

CSR FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN NIGER DELTA OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Kpolovie, P. J.¹ and Sado, A. A.²

1. Director, Academic Planning, Research and Control Unit, Vice-Chancellor's Office, University of Port Harcourt, PMB 5323 Port Harcourt. Email: kpolovie@gmail.com
2. Chairman, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), University of Port Harcourt Branch, PMB 5323 Port Harcourt.

ABSTRACT: *An ethnographic research method that allows for a blend of aspects of qualitative and quantitative investigations was adopted in this study to establish whether both the oil prospecting companies and their host communities have the same view that mutual coexistence between the two parties is very feasible and relatively cheaper via excellent CSR practices by the oil companies. CSR, an acronym that stands for Corporate Social Responsibility, is the persistent commitment by a business organization to ethically behave to contribute maximally to the economic and environmental advancement of the quality of life of its workforce and the society, particularly the host communities. It was hypothesized that excellent CSR practice by the oil companies might be a potent solution to the violent crisis that has unfortunately characterized the relationship between oil prospecting companies and their host, the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta. The effectiveness of seven indicators of CSR as perceived by the oil corporations and the oil-producing areas in the resolution of the brutal conflicts in the Niger Delta were empirically investigated. A large sample of 2,487 was drawn by proportional stratified random sampling technique from the host communities and oil companies for the study. Results showed an overwhelming discrepancy between oil companies' staff and oil producing areas indigenes for each of the seven CSR indicators. While host communities absolutely or strongly favored adoption of CSR as a viable strategy for ending the crisis and ensuring ultimate peace in the Niger Delta; the staff of oil prospecting companies held a diametrically opposite view. It is therefore recommended very strongly that oil producing companies in the Niger Delta should accord primary attention to excellent CSR practices to guarantee mutual peaceful coexistence and optimum oil production in the Niger Delta Region.*

KEYWORDS: CSR; Conflict resolution; Niger Delta; Oil Indicators of CSR; Oil and gas industry; Oil prospecting companies; Violent crisis; Host communities; Optimum oil production; Relationship between oil prospecting companies and oil producing areas.

INTRODUCTION

Frequent violent conflicts have characterized the relationship between oil prospecting companies and their host communities in the Niger Delta (Kpolovie, 2003). Violent clashes have unfortunately been experienced in the Niger Delta. A close examination shows that most of such conflicts have a direct or an indirect link with oil prospecting companies. While the former refers to conflicts between host communities and oil companies, the latter covers intra

cum inter-communal clashes over who should benefit from the activities of the oil exploration, exploitation and servicing businesses in the area. It is the concern of the current investigation to identify suitable conflict management style or model as done in other parts of the world (Hans & Bariki, 2012) to guarantee mutual peaceful coexistence between oil prospecting companies and their host communities (Kpolovie, 2003).

It is the responsibility of oil companies and other major firms to produce and distribute wants satisfying goods and services in return for a profit. It is this profit motive that serves as a strong incentive to business to provide goods and services as efficiently as possible. This is done to reduce costs with the aim of attracting more customers. Other members of the public which the business has to satisfy include the government, shareholders, employees, creditors, suppliers, and most importantly the community within which the company exists. Each of these groups exerts a considerable amount of influence on the policies and actions of every oil firm (Kerr, Janda & Pitts, 2009; De-George, 2011). When such influence is not very carefully handled, the result is endless strife as experienced in the Niger Delta. Urgent attention is needed to correct the ugly situation for all the parties to achieve their objectives maximally in a most peaceful manner. It is for such corrections and proactive crisis prevention measures that functional CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) department is established in every “Fortune 500 companies” (Fortune, 2016).

The oil companies cannot continue business without profits. Profits, however, are not the be-all and end-all of any successful corporation. If the firm does not simultaneously serve the needs of society (host communities, Niger Delta region in this case), then the corporation as an instrumentality of accomplishment will surely dwindle and perish and deserves to perish, perish un-mourned for (Kpolovie, 2012). The oil prospecting companies must forgo some of their swollen profits to serve legitimate or rational goals of the host communities. Cost minimization and profit maximization at the total expense of the operational communities necessarily have to stop. The diminishing returns of such one-sided and solely oil companies-oriented goals is what is commonly experienced now and is erroneously termed violence against oil companies, militancy, youth restiveness, and conflicts between host communities and oil prospecting companies, and sometimes intra cum inter-communal clashes.

A thorough humane and rational re-examination of the cost and profit analysis over the years will unravel that the oil prospecting companies have lost incomparably more as a result of the diminishing returns from their strictly company-oriented policies than what it would have taken them to coexist peacefully with their host communities (Kpolovie, 2003). For instance, during the last one year alone the Niger Delta has been very restive, and this has had an enormous negative impact on oil exploration and exploitation. It was for this reason that in a recent interview with Alhaji Naikanti Baru, the NNPC Group Managing Director, he expressed that Niger Delta which is the operating ground of oil prospecting companies in Nigeria has been witnessing social unrest occasioned by the activities of militant groups, leading to a cut in Nigeria’s oil output. He lamented that Nigeria had lost over seven billion dollars (about N2 trillion) to militancy and pipeline vandalism since the beginning of the year, 2016. The disruption of oil productions, according to him, has significantly affected Nigeria’s oil exports. Perhaps, the feelings of helplessness that the NNPC Group Managing Director expressed was merely as part of the oil companies’ regular press war to misinform and win public sympathy against the authentic helpless oil producing communities as his

views were entirely contrary to the feelings of the Niger Delta citizens that the current ethnographic researchers have lived with for some years.

It is therefore hypothetically postulated in this investigation that the pipeline vandalism and the resultant drop in the oil production and exportation in Nigeria are perhaps entirely not unconnected with poor CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) by the oil prospecting companies. The Federal Government of Nigeria and its system of government that is not practicing true fiscal federalism may not also be unconnected with the crisis in the Niger Delta as the Federal Government derives all the benefits accruing from oil production without according to the oil producing areas what is due them.

This investigation was set to establish whether both the oil prospecting companies in Niger Delta and their host communities have the same view that mutual coexistence between the oil producing areas and the oil exploration companies is very feasible and relatively cheaper via excellent CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) practice by the oil companies for both parties to embrace and adhere. In other words, this study was aimed at ascertaining whether the oil prospecting companies are in the same position as the oil producing communities that with very good CSR that makes the oil companies to steadfastly start and continue to support all necessary initiatives that will help to improve the quality of life of people in the Niger Delta in a sustainable manner; the oil prospecting companies and the oil producing communities shall enjoy peace and mutual coexistence that shall allow smooth operation of oil production without disruption in the areas.

There is a need at this point to define CSR. CSR is an acronym that stands for Corporate Social Responsibility. Mallenbaker (2004) described CSR as the conglomeration of how companies manage their business processes to produce an overall positive impact on society in which the firm operates. That is, CSR refers to the management of human and physical resources; and the nature and quality of impact that the management has on the society for consistent improvement of the society (Fields, 2002; Bansal & Roth, 2000; Deswal, 2015). It is also seen as the continuing commitment by a business organization to ethically behave to contribute maximally to the economic advancement and quality of life of its workforce, their families, and particularly those of the host community, and the larger society (Oppewal, Alexabder & Sulliwana, 2006). Corporate social responsibility is equally viewed as a progressive business model that beyond statutory payment of taxes, the company volitionally embarks on philanthropic services for the creation of wealth to the immediate and wider society for ensuring smoother operation of the business (Carroll, 1979; Wei, 2011). Furthermore, CSR could be viewed as the implementation of concerted efforts in always operating a business in a socially and ethically responsible manner by investing significantly in developing the host communities as well as the general society (Epstein-Reeves, 2010; Catalyst Consortium, 2002).

All the above definitions tend to indicate that CSR is effective and efficient all the human and physical inputs of a business, operating it in such a manner that the company meets and exceeds the social, legal, ethical, commercial and public expectations that the immediate and wider societies have about the firm by volitionally contributing overwhelmingly to the society in which the business functions. But is the definition by Caramela (2016) that we have slightly modified with seven indicators of CSR that is adopted as the operational definition of CSR in this current investigation. Caramela (2016) defined CSR very simply as “business

practices involving initiatives that benefit society (the host communities in particular)... CSR encompasses a wide variety of tactics, from giving away a portion of a company's proceeds to charity, to implementing 'greener' business operations." Examples of such activities that Caramela (2016) outlined include environmental improvement, provision of humanitarian services, ethical labor practices, and volunteerism in executing certain key projects in the host communities (Carroll, 2000).

For the current investigation, CSR is defined operationally as an oil prospecting company's practices that utilize initiatives that mutually benefit the oil producing areas (host communities mainly, and the wider society) and the oil company that fervently adopts the listed seven CSR indicators to guarantee optimal peace and maximum oil production in the Niger Delta Region:

1. None suppression of the host community. This requires granting attention and favorable consideration to initiatives from the host communities that are capable of improving the relationship between the oil producing areas and the oil producing areas.
2. Improvement of the quality of life in the host communities. This includes eradication of persistent poverty; provision of adequate employment opportunities to qualified indigenes of the oil-producing areas; location of the oil firms' headquarters in the oil producing areas and due payment of task to the hosting states.
3. None engagement in activities that threaten the very existence of the oil producing areas. Oil production operations need not be carried out in a way that will render farming lands infertile, fishing and drinking water are unsafe respectively for fish and humans. Another example of such preventable activities is a proliferation of constant gas flaring throughout the Niger Delta.
4. Not causing serious environmental problems in the host communities. This deals with prevention of all preventable oil spillages in the oil producing areas. Timely changing of rusty oil pipe piles that have outlived their expiration time could prevent oil spillage that is due to pipelines that could no longer withstand the oil flow pressure.
5. Prompt response to oil and gas pollutions when they unavoidably occur. Situations where oil spillage is not cleaned up for months, even years as in Ogoni land is contrary to effective CSR practice.
6. Meaningful participation in the human capital development of citizens of the oil producing areas. Sponsoring of oil producing indigenes to acquire university education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels; serious skills acquisition training for a sizeable number of indigenes; and letting some oil producing indigenes or even states to own some oil blocks are good CSR practices that oil prospecting companies can dedicate embark on in a sustainable manner.
7. Provision of infrastructural development in the oil-producing areas. Some necessary infrastructures for overall public utility could be built for host communities by oil producing companies as part of CSR.

In other words, CSR refers to an oil company's transparent business practices that are based on ethical values, compliance with legal requirements, and respect for people, communities, and the environment. With the adoption of the seven CSR indicators, beyond making profits, each oil firm shall be responsible for the totality of its impact on people in the company, host communities, and the larger society. An oil company with CSR shall live up to the stakeholders' expectations that the firm is passionately responsible environmentally and socially in conducting its business. Within the community, CSR simply demands that the oil

company should primarily demonstrate at all times that it is indeed ‘a good neighbor’ with a ‘corporate citizenship.’ When every oil company in the Niger Delta practices good CSR, there shall not be any violent clash between the company and the host communities; peace shall reign supreme; oil production operations by the business shall go on very smoothly without any disruption. The oil company shall then be able to produce oil to its maximum production capacity; Nigeria’s oil exportation shall accelerate to the climax. With such mutual coexistence, ‘even nature shall increase the oil and gas deposits in the Niger Delta’ as some of the Royal Majesties in the Region faithfully attested.

It is hypothesized in this ethnographic study that CSR as operationally defined here can be practiced by the oil companies in the Niger Delta if they chose to make Corporate Social Responsibility their primary focus practically. In fact, CSR world over requires adherence to the seven indicators captured in this study. It is perhaps for that reason that the Business Dictionary aptly defined CSR as “a company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates.” Companies express this CSR otherwise referred to as corporate citizenship in some ways that majorly include:

1. through their waste and pollution reduction processes,
2. by contributing educational and social programs, and
3. by earning adequate returns on the employed resources.

Corporate social responsibility as defined here closely related to the definition of Social Responsibility proffered in the Business Dictionary (2016a) “the obligation of an organization's management towards the welfare and interests of the society in which it operates.”

In fact, CSR has since ceased from being an optional practice and has become one of the core typical characteristics for sustainable success of corporations (Brooks, 2013). A survey of over 10,000 shoppers by Brooks (2013) revealed that CSR had become a significant reputational imperative of a firm, with more than 90 percent of customers world-over having a high likelihood of switching to brands that support a good cause, given the similar price and quality. The study showed that ninety percent of shoppers surveyed would boycott companies if they found that the companies were not practicing effective CSR; and that 55 % of the respondents have already boycotted such enterprises in the previous past year. Firms very quickly earn public trust with CSR that depict transparency and honesty of the establishment (Kpolovie, 2012). With CSR, an oil company could solve a big social problem, make tremendous impact, improves its power of bringing people of all backgrounds, ages, and interests together that will serve as a colossal win-win for both the host communities and oil companies. It is unimaginable the number and quality of customers that TOMS’ SHOES has attracted to itself because of its CSR of donating a pair of shoes to a child in need for every pair of shoes that a customer purchases from the company (Mycoskie, 2016).

Blake Mycoskie, the founder of TOMS in a trip to Argentina saw hardships suffered by some children there who had to grow up without wearing a shoe for not being able to afford. Moved with empathy, he established TOMS’ Shoes with an amazing CSR of “one for one,” meaning that for every one pair of shoes that the company sells, a pair of shoes will be produced and donated to a child in need of shoes. This soon became a most powerful business model that made TOMS grow beyond imagination within. Today, TOMS is offering

free education to those who could not have afforded; free medical care to patients who could not have afforded it; free clean water to families that could not have afforded it; free bags, free coffee, free eyewear, free safe childbirth and so on to millions of people who could not have afforded them. The firm TOMS has and will continue to grow exponentially because of its sustained excellent CSR practices. If TOMS could do this so successfully, the oil companies in the Niger Delta where poverty and suffering reigns could adopt exceptional CSR in its relationship with the host communities and maximally boost oil production due to the accompanying peaceful operational conditions that they will enjoy (Mycoskie, 2016). Kpolovie (2003) in a survey found that of 1614 youths who have benefited from oil companies' scholarship either at primary, secondary or tertiary education, none had a predisposition towards disruption of peaceful operation of oil production as against their counterparts that one in every seven had such predisposition in the Niger Delta.

More and more companies realize in today's global village that CSR is very crucial to stay productive, competitive, and relevant in a rapidly changing business world (Visser, Matten, Pohl & Tolhurst, 2008). Companies that want to increase their ability to manage their profits and risks, and to protect the reputation of their brands have no alternative than to practice CSR fervently. Globalization has culminated in a much more fierce competition for skilled employees, investors, and consumer loyalty (Kerr, Jonker, Wagner & Schmidpeter, 2005; Sun, 2010). How a company relates to its workers, its host communities, and the marketplace have become core factors of the sustainability of its business success. For instance, a vast majority of Britons would buy more from a store that supports CSR (Somerville 2013). Consequently, there are scores of CSR organizations and business associations promoting corporate social responsibility, with a collective membership of thousands of big, small, and medium-sized companies in various industries world-over. In the United States, San Francisco-based Business for Social Responsibility alone has 2,400 corporate member companies that globally employ more than six million workers, and account for a total annual revenue of over US\$2.9 trillion. In Europe, 1000 major global companies are dedicated to CSR. In the Third World Countries, several companies practice CSR (Catalyst Consortium, 2002; Estein-Reeves, 2010). The big unanswered question that this investigation hopes to answer is whether the multinational oil prospecting corporations in the Niger Delta are also practicing competent CSR that is capable of instilling very peaceful oil production operations in the oil producing areas.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this investigation, the following seven research questions in accordance with the seven CSR indicators were posed and later answered on the basis of empirical data that were collected from both the indigenes of oil producing areas and staff of the oil prospecting companies for the study.

1. Has the use of the military and other security agencies achieved the desired objective of excellent conflict management for mutual corporate social responsibility in Nigeria?
2. Has the quality of life in the oil producing communities improved dramatically since oil exploration and production started in Nigeria?
3. Do oil producing communities feel threatened by the activities of oil prospecting companies in their communities in Nigeria?
4. Have exploration and production of oil and gas by oil prospecting companies caused serious environmental problems in host communities in Nigeria?

5. In Nigeria, do oil exploration companies respond promptly and appropriately to oil and gas pollutions or spillages in the Niger Delta when they occur?
6. Will oil prospecting companies' meaningful participation in the development of their host communities lead to significantly better acceptance of the companies by the oil producing communities in Nigeria?
7. Does lack of infrastructural development in the host communities largely cause conflicts between the oil producing communities and oil prospecting companies in the Niger Delta?

