

Corporate Social Responsibility: Evolution, Controversies, and Practical Implications for Sino-Africa Relations: A Meta-Analysis

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**Abstract:** social responsibility has gained attention from media, academicians, politicians, practitioners and among business managers globally. More so, the increased economic engagement between China and Africa has heightened concerns about Chinese companies' social responsibility practices in the region. This article conducts a meta-analytic review of existing relevant literature on the evolution, controversies, and practical implications for corporate social responsibility in Sino-Africa relations. This review investigated the development of social responsibility and identified areas that will inform future studies. The study methodology was hinged on review of relevant articles on CSR and content analysis from of CSR reports from several Chinese companies operating in Africa. In conclusion, the authors argue that there is need for a consensus to have a working definition of corporate social responsibility that suits African perspectives. Furthermore, legislation of CSR in Africa could provide clear guidelines for Chinese companies operating in the region, particularly those that are smaller in size, and therefore do not often publish CSR reports and struggle to meet their CSR commitments.

**Keywords:** corporate social responsibility, evolution, controversies, Sino-Africa relations, Meta-analysis

## 1. Introduction

China is a key development partner for African nations. This paper was informed by the recent intensification in the engagements between China and African countries. The Sino- Africa relations has led to concerns about debt-trap diplomacy, geopolitical strategies, security issues and trade imbalances. In spite of the growing economic engagements, Chinese enterprises have faced challenges in Africa. Some of these challenges may be due to how these enterprises approach corporate social responsibility (CSR). Scholarship on Chinese companies Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) in Africa has been scattered and the purpose of this review is to identify gaps and contribute to the debate on Sino-Africa relations. There are challenges in the implementation of CSR given that its global practices are new in China (Wang, 2020) while in Africa it is an evolving concept (Idemudia, 2014). This implies that expectations of each generation and cultural practices have shaped our understanding of corporate social responsibility.

Previously, corporate social responsibilities (CSR) was encouraged internationally through activism targeting corporations, sustainable development educational programs and development of a regulation framework. Non-Market strategies such as the cultural believes have also played a key role in shaping CSR practices within corporations (Kaplan & Kinderman, 2017). Furthermore, economic and social pressures towards business enterprises to fulfil certain obligations deemed ethical by the populace have contributed to the spread of CSR practices through legislation (Berger-Walliser & Scott, 2018).

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section two of the paper reviews the evolution of CSR as it was evident that in the early centuries, influenced by the Christian religious philosophy care for the needy in society (Chaffee, 2017). In the 1960's CSR was influenced by the increased social awareness leading societal movements that were evident in the USA. The questions on limits of economic growth and its effect to the environment and human well-being encouraged a protest culture agitating for corporate responsibility (Carson, 1962). Other

proponents for CSR were due to increased population growth, pollution and depletion of natural resources (Porter et al., 2007).

Section three of the paper addresses the controversies of CSR in the world. It points out to the fact that there can be no generalizations about CSR because countries have different cultural practices and corporations have faced varied challenges therefore employing different approaches social responsibility. The discourse focuses on controversies in the definition of CSR and how it has been influenced by culture and societal expectations. Later, discussions on application of CSR in China, and how Chinese companies are exporting such practices abroad are provided. Contextualization of CSR practices to suit African perspectives was also reviewed.

To the contrary, other scholars were sceptical of the notion of CSR. Notably, Milton Friedman (1976), a renowned economist, gave in 1962 a particular perspective of the role of corporations in a free capitalist system in which firms should limit to the pursuit of economic benefits (Friedman, 1962). Friedman would further explore this notion in the article “*The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits*” published by Friedman, (1970) in which he saw CSR activities as inappropriate use of company’s resources that would result in the unjustifiable spending of money for the general social interest.

## 2.1 Evolution

The concept of social responsibility can be traced back to ancient Roman and pointed towards communities providing asylums, shelter for the needy, medical care and construction of orphanages. The subsequent centuries led to expansion of the concept as the English empire conquered new lands exporting social development laws to American colonies (Chaffee, 2017).

