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Stakeholder Management In The Sustainability Of Corporate Social Responsibility Projects – A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Firms employ corporate social responsibility (CSR) to influence stakeholder perceptions and positively induce desirable business outcomes. The mechanism through which stakeholder management affects the sustainability of CSR projects has been under-explored despite the burgeoning literature on corporate social responsibility. In response, we systematically review empirical studies on stakeholder management in the sustainability of corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects to assess the status quo of literature to inform future direction in this study area. Four databases, including Scopus, Web of Science (WOS), Ebsco Host and Google Scholar, were searched to identify relevant articles published over the last two decades (January 2000 to November 2023). Peer-reviewed journal publications were systematically reviewed to come up with the findings of this study. The findings highlight that firms practice stakeholder management as part of delivering CSR projects. It also revealed the complexity of stakeholder management within the various sectors, with its stakeholder pool affecting CSR project sustainability. However, there is a need for more evidence of this finding since there were only a few relevant empirical publications in the literature to support this position. The study will draw CSR practitioners' attention to the fact that comprehensive stakeholder management is essential for the sustainability of CSR projects. This study used the systematic review based on clearly defined transparent processes and criteria to aggregate knowledge on the status quo of stakeholder management to ensure the sustainability of CSR projects.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility (CSR), stakeholder management, sustainability, sustainable CSR projects, review.

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Introduction

Businesses allocate resources to undertake corporate social responsibility in society to meet stakeholder expectations and gain their trust despite their focus on profit objectives (Foss and Klien, 2018). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is businesses' obligation to society and stakeholders who are influenced and affected by corporate policies and practices (Kowalczyk and Kucharska, 2020). This voluntary process involves the interactions between companies and multiple stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, competitors, local communities, and citizens who are impacted or impact the operations of companies (Sachs and Kujala, 2021). Since communities have relief expectations from companies, corporate bodies are mandated to fulfil these expectations. Lewa (2020) has suggested that society tends to reward organisations in different ways when seen as socially responsible.

Pressures from stakeholder groups such as civil society groups and nations have forced several companies to change their policies toward achieving CSR. Also, for businesses to survive and grow within their operating environment, they need to consider stakeholders' expectations and safeguard the sustainability of the environment (Taghian *et al*., 2015). Thus, in addition to profit-making objectives, companies allocate resources for social investments in societies (Ansu-Mensah *et al*., 2021) and also find a balance between profitability and contributing positively to the sustainability of the society in which they operate (Marinina, 2019). The importance of stakeholder management in organisational activities, including CSR, cannot be overemphasised. This has been amply revealed through numerous research in stakeholder management and other constructs such as value creation (Freudenreich *et al*., 2020), innovation (Alverez and Sachs, 2021), CSR and sustainability (Kulkarni and Aggarwal, 2022). Stakeholder management involves identification, planning, managing, and monitoring stakeholder engagement (PMI, 2023). Globally, managing stakeholders is complex and challenging due to the diverse characteristics of multiple stakeholders, including their expectations, needs, interests, and power (Nguyen and Mohamed, 2020). Many businesses have altered their policies and operations and integrated the idea of CSR backed by stakeholder management to protect their hard-earned reputation and promote business sustainability (Hasan *et al*., 2018). Thus, companies and stakeholders, including their host communities, mutually benefit from companies' operations through CSR and the sustainability of such CSR initiatives. According to Kiesnere and Baumgartner (2019), the sustainability of projects and their outcomes ensure that the gains from such projects are maintained over a long time. This is what justifies the investment, both financially and socially, in a project. The sustainability and success of CSR initiatives are affected by barriers to stakeholder involvement and engagement in CSR formulation initiatives and thus require further research attention (Fatima and Elbanna, 2023).

The individual concepts of stakeholder management and CSR have been widely studied (Dmytriyev and Freeman, 2021). Previous studies have focused on several areas of CSR, including stakeholder management and CSR (Adomako and Trans, 2022) and the relationships

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between sustainable development and CSR (Shayan *et al.*, 2022). However, research on the linkage between the concepts of stakeholder management and the sustainability of CSR projects is still evolving (Caroll and Brown, 2018). Though there is a relationship between the two concepts, it also involves sacrificing smart business goals since it draws on the business' resources (Caroll and Brown, 2018). For companies to effectively capitalise on stakeholder management to ensure the full benefits of CSR initiatives are reaped through the sustainability of CSR projects, there is a need to undertake studies on stakeholder management within the context of the sustainability of CSR projects. Thus, this study aims at finding the state of stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR projects. The study will address the following research question: What is the state of knowledge of stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR projects? Knowledge of the state of stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR projects will serve as a benchmark for recommendations for improving the sustainability of CSR projects. Also, areas for further studies will be identified. The first part of this study presents a review of extant literature relevant to the subject matter. This is followed by methodology, then a discussion of findings and results. The paper ends with conclusions and recommendations.

Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR initiative is one of the strategies firms employ to positively influence stakeholder perceptions and induce desirable business outcomes. CSR activities and their sustainability bring benefits such as skilled workforce, good reputation, and relationships with stakeholders of companies (Guo and Lu, 2021). Although voluntary, many firms have embraced CSR because it offers an avenue for corporate excellence, leading to repeated and sustainable business. Many firms are involved in various categories of philanthropy-related CSR projects, charitable donations to local communities, advocacy, environmental preservation efforts and volunteering programmes (Abdelhalim and Eldin, 2019). This list of CSR projects is not exhaustive. Other CSR projects organisations tend to engage in include the provision of social infrastructure in host communities (for example, provision of schools, boreholes, and health posts), charitable donations to a good cause (example donation of school items), activities that promote sustainable development and anti-poverty initiatives (example advocacy programmes such as awareness programme on HIV/AIDS and breast cancer) among others (Serfontein-Jordaan and Dlungwame, 2022; Hopkin, 2016)

Sustainability in CSR Projects

The term "sustainability" comes from the concept of "sustainable development". According to the Brundtland Commission (World *Commission* on Environment and Development), sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (UN, 1987). This involves a process in which resource exploitation, investment direction, the orientation

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of technological development, and institutional change are congruent with future and present needs. Following the work of the Brundtland Commission, a broader and more acceptable concept of sustainability has emerged based on the triple bottom line (TBL) of environmental, economic, and social dimensions (Elkington, 1998). There is no universal definition of sustainability. There are over one hundred (100) definitions of the concept of sustainability, and they all generally agree that the broader TBL of sustainability needs to be simultaneously balanced. The concept of sustainability thus hinges on the triple bottom line (social, environmental, and economic dimension), necessitating a new perspective for projects (Martens and Carvalho, 2016; Marcelino-Sádaba *et al*., 2015). Rather than focusing solely on economic interest, the concept of sustainability considers the triple bottom line (TBL) as the basis for achieving short and long-term success through rational use of resources, meeting present human needs without harming future generations (Silvius and Schipper, 2014; Elkington, 1998). There has been a continuous drive to incorporate sustainability effectively in all fields since the 1970s (Marcelino-Sadaba *et al*., 2015; Elkington, 1998; UN, 1987). Stakeholder management is critical to the sustainability of projects and organisations (Schaltegger and Burritt, 2018).

The concept of sustainability can be looked at from the project level, organisational level and global level (for example, the sustainable development goals level), among others. According to Silvius and Schipper, 2014), incorporating sustainability into projects can be referred to as project sustainability management. Project sustainability can be defined as the planning, monitoring and controlling of project delivery and support processes with due consideration for social, environmental and economic aspects of the life-cycle of the project resources, processes, deliverables and effects aimed at realising benefits for stakeholders and performed in a transparent, fair and ethical way that includes proactive stakeholder participation (Silvius and Schnipper, 2014). Sustainability studies in projects are still evolving (Khalifeh *et al*., 2020). In the context of CSR projects, there are two different but related perspectives on incorporating sustainability into projects, that is, project process sustainability and product or outcome sustainability (Khalifeh *et al*., 2020; Aarseth *et al*., 2017). Whereas project process sustainability relates to the sustainability of the project processes and interrelated activities, project product sustainability is related to the sustainability of the project outcomes or deliverables (Carvallho and Rabechini, 2017; Kivila *et al*., 2017). Identifying and formulating CSR initiatives, among others, falls under CSR project process sustainability, whilst outcomes such as enhancing corporate reputation fall under product outcome sustainability. Incorporating sustainability into projects is still emerging with many unanswered questions, particularly the relationship between sustainability and other constructs, such as stakeholder management, which still lacks empirical evaluation (Martinez-Perales et al., 2018; Marcelino-Sadaba *et a*l., 2015).

Stakeholder Management and Sustainability of CSR Projects

According to PMI (2023), a stakeholder is an individual, group, or organisation that may

