *The functions of social conflict*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Dixon, T. (2014). Coperate social responsibility, the triple botton line, standardization and brand management in Houston Texas, Uppsala University.
- Etekpe, A. (2012). Role models in peace-building in Africa: An assessment. Retrieved from http://www.academicjournals.org/article/article1381825101_Etekpe.pdf on 02 November 2017.
- Folarin, B. (1998). *Issues in applied communication*. Ibadan, Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig) Ltd.
- Frynas, J. (2005). False developmental promise of corporate social responsibility: Evidence from multinational oil corporations. *International Affairs*, 81(3), 581-598.
- Human Security Report (2013). The decline in global violence. Retrieved from <https://relief-of-webintreportworld> on 28/12/2017.
- Human Rights Watch, (2001). A briefing paper on the update of human rights violation in Niger Delta.
- ICE Case Studies (1997). Ogoni and Niger Delta conflict over oil. (Case number 64), 46-60
- Lashgari, M. (2004). Modern international corporate governance: Principles and models. Retrieved from <https://books.goggle.com/books> on 16/07/2016
- Idemudia, U. (2010). Rethinking the role of corporate social responsibility in the Nigerian oil conflict: The limits of CSR. *Journal of International Development*, 22(7), 833 – 1053.
- Igben, H. G. O. (2008). Public relations and conflict management in the Niger Delta. In Mojaye, E. M., Arhagba, E., Soola, E., & Oso, L. (eds) *Media, dialogue, peace building and reconciliation: A conference proceeding*. Ibadan: Bookright Nig. Ltd
- Igbara, F. N., Etu, N. O., Alobari, C. M., & Naenwi, M. O. (2014). Corporate social responsibility and the role of oil companies in community development projects in Rivers State, Nigeria: An evaluation. *IOSR journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 19(3), 92-97.
- Isika, G. (2012). Structural dimension in the treatment of conflict theories: A critique on the application of social conflict theory in Ekeanyanwu, N. T., Ngoa, S. N., & Sobowale, I. A. (eds) *Critique and application of communication*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Kpolovie, P. J., & Sado, A. A. (2016). CSR for conflict resolution in the Niger Delta oil and gas industry. *British Journal of Environmental Sciences*, 4(5), 1 - 35.
- Lukacs, G. (1968). *History and class consciousness*. Cambridge, MIT Press Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Miller, D. (2005). *Principles of social justice*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Nwaneke, P. (2011). Awareness and environmental management in oil companies in Nigeria. Retrieved on February 24, 2018 from <http://www.researchgate.net.3...>

- Nwankwo, C. & Ezeobi, O. (2008). Nigeria lost N150bn to pipeline vandals in eight years. *The Punch*, May 15. Retrieved from www.punchng.com/articles.aspx
- Ochonogor, I. C., & Njoku, A. I. (2006). The imperative of communication in conflict resolution for sustainable peace in Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://www.arabianjbam.com> pdf. on 19/02/2018.
- Ogbemi, O. B. (2014). *Public relations: Principles, practice and management*. Lagos: Ampitop Publishing Company.
- Ogbemi, O. B. (2003). Community relations and corporate image of the Eleme Petrochemicals company Limited (EPCL) Port Harcourt. A dissertation submitted to the Department of Marketing, University of Nigeria, Enugu campus in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of the M. Sc. degree In Public Relations (Unpublished).
- Ogbemi, O. B., & Imide, I. (2008). Assessment of corporate social responsibility of oil producing companies in host communities: A case study of Mobil Producing Unlimited, Eket, Akwa-Ibom State Nigeria. *Auchi Journal of Business Studies*, 2(1), 197-210.
- Okoko, K. A. B., & Nna, J. N. (1998). Emerging trends and community perception in Nigeria oil industry. *Nigerian Journal of Oil and Politics*, 1(2), 45-54.
- Okolie-Osemene, J., & Okanume, U. J. (2012). Contravening environmental laws: Practices of multinational oil companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Journal of International Law*, 3, 1-23.
- Okolie-Osemene J., & Tor, J. T. (2012). Disarming criminalised non-state armed groups in the Niger Delta: Issues and prospects. *Africa Conflict Profile*, 2(1), 73-93.
- Okeke-Muogbo, C. & Gloria, Nneka, CAN (2016). Cooperate Social Responsibility practice and rural development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Development Strategies in Humanities, Management and Social Sciences*, 6(1), 80-99.
- Okonta, I. (2006). Behind the mask: Niger Delta economies of violence project. *Working Paper 11, University of California, Berkeley*. Retrieved from <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/NigerDelta> on 02 November 2017.
- Okoro, O. (2014). Corporate social responsibility agenda for international oil companies (IOCS): New perspectives from stakeholders in the Niger Delta region (NDR) Nigeria. Retrieved from researcharchives.wintec.ac.nz>OGECHI on 12/06/18.
- Onyima, B. N., & Iwuoha, V. C. (2015). New dimensions to pastoralists-farmers' conflicts and sustainable agricultural development in Agadama and Uwheru Communities, Niger Delta. *African Security* 3, 166-184.
- Oskamp, S. (1977). Attitude and Opinions. Retrieved on December, 27, 2017 from <https://books.google.com>>...General.
- Oteh, C. O., & Eze, R. C. (2012). Vandalisation of oil pipeline in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and poverty: An overview. *Studies in Sociology of Science*, 3(2), 13-21.
- Otite, O. (2001). On conflicts, their resolution, transformation, and management. In Otite, O., & Albert, I. O. (eds.) *Community conflicts in Nigeria: Management, resolution and transformation*. Ibadan, Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Rim-Rukeh, A. Ogbemi, O. B., & Imide, I. O. (2008). Corporate social responsibility as a strategy to reducing conflict between oil companies and host communities in the Niger Delta Nigeria. In Mojaye, E. M., Arhagba, E., Soola, E., & Oso, L. (eds) *Media, dialogue, peace building and reconciliation: A conference proceeding*. Ibadan: Book-wright Nigeria Publishers.

- Rousseau, J. (1987). *The basic political writings*, (Trans. Donald A. Cress). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
- UNEP (2011). Report on Ogoniland. Retrieved from <https://so2.static.shell.com>nga>pdf>. on 12/06/18.
- Watts, M. (2014). Resource curse? Governmentality, oil and power in the Niger Delta. *Geopolitics*, 9(1), 50-80.
- World Health Organization (WHO)(2002). *World report on violence and health*. Geneva:
- Whiteman, A. (1982). Nigeria: its petroleum geology, resources and potentials. New York: Graham publishers.
- WHO. Retrieved from <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/9241545615.pdf> on 02 November 2017.