Later, emergency of the Christian religious philosophy in the eighteenth century led to a series of philanthropic works to address social inequality, poverty and ignorance concerning children and women labour (Carroll, 2008). The Victorian philanthropy religious inclination gave rise to a social consciousness towards humanism and by end of the eighteenth century, philanthropic works centred on welfare schemes seen in most of Europe and USA (Harrison, 1966). In the 1920’s and early 1930’s ,business leaders took up initiatives that balanced the enterprises need of making profits and meeting the needs of their customers, community and labourers (Carroll, 2008). Corporations were already seen as agents of social responsibility even before World War II (Clark, 1939).

The 1950’s and 1960’s marked an era of changing attitudes and approaches towards corporate social responsibility. Large corporations wielded power whose impact was visible in the society (Bowen, 1953). After World War II and through the 1950’s corporations societal responsibility was going beyond philanthropic activities (Carroll, 2008). CSR concepts in the 1970’s were influenced by the increasing awareness regarding environmental management, human rights and agitation for favourable working conditions which resulted to high expectation for businesses enterprises from the community. In as much as CSR became popular in the 1970’s its focus remained limited to environmental pollution and workers’ rights (Porter et al., 2007).

The unrestricted definition of CSR in the 1970’s led to debates about its operationalization in the 1980’s and early 1990’s hence it was accepted as a key component in the decision making processes within corporations (Jones, 1980). Carroll (1991) developed the “*Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility*” in 1991 which consisted of the four layers of corporate responsibility. Ideas of sustainable development were also reflected in this period and their influence on corporate behaviour. The creation of the European Environmental Agency in 1990 and the UN summit on the Environment and Development led to adoption of the Agenda 21 and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 represented a change in the understanding of CSR and as a result, international organizations and companies alike saw CSR as a way to balance the challenges and opportunities of the time and its institutionalization begun spreading globally.

In the year 2000, the adoption of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the creation of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) gave a new dimension to the understanding of social responsibility where broader responsibilities were placed on corporations, mainly in terms of human and labour rights, environmental management, anti-corruption and sustainable development. This opened the discussion around the benefits of

strategic CSR and by the early 2010's it was believed that companies can generate shared value while improving the firm's competitiveness through a holistic implementation of strategic corporate responsibility.

In the decade of the 2010's, the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015, reflected a new social contract in which corporations were expected to play a pivotal role in the global efforts to achieve the SDGs. Since then, the literature around CSR has focused on its implementation and its impact on specific areas of performance which can be linked to a certain extent to the SDGs while the understanding of CSR has remained centred on its potential to generate shared value.

### 2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility in China

China is playing an important role to the global economy. It is important to discuss CSR development and its application in China so as to understand her overseas application and how it can be contextualized to fit African perspectives. Lin, (2010) study indicates that in 2006 the Chinese corporate law was revised to formally include the concept of CSR. However, this mandate did not subject corporations to compulsory expenditure on CSR. A study by Gao, (2011) used content analysis on CSR reports of the year 2007 for listed Chinese companies in Shanghai and Shenzhen Security Exchange to evaluate features of CSR practices in China. He found out that 79% of the companies were willing to take up social responsibility and no firm reported a negative take on CSR. However, SOEs had a higher propensity to address social responsibility compared to private enterprises although private enterprises addressed stakeholders concerns better compared to SOEs. These arguments were also supported by a study done by Hu, Zhu, Tucker & Hu, (2018) found that CSR reporting in China varied considerably depending on the ownership of a company. To begin with, foreign direct investors in China promoted publication of CSR reports. In addition, Chinese SOEs were likely to publish CSR reports due to the positive effect the reports had on their stock market listing. Contrary to expectations, the research revealed that domestic investors maintained a neutral stance towards CSR reporting.

Similarly, another study on listed companies in China by Liu & Tian (2019) revealed that the requirement in law for mandatory disclosure of CSR reports increased investment efficiency thereby mitigating the risks of overinvestment particularly for industries that contributed significantly to environmental pollution. In the same line Chen, Hung & Wang, (2018) study notes that since 2008 corporations in China are subject to mandatory CSR reports of their operations. Chen et al., (2018) assertions revealed that CSR reporting led to a decrease in carbon emissions in China. Nevertheless, the study adds that such mandates resulted to a reduction in company returns which was not to the interest of shareholders.