Apart from the physical devastation that host communities are exposed to, one major issue of conflict between companies and communities is the press war that companies have engaged with host communities and the misinformation that erodes the organization of credibility (reputation) that often culminate in destruction or blowing up of pipelines and the eventual drop in oil production. Perhaps the conflict in this sensitive sector of the Nigerian economy is due mainly to misunderstanding and misplaced priorities in the social and economic responsibility of the oil and gas companies. The counter allegation which is the practice in the mean time does not discharge the oil companies from their social responsibility to the host communities, According to Bradshaw (undated, p.2):

...all that can really be regarded as certain and unchanging is that oil corporation in its day to day operation is not sensitive to the public interest. A socially accountable corporation must be a "thoughtful" institution, able to rise above immediate economic interest and to anticipate the impact of its actions (or inactions) on all individuals and groups, from the shareholders, and host communities, to its employees... A successful organization must possess a moral sense as well as economic sense.

The seeming thoughtlessness of the oil companies has led to conflicts and violent confrontations with the host communities. Recently, the hostility in the Niger Delta is characterized by killings, kidnappings, and destruction of facilities. Even with the proclamation of Amnesty by the Federal Government, cessation of violence is not in sight and may never be without a significant change in the oil companies' operating style (Hans & Bariki, 2012) to the active practice of CSR.

Perhaps the conflicts in the oil producing areas in Nigeria may better be understood by outsiders when the obvious in the region is stated. The oil companies seem to have been grossly thoughtless of the impact of its activities on fellow community neighbors and the ecosystem both in the short-and long-term (United Nations Environment Programme, 2016). The citizens and inhabitants of Niger Delta, the oil-producing region in Nigeria, are predominantly farmers and fishers of whom significant majority have completely lost their source of livelihood due to the devastation of the soil and rivers by the harmful oil exploration activities of the oil prospecting companies in the area (Burger, 2011). Also, the host communities have suffered devastating pollution of the air and damaging acid rains as part of the effects of environmental pollution by harmful oil production activities like excessive gas flaring in the region (Rosenstein, 2005). With all these negative activities of oil production in the Niger Delta, it has become very clear that the oil prospecting companies in the areas do not practice CSR as defined operationally in this study and as defined simply by the Business Dictionary as "a company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates"; and that companies express

CSR practice through their waste and pollution reduction processes, contribution of educational and social programmes to the host communities, and through the companies' earning adequate returns on the employed resources. The poor community relations management in the oil industry operating in the Niger Delta is a contributing factor in the recurring violent conflict between the host communities and the oil companies (Stevens, Kooroshy, Lahn & Lee, 2013; Alamiyeseigha & Kpolovie, 2013). One of the greatest problems militating against success in the oil industry is the issue of frequent violent conflict (International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, 2008). Whether adoption of CSR a primary focus by the oil companies that operate in the Niger Delta successfully serve as a functional solution to the problem as perceived by the oil producing communities on the one hand and by the oil prospecting companies, on the other hand, is the concern of this investigation.

The Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, is an oil company owned by the government of Nigerian. NNPC is the government's representative in the several joint ventures with other oil companies. As the co-coordinator of oil exploration and production, its community relations policy will aid understanding of the community relations policy in the oil and gas industry as a whole (Ololube, Ajayi, Kpolovie & Usoro, 2012; Ololube, Ajayi & Kpolovie, 2011). NNPC in its community relations policy defines community relations as "an institution's planned active and sustained participation with a community to maintain and enhance its environment for the benefit of both the organization and the community through dealing and communicating with the group and citizens" (NNPC, 2013). To achieve its community relations objectives, it has set out the following guidelines:

- a. Corporate donations and assistance projects shall be concentrated in areas that will enhance company's reputation and business interests at the local, State and national levels. In particular, the company's areas of operation will receive some preference about the size of company's assets and planned exploration, production and engineering programs.
- b. Company assistance programs should be tailored to suit local communities and national long-term objectives and needs.
- c. Considering the corporation's and the country's interest, the areas of support to the various communities will be concentrated on education, agricultural training, community development, environment conservation, arts, and culture. Thus it is ensured that the corporation's efforts are not spread too thinly while its identity and impact are enhanced.
- d. Corporate assistance should be aimed at supplementing and complementing the efforts of federal, state and local governments, where appropriate and should not attempt to take over completely direct responsibilities of the local and federal government.
- e. Wherever possible, donations should be made for a specific identifiable purpose by being tied to a particular item(s) (NNPC, 2013).

Although most oil companies in Nigeria do not have special community relations programs or policy, the above guidelines undoubtedly are copied by them. Oil companies in pursuance of the guideline (a) above put company's reputation, and business interest expressed in dollar return first and above communities' right to development and clean environment (Chamberlain, 2016; Burger, 2011; Gayidova, 2016; Techtarget, 2016). According to Nwokedi (1987), the oil companies in Nigeria ride on press coverage to achieve their objectives of "reputation and business interest" through some pseudo-events. Considering the devastating effect of oil production on the environment and people, development of the host

communities to ameliorate their condition of living should rather be a matter of priority (Labaqui, 2016; Hicxsolutions, 2016). Unfortunately, the oil companies in the Niger Delta look at host community development and environmental improvement from a totally different perspective (World Economic Forum, 2016). In an interview by Newswatch Magazine (1995) with Chidozie Okonkwo, former Manager, Community and Environment of Shell, Western Division; he observed that “it is obvious that oil producing communities are not developed. That according to him is quite clear. He believes it is the responsibility of the government to develop the land”. Also, Emeka Achebe (1995:12), former General Manager, Environment and Relations of Shell Petroleum Development Company supported Okonkwo’s assertion. According to him, “ours is a business, and we cannot take over the responsibilities of government.” Whether this stand of the oil and gas companies is due to ignorance or misconception is uncertain, one fact is clear, it is against the practice in modern business where CSR is given primary focus. According to Cutup, Center, & Brown (1985, 483), community relations has been redefined now to go beyond the immediate stakeholders to include all those somehow involved or affected by the presence and activities of business organizations, as well as those yet-unborn generations whose interests must be anticipated and protected.

The fact that oil companies’ activities affect the lives and economies of host communities adversely is inescapable. The community relations programs of the oil firms should lean heavily on environmental protection, a sore point that is negligently overlooked. Shell’s claim that the development of the oil producing areas is not its or any other oil firm’s statutory responsibility may not be wrong because the Nigerian laws do not compel the oil companies to do so (Ekoriko, 1995). But the big question now is if the oil firm does not have a statutory responsibility towards the oil producing communities, don’t they have a moral one to improve the communities where they operate a business and whose land they have appropriated for such activities? The answer to this question is critical in formulating community relations programs.

One of the most profound evolution in the history of human society as it concerns industrialization, the Declaration of United Nations Conference on Human Environment (UNEP, 1972), is being sidelined by the oil and gas industry in Nigeria. The human environment has emerged as one of the major issues in public discourse. The 1972 Stockholm Conference on Human Environment (UNEP, 1972) brought the environmental issues into the world’s political stage and asserted that the protection and improvement of the human environment is a major issue which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world. There is growing evidence daily of man-made harm in the Niger Delta region where there is dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings; major and undesirable disturbances to the ecological balance of the biosphere; destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources; and gross deficiencies, harmful to the physical, mental and social health of man, in the environment; occasioned by careless oil production activities. The Niger Delta is most negatively affected by environmental problems as the area has practically been long neglected by both the Federal Government and the oil producing companies that operate and pollute the environment. There are untold environmental problems caused by under-development and activities of oil prospecting companies. In the Niger Delta, millions of impoverished and indigent persons continue to live far below the minimum levels required for a decent human existence, deprived of good water and air, adequate food and clothing, shelter and education, health and sanitation.

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Master Plan for seven-year development clearly showed that the Niger Delta is a huge irony. Though virtually all the 34 billion barrels of oil that have made Nigeria the eighth largest producer of oil in the globe are buried in Niger Delta, the oil-producing area has remained the poorest region in Nigeria and the world, and it is getting poorer annually (Adeleye, Neil & Azuatalam, 2007). The oil producing companies in the Niger Delta, like in other parts of the world, has the capability to discover, invent, create, advance, and transform the oil producing area. If used with good CSR practice, the accumulated wealth generated by oil exploration and production in the Niger Delta can bring to all peoples in the area benefits of a safe environment, development and the opportunity to enhance the quality of life. But if wrongly used as is currently done, the same oil wealth or power can do incalculable harm to the environment and human beings who are the natural owner and inhabitants of the region. The wrong use of oil production is very apparent in the Niger Delta where human existence has been threatened by environmentally unfriendly activities of oil prospecting companies. Oloibiri, where oil was first struck in commercial quantities in Nigeria, has since become uninhabitable by humans and both aquatic and land animals (Kakulu, 2002).

Oloibiri Well No. 1 was the first oil well in Nigeria, discovered in 1956 and from then till date, crude oil production in the Niger Delta has earned Nigeria over N96.212 Trillion which accounts for over 80 percent of the country's federal revenue (SweetCrudeReports, 2016). Of that huge sum, the only insignificant amount of N12.3 Trillion as derivation over the years has been paid to the oil producing area that alone suffers the full negative effects of oil production. If 50 percent derivation which the First Republic civilian administrator, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1960-1965) faithfully instituted had not been jettisoned a few years after, it is N48.106 trillion that would have accrued to the oil-producing Niger Delta. This means that the Niger Delta has been overwhelmingly shortchanged to the mind-blowing tune of N35.848 trillion that could have made the region wealthy and mostly solved its environmental problems. For an extended period of time of 14 years (1967-1981), the oil producing area had zero derivation; and this was the oil boom era of the 1970's. This was during the Generals Yakubu Gowon, Murtala Mohammed, and Olusegun Obasanjo military rule. All these coupled with unbearable oil-production-related environmental degradation and the refusal of the oil exploitation companies to practice CSR will continue to make the indigenes of the Niger Delta to legitimately agitate for resource control, or restructuring of Nigeria into true fiscal federalism, if not for an outright cessation to an independent Niger Delta Republic (Alamieyeseigha and Kpolovie, 2013).

Even though oil companies pass responsibilities of development in the oil-producing areas to the government, no important policy of government recognized these areas until 1982 when it set aside 1.5 percent of Federal revenue from oil for the development of the oil producing communities. However, the fund was not made available until 1990 when a presidential task force was set up by the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida to manage the fund. The fund was increased in 1992 to 3 percent with a commission called the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) formed to manage it. Until its abrogation, the commission did not make any appreciable impact, first "because it is difficult to redress 35 years of neglect and devastation in three years" (Ekoriko, 1995:14). Though the civilian government of General Olusegun Obasanjo through an act established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) on June 5, 2000, as a replacement for OMPADEC (NDDC, 2000), there were too many controversial provisions in the enabling law that

affected its performance negatively. It became business as usual, with political appointees running riot with its fund to the detriment of the host communities.

In 1990, the Ogonis took stock of their condition and discovered that in spite of the stupendous oil and gas wealth of their land, they were extremely poor, had no social amenities, which unemployment was awning at over seventy percent. Worse, their environment was completely devastated by three decades of reckless oil exploitation, and they were facing ecological warfare in the forms of environmental degradation, political marginalization, economic strangulation, slavery and possible extinction (Saro-wiwa, 1995:3). These were the submissions of late Ken Saro-Wiwa, writer, publisher, human right activist, environmentalist and former leader of the Movement for Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) during MOCK trial at the infamy called Civil Disturbances Tribunal in Port Harcourt 1995. This submission, as articulated by Saro-Wiwa summaries the feelings and belief of all oil producing companies' host communities in the Niger Delta. Horsefall (1994:2) the former executive chairmen of the defunct Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) agrees with Ken Saro-Wiwa. He said, for forty years exploration for petroleum and gas has taken place in the most difficult, backyard and underdeveloped terrains of this country inhabited by our countrymen and women. For forty years no meaningful or objective programs for the physical and infrastructural development of these areas has been embarked upon. No program for the economic and social rehabilitation of the peoples who live in these regions, whose lives, and environment have been devastated to sustain the national economic well-being has been set in motion.

The resultant frustration of the oil producing areas itself is agitations and sometimes violent protests causing severe losses in lives and properties on both sides. Until 1956 when the first discovery of oil in commercial quantities was made at Oloibiri, the Niger Delta region of Nigeria enjoyed relative peace. The climate and environment were not encroached on. Things have since changed. Not thanks to the activities of oil and gas companies who have invaded the region. One is yet to meet any commentator who has not lamented the impact of oil exploration and production on the environment. According to Horsefall (1994, 3) oil mineral, prospecting and production are such that the communities where these operations take place have to pay a heavy toll in environmental degradation (and contend with the) irreversible ecological damage to flora and fauna. Obuasi agrees. According to him (1987) certain effluents from petroleum refineries affect the environment adversely. These include the aqueous effluents and hydrocarbon oil seepages. One of such pollution occurred at the Nembe Creek in the month of September 1995. The community had to contend with the disaster associated with lack of drinking water and loss of aquatic lives. "It was incredible to see the creeks burn," a fisherman said.

The air is not spared in the onslaught against the environment by the oil and gas companies. In countless locations, gas is flared 24 hours a day over the years. This is contributory to the depletion of the ozone layers being experienced worldwide as a result of unfriendly environmental attitude. Beside pollution of the air, gas flaring is associated with other environmental problems of noise and excessive heat, but these are less.

According to Ukaegbu and Okeke (1987, 302), gas flare is usually viewed as the effect of tight intensity and temperature on the environment... The magnitude of these effects to the meteorological, biological, chemical parameters and soil conditions in the environment (may

be far more disastrous) and have not been adequately documented". In a study of the yield of crops around flares, Ukaegbu and Okeke (1987, 302) discovered that there was "no yield for the maize crops located about 200m from the flare in all direction... "substantial reduction in the yield of cassava tubers with decreasing distance to the flare." There is also severe alteration to land in the process of oil exploration and production. Emphasizing this alteration Horsefall (1994, 4) says, it is widely known that oil exploration is a wasting process. It involves large-scale excavation of land, the use of heavy explosives, fraught with the use of harmful chemicals and other forms of equipment which destroy the environment.

According to French (1995, 18) one of the prices we and the environment will have to pay... are the occasional accidents. But this does not excuse the creators of this situation from their moral responsibilities to the other stakeholders whose interest must be protected. The oil technology in Nigeria may be two or more generations behind. Statistics point to this. According to the Green Peace International, many of Shell's (the biggest oil company in Nigeria) operations and materials are outdated and in poor condition and would be illegal in other parts of the world (Lerner, 2006). Statistics by another report shows that though Shell operates in 100 countries, 40 percent of its spills occurred in Nigeria (Olukoya, 1995:15). As frightening as the environmental records are, the oil producing companies in Nigeria always try to claim that activities of oil vandalism cause all spillages in the country. Oil spillages that occur in this region are often not properly cleaned as Olukoya (1995, 15) asserted.

In Ejama-Ebubu, the scars of an oil blow-out that occurred there in 1970 will surely be there for a long time. The oil blow-out had caused the burning of a virgin forest, transformed the place into a barren land. Shell said it cleared the oil from the area after the blow-out. But there was strong evidence of crude oil over the place. A large quantity of oil still lies beneath the soil, and the oil is said to ooze up from time to time as if a fresh spillage had occurred. Completely devastated also is the Yorla flow station in Ogoni land where oil spillage occurred and was left unchecked for several weeks. The Ogoni struggle to protect the environment may have started a little bit late as the history of oil production in Nigeria is fraught with unfriendly environmental attitude since the end of the 1950s. The irresponsible environmental attitude of the oil and gas companies had elicited frustration expressed in demonstrations which were sometimes violent. In fact, in some cases, oil production was halted by aggrieved and violent demonstrators over environmental degradation. Apart from production loss, the reputation of the companies is negatively affected.

Oil accounts for ninety percent of Nigeria's foreign earning and about eighty percent of total revenue. Unarguably, oil money has sustained the government of Nigeria; unfortunately, little or no effort has been made to develop the areas from where the oil is got. As has been showing earlier, the exploitation oil is "wasteful," and the producing areas are almost being wasted due to neglect both by the government and the oil companies. Umuechem is an oil producing community in Rivers state. On October 1, 1990, mobile police officers were drafted to the city following a protest by youths of the community at one of Shell's Locations. At the end of the raid, according to Saro-Wiwa (1995), eighty people were massacred and four hundred and ninety-five houses burnt. Umuechem is an oil producing community that has as a last resort embarked on demonstrations that are sometimes violent causing massive loss of lives and properties on both sides.