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affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a project, programme, or portfolio's decision, activity, or outcome. One of the main reasons stakeholders are taken into account in organisational practices is because an organisation's capacity to generate value and become sustainable relies on its capacity to effectively manage and balance the interests and expectations of its stakeholders (Freeman *et al.*, 2010). However, the past twenty years have seen a change in emphasis from meeting the demands of all stakeholders to interactively working together to generate value and address sustainability challenges (Freudenreich *et al*., 2020; Freeman *et al.*, 2017). Owners, customers, employees, indigenous communities, suppliers, distributors, academics, NGOs, the state, and media companies are just a few of the essential groups of stakeholders (Freeman and Dmytriyev, 2017).Project stakeholder management includes processes required to identify stakeholders, analyse their needs, expectations, wants, interests, power, influence, and impact on the project, and develop appropriate management strategies for effectively engaging stakeholders in the project decisions and execution (PMI, 2023). The key processes for stakeholder management include identifying stakeholders and planning, managing, and monitoring their engagement. Thus, one of the cardinal processes of stakeholder management is stakeholder engagement (Clevenger and MacGregor, 2019). Stakeholder engagement involves an organisation's efforts to actively involve interested parties in its operations for the benefit of all parties involved (Amoako, 2017). Communicating and passing on information to stakeholders is not enough; proactively engaging stakeholders is crucial to sustainability (Aggarwal and Singh, 2019). Instead of enhancing the organisation's impact, discretionary CSR and stakeholder involvement reduce its strategic impact and sustainability (Asante *et al*., 2019). Literature clarifies that stakeholder management is vital to CSR (Park *et al*., 2014). Effective stakeholder management is essential for the implementation and sustainability of CSR projects (Asu-Mensah *et al*., 2021), and inconsistent stakeholder management reduces the sustainability of CSR initiatives (Ihugba, 2012).

Research Methodology

The research question was addressed using systematic literature review (SLR) method as this method is replicable, robust, rigorous, and transparent in accessing relevant articles from a vast number of publications, screening and appraising them (Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Aarseth *et al.*, 2017). The choice of SLR was to assist in identifying existing patterns, themes and future directions in the subject area (Fink, 2019; Snyder, 2019). From a literature review on SLR of stakeholder management and CSR (Damoah et al., 2019; Olanipekun et al.,2020) and, to the authors' knowledge, none focused on stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR.There are several ways of carrying out SLR (Higgins *et al.*, 2023; Xiao and Watson, 2019; Tranfield *et al.*, 2003). The SLR was carried out by identifying, screening, selecting, extracting and appraising relevant literature based on guidelines outlined by Linnelucke *et al.* (2020) and Tranfield *et al.* (2003). These guidelines follow three main stages, viz planning the review, conducting the review, and reporting and disseminating the review.

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Planning the Review

The scope of the study is to review relevant articles on stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR projects to assess the status quo of literature to inform future direction in this study area. Thus, the study aims to synthesise and summarise relevant literature to understand the state of knowledge in this subject area and provide insight for future research direction. The inclusion and exclusion criteria adopted for the study are summarised in Table 1. These criteria were derived from the research question and objective (Linnenluecke *et al.*, 2020). Regardless of their impact factor, peer-reviewed journals were adopted for the study to ensure all relevant data were included (Khalifeh *et al.*, 2020). Books and book chapters were also included in the study, as Transfield et al. (2003) and Shannon (2002) have stated that SLRs should not just focus on journals because they do not contain all published relevant materials. Only English content or studies were considered to avoid misinterpretation of other languages (Qazi and Appolloni, 2022). The study was opened to CSR in all sectors, including mining, banking, manufacturing, and construction, to ensure adequate data was obtained. The study period was limited to 2000 to November 2023. The early 2000s marked a significant and focal point in the emphasis on the need to understand CSR from stakeholders' perspective, and thus, the year 2000 was adopted as the starting point of the SLR (Chaturvedi *et al.*,2022; Morgeson *et al.*, 2013). Also, Homer and Gill (2022), in their study on "How CSR is described in keywords", found that CSR search became mainstream in the early 2000s.

Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
1. Journal/ Document Type	Peer-reviewed journals (articles, book chapters, books and conference papers)	All documents that fall outside those in the inclusion criteria (for example, magazines, dissertations, research reports)
2. Language	English	Any other language
3. Time of Publication	2000 – November 2023	Any other outside 2000 -November 2023
4. Focus	Stakeholder management and sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR)	Documents not relevant to addressing the research question

Four leading multidisciplinary academic databases were chosen for the literature search since no single database includes all published materials (Fobbe and Hilleftofth, 2021; Linnenluecke et al., 2019; Xiao and Watson, 2019). These include Scopus, Web of Science (WOS), EBSCO Host (Academic Search Complete and Business Source Complete) and Google

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Scholar (using Publish and Perish interface). This was done to ensure reliability and rigour in searching for relevant articles on stakeholder management and sustainability in CSR. Those databases were selected for their comprehensive coverage and indexing of relevant journals (Damoah *et al*., 2019). Also, Scopus and WOS have been recognised as one of the largest databases of peer-reviewed literature with high-quality journals and providing advanced search functions (Fobbe and Hilleftofth, 2021; Gusenbauser and Haddaway, 2020).

The keywords for the study were selected based on the research question and the literature review of