Tan-Mullins & Hofman, (2014) argued that Chinese perceptions of CSR differ from the western perceptions in the sense that Chinese business managers believe that contributing to societal expectations such as donating to schools and hospitals; improving the economy; environmental management and complying with the law are the most essential corporate practices. While western companies have inculcated concepts of CSR which are tied up with ideals such as human rights and democracy. To this, Graafland & Zhang, (2014) added that most Chinese companies concentrate more on the economic aspect of CSR such as competitiveness. Expounding on this arguments, Wang, Huang, Gao, Ansett & Xu, (2015) in their paper on socially responsible leadership in Chinese firms' performance concluded that responsible leadership is essential for Chinese MNCs established abroad so as to build trustworthiness with local stakeholders.

Hsu, (2016) notes that in the recent past, Chinese firms have adopted international Corporate Social Responsibility practices. This he notes is aimed at gaining legitimacy as the firms venture into overseas markets. Chinese CSR comes in different forms such as corporate governance, environmental management and stakeholders' engagement. However, some firms carry out CSR as a voluntary activity. He further notes that CSR has also been impressed by Chinese firms due to other reasons such as accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001, the Chinese government recognizing the role businesses play in addressing policy shortcomings and businesses being used as a tool to overcome the neoliberal economy. Wang, Lai, Song, & Lu, (2018) study revealed that CSR practices in Chinese construction firms are suboptimal with improvements mainly on institutional environment and management efficiency. Jiang, (2020) contends that internationalization of institutions is not easy. He asserts that the creativity used by a corporation to succeed in China might not be applicable elsewhere because of different political climate and cultural practices and regulations also differ.

Chinese companies started by addressing employees working conditions, then harmonization of social and environmental concerns. As at 2012 70% of the largest 100 Chinese firms published CSR reports addressing employee relations, environmental commitments and product quality Li, Khalili, & Cheng, (2019). A paper by Zhao, Lee, & Moon, (2019) on employee response to CSR in China found that good employer-employee relations positively influenced CSR perception and employee identification with the company. There was no moderating effect between philanthropic activities and identification with the organization in China. Using the social exchange theory and a sample of 250 employees in China. Jia, Yan, Liu, & Huang (2019) study had similar findings with external CSR activities having a positive impact on employees work engagement and pride. Internal CSR had direct effects on the employees work due to perceived organizational support. Sun et al., (2020) study between 2012-2016 using OLS postulated that employee's level of education positively affected CSR implementation activities of a company. This is an indication of the important role employees' play on CSR implementation of a company especially if it is well understood.

Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) has also received a lot of attention in China. Huang, Wu, & J, (2017) highlight that firms in China are getting pressure from environmental regulators, customers concerns and the media to protect the environment. Although, internal factors such as CSR performance of the firm on pollution control guide their actions. Wang, Lu, & Qiao (2021) investigated the link between CSR and air pollution in 482 listed Chinese companies from 2014 to 2017, the study concluded that companies contributing more to air pollution had a higher CSR performance and the executive management were more concerned about CSR especially if they had political ties. Li, Khalili, & Cheng (2019) analysed the trend in CSR and productivity in China. They found out that environmental and social responsibility had positive impact on a firm's performance however this varied from province to province. Companies operating in regions with lower economic development (GDP) had less incentives in implementation of CSR initiatives compared to developed or rather first tier regions.

Wang, (2020) summarized the history of CSR in China where the starting stage was (2001-2004), hovering stage (2005-2007) where enterprises started responding appropriately to the CSR system, and the spurting stage (2008-2012). The spurting stage refers to the year 2008, when CSR was adopted by major enterprises through suggestions made by State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC). During the improving stage (2013-2018). Improving stage resulted to 120 Chinese companies being listed in the Fortune 500 magazine by 2018. This was close to the USA companies in the Fortune 500 magazine list at 126. As a result, Chinese firms strived to improve in terms of technology, management, and internationalization hence fully incorporating CSR in their operations. Wang further gives insights of the role played by non-profit organizations such as institute of Public and Environmental Affairs (IPE), Alashan SEE Ecological Association and China Social Responsibility 100 Forum to CSR development. He concludes his study by giving highlights of overseas fulfilment of social responsibility by Chinese enterprises using Alibaba as an example.