Apart from the environmental hazards, inhabitants of oil producing areas have lost their sources of livelihood to the destructive activities of oil companies. Besides, they lack social amenities. Oil businesses in response to the agitation of host communities almost always say it is the responsibility of the government to provide social amenities in the oil producing areas, while inhabitants of the communities think otherwise. In fact, people in the oil producing areas argue that they do not know government; it is the oil companies that they see executing the oil exploitation activities in their land. In Uzoro, Isoko Local Government Area of Delta State, for example, the community is heartbroken about what it sees as Shell's nonchalant attitude to its plight. Shell produces 30,000 barrels of crude oil daily in the area. But despite this, the community is a dilapidated slum, in need of basic amenities. In Nembe, Bayelsa State, the situation is worse. Although the federal government has been executing rural telecommunication projects all over the country, the oil communities do not have any. Nembe, the headquarters of a Local Government, is one of such communities without telecommunication, no potable water, no road, and no electricity as these are the characteristics of most of the communities found in the mangrove.

A public relation is a veritable tool for managing conflict relationship with the public by the organization. Ordinarily, public relations would mean a relationship with various organization publics using information. To be effective, however, requires much more than information dissemination, It demands the setting up of channels of communications between the public and the organization such that the encoder in one instance could also be the receiver in another occasion. This is two-way communication model. According to Black (1990), the purpose of public relations practices is to establish two-way communication seeking common ground or areas of mutual interest and develop understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information. The primary cause of conflict is a misunderstanding. So, to resolve the dispute for reputation advantage means to achieve understanding which is largely dependent on information, education and communication. Principally, therefore. Communication is at the root of resolving conflict situations. Public relations has been subjected to so many definitions that on their own have generated so much misunderstanding and misconception about its practices. However, a distinguished scholar and professional leader in public relations, Harlow (1976, 36) have analyzed these various definitions to produce a working, conceptual and operational definition of public relations as...

a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual line of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics, involves the management of problems or issues, helps management to keep informed on and responsive to serve the public interest: helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound ethical communication as its principal tools. The main function of public relations, therefore includes issues management, effective two-way communication, preventing conflict and misunderstanding, harmonizing private (organization's) and public interest, etcetera, with the aim of promoting the organization and making it acceptable to its various publics.

This discussion on managing conflict situation for reputation advantage shall be centered on social responsibility, responsive communication flow and issues environmental management. As has been established in this paper the causes of conflict between host communities and oil and gas companies are numerous but are classified under environmental degradation and socio-economic factors.

To communicate simply means to “pass on.” It applies to several situations, but in this discussion, we shall be using it to mean passing on of information. Everybody or organization needs to communicate with the larger society to make a meaningful existence; inescapably communication is like the cement that holds society together (Cutup, Center & Brown, 1985). In fact, communication is a strong motivator. However, the communication that changes an opinion or motivates and by implication enhance reputation should be more than just passing on information to the public. The objective of influencing public opinion – changing or forming a new one can only be achieved through safe and efficient public relations and in this case community relations particularly. If well-articulated, hostility could be changed to friendship thereby resolving the conflict and erosion of reputation occasioned by misunderstanding and misconception. Furthermore, since people depend on one another to understand and form an opinion about what is going on around, communication is the twin brother of success in reputation management. Even individual’s judgments in most cases are partly borrowed impression accepted on the authority of some other persons. After all, public relations is all about reaching people, understanding them and influencing them positively towards organizational goals and objectives.

The awareness generated by environmentalists is further spreading information and may be compounding the problems in cases. If there is any change envisaged, it is that hostility will gravitate and deepen. This situation calls for a program of action to influence public opinion. Communication is a sharp tool in this regard because in its various forms and models it has the persuasive power to effect the desired change of views. Public relations refer to persuasion aimed primarily at changing old behavior or at creating behavior patterns. It is apparent that management of the public’s information intake supported by organizations quality performance and responsible actions can influence the public’s opinion or form a new one where necessary. Changing the view of individuals who make up the series of interweaving, overlapping publics of a corporation or an association is what public relations are all about. The change desired in conflict and reputation management is to turn hostility into friendship and public acceptance in support of the organization. Excellent communication has been found to be a credible and efficient means of achieving this objective. Public relations communication through different media will prove to be effective more so since the media set agenda on several topical and national issues. What the public relations man needs to do is to target specific publics with which conflicts exist effectively. The use of the mass media as credible channels of communication is founded on the fact that most active citizens depend on the press for information and education, as the press exists influencing public opinions on a variety issues. In the case of conflict with host communities and environmentalist, the target of community relations will be to get the understanding of the mass media practitioners who will, in turn, do thorough presentations that are aimed at positively catching and persuasively changing the minds of the public to accept the oil companies.

However, it is important to note that effective community relations are not bombarding the public with information which in some cases may be perceived as window dressing and mere propaganda causing more reputation damage, but it is a two-way traffic with inbuilt feedback system capable of also changing the attitude of the organization as a result of reciprocal output-feedback adjustment. Inherent in public relations therefore is

“...the potential to act in an advisory capacity and to have an impact on decision-making. This possibility, in turn, leads to some control over its own domain in time of crisis and, as a

sensing device, public relations can be effective in preventing many potential crisis situations. Management properly remains the “large wheel” but the small wheel that is public relation may occasionally be capable of influencing the large one. If observations of external environments indicate that a policy or practice is detrimental.... (to public interests) management can be encouraged to adjust (Bell and Eugene, 1976, 53).

Managers of public relations should have responsibility and authority to deal with crisis situations as they are noticed. Moreover, the manager of public relations should report directly to the chief executive or the highest level of management so that his contributions to the formulation of policy is not watered down along the line of command. Conflicts resolution is all about adjustment. Public relations processes are designed to encourage changes by both the public and organizations, and extreme caution must be observed to identify negative feedback from positive feedback. The warning signs of negative feedback are deviations from set objective, and when this occurs, the content and model of communication may be changed.

Every conflict situation expressed in physical demonstration or agitations of some sort had its root in confusion resulting from a misunderstanding (Kpolovie, 2014b; Kpolovie & Emeline, 2016; 2016b; LexisNexis, 2016; Kpolovie, 2016b). The communication that is effective is one in which what is understood by the receiver is what is meant by the sender (Cartercenter, 2016; Switzer, 2001; PWC, 2015; Utting & Ives, 2006). Imperatively, public relations make use of words and action to correct misunderstanding and persuade and achieve the desired dispositions (Buldybayeva, 2014; Canadian Government, 2014). Closely related to this, is the meaning attached to words as used by the various publics to avoid ambiguity. Prevent the use of jargons as much as possible. News media perspective is not enough to resolve or manage a conflict situation successfully. Other methods of communication should be adapted to reach the relevant public.

The oil producing communities are inhabited by uneducated and politically inactive people who do not rely on the news media for information and education. Besides, communication through the mass media is not readily amenable to control by public relations. Public relations cannot determine what is finally said and how it is said. The challenge posed by this disadvantage has given impetus to the acceptance of organizational publications as a principal means of circumventing the inadequacies of the news media in conflict management. Most often, it (organization publications) combines editorial content that both espouses the sponsor's point and addresses concerns of targeted publics (Spence, 2011). Public relations communication is all about explaining the organization's viewpoint and persuading the public's to act according to the objectives of the communication, in this case, conflict management (Rosenstein, 2005).

The use of organizational publications will no doubt persuade the public, but we must emphasize here that information contained in them must be full and genuine. Otherwise, the public could take them to be instruments of organizational propaganda. The oil industry could even publish a magazine or newsletter articulately targeted at environmentalists, government officials and host communities explaining their activities and courting the public's understanding. This will no doubt lessen and of course curtail the aggression of the various communities and the general public towards oil companies (FTConsulting, 2016).

Furthermore, the companies could also participate in various important activities in their host communities; and discussing face to face with members of the public in the communities. Since most opinions are formed not on the basis of education but by the views of others like community leaders, companies could organize meetings with community opinion leaders like the Community Development Committee (CDC), Council of Chiefs, and Community Youths Organization to explain organizations' policies and actions (Hans & Bariki, 2012).

In today's globalized world (Kpolovie & Iderima, 2016a; 2016b; 2013; Kpolovie & Obilor, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c), the role of effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for dissemination of information for reputational building by the oil companies cannot be overemphasized (Kpolovie, 2002; 2006; 2007; 2010a; 2012; 2014). Any good act of CSR that an oil company successfully embarks on for the host communities (Kpolovie, Iderima & Ololube, 2014; Kpolovie, 2016a; 2012b; OECD, 2015) or either improvement or preservation of the environment will almost instantly be communicated world-over (Kpolovie, Obilor & Ololube, 2015; Ololube, Amaele, Kpolovie & Egbezor, 2012; Ololube, Kpolovie & Makewa, 2015; Ololube, Kpolovie, Amanchukwu & Briggs, 2013). With ICT usage, CSR projects done by oil companies in other climes for their host communities become easily known to the indigenes of the Niger Delta (Joe, Kpolovie, Osonwa & Iderima, 2014; Kpolovie, 2011b; Kpolovie, Joe, Okoto, 2014; Kpolovie, Ololube & Ekwebelem, 2011). This propels the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta to request passionately that oil companies in the Niger Delta should also adopt such CSR practices.

However, the erroneous belief that information dissemination without action will achieve organizational objectives, the current practice in oil and gas, is unfounded and must be discouraged (Deswal, 2015). Communication goes with work. The action here refers to what the organization is doing to correct any defect in products, abuse on the environment, corporate social responsibility, and etcetera (Stevens, Kooroshy, Lahn & Lee, 2013; Wei, 2011; Kerr, Janda & Pitts, 2009; Habisch, Jonker, Wagner & Schmidpeter, 2005). Without these actions; communication will fail in its bid to resolve any conflict situation and of course lead to further reputation bartering (OECD, 2015). Superb Corporate Social Responsibility practice, civic-minded policies, acts of participation, and demonstration of positive surprises to host communities are like building blocks for conflict-free business operations (Caramela, 2016; Kpolovie, 2003; Sun, 2010; Visser, Matten, Pohl & Tolhurst, 2008; Epstein-Reeves, 2010). Continuous communication about policies, participation and the affairs of the organization cements them together. Managing conflict situations demand free communication flow (Carroll, 1979).

One of the greatest challenges of public relation is the management of reputation and conflict between the oil industry and the society (Cartercenter, 2016). Any crises situation has positive and negative valences and what turns up is a function of the management. Crises or conflict is like a coin with two sides, each having an equal probability of occurrence (Buldybayeva, 2014). Due to the unpredictable nature of crises, experts have espoused a proactive method rather than a reactive method of crises management. The implication here is to control the different variables that impinge on the organization to avoid the occurrence of conflict or successfully reduce its negative impact before it spreads like the wildfire that it is. Corporate Social Responsibility has ever shown that a fire brigade approach to conflict between the firm and society – wait until it occurs and we'll fix it, is not only expensive, it is

also a dangerous method of instilling mutual coexistence (Canadian Government, 2016; Fields, 2002; Babsal & Roth, 2000). This has given impetus to issues management as a social responsibility tool for conflict prevention (De-George, 2011; Carrol, 2000).

Issues management has been subjected to numerous and various definitions but with no consensus on any definition. In some cases, it is so difficult to understand by its definition that the only way may be by describing what it involves. But we can take a working definition from Chase (1984) who originally coined the concept. “issues management” and defined it as the capacity to understand, mobilize, coordinate and direct all strategic policy planning function and all public affairs as well as public relations skills towards achievement of set objective of meaningful participation in the creation of public policy that affects personal and institutional destiny.

Issues management entails execution of needs analysis; tracking, data collation, evaluation, and presentation of data-based recommendations to the management on the negative or positive impact on the growth and survival of a corporate organization (Kpolovie, 2012). Issues management requires much research or data collection and analysis, synthesis and evaluation that tends to the futuristic, advisory or prescriptive, and predictive or forecasting-oriented for the best attainment of utilitarian goal (Kpolovie & Ololube, 2013; Kpolovie & Obilor, 2014).

The important factor in issues management is to be proactive and solve the problem even before it engulfs the organization (Ololube & Kpolovie, 2012; Ololube, Amaele, Kpolovie, Onyekwere & Elechi, 2012). The task of public relations here is research oriented so that management is aware of potential conflict situations and likely effects and take actions that will stop the escalation of actual or potential conflicts. When put to use, issues management increases management’s knowledge of trends and public opinion and enables the managers to manage the issues so that potential crisis or conflict is avoided (World Economic Forum, 2016; Williams, 1976). In the oil and gas industry, investment in issues management will equip the public relations department with better knowledge of public perceptions of the organization; and of the environmentalists as well as the actions of the host communities, and regulatory authorities, to influence the public towards the desired objective of public acceptance.

The process of issues management, according to Chase (1984), involves the following:

1. Issues identification
2. Issues analysis
3. Issues strategy options
4. Issues action program
5. Evaluation of results

Another issue management model that may be relevant to the Nigeria oil industry is the PRISMS (Public Relation Issues Monitoring System) that is said to have been developed by the Philips Petroleum Company in 1984 (Obuasi, 1987). The use of models aids public relations in the identification of problems. For example, conflict situations will be identified early enough, analyzed and strategies for resolving them planned. The action program, an indispensable stage takes us back to our previous discussion on communication where it was emphasized that communication must be followed up with action.

Conflict often occurs in any relationship of two or more people. Conflict resolution, therefore, has become part of the everyday task of managers whether it is the area of international relations and diplomacy, business management, public administrations, politics or even Intra and interpersonal relationships. Success or failure in this aspect of the directorate more often than not is determined by the objective set ab initio. The implication, therefore, is that what is termed successful in one instance could as well be unsuccessful or a failure in another occasion. To aid understanding of this complicated subject matter, conflict resolution methods, the views of theorists, shall be discussed under three headings viz, the zero-sum theory method, promotion of mutual interest method and the optimum mix method.

The Zero-Sum Method

The conflict situation and orientation of managers bear a considerable influence on the approach adopted in the resolution of the conflict. Managers who see the conflict as an opportunity to advance their interest further will exploit the situation for their gains at the expense of the opposing party. A lot of arm twisting is involved. Theorists believe the conflict is successfully managed if and only if the objective of gaining at the expense of the other is achieved. Like the zero-sum situation in game theory, a win is seen as a context with an opportunity to increase benefits and further one's ambition by successfully managing an adversary and manipulating his behavior by threats. If all the parties in a conflict maintain their zero-sum theory aspiration, the chances are that they will pay a higher price at the end. Competition is so fierce here that it could be a recipe for conflict rather than resolving it. This zero-sum method of resolving conflict is amenable to the competitive resolution process. The attainment of one party's goal(s) precludes the non-attainment of the other party's goal(s) in good faith.

Promotion of Mutual Interest Method

As against the zero-sum game theory method, supporters of this method believe that conflict is a potential disaster for no party better off by its consequences. Theorists posit that in every conflict situation, there are interests which are mutual to the parties and that the common enemy is the conflict itself which they should jointly work to eliminate. Here success means reaching a solution that is acceptable to both sides (Lipson, 2002) and this achievement is attained by the participants in the conflicts recognizing that they are "partners in a common pursuit, (Rummel, 1976). Managers who prefer this method of resolving conflict realize that escalation of the conflict consequent upon a selfish and myopic view of the situation will result to the hurt of all involved in the conflict, they, therefore, walk the part of common interest as the only route to escape from the imminent disaster. Crisis managers who adopt the mutual interest method are more co-operative in their resolution process. They believe that the attainment of a party's goal is possible only if the another party attains its goals.

Optimum Mix Method

It is believed that the third school of thought marries the former two with Webster's English Dictionary definition of crisis as a "turning point for better or worse." Theorists here believe that every conflict like a coin has two sides-positive and negative, and what turns up depends on the management of the conflict. They agree that looking at any situation from the myopic perspective and option of either winning or losing portends enough danger to its resolution. In the words of Synder and Diesing (1977, 207) resolving conflicts are achieved at "the optimum mix method of resolving conflicts." Williams (1976:29-30) wrote that "Crisis management is essentially an attempt to balance and reconcile these diverse elements. There

is almost inevitably a kind of schizophrenic quality about it, as those involve create risks while simultaneously trying to ensure that their risk-taking behavior has no uncontrollable or unintended consequences that might result.”

From this point of view, it is important to note that there may be and in fact are diverse elements in any conflict situation. The task of the managers should be to maximize their joint interest while at the same time reducing their risks. The summary though paradoxical is that, there are positive “consequences of a phenomenon ordinary and indiscriminately considered to be disastrous” (Gilbert and Lauren, 1980, 648). Managers who seek this positive outcome out of every conflict situation will no doubt be satisfied and will not suffer ‘reputation corrosion syndrome.’

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An ethnographic research method that allows for a blend of aspects of qualitative and quantitative investigations (Ololube & Kpolovie, 2012) was adopted in this study. According to Kpolovie (2016, 230), “Ethnographic research is a naturalistic anthropological inquiry that employs continual ongoing in-depth participant observation and interview of, and conversation and interaction with the subjects for valid, reliable and dependable description of the dynamic everyday cultural characteristics, experiences and practices of individuals in a particular society, group, organization, institution or situation.” It is a participatory empirical description of the events that typically occur within the existence of a particular social group, with a special regard to the social structures and the individual’s behaviour in the group membership, and an appropriate interpretation of the meaning of these for the culture of that group in indirect relationship with another or other groups. That is, the findings of the ethnographic research are produced from the investigator’s participatory knowledge of the normal naturalistic life of the social group under investigation.

In line with the requirements, the researchers had to live in the Niger Delta which is the oil producing area for over ten years to directly experience and observe the relationship between the oil prospecting companies and the oil producing areas. Though ethnographic research is mainly qualitative and naturalistic as opposed to highly quantitative and controlled enquiry; the investigators’ participation in the normal routine activities of the oil producing areas of study enabled him to acquire an insider’s knowledge that allows for a well-grounded insider outsiders or *emic etic's* interpretations of the dynamic social interaction in the oil producing communities in relation to the oil prospecting companies. The direct personal experience of the investigators in the oil producing areas’ lifestyle gave them a tacit knowledge and a holistic understanding of the significance of the group members’ behavior that allows for a balanced integration of their observations with information gathered from the structured questionnaire and other sources such as interviews and documentary materials. This is in accordance with Best and Kahn’s (2007:252) assertion that data obtained in ethnographic study should consist of “observation of patterns of action, verbal and nonverbal interaction between members of the tribe (group) as well as between the subjects and the researcher and his or her informants, and the examination of whatever records or artefacts that were available.” Kpolovie (2010) averred that the description of the group’s life provided in ethnographic study is much more encompassing, accurate, valid, authentic, genuine, realistic and dependable than descriptions that could be gotten from historical research which considers only past events, from experimental research which removes the subjects from their

natural setting, and from other types of research which merely use ordinary non-participant observers to collect data about the group under investigation.

In line with the key demands of ethnographic research, the investigators in this study experienced, observed, interacted with, listened to, conversed with, and interviewed the subjects while recording from advantaged position of researchers who are acculturated in the subjects' culture in a free and naturalistic atmosphere. Ethnographic research method assumes that the most important behavior of individuals in social groups is a dynamic process of complex interrelationships and interactions that is composed of much more than a set of facts, statistics, or discrete incidents that can best be identified and understood through objective participant observation. It entails observation of the natural (unsimulated) behavior of the subjects in a real-life setting that is free from the constraints of more conventional research like experimental, action, ex-post facto and quasi-experimental procedures.

Objective participant observation in ethnographic research is attained via the neutrality of the investigator. Rather than aligning with either the authority or subjects figures, the researcher objectively and neutrally ensures that his relationship with the entire subjects under investigation is strictly based on trust and confidence (Kpolovie, 2016). This is in compliance with the second assumption of ethnographic research that human behavior is influenced by the setting within which it occurs. The researcher genuinely seeks to and understands the context and nature of the social terrain in which the investigation is done. He observes and interprets the group's behavior, values, norms and traditions as both an outsider and an insider (emic and etic) regarding the subjects' own view of the situation, interpretation of their own thoughts, words, and activities, as well as those of others in the group.

In other types of research, hypotheses research questions are stated at the beginning of the investigation before objective observation or collection of data; and are deductively tested and interpreted at the end of the work (after data gathering and analysis). But this is not the case in ethnographic research in which the order and pattern are somehow reverse. This ethnographic research began with objective participant observation or data collection without initially formulated hypotheses or research questions and clear preconceptualization of the nature of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Later, by the observations, inductive logic was adopted to formulate research questions and periodically reevaluated and modified by further or newer observations to remove (or at least reduce) discrepancies and inconsistencies. The investigators in their observation and participant experience kept looking for more evidence to challenge the modified research questions. The investigators did this because "the most additional evidence is used for answering research questions or testing of the hypotheses as well as for formulation of other research questions/hypotheses as for the investigation progress; the greater the credibility and utility of ethnographic research" (Kpolovie, 2016, 232). Interpretation of results of data analyzed is not deferred to the conclusion of the study in ethnographic research. Such interpretations are made in a constant ongoing process of testing tentative hypotheses and answering research questions against additional observations in a real-life situation.

Osuala (2005:182-183) argued that high internal validity of ethnographic research is anchored on the data collected as well as the techniques used for the data gathering thus.

1. The ethnographers live among participants (subjects) and gather data for long periods, and this practice provides them the opportunities for continual data analysis and comparison

to refine constructs and to ensure the match between scientific categories and participant reality.

2.

3. Informant interview, which is a major ethnographic data source, is less abstract than many instruments used in other research designs.

4. A participant observation which is the ethnographer's second principal source of data is conducted in natural settings that reflect the reality of the life experience of participants more accurately than do more contrived or laboratory setting.

5. The ethnographic analysis incorporates a process of research activity to persistent questioning and re-evaluation.

Validity

Validity in ethnographic research is the credibility and accuracy of the conclusions, interpretations and of the processes for arriving at them. In other words, ethnographic research is said to be valid when the data collected, and the steps or processes for collecting them, analyzing them and reporting or disseminating them are accurate and credible. Therefore, to ensure that this ethnographic research is valid, the investigators accurately observed, interviewed, experienced and practiced the ways of life of the group under study and wrote an accurate as well as credible report about the general practices or characteristics of the oil producing areas and the oil prospecting companies with regards to corporate social responsibility management of the companies for attainment of mutual crisis-free advantage. The ethnographic report clearly shows all the precautions taken by the investigators to convince the audience that the study done is very accurate, credible and valid. The pattern of which the data are interpreted explicitly described the evidence on which the data are based and all the efforts made by them to test for evidence that would tend to disconfirm any of the tentative conclusions. A way of ensuring validity of this ethnographic research that was adopted by the investigators was submission of draft report of each stage of the work as it progresses to the subjects to read and confirm that the observations, interviews, practices, experiences, events, and interpretations contained in the report are accurate, exact and entirely correct about the indigenes of the oil producing areas and staff of the oil prospecting companies. A clear evidence of the validity, authenticity and reliability of this ethnographic research via submission of draft report of each stage to the subjects to read and confirm the observations is in the fact that all the findings of this study, as shall be soon seen, were firmly embedded in the "16-points demands" that the Niger Delta Stakeholders presented to President Buhari on November 1, 2016, just three days ago (Sahara Reporters, 2016).

Reliability

Reliability of ethnographic research is the consistency of data collected, conclusions drawn and interpretations made of the data and accordingly reported. To achieve this, the ethnographers in this study mainly collected accurate information in the form synoptic chart of verbatim utterances and opinions on which analysis, conclusions, inferences, interpretations, and communication or dissemination are based. Modern audiovisual methods of recording were used for the purpose of ensuring reliability in ethnographic research. With audiovisual technique, recorded events, interviews and discussions were possibly examined and used at any later time by the ethnographers with the highest possible accuracy and consistency beyond refutation by the informants or any other person. Reliability of this ethnographic study was further enhanced by the extended period of the investigators'

exposure to the data. This time of sojourn with the group and personal experience or first-hand information of the lifestyles of both the oil producing areas citizens and the oil prospecting companies staff accorded the ethnographers every opportunity and special privilege to cross-check their data and reconcile all aspects and forms of inconsistencies. The various strategies, techniques or tools which the researchers used for collecting the same information in the ethnographic study also enhanced the reliability of the investigation and results, or conclusions reached thereof. Where multiple observers and interviewers were used to obtain the same congruous information about the oil producing communities on the one hand and the oil prospecting companies on the contrary independently, either at the same time or over time, more credence was given to the reliability or consistency of the ethnographic investigation. Finally, this ethnographic research was equally made more reliable by carefully reporting the study step by step to allow for easy replication by other ethnographers. If in the course of replicating this ethnographic study by other subsequent investigators, the same results, conclusions and interpretations are made, then the reliability of this study has been confirmed at its peak.

Sample

A large sample of 2,487 was drawn in accordance to proportional stratified random sampling for this investigation. While 223 respondents were drawn from the oil prospecting companies in the Niger Delta, a sample of 2,264 respondents was drawn from the oil producing areas otherwise known as the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta which is the oil producing region in Nigeria has a steadily growing population estimated in 2005 to be over 30 million people that account for more than 23% of Nigeria's total population. Furthermore, the population density in the Niger Delta is judged to be among the highest in the world with 265 people per kilometer squared (National Population Commission, 2014).

Data Analysis

In line with ethnographic research principles that blends aspects of qualitative research and quantitative research; quantitative data were collected and analyzed in this study in a way that can best be understood by all the stakeholders of the study (oil producing areas indigenes and oil prospecting companies staff). Percentages of responses to a seven-point scale ranging from Absolutely Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Barely agrees, Agree, Strongly agree to Absolutely agree to each research question by respondents from the oil producing areas on the one hand, and the oil prospecting companies, on the contrary, were used for the data analysis in line with multivariate statistical analysis techniques (Kpolovie, 2016g; 2011; 2012; Johnson & Wichern, 2014; Ho, 2014; Douglas, 1984). Clustered bar graphs for best pictorial presentation were equally used as univariate and multivariate statistical data analysis of qualitative/quantitative research requires for answering the research questions in this investigation (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014; Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010; Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017; Kpolovie, 2016; 2011).

RESULTS PRESENTATION

1. Answer to Research Question 1

Has the use of the military and other security agencies achieved the desired objective of optimum conflict management for mutual corporate social responsibility in Nigeria?

Table 1: Percentage of discrepancy in response between host communities (HC) and oil prospecting companies (OPC) on use of the military and other security agencies in conflict management

Response	Use of the military and other security agencies has achieved the desired objective of optimum conflict management for mutual corporate social responsibility				Discrepancy %
	HC	OPC	HC %	OPC %	
Absolutely Disagree	788	3	34.80	1.35	33.45
Strongly Disagree	600	5	26.50	2.24	24.36
Disagree	401	5	17.71	2.24	15.47
Barely Agree	300	11	13.25	4.93	8.32
Agree	150	20	6.63	8.97	2.34
Strongly Agree	20	69	0.88	30.94	30.06
Absolutely Agree	5	110	0.22	49.33	49.11

It can be discerned from Table 1 that out of 2,264 respondents from the oil producing areas or host communities, 788 (34.80%); 600 (26.50%); 401 (17.71%); 300 (13.25%); 150 (6.63%); 20 (0.88%); and 5 (0.22%) respectively responded Absolutely Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Barely Agree; Agree; Strongly Agree; and Absolutely Agree with the statement that ‘use of the military and other security agencies has achieved the desired objective of optimum conflict management for mutual corporate social responsibility.’ The response of the 223 respondents from oil prospecting companies is at direct variance with those of the oil producing areas. Specifically, 3 (1.35%); 5 (2.24%); 5 (2.24%); 11 (4.93%); 20 (8.97%); 69 (30.94%); and 110 (49.33%) of the 223 oil companies’ staff responded Absolutely Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Barely Agree; Agree; Strongly Agree; and Absolutely Agree to the same item that ‘use of the military and other security agencies has achieved the desired objective of optimum conflict management for mutual corporate social responsibility.’ It is very glaring from the Table 1 that there is an overwhelming incongruity between the views of the host communities and oil companies on the use of security agencies for management of conflicts between the two parties. The percentage of discrepancy between host communities and oil companies on the issue for each the options is as high as 33.45%, 24.36%, 15.47%, 8.32%, 2.34%, 30.06%, and 49.11% respectively for Absolutely Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Barely Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree, and Absolutely Agree. Put together, as much as 61.2% (34.80% + 26.50%) of respondents from the host communities disagreed absolutely and strongly with the statement in direct contrast with oil companies that as much as 80.27% (30.94% + 49.33%) strongly and absolutely agreed with the same statement. Put differently, while only infinitesimal 3.59% (1.35% + 2.24%) of staff of oil prospecting companies strongly and absolutely disagreed with the same statement; infinitesimally small 1.1% (0.22% + 0.88%) of host communities strongly and absolutely agreed with the statement.

Perhaps, the polarized view of the oil producing communities and the oil prospecting companies can better be visualized graphically as shown in the clustered bar graph in Figure 1.

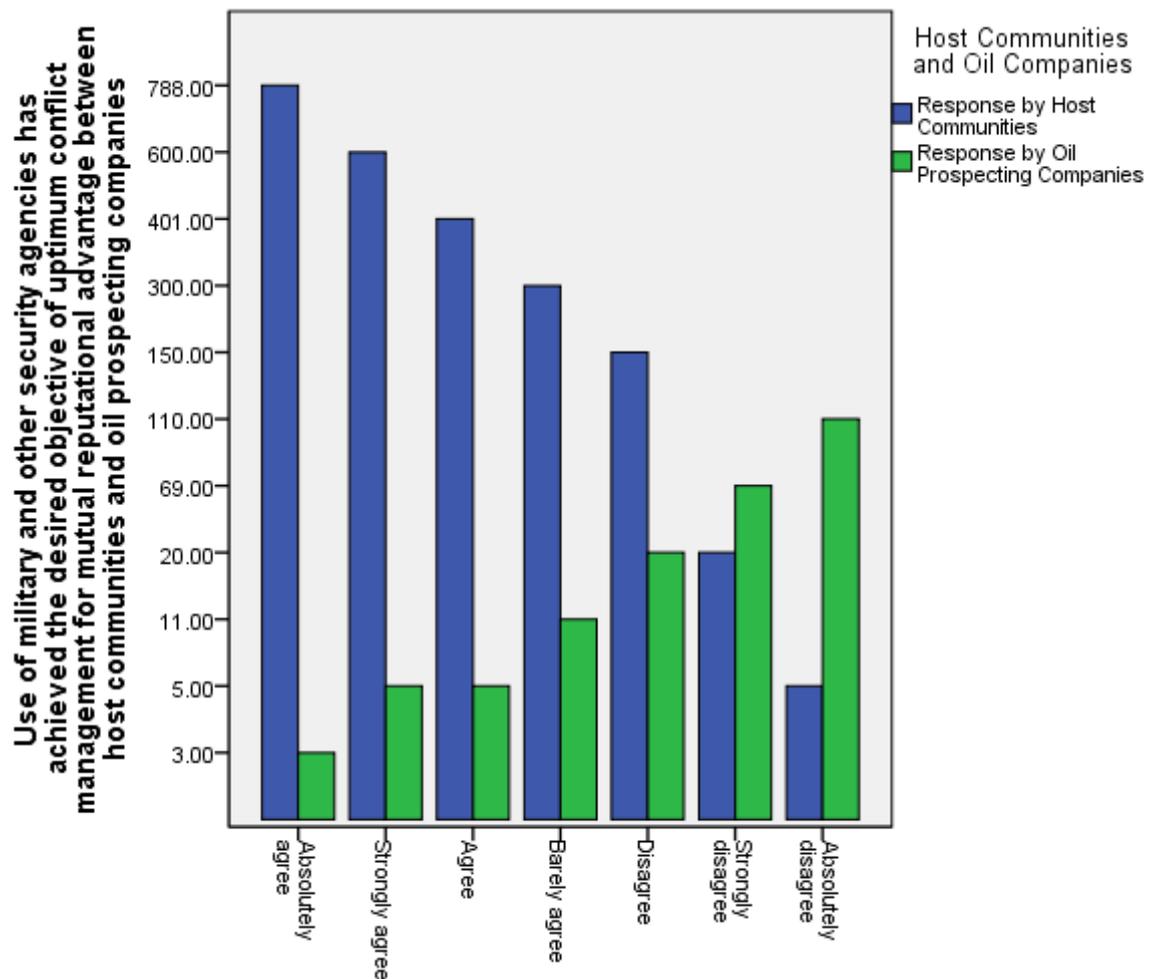


Figure 1: Clustered Bar Graph of answer to Research Question 1

The graph has pictorially revealed at a glance that while the response of host communities on the indicator is highest at Absolutely Disagree (788) and keeps reducing to the least (5) at Absolutely Agree; the reaction of oil prospecting companies is highest at Absolutely Agree (110) and consistently reduces to the least at Absolutely Disagree (3). The significant difference in the direction and dimension of response by host communities and oil prospecting companies is potent evidence that the two parties have an underlying disagreement on the use of military agencies for conflict resolution, consequent upon which optimum mutual corporate social responsibility management could not be attained.