### 3.0 Controversies

#### 3.1 Overall Concepts and Definitions

The first scholarly definition of CSR was done by Bowen in 1953 as cited in Chaffee (2017). Bowen (1953) defined CSR as business leaders' actions that align with values of a society in which they operate. The definition continually expanded in the 1960' although it was confined to labourers, management and business aim to make profits. Its definition was unrestricted through the 1970's which led to CSR being unclear to different people and businesses. The first recorded unified definition of CSR was done by Carroll (1979) who categorized CSR in four dimensions namely; economic, legal, ethical and discretionary. Later in the 1990's adoption of Agenda 21 and UNFCCC led to alterative perspectives such as the stakeholder theory, corporate social performance and corporate citizenship, and even when they were consistent with the prevailing CSR understanding, their use created an uncertainty with regards to the definition of CSR and by the end of the decade the concept lacked a globally accepted definition and unclear boundaries (Lantos, 2001). The definitions of CSR of the 2000's reflected the belief that corporations had a new role in society in which they needed to be responsive to social expectations (Porter & Kramer, 2007).

The scope and way in which CSR is defined has remained contentious in academia, society and business. The contentions stems from a business' goal to remain profitable but still operate within the ethics of a society. This calls for a working definition in line with the business's CSR practices and the society's expectations Wan-Jan,



(2006). It implies that CSR definition may also vary from country to country depending on the existing conditions such as economic development and societal expectations. This raises the question as to whether CSR practices should differ in developing and developed countries Windsor, (2019). A clear definition is required so as to analyse CSR strategies; however, such a definition cannot be universal. World Bank (2003), defined CSR as the commitment of an enterprise to contribute to sustainable economic development while working with employees, families and the community, improving their standard of living and contributing to economic development.

It is only until 1950s that Bowen, (1953) defined a set of social responsibilities a business has to account for because its operation affect stakeholders, customers, employees and the general societal well-being. The scholarly definition of CSR led to Bowen being referred to as the father of corporate social responsibility. Crowther & Aras (2008) note that CSR involves economic, legal, ethical and the natural environment. They argue that broadest definition of CSR entails what is and what should be and the interaction between MNCs, the governments and its citizens. Lin (2010) defined Corporate Social Responsibility as activities a company undertakes that are beyond the lawfully laid down obligations and regulations in a given community or country. Lin further notes that this does not entail maximization of shareholders profits but rather doing more in line with environmental management, social obligations, employee's relations and so forth. Sheehy, (2015) defined CSR as the way international private businesses internally regulate their activities in order to contribute to societal needs through philanthropy, charity or activism. Berger-Walliser & Scott, (2018) argues that the definition of CSR has evolved in the modern era. This means the voluntary aspect of CSR has changed to legislation of CSR by governments. In their study using case studies from USA, Britain, India and China. Berger-Walliser et al (2018) concluded that CSR is no-longer voluntary rather it is part of a company's commitment to societal, ethical and environmental concerns. These are some of the concepts widely acceptable in scholarship and organizations with regard to CSR definitions. These areas are not within the scope of the company's activities but rather to those whose interests are affected by the day to day operations of the company.

Smith (2011) defined CSR according to the following dimensions; first, environmental management which entails for example, a cleaner environment, less pollution, green energy, preservation of the natural habitat. Second, Society which entails the relationship between the enterprise and society where philanthropy, charity, cleaning are some of the activities. Third, the economy where socio-economic or financial aspects, including describing CSR in terms of a business operation where a business contributes to development and its own profitability. Fourth, Stakeholder engagement which involves Interactions with their employees, suppliers, customers and communities. Lastly, voluntary work, which are actions not prescribed in law, hence a business needs to act beyond its legal obligations. Corporate Social Performance (CSP) was later incorporated in the study of CSR. Wood, (1991), Xu, Yang, Quan & Lu, (2014) defined Corporate Social Performance as the outcomes of an organization or business in relation to its practices and policies as the business interacts with the society and other stakeholders. Again Wood, (2018) argues that CSP can also involve unintended externalities of a business activities. The conceptual development of CSP involves fighting poverty, legal studies, economics and other social sciences. Wang & Chen, (2017) note that CSP has been used by business executives to attract investors, society and customers as well as for competitive advantage to obtain investment contracts. In the recent past, there has been a shift from the traditional view of CSP which focused on financial performance of the business to sustainable development concerns such as environmental management.