Answer to Research Question 2

Has the quality of life in the oil producing communities improved dramatically since oil exploration and production started in Nigeria?

Table 2: Percentage of discrepancy in response between host communities (HC) and oil prospecting companies (OPC) on quality of life in oil producing areas

	Quality of life in the oil producing communities has improved dramatically since oil exploration and production started				
Response	HC	OPC	HC %	OPC %	Discrepancy %
Absolutely Disagree	1412	0	62.36	0.00	62.36
Strongly Disagree	735	0	32.46	0.00	32.46
Disagree	97	3	4.28	1.35	2.93
Barely Agree	9	10	0.40	4.48	4.08
Agree	9	30	0.40	13.45	13.05
Strongly Agree	2	81	0.09	36.32	36.23
Absolutely Agree	0	99	0.00	44.39	44.39

It can be discerned from Table 2 that for the indicator “quality of life in the oil producing communities has improved dramatically since oil exploration and production started”; 1412 (62.36%) of the 2264 respondents from the oil producing communities absolutely disagreed, 00 (0.00%) respondents of the oil producing companies absolutely disagreed, and this is equal to 62.36% discrepancy between the host communities and the oil prospecting companies. Similarly, 735 (32.46%) of respondents from oil producing communities strongly disagreed, 00 (0.00%) of respondents from the oil exploration companies strongly disagreed, giving 32.46% difference between host communities and the oil companies. In fact, when these two levels of response are added, as much as 2147 (94.82%) of the host communities absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed, while no single respondent from the 223 oil companies respondent absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed with the statement that quality of life in the oil producing communities has improved dramatically since oil exploration and exploitation started in the Niger Delta. With this alone, there is as much as 94.82% divergence between oil producing communities and the oil prospecting companies.

Furthermore, on this indicator, the Table 2 has shown that while 97 (4.28%) of oil producing communities’ respondents disagreed, only 3 (1.35%) of oil companies’ staff disagreed, giving a discrepancy of 2.93% between host communities and oil companies. Also, while 9 (0.4%) of oil producing areas respondents barely agreed with the item, 10 (4.48%) of oil producing companies’ respondents barely agree, showing 4.08% incongruity between the latter and the former. Similarly, while only 9 (0.40%) of host companies’ respondents agreed with this indicator, 30 (13.45%) of oil prospecting companies’ respondents agreed with the indicator, giving 13.05 discrepancy between the two parties. While only 2 (0.09%) persons from the communities strongly agreed, as much as 81 (36.32%) of the oil prospecting companies’ staff strongly agreed with the second indicator, giving a discrepancy of -36.23% between the oil producing areas and oil exploration companies in Niger Delta. While no single person (0.00%) from host communities absolutely agreed, 99 (44.39%) of oil company workers absolutely agreed with the second indicator, giving 44.39% discrepancy between the two parties. The last two response options alone put together, shows that while only 2 (0.09%) of the 2264 host communities’ respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed, overwhelming 180 (80.71%) of the 223 oil producing companies’ respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed that quality of life in the oil producing communities has

improved dramatically since oil exploration and production started in the Niger Delta. The margin of disagreement at these last two options alone between indigenes of oil producing areas and staff of oil producing companies is 80.62%. The entire response indicating serious incongruity between oil producing communities and oil producing companies in the Niger Delta is pictorially presented with clustered bar graph in Figure 2 for evident and unambiguous appreciation.

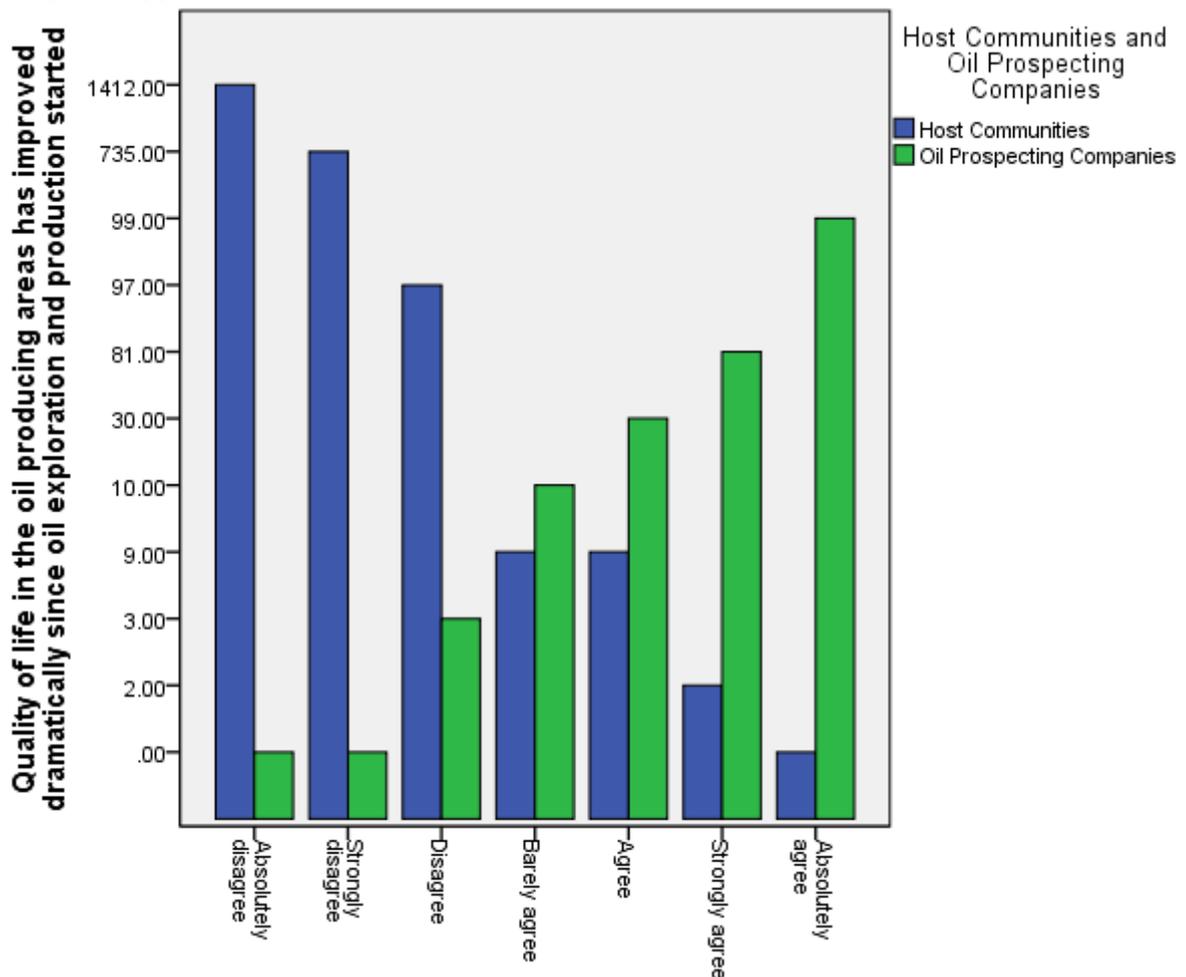


Figure 2: Clustered Bar Graph of answer to Research Question 2

The graph in Figure 2 has pictorially exposed at a glance that while the response of host communities on the second indicator of this study is highest at Absolutely Disagree (1412) and keeps reducing sharply to the least at Absolutely Agree (0); the response of oil prospecting companies is highest at Absolutely Agree (99) and consistently reduces very sharply to the least at Strongly Disagree (0) and Absolutely Disagree (0). The significant discrepancy in the direction, dimension, and magnitude of response by host communities and oil prospecting companies is compelling evidence that the two parties have a fundamental disagreement with the assertion that quality of life in the oil producing communities has improved dramatically since oil exploration and exploitation started in the areas. That is, while the host communities resolutely hold that oil production activities in their regions have affected them negatively, the oil producing companies hold that oil prospecting activities have affected lives of the host communities positively. These different positions are

indications of dissatisfactory mutual corporate responsibility management by the multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta.

It is necessary to establish how the lives of host communities have been affected. The question was asked against the background of deep-rooted belief in the oil producing areas that oil production activities have caused untold hardships, economically and socially to the oil producing areas. It was necessary, therefore, to pose this question to the oil companies to confirm or dispute this allegation. For instance, it has been proved in previous research that gas flaring which is a common phenomenon reduces crop yields (Burger, 2011; Labaqui, 2016). Furthermore, pollution affects land and water similarly thereby affecting the host communities' economic life since the occupation of the oil producing areas is predominantly farming. Without access to other forms of economic activities occasioned by underdevelopment, poverty is no more a strange bedfellow the oil producing communities have to contend with.

Answer to Research Question

Do oil producing communities feel threatened by the activities of oil prospecting companies in their communities in Nigeria?

Table 3: Percentage of discrepancy in response between host communities (HC) and oil exploration companies (OPC) on feeling of being threatened

	Oil producing communities feel threatened by the activities of oil prospecting companies in their communities				
Response	HC	OPC	HC %	OPC %	Discrepancy %
Absolutely Disagree	0	96	0.00	43.05	43.05
Strongly Disagree	0	96	0.00	43.05	43.05
Disagree	9	27	0.40	12.11	11.71
Barely Agree	4	4	0.18	1.79	1.61
Agree	182	0	8.04	0.00	8.04
Strongly Agree	509	0	22.48	0.00	22.48
Absolutely Agree	1560	0	68.90	0.00	68.90

It can be seen very clearly from Table 3 that for the indicator “oil producing communities in Nigeria feel threatened by the activities of oil prospecting companies in their communities”; 0 (0.00%) of the 2264 respondents from the oil producing communities absolutely disagreed, 96 (43.05%) respondents of the oil producing companies absolutely disagreed, and this is equal to 43.05% discrepancy between the host communities and the oil prospecting companies. Similarly, 0 (0.00%) of respondents from oil producing communities strongly disagreed, 96 (43.05%) of respondents from the oil exploration companies strongly disagreed, giving 43.05% difference between host communities and the oil companies. In fact, when these two levels of response are added, no single respondent 0 (0.00%) from the 2264 respondents of the host communities absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed, while as much as 192 (43.10%) oil companies respondents absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed with the statement that oil producing communities in Nigeria feel threatened by the activities of oil prospecting businesses in their communities. With this alone, there is as much as -86.10% divergence between oil producing communities and the oil exploration companies.

Furthermore, on this indicator, Table 3 has shown that while only 9 (0.40%) of oil producing communities' respondents disagreed, 27 (12.11%) of oil prospecting companies' staff disagreed, giving a discrepancy of 11.71% between host communities and oil companies. Also, while 4 (0.18%) of oil producing areas respondents barely agreed with the item, 4 (1.79%) of oil producing companies' respondents barely agree, showing 1.61% incongruity between the latter and the former. Similarly, while as much as 182 (8.04%) of host companies' respondents agreed with this indicator, 0 (0.00%) of oil prospecting companies' respondents agreed with the indicator, giving 8.04% discrepancy between the two parties. While 509 (22.48%) persons from the host communities strongly agreed, 0 (0.00%) of the oil prospecting companies' staff strongly agreed with the third indicator, giving a discrepancy of 22.48% between the oil producing areas and oil prospecting companies in Niger Delta. While much more than half of the 2264 respondents from the host communities 1560 (68.90%) agreed, 0 (0.00%) of oil company workers absolutely agreed with the third indicator, giving 68.90% discrepancy between the two parties. The last two response options alone put together, shows that an overwhelming 2069 (91.38%) of the 2264 host communities' respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed, no single respondent 0 (0.00%) of the 223 oil producing companies' respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed that oil producing communities in Nigeria feel threatened by the activities of oil prospecting companies in their communities. The margin of disagreement at these last two options alone between indigenes of oil producing areas and staff of oil producing companies is 91.38%. The entire response indicating serious incongruity between oil producing communities and oil producing companies in the Niger Delta is pictorially presented with clustered bar graph in Figure 3 for evident and unambiguous appreciation.

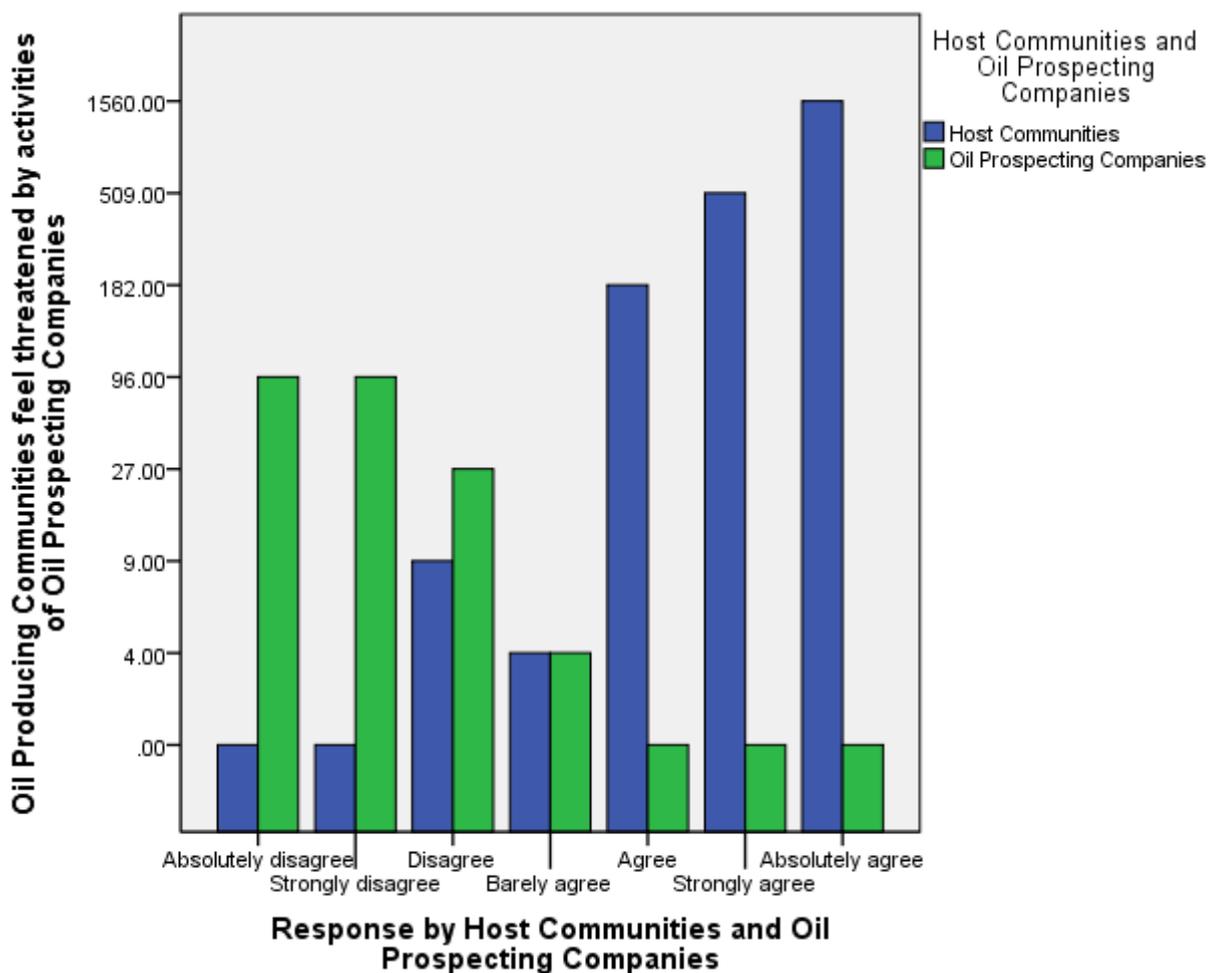


Figure 3: Clustered Bar Graph of answer to Research Question 3

The clustered bar graph in Figure 3 has pictorially uncovered at a glance that while the response of host communities on the third indicator of this study is highest at Absolutely Agree (1560) and keeps reducing very sharply to the least at Absolutely Disagree (0) and Strongly Disagree (0); the response of oil prospecting companies, on the other hand, is highest at Absolutely Disagree (96) and Strongly Disagree (96) and consistently reduces very sharply to the least at Agree (0), Strongly Agree (0) and Absolutely Agree (0). This observed significant discrepancy in the direction, dimension, and magnitude of response by host communities and oil prospecting companies are robust evidence that the two parties have a fundamental disagreement with the assertion that oil producing communities in Nigeria feel threatened by the activities of oil exploration businesses in their communities. That is, while the host communities resolutely hold that oil production activities in their areas have significantly threatened their existence, the oil producing companies hold that oil prospecting activities in the Niger Delta constitute no threat at all to the indigenes. These different positions indicate high dissatisfaction with the corporate social responsibility management by the multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta.

The communities were asked if they felt threatened by the activities of oil businesses in their communities. The need for this question was founded on the destructive nature of oil

production. The threat is one of the principal causes of conflict in any relationship. This question therefore, ab initio was asked to elicit a response to determining whether or not there is a reason to believe there is conflict in the present or future. An overwhelming majority of (91.38%) of oil producing areas feel highly threatened by the activities of oil companies in their regions on the one hand, and 86.10% of oil prospecting companies hold that oil production activities do not threaten life existence in the oil producing areas in Nigeria. This is a conclusive evidence of significant conflict, indicating crisis between the two parties. It is sufficient enough, therefore, to believe that conflict exists between the host communities and oil companies in the Niger Delta.

Answer to Research Question 4

Have exploration and production of oil and gas by oil prospecting companies caused serious environmental problems in host communities in Nigeria?

Table 4: Percentage of discrepancy in response between host communities (HC) and oil exploration companies (OPC) on environmental problems caused by oil production

	Exploration and production of oil and gas by oil prospecting companies have caused serious environmental problems in the Niger Delta				
Response	HC	OPC	HC %	OPC %	Discrepancy %
Absolutely Disagree	0	3	0.00	1.35	1.35
Strongly Disagree	0	46	0.00	20.63	20.63
Disagree	0	72	0.00	32.29	32.29
Barely Agree	0	83	0.00	37.22	37.22
Agree	28	12	1.24	5.38	1.14
Strongly Agree	247	7	10.91	3.14	7.77
Absolutely Agree	1989	0	87.85	0.00	87.85

It can be seen very clearly from Table 4 that for the indicator “exploration and production of oil and gas by oil prospecting companies have caused serious environmental problems the Niger Delta”; 0 (0.00%) of the 2264 respondents from the oil producing communities absolutely disagreed, 3 (1.35%) of the 223 respondents from the oil producing companies absolutely disagreed, and this is equal to 1.35% discrepancy between the host communities and the oil prospecting companies. Similarly, 0 (0.00%) of respondents from oil producing communities strongly disagreed, 46 (20.63%) of respondents from the oil exploration companies strongly disagreed, giving 20.63% difference between host communities and the oil companies. In fact, when these two levels of response are added, no single respondent 0 (0.00%) from the 2264 respondents of the host communities absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed, while as much as 49 (21.98%) of the 233 oil prospecting companies respondents absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed with the statement that exploration and production of oil and gas by oil prospecting companies have caused serious environmental problems the Niger Delta. With this alone, there is as much as 21.98% divergence between oil producing communities and the oil prospecting companies.

The Table 4 has further shown that while only 0 (0.00%) of oil producing communities’ respondents disagreed, 72 (32.29%) of oil prospecting companies’ staff disagreed, giving a discrepancy of 32.29% between host communities and oil companies. Also, while 0 (0.00%)

of oil producing areas respondents barely agreed with the item, 83 (37.22%) of oil producing companies' respondents barely agreed, showing 37.22% discrepancy between the latter and the former parties. Similarly, while 28 (1.24%) of host companies' respondents agreed with this indicator, 12 (5.38%) of oil prospecting companies' respondents agreed with the indicator, giving 1.14% discrepancy between the two parties. While 247 (10.91%) persons from the host communities strongly agreed, 7 (3.14%) of the oil prospecting companies' staff strongly agreed with the fourth indicator, giving a discrepancy of 7.77% between the oil producing areas and oil exploration companies in the Niger Delta. While much more than half of the 2264 respondents from the host communities 1989 (87.85%) absolutely agreed, 0 (0.00%) respondents of oil company workers absolutely agreed with the fourth indicator, giving 87.85% discrepancy between the two parties. The last two response options alone put together, shows that an overwhelming 2236 (98.76%) of the 2264 host communities' respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed, only 7 (3.14%) of the 223 oil producing companies' respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed that 'exploration and production of oil and gas by oil prospecting companies have caused serious environmental problems in the Niger Delta'. The margin of disagreement at these last two options alone between indigenes of oil producing areas and staff of oil producing companies is 95.62%. The entire response indicating serious incongruity between oil producing communities and oil producing companies in the Niger Delta is pictorially presented with clustered bar graph in Figure 4 for evident and unambiguous appreciation.

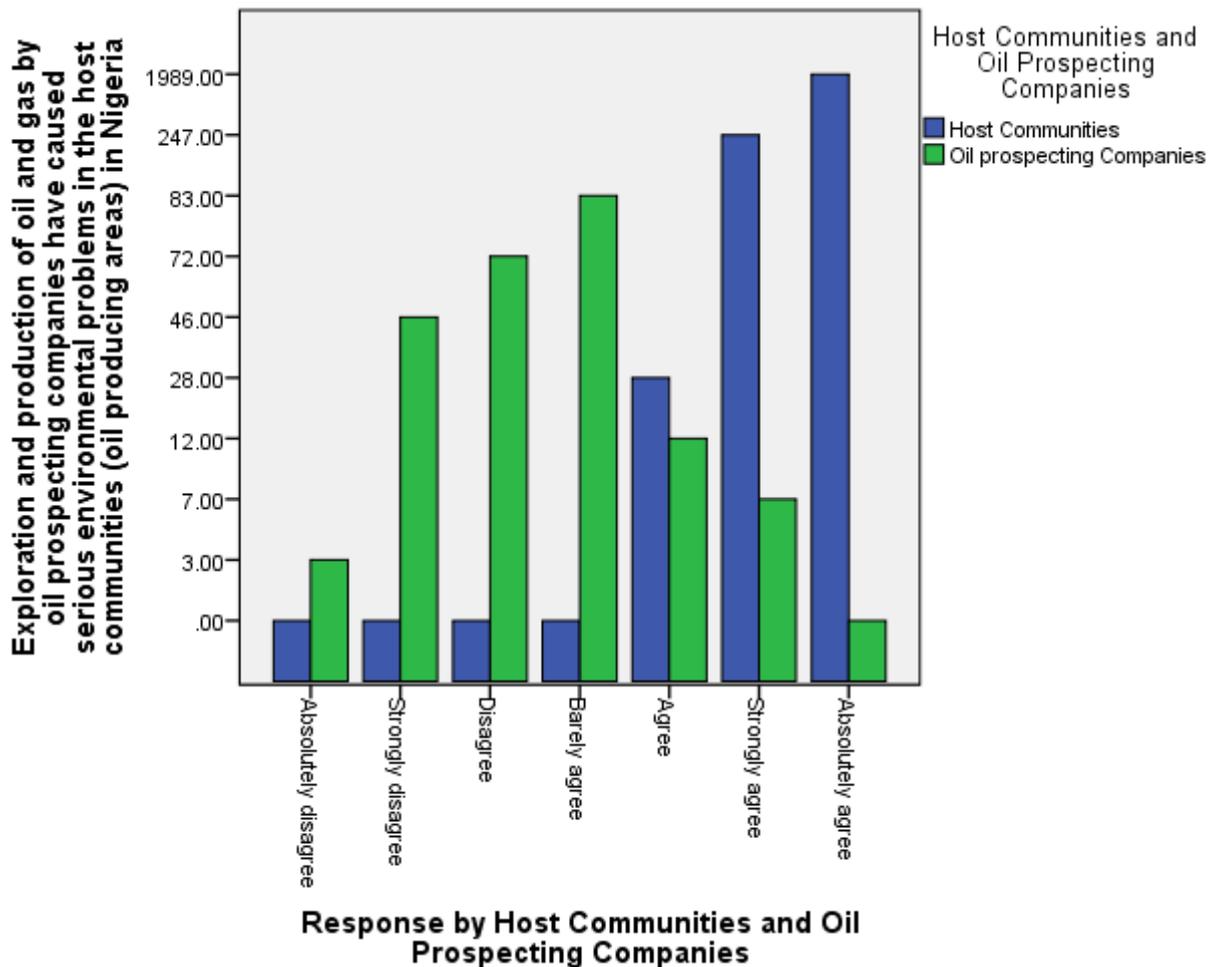


Figure 4: Clustered Bar Graph of answer to Research Question 4

The clustered bar graph in Figure 4 has pictorially uncovered at a glance that while the response of host communities on the third indicator of this study is highest at Absolutely Agree (1989) and keeps reducing very sharply to the least at Barely Agree (0), Disagree (0), Strongly Disagree (0) and Absolutely Disagree (0); the response of oil prospecting companies, on the other hand, is highest at Barely Agree (83), followed by Disagree (72) and lowest at Absolutely Agree (0). This observed significant discrepancy in the direction, dimension, and magnitude of response by host communities and oil prospecting companies are robust evidence that the two parties have a fundamental disagreement with the assertion that 'exploration and production of oil and gas by oil prospecting companies have caused serious environmental problems the Niger Delta.' That is, while the host communities resolutely hold that oil production activities in their areas have unbearably damaged the oil producing areas' environment, the oil producing companies barely concur that oil prospecting activities in the Niger Delta have caused environmental degradation in the areas. These different positions indicate great discontentment with the corporate social responsibility management by the multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta. This is a certain evidence of conflict, suggesting crisis between the two parties. It suffices to believe that unresolved conflicts exist between the host communities and oil companies in the Niger Delta.

Communities were asked to assess whether or not the exploration and production of oil have caused serious environmental problems in their communities. Environmental factors have been mentioned as significantly affecting the relationship of oil companies and their host communities. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not environmental problems are part of the crisis generating issues in the oil producing areas. Almost all respondents from the oil producing areas agreed either absolutely or strongly to the fourth indicator. It is safe to conclude therefore that exploration and production of oil and gas have caused serious environmental problems in the areas of operation.

Answer to Research Question 5

In Nigeria, do oil prospecting companies respond promptly and appropriately to oil and gas pollutions or spillages in the Niger Delta when they occur?

Table 5: Percentage of discrepancy in response between host communities (HC) and oil prospecting companies (OPC) on oil companies' reaction to oil spillage

	Oil prospecting companies respond promptly and appropriately to oil and gas pollutions or spillages in the Niger Delta				
Response	HC	OPC	HC %	OPC %	Discrepancy %
Absolutely Disagree	1662	0	73.41	0.00	73.41
Strongly Disagree	594	0	26.24	0.00	26.24
Disagree	8	0	0.35	0.00	0.35
Barely Agree	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Agree	0	9	0.00	4.04	4.04
Strongly Agree	0	62	0.00	27.80	27.80
Absolutely Agree	0	152	0.00	68.16	68.16

It can be seen very clearly from Table 5 that for the fifth indicator that "oil prospecting companies respond promptly and appropriately to oil and gas pollutions or spillages in the Niger Delta"; 1662 (73.41%) of the 2264 respondents from the oil producing communities absolutely disagreed, 0 (0.00%) of the 223 respondents from the oil producing companies absolutely disagreed, and this is equal to 73.41% discrepancy between the host communities and the oil prospecting companies. Similarly, 594 (26.24%) of respondents from oil producing communities strongly disagreed, 0 (0.00%) of respondents from the oil exploration companies strongly disagreed, giving 26.24% difference between host communities and the oil companies. In fact, when these two levels of response are added, overwhelming preponderance of 2256 (99.65%) from the 2264 respondents of the host communities absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed, while no single person 0 (0.00%) of the 233 oil prospecting companies respondents absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed with the statement that 'oil prospecting companies respond promptly and appropriately to oil and gas pollutions or spillages in the Niger Delta'. With this alone, there is as much as 99.41% disagreement between oil producing communities and the oil prospecting companies in Nigeria.

The Table 5 has also shown that while 8 (0.35%) of oil producing communities' respondents disagreed, 0 (0.00%) of oil prospecting companies' staff disagreed, giving a discrepancy of

0.35% between host communities and oil companies. Furthermore, while 0 (0.00%) of oil producing areas respondents barely agreed with the fifth item, 0 (0.00%) of oil producing companies' respondents barely agreed, showing 0.00% discrepancy between the latter and the former parties. Similarly, while 0 (0.00%) of host companies' respondents agreed with this indicator, 9 (4.04%) of oil prospecting companies' respondents agreed with the indicator, giving 4.04% discrepancy between the two parties. While 0 (0.00%) persons from the host communities strongly agreed, 62 (27.80%) of the oil prospecting companies' staff strongly agreed with the fourth indicator, giving a discrepancy of 27.80% between the oil producing areas and oil exploration companies in the Niger Delta. While no single respondent from the 2264 oil producing areas respondents 0 (0.00%) absolutely agreed, 152 (68.16%) respondents of oil prospecting companies workers absolutely agreed with the fifth indicator, giving - 68.16% discrepancy between the two parties. The last two response options alone put together, shows that 0 (0.00%) of the 2264 host communities' respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed, a preponderance of 214 (95.96%) of the 223 oil producing companies' respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed that 'oil prospecting companies respond promptly and appropriately to oil and gas pollutions or spillages in the Niger Delta'. The margin of disagreement at these last two options alone between indigenes of oil producing areas and staff of oil producing companies is 95.96%. The entire response indicating serious disagreement between oil producing communities and oil producing companies in the Niger Delta is pictorially presented with clustered bar graph in Figure 5 for evident and unambiguous appreciation.