### 3.2 Contextualizing CSR to Suit the African Perspectives

Corporate Social Responsibility should then be defined and contextualized to suit the African perspectives. Freeman & Hasnaoui, (2010) note that CSR is a dissected concept therefore the African context should involve a business operating within the set law, supporting social activities, being economically profitable, contributing resources towards certain philanthropic activities, encouraging talent development and promoting ethical ideals. The aforementioned themes need enough attention in Africa for CSR concepts to align with their societal expectations. Dartey-Baah & Amponsah-Tawiah, (2011) contend that CSR is similar to other concepts such as democracy, human rights and justice which are being advanced in Africa by the western governments. This shows how important CSR should be to Chinese enterprises in Africa so as to sustain their operations in the long run. CSR in Africa can be part of the solution affecting the region due to underdevelopment (Idemudia, 2014).

Carroll (1991), Places economic viability as the foremost and pivotal aspect of CSR in Africa. Second, the legal responsibility. Third, the ethical responsibility and lastly, the philanthropic activities of multinational companies. This may be due to high unemployment rates as highlighted by (Idemudia, 2014). The International Labor Organization 2020 report on global employment trends indicate that the combined male and female youth unemployment rate stood at 13.7 percent in Africa. It is important to note that in the recent past, the themes presented above compete in that environmental sustainability and employees' relations are also taking centre stage in Africa. Choongo, (2017) study on CSR in sub-Saharan Africa, for instance found that there is a relationship between CSR performance and financial health of an enterprise in Zambia. The study also argued that corporate reputation and employee commitment had partial significance on the firm's performance over time in sub-Saharan Africa.

Cheruiyot & Onsando, (2016) argue that the concept of CSR in Africa has been misunderstood in that the term has been used interchangeably with its synonyms such as corporate governance. This has made definition of CSR in Africa to lack clarity making it possible for multinational corporations to take advantage of the lacuna thereby only reacting to emergencies like food supply to specific areas in times of distress and donations both in cash or otherwise which does not reflect MNCs long term strategies on CSR in Africa. In as much as CSR practices are the most legitimate ways of justifying a MNCs operation in Africa, the unique political and socio-economic conditions of African countries provides a multidimensional nature to CSR application hence need to promote the fluid approaches. They argue that challenges in Africa stem from poverty and inequality, communicable diseases and human rights therefore CSR concepts should endeavour to address these concerns. Furthermore, they propose that theories like Ubuntu and practices such as "harambees" can be used to fill the gap left by MNCs in approaching CSR on the continent.

On the other hand Nyuur, Ofori & Debrah (2014) also argued that contextualization of CSR in Africa should be addressed beyond the definitional and theoretical contestations that have always dominated the CSR discourse. Instead the paper suggests that focus should be on the foundation on which CSR is build. Surveys from different Sub Saharan African countries indicated that the way CSR is understood and its application differs in different contexts. This means adoption of ideas from developed countries will end up diluting the importance and impact of CSR in Africa. The study shifted from the definitional debate of CSR and instead focused on how MNCs can manage their link with the community in different settings according to the company's value chain

#### 4.0 Research Design and Methodology

The study adopted a meta-analysis of existing evidence based research literature and findings which were systematically reviewed. Multiple studies were selected with the focus on corporate social responsibility. Selection of studies was based on the quality of the approach to CSR as discussed in the articles. These articles generally addressed the theme of this article: evolution, controversies and the Sino-Africa relations. Additionally, these papers were more inclined to employee relations, environmental management, and philanthropic activities. The selection of papers applied intuition where attention was given to relevance, evidence based, publication rigor, and recent trends in CSR.

Content analysis of CSR reports from several Chinese multinationals operating in Africa was done. These companies included; the Sinohydro Corporation sustainable development policy, China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), China Road and Bridge Corporation, China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), China Henan International Cooperation Group Company Limited, China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC). The companies CSR practices were recorded and analysed in line with the reviewed studies. These companies also had webpages for official communication on their social responsibility practices and vision. The most applied CSR practices by the Chinese companies were recorded.

#### 5.0 Discussions and Practical implications

China's Belt and Road Initiative and venturing abroad campaigns led to the adoption of CSR practices by Chinese multinationals in order to become internationally competitive. As pointed out earlier, there are different expectations by the communities, stakeholders and even corporations on implementation of CSR in different countries. An assessment of CSR reports by major Chinese companies in Africa reveal the following: Sinohydro

Corporation sustainable development policy highlights CSR activities such as business accountability, acting in an ethical and fair manner in its contracts and operations, creating long term goals fostering career development, compliance with the rule of law, respect local culture, religions and customary practices, preserve biodiversity, effective communication and response to complaints. China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) CSR reports aims at putting a human face in their operations by ensuring quality of infrastructure and services provided, transparency in their operations, abiding by local laws and regulations, creation of local employment and nurturing professionals, engagement with local small and medium-sized suppliers, improving ecological balance and reduce negative environmental impact through construction of green regions they operate.

China Henan International Cooperation Group Company Limited Social responsibility in Tanzania involves; support for local government and general public, providing employment opportunities to people in the host country and improving the local economy. China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) CSR reports indicate the company's participation in disaster relief and rescue, green development, maternal and child care, education improvement, and annual publication of reports. China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) global responsibility reports indicates the company has 99 projects in Africa, with concerns for environmental protection, transparency in their operations and employee, customers and suppliers relations. China Road and Bridge Corporation social responsibility framework and practices include; delivering excellent projects, green technology, Protection of the local ecology, addressing employees interests, providing timely aid to host countries, promoting cultural & education exchanges.

### 6.0 Controversies and Arguments

According to CSR reports analysed, job creation and environmental management are key focus areas that Chinese companies engage in, in their social responsibility programs in Africa. They have also focused on delivery of quality products, infrastructure and services. This raises the question on whether CSR programs by Chinese companies target the vulnerable or could it be that the programs are only meant to foster their image in Africa. This study has implications for future studies on Chinese CSR in Africa. Such studies could provide insights into the motivation behind those CSR programs, expectations of stakeholders on investment decisions and transparency in CSR activities. The authors expect that the contextualization CSR concepts and practices within the African context will help in broadening the theoretical implications of CSR in developing countries. This is because of the positive externalities that accompany these projects in terms of job creation, skills and technology transfer, economic growth and improved bilateral relations between Africa and China.

Review of literature leads the authors to argue that African governments need to come up with relevant policies to capture CSR practices that will suit the needs of her people while drawing lessons from the international CSR policies. This simply means that governments should act like facilitators to encourage implementation of CSR activities by Chinese companies in their countries. The governments can also share knowledge about good CSR practices through stakeholders' forums and employment of simple tools as indicators of CSR. Government needs to put in place structural reforms so as to encompass CSR practices in the development agenda. This implies that CSR activities might evolve from voluntary practices to legislation. Legislation practices have come into practice in China, USA, Britain and other major economies around the world. The business environment has also become more complex with new CSR approaches required by organizations

Previous research on CSR has uncovered various research gaps (Carroll 1999; Lee 2008; Secchi 2007). Lee (2008) highlights that recent research and conceptualization of CSR has been on macro societal effects, and its impact on the organization processes and performance. The theoretical discourses have been ethically oriented and normative in nature with arguments inclined to the study of managerial practices. Despite the well-accepted belief that CSR enables organizations to meet their stakeholder obligations, various unresolved issues remain.

Many organizations still struggle to adhere to their CSR obligations, therefore, making it necessary to formulate standards through evidence based research especially on Chinese companies CSR approaches. Recommendations emanating from studies should reflect societal expectations, theoretical knowledge and managerial realities. This meta-analysis points to research gaps at organizational and managerial levels analysis of CSR. The review of the evolution, proponents, controversies and methodologies in CSR provides timely, reasoned, questions that have

gone unanswered on performance of Chinese companies' overseas in the field of CSR practices specifically in Africa.

## 7.0 Conclusion

The concept of CSR is not well understood in Africa. There is also need for future studies to contextualize CSR to suit African perspectives in as much as these studies focus on International CSR practices and policies. Sustainable development is also still a contentious issue in Africa and linking SDGs to CSR practices will be good for comprehensive policy formulation. Foreign investments need to play a major role in CSR practices by balancing the different needs of stakeholders to fulfil their purpose. There in need to further examine FDI and CSR in Africa. Future studies could focus on the entire local communities where Chinese companies' construction projects are carried out. This shall help in capturing an in-depth perception of people about Chinese projects and their CSR engagements with the community so as to identify areas of improvement

## Conflict of Interest

There is no potential competing interests by the authors

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