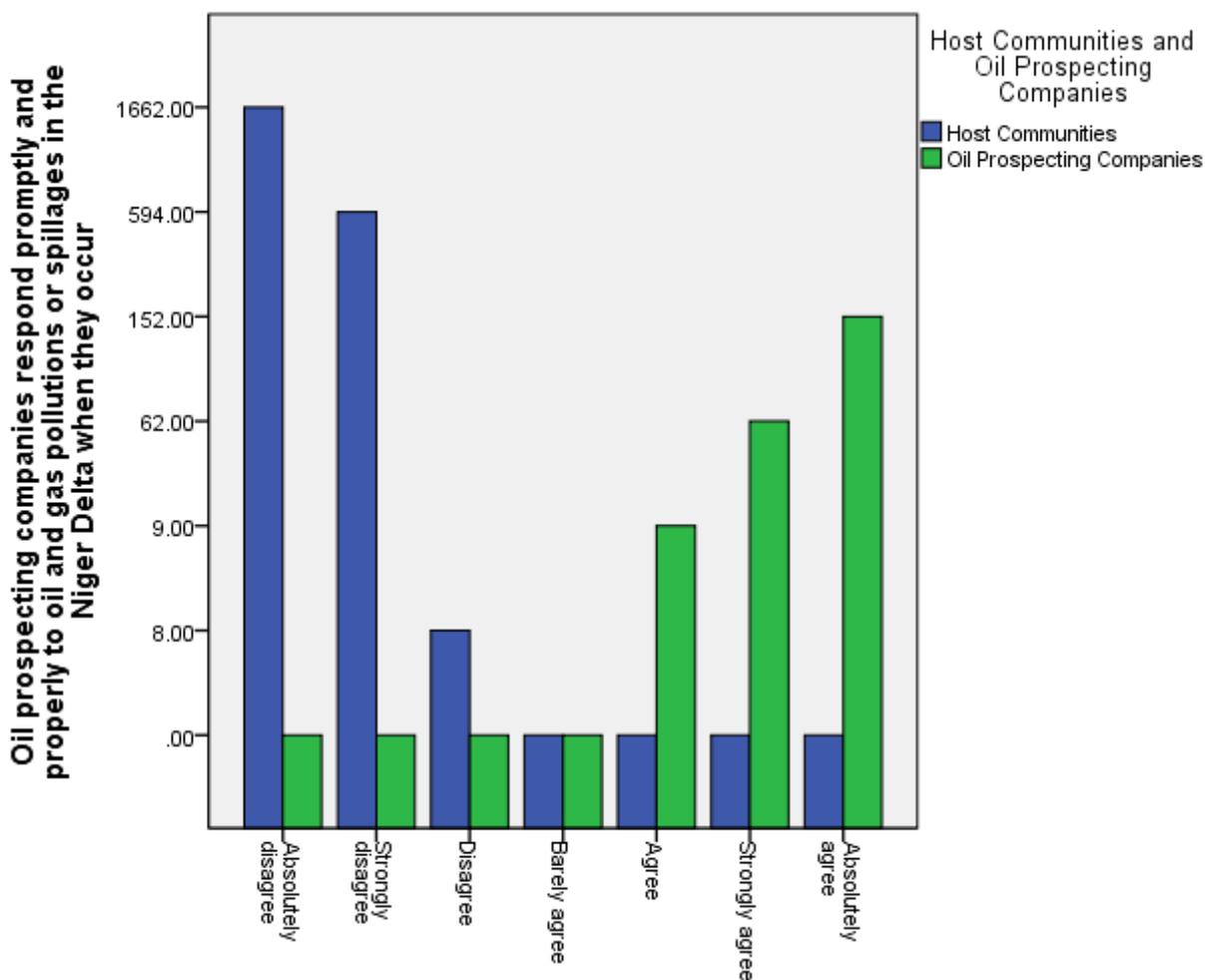


Figure 5: Clustered Bar Graph of answer to Research Question 5

The clustered bar graph in Figure 5 has pictorially uncovered at a glance that while the response of host communities on the fifth indicator of this study is highest at Absolutely Disagree (1662) and keeps reducing very sharply to the least at Barely Agree (0), Agree (0), Strongly Agree (0) and Absolutely Agree (0); the response of oil prospecting companies, on the other hand, is highest at Absolutely Agree (152), followed and very sharply reduces to the minimum (0) at Barely Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree and Absolutely Disagree. This observed significant discrepancy in the direction, dimension, and magnitude of response by host communities and oil prospecting companies is definitive evidence that the two parties have a fundamental disagreement with the assertion that 'oil exploration companies respond promptly and appropriately to oil and gas pollutions or spillages in the Niger Delta.' These different positions indicate great discontentment with the corporate social responsibility management by the multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta. This is a certain evidence of conflict, showing crisis between the two parties. It suffices to believe that unresolved conflicts exist between the host communities and oil companies in the Niger Delta.

One of the leading causes of conflict between host communities and oil companies is the companies' neglect of the devastating effect of their activities in the oil producing areas. The question was asked to evaluate the response of oil companies to the consequence of their operation. The issue here is not whether or not pollution occurs but how do the companies

react such spillage? The oil producing areas strongly agree that the neglect of the devastating effect of oil production activities, particularly oil spillage and gas flaring and pollution, by the oil and gas companies is one of the leading causes of conflict.

Answer to Research Question 6

Will oil prospecting companies' meaningful participation in the development of their host communities lead to significantly better acceptance of the companies by the oil producing communities in Nigeria?

Table 6: Percentage of discrepancy in response between host communities (HC) and oil prospecting companies (OPC) on oil companies' meaningful participation in development of the oil producing areas

	Oil exploration companies' meaningful participation in development of their host communities will lead to significantly better acceptance of the companies by the oil producing communities				
Response	HC	OPC	HC %	OPC %	Discrepancy %
Absolutely Disagree	0	39	0.00	17.49	17.49
Strongly Disagree	9	86	.40	38.57	38.17
Disagree	39	62	1.72	27.80	26.08
Barely Agree	88	31	3.89	13.90	10.01
Agree	197	4	8.70	1.79	6.91
Strongly Agree	801	1	35.38	0.45	34.93
Absolutely Agree	1130	0	49.91	0.00	49.91

It can very clearly be discerned from Table 6 that for the sixth indicator "oil prospecting companies' meaningful participation in development of their host communities will lead to significantly better acceptance of the companies by the oil producing communities"; 0 (0.00%) of the 2264 respondents from the oil producing communities absolutely disagreed, 39 (17.49%) respondents of the oil producing companies absolutely disagreed, and this is equal to 17.49% discrepancy between the host communities and the oil prospecting companies. Similarly, 9 (0.40%) of respondents from oil producing communities strongly disagreed, 86 (38.57%) of respondents from the oil prospecting companies strongly disagreed, giving 38.17% difference between host communities and the oil exploration companies. In fact, when these two levels of response are added, only 9 (0.40%) respondents from the 2264 respondents of the host communities absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed, while as much as 125 (56.06%) of the 223 oil companies respondents absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed with the statement that 'oil prospecting companies' meaningful participation in development of their host communities will lead to significantly better acceptance of the companies by the oil producing communities'. With this alone, there is as much as 55.66% disagreement between oil producing communities and the oil prospecting companies.

Furthermore, on the sixth indicator, Table 6 has shown that while only 39 (1.72%) of oil producing communities' respondents disagreed, 62 (27.80%) of oil prospecting companies' staff disagreed, giving a discrepancy of 26.08% between host communities and oil companies. Also, while 88 (3.89%) of oil producing areas respondents barely agreed with the item, 31 (13.90%) of oil producing companies' respondents barely agree, showing 10.01% discordance between the latter and the former. Similarly, while 197 (8.70%) of host communities' respondents agreed with this indicator, 4 (1.79%) of oil prospecting companies' respondents agreed with the indicator, giving 6.91% discrepancy between the two parties. While 801 (35.38%) persons from the host communities strongly agreed, 1 (0.45%) of the oil prospecting companies' staff strongly agreed with the sixth indicator, giving a dissension of 34.93% between the oil producing areas and oil exploration companies in the Niger Delta. While as much as about half of the 2264 respondents from the host communities 1130 (49.91%) absolutely agreed, 0 (0.00%) of oil companies workers absolutely agreed with the sixth indicator, giving 49.91% discordance between the two parties. The last two response options alone put together, shows that an overwhelming 1931 (85.29%) of the 2264 host communities' respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed, only a single respondent 1 (0.45%) of the 223 oil producing companies' respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed that 'oil prospecting companies' meaningful participation in development of their host communities will lead to significantly better acceptance of the companies by the oil producing communities'. The margin of dissonance at these last two options alone between indigenes of oil producing areas and staff of oil producing companies is 84.84%. The entire response indicating a serious conflict between oil producing communities and oil producing companies in the Niger Delta is pictorially presented with clustered bar graph in Figure 6 for evident and unmistakable appreciation.

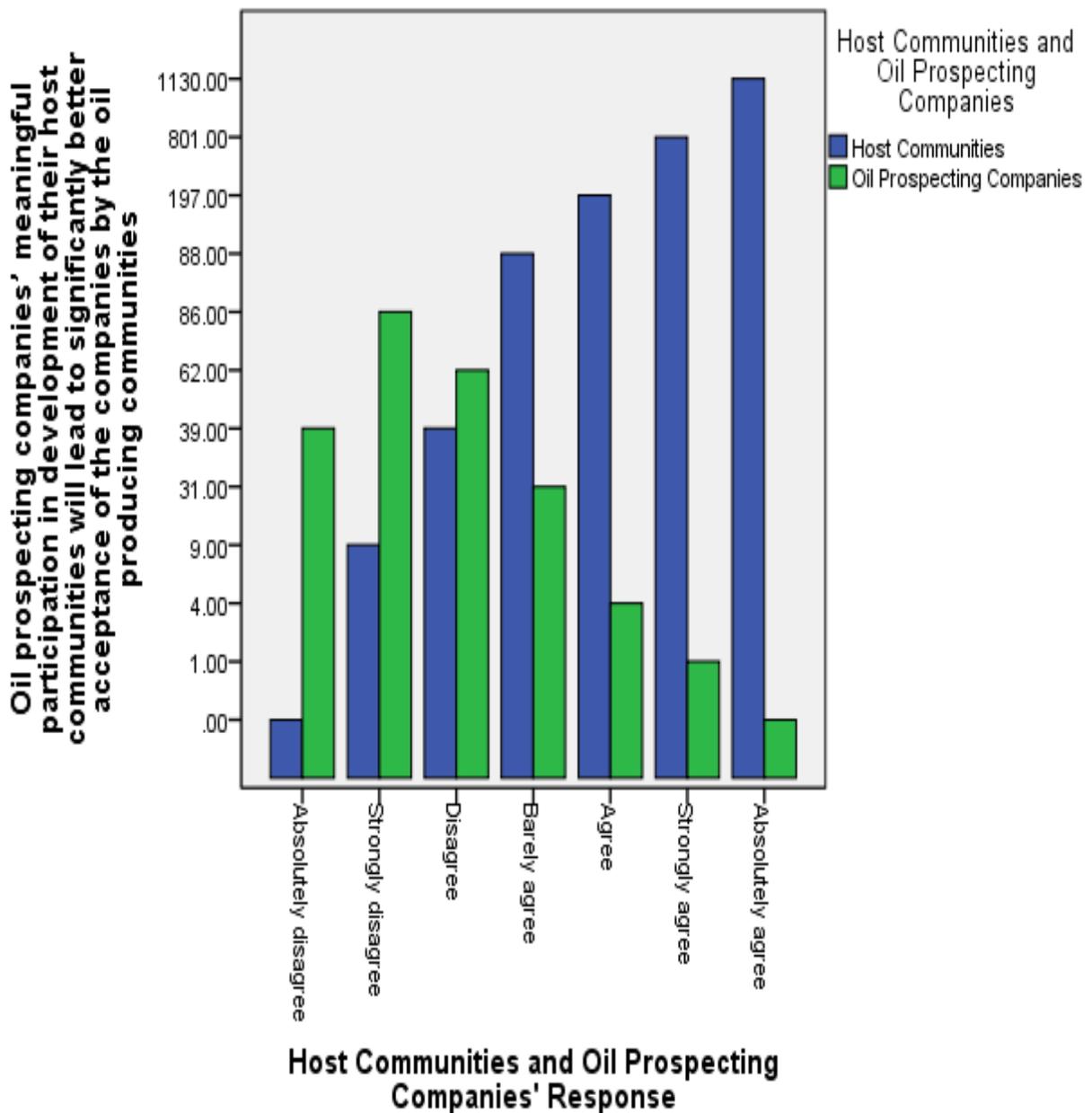


Figure 6: Clustered Bar Graph of answer to Research Question 6

The clustered bar graph in Figure 6 has pictorially revealed at a glance that while the response of host communities on the sixth indicator of this study is highest at Absolutely Agree (1130) and keeps reducing sharply to the least at Absolutely Disagree (0); the response of oil prospecting companies, on the other hand, is high at Absolutely Disagree (39), highest at Strongly Disagree (86) and consistently reduces sharply to the least at Absolutely Agree (0). This observed great dissension in the direction, dimension and magnitude of response by oil producing areas and oil prospecting companies is robust evidence that the two parties have a fundamental disagreement with the assertion that ‘oil exploration companies’ meaningful participation in development of their host communities will lead to significantly better acceptance of the companies by the oil producing communities’. That is, while the host communities resolutely hold that active participation of oil prospecting companies in the

development of the host communities will result in significantly better acceptance of the oil companies by the oil producing areas; the oil exploration companies in the Niger Delta are of a contrary opinion. These different positions indicate significant displeasure with the corporate social responsibility management by the multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta. This is a conclusive evidence of enormous conflict, suggesting brewing crisis between the two parties. It is sufficient enough, therefore, to believe that conflict does exist between the host communities and oil companies in the Niger Delta on the degree of oil prospecting companies' involvement in the development of the oil producing areas.

Whether or not the oil companies' meaningful participation in host communities' economic development will elicit the communities' support of the oil and gas companies was addressed by the sixth research question. Apart from the apparent, this question assumes that communities understand that the hazard associated with oil production cannot be completely eradicated; but if the companies improve on their community development involvement, the communities would still support them. The oil producing areas absolutely and/or strongly agree that if oil producing companies improve on their community relations which may take the form of improved communication, compensation, and human development, the companies will be supported by the host communities, and there will be a much more peaceful atmosphere in the Niger Delta for the multinational corporations to operate smoothly. Though the oil prospecting companies think that they are doing enough in this direction, the sixth finding of this study has shown that the host communities want the oil companies to drastically improve in their corporate social responsibility towards the communities and do much more in practically developing the oil producing areas directly.

Answer to Research Question 7

Does lack of infrastructural development in the host communities largely cause conflicts between the oil producing communities and oil prospecting companies in the Niger Delta?

Table 7: Percentage of discrepancy in response between host communities (HC) and oil exploration companies (OPC) on lack of infrastructural development

	Lack of infrastructural development in the host communities largely cause conflicts between oil producing areas and the oil exploration communities				
Response	HC	OPC	HC %	OPC %	Discrepancy %
Absolutely Disagree	0	82	0.00	36.77	36.77
Strongly Disagree	7	89	0.31	39.91	39.60
Disagree	41	41	1.81	18.39	16.58
Barely Agree	122	6	5.39	2.69	2.70
Agree	304	5	13.43	2.24	11.19
Strongly Agree	788	0	34.81	0.00	34.81
Absolutely Agree	1002	0	44.26	0.00	44.26

Table 7 has shown that for the seventh indicator “lack of infrastructural development in the host communities largely cause conflicts between oil producing areas and the oil prospecting communities”; 0 (0.00%) of the 2264 respondents from the oil producing communities absolutely disagreed, 82 (36.77%) of the 223 respondents from the oil producing companies absolutely disagreed, and this is equal to 36.77% discrepancy between the host communities and the oil prospecting companies. Similarly, while only 7 (0.31%) of respondents from oil producing communities strongly disagreed, 89 (39.91%) of respondents from the oil prospecting companies strongly disagreed, giving 39.60% dissimilarity between host communities and the oil exploration companies. In fact, when these two levels of response are added, only 7 (0.31%) respondents from the 2264 respondents of the host communities absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed, while as much as 171 (76.68%) of the 223 oil companies respondents absolutely disagreed and/or strongly disagreed with the statement that ‘lack of infrastructural development in the host communities largely cause conflicts between oil producing areas and the oil prospecting communities’. With this alone, there is as much as 76.37% disagreement between oil producing communities and the oil prospecting companies.

Furthermore, on the seventh indicator, Table 7 has revealed that while 41 (1.81%) of oil producing communities’ respondents disagreed, 41 (18.39%) of oil prospecting companies’ staff disagreed, giving a discrepancy of 16.58% between host communities and oil companies. Also, while 122 (5.39%) of oil producing areas respondents barely agreed with the item, 6 (2.69%) of oil producing companies’ respondents barely agree, showing 2.70% divergence between the latter and the former. While 304 (13.43%) of host companies’ respondents agreed with this indicator, 5 (2.24%) of oil prospecting companies’ respondents agreed with the indicator, giving 11.19% discrepancy between the two parties. Furthermore, while 788 (34.81%) persons from the host communities strongly agreed, 01 (0.00%) of the oil prospecting companies’ staff strongly agreed with the seventh indicator, giving a dissension of 34.81% between the oil producing areas and oil exploration companies in the Niger Delta. While as much as 1002 (44.26%) respondents from the host communities absolutely agreed, 0 (0.00%) of oil companies workers absolutely agreed with the seventh indicator, giving 44.26% discordance between the two parties. The last two response options alone put together, shows that an overwhelming 1790 (79.07%) of the 2264 host communities’ respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed, only 0 (0.00%) of the 223 oil producing companies’ respondents strongly agreed and/or absolutely agreed that ‘lack of infrastructural development in the host communities largely cause conflicts between oil producing areas and the oil prospecting communities’. The margin of dissonance at these last two options alone between indigenes of oil producing areas and staff of oil producing companies is 79.07%. The entire response indicating a serious conflict between oil producing communities and oil producing companies in the Niger Delta is pictorially presented with clustered bar graph in Figure 7 for evident and unmistakable appreciation.

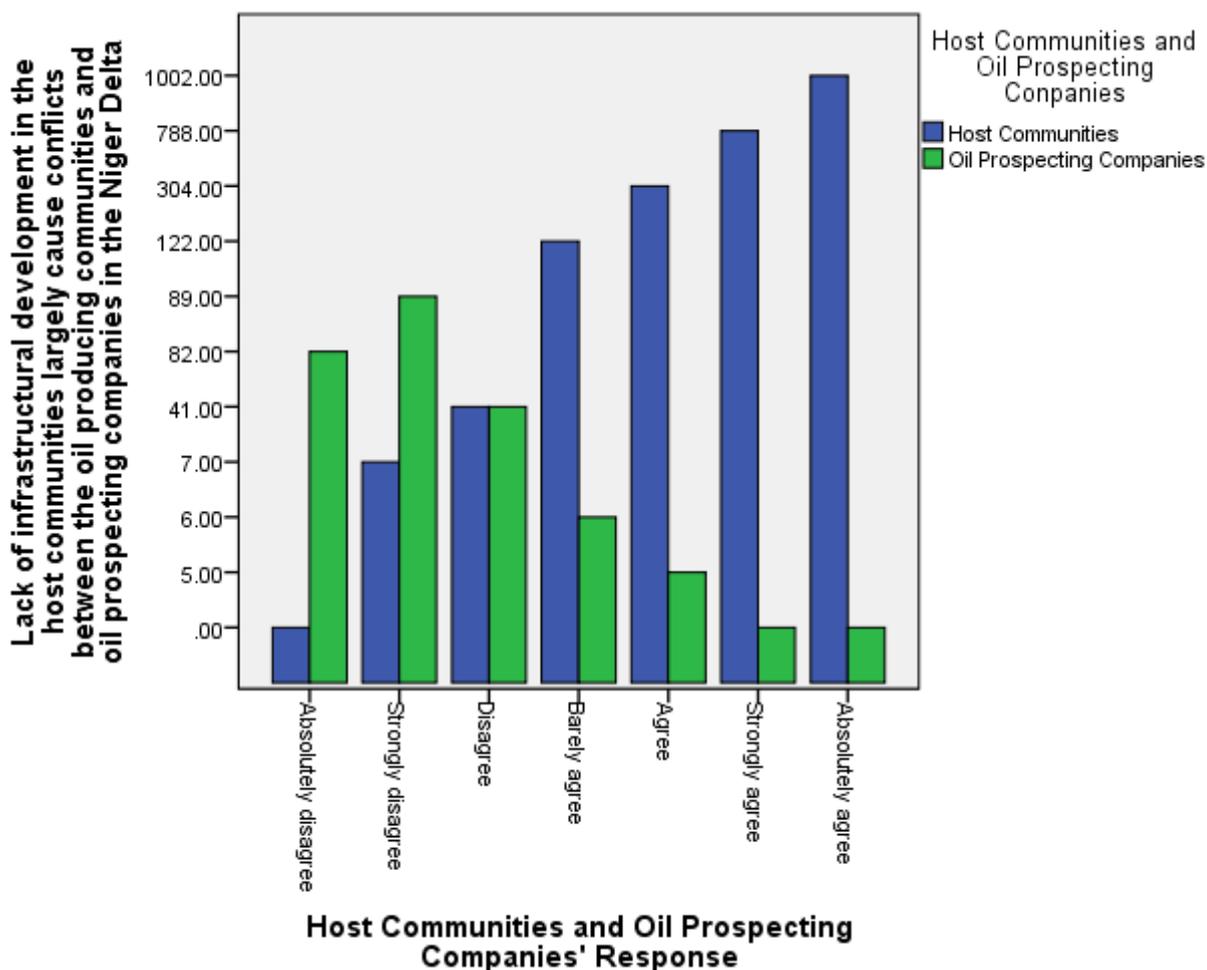


Figure 7: Clustered Bar Graph of answer to Research Question 7

The clustered bar graph in Figure 7 has pictorially shown at a glance that while the response of host communities on the seventh indicator of this study is highest at Absolutely Agree (1002) and keeps reducing sharply to the least at Absolutely Disagree (0); the response of oil prospecting companies, on the other hand, is high at Absolutely Disagree (82), highest at Strongly Disagree (89) and consistently reduces sharply to the least at Strongly Agree (0) and Absolutely Agree (0). This observed great dissension in the direction, dimension and magnitude of response by oil producing areas and oil prospecting companies is definitive evidence that the two parties have a fundamental discordance on the assertion that 'lack of infrastructural development in the host communities largely cause conflicts between oil producing areas and the oil prospecting communities.' That is, while the host communities doggedly hold that the total lack of infrastructural development in the oil-producing areas is a potent cause of conflicts between the oil companies and host communities; the oil prospecting companies in the Niger Delta are of an entirely contrary view. These opposing positions indicate considerable discontent with the corporate social responsibility management by the multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta. This is a definite evidence of massive conflict, suggesting brewing crisis between the two parties. It suffices, therefore, to deduce that conflict does exist between the host communities and oil companies in the Niger Delta for lack of physical infrastructural development in the oil-producing areas.

DISCUSSIONS

The crisis is a phenomenon that is ordinarily disastrous but marks a turning point in any organization. It has been established during this research that good crisis management is imperative for community acceptance and co-operation with the oil prospecting companies. In the Nigeria oil industry, it is astounding not to have not compelled the companies to give crisis management its pride of place in the general management philosophy in the industry. Corporate Social Responsibility that could be used to resolve existing conflict between the oil companies and their host communities is needed by the oil producing areas, but the oil companies do not want to adopt CSR to guarantee very peaceful and optimum operation of oil production. The results of this study have shown that for each of the seven indicators of CSR, there is an overwhelming disagreement between the oil prospecting companies and the host communities. The profoundly huge discrepancy between the oil companies and their host communities on each of the seven CSR for mutual peaceful coexistence between the two parties simply means that already the unwanted (violent conflict) is at work between the parties. While the oil prospecting companies feel that they have done enough to no avail in ensuring mutually peaceful operation of oil production activities in the Niger Delta, the oil-producing areas feel that for friendly and maximum operation of oil exploration and exploitation activities, the oil companies must do much more on each of the seven CSR indicator of this study.

This investigation has far and above everything, revealed the essential need for oil prospecting companies in the Niger Delta to actively practice excellent Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for peace to ultimately reign in the entire area and guarantee uninterrupted optimum operation of oil exploration, prospecting and production activities. This is firmly anchored on the findings that for each of the seven indicators of CSR, the oil producing areas are positively predisposed and absolutely or actively want the oil companies to practice; but the oil prospecting companies, for now, are having a diametrically opposite position.

It is pertinent to recall at this point that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in this investigation is an oil prospecting company's practices that utilize initiatives that mutually benefit the oil producing areas (host communities mainly, and the wider society) and the oil company. Such oil company fervently adopts these seven CSR indicators to guarantee optimal peace and maximum oil production.

1. None suppression of the host community. This requires granting attention and favorable consideration to initiatives from the host communities that are capable of improving the relationship between the oil producing areas and the oil producing areas.
2. Improvement of the quality of life in the host communities. This includes eradication of persistent poverty; provision of adequate employment opportunities to qualified indigenes of the oil-producing areas; location of the oil firms' headquarters in the oil producing areas and due payment of task to the hosting states.
3. None engagement in activities that threaten the very existence of the oil producing areas. Oil production operations need not be carried out in a way that will render farming lands infertile, fishing and drinking water are unsafe respectively for fish and humans.

Another example of such preventable activities is a proliferation of constant gas flaring throughout the Niger Delta.

4. Not causing serious environmental problems in the host communities. This deals with prevention of all preventable oil spillages in the oil producing areas. Timely changing of rusty oil pipelines that have outlived their expiration time could prevent oil spillage that is due to pipelines that could no longer withstand the oil flow pressure.

5. Prompt response to oil and gas pollutions when they unavoidably occur. Situations where oil spillage is not cleaned up for months, even years as in Ogoni land is contrary to effective CSR practice.

6. Meaningful participation in the human capital development of citizens of the oil producing areas. Sponsoring of oil producing indigenes to acquire university education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels; serious skills acquisition training for a sizeable number of indigenes; and letting some oil producing indigenes or even states to own some oil blocks are good CSR practices that oil prospecting companies can resolutely embark on in a sustainable manner.

7. Provision of infrastructural development in the oil-producing areas. Some necessary infrastructures for overall public utility could be built for host communities by oil producing companies as part of CSR.

An oil company with CSR shall live up to the stakeholders' expectations that the corporation is passionately responsible environmentally and socially in conducting its business. When every oil company in the Niger Delta practices good CSR, there shall not be any violent clash between the company and the host communities; peace shall reign supreme; oil production operations by the business shall go on very smoothly without any disruption. The oil company shall then be able to produce oil at its maximum production capacity, and Nigeria's oil exportation shall accelerate to the climax. The findings of this investigation were based on the seven indicators of CSR, and they primarily constituted the 16-points demand that the Niger Delta Stakeholders presented to President Buhari on the 1st of November, 2016, just three days ago (Sahara Reporters, 2016), courtesy of ethnographic research validity establishment that compelled the current investigators to from time-to-time, present the reports to the stakeholders for confirmation of credibility.

One high point noted during this study is that government and oil companies deploy the services of security agents to quell the crisis. The first research question was asked against the background that the military and other security agencies have continuously been used to intimidate the communities into docility. This has not worked very well world-over (Wei, 2011; Banasal, 2000; Catalyst Consortium, 2002; Canadian Government, 2014; Utting & Ives, 2006) because lasting mutually peace coexistence between oil prospecting companies and the oil producing areas can never be sustained or realized through military suppression (World Economic Forum, 2016; Stevens, Kooroshy, Lahn & Lee, 2013; Switzer, 2001) of all legitimate agitations by the host communities (Sahara Reporters, 2016; Brooks, 2013; Sun, 2010). Indigenes of the oil producing areas, like in other parts of the world (Habisch, Jonker, Wagner & Schmidpeter, 2005), overwhelmingly want CSR (Epstein-Reeves, 2010; Spence, 2011; Alamiyeseigha & Kpolovie, 2013; Oppewal, Alexander & Sulliwan, 2006; Deswal, 2015). The first research question of this study was also asked to establish whether or not the use of military suppression method of conflict resolution has achieved the desired objective of attaining the peak of mutual reputation management and corporate social responsibility by the oil companies. The implication of the first result of this study is that while there is a

general agreement by the oil producing communities that the use of force on the host communities has failed to achieve the desired conducive atmosphere for smooth oil and gas operations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria; the oil prospecting companies have a consensus that uses of military force in the oil producing areas has culminated in the desired conducive atmosphere for smooth exploration and exploitation of oil and gas in the Niger Delta. The divergent positions of the host communities and oil prospecting companies might have rather contributed markedly to the intermittent suppression of the host communities' agitation, which has hardened a few individuals from the host communities to become freedom fighters, MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta) (Wikipedia, 2013), and currently NDA (Niger Delta Avengers) (NigerDeltaAvengers, 2016); though wrongly referred to in the news media as militants (The Guardian, 7 November 2016).

The great gap between the views of the oil exploitation companies and the host communities indicate the existence of sick or weak community relations department and the virtual absence of CSR in the oil companies. This study established that component of a good crisis management lacked in the overall public (Community) relations administration of the companies. As a process, crisis management should start with issues management, and end with evaluation. This call for the establishment of the credible committee(s) to handle the crisis. This is the proactive management style. Unfortunately as was established, what is rather prevalent in the Niger Delta is a reactive management approach to the crisis. For example, a vast majority of the communities said the oil companies do not have an established useful communication link with them. The implication is that there are no means of feedback to listen to the communities. It is not enough to inform the press and the communities for that matter, of what you are doing without providing ways and means of also listening to them. Bombarding the communities, special interest groups and the media with information rather than communicating with them is counterproductive as the perception by the groups is that they are seen as, instead of actually, being good.

Furthermore, the communities agree that lack of infrastructure in the face of a display of wealth by the oil workers is a potent cause of frustration and conflict. The companies do not seem to know this. Adopting a pro-active crisis management would have exposed this underlying feeling of frustration.

Another sore point in the relationship between host communities and oil companies is in the area of oil spillage and control that has to do with environmental degradation. There is a sharp disagreement between the oil companies and the host communities. While the communities feel that oil production activities and their consequences have impoverished them, the companies believe what is lost in damages and spillage is paid for in compensation. In a question "oil companies compensate the communities fully whenever there is destruction to land and plants in the oil producing areas"; the overall response showed that while the host communities totally disagreed, the oil companies absolutely agreed. Just how on earth will oil pollution destroy a people's land, water and air, and by implication the people's means of livelihood, and the oil companies that caused it be boasting that compensation was fully paid while the people are dying (United Nations Environment Programme, 2016; World Economic Forum, 2016; International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, 2008)? This erroneous claim by the oil companies in the Niger Delta that the Federal government has accepted as the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth made the Niger Delta Avengers to remind the President that "we (oil producing areas) have been raped

for too long, general Muhammadu Buhari should face the reality of the Niger Delta question (Niger Delta Avengers, 2016).

It was also established that oil companies see their participation in the provision of infrastructure in the host communities as the sole responsibility of the Nigerian federal, state and local governments' and as a mere act of charity and not a responsibility of the oil prospecting companies that operate in the region. Corporate Social Responsibility that the oil producing areas want the oil companies to adopt primarily require the oil firms to participate in the development of the society actively (Business Dictionary, 2016; Deswal, 2015; Visser, Matten, Pohl & Tolhurst, 2008; Mallenbaker, 2004; Caramela, 2016). The oil companies in the Niger Delta needs to know that an act of charity does not merely achieve social approval from the host communities, but must be planned and sustained over time. The companies are unable to fully anticipate the impact of their activities on the lives of the people who naturally live in the oil producing areas. Concrete policies and programs need to be executed to ameliorate the suffering situation in the oil producing region. Furthermore, oil companies are still practicing the age great but obsolete idea that business is an economic institution whose only legitimate function is profit maximization and not social. Change is a great need and needed now. The oil companies in the Niger Delta should adopt and practice good CSR.

Finally, the paper has established that the achievement of a conducive operational environment is dependent on two major factors. The first is that the overall improvement of community relations by the oil companies will achieve significant support and encouragement by the host communities. Secondly, oil companies' participation in community development of the host communities will result to a major rural development and eliminate the frustration associated with non-availability of infrastructure. This will reduce tension in the industry and make the communities amenable to public relations management.

A crisis well managed marks a turning point in an organization, and this is achieved most of the time with the aid of effective communication. This paper has attempted to expose the nature of the conflict in the oil industry and its causes and effect on both parties. Crisis in the oil producing areas has been so violent, resulting in the loss of lives and properties on the side of host communities as well as oil companies. It is hoped that the practitioners will adopt excellent CSR practices and the theoretical framework of conflict resolutions discussed in the paper in resolving the recurring conflicts in the oil industry.

The exploration and production of oil in Nigeria has lasted for sixty years. This means sixty years of exploration of the host communities, and they have over the years felt deprived, frustrated, and expressed violent aggression as described by (Kpolovie, 2003). The oil companies say they have compensated the communities for whatever damage that it has done. They support their claims with the increasing figure of community relations budget. But the communities disagree. The battle line is drawn, and the only way forward as revealed by findings of this study is adoption and excellent practice of CSR as evidently expressed by the oil producing areas.

In reaction to a recent report commissioned by Shell which suggested that the company could be pulling out of the Delta when a Nigerian, Basil Omiyi was announced as Shell Nigeria Managing Director designate. Interestingly Omiyi accepted in an interview with CNN that their activities have contributed to the chaos in the Niger Delta. But affirming the Nigerian

paradox, in the same interview, he referred to the form of agitation in the delta as criminal. Now this is an abuse on the sensibility of the dislocated inhabitants' of the region. Host communities, however, hope that the present situation which has caused them to feel that the discovery of oil in their communities is a curse will give way to a feeling of blessing from when the oil companies will devotedly practice CSR.

Finally, excellent practice of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by the oil prospecting companies in the Niger Delta is absolutely recommended in line with the consistent and resolute call for it by the host communities and best practices in other parts of the world to ensure very smooth and disruption-free operation of oil production activities in the Niger Delta. The oil producing companies in the Niger Delta, like in other parts of the world, has the capability to discover, invent, create, advance, and transform the oil producing area. If used with good CSR practice, the accumulated wealth generated by oil exploration and production in the Niger Delta can bring to all persons in the area benefits of a safe environment, development and the opportunity to enhance the quality of life. It is only in such peaceful environment that production of oil can be maximized in Nigeria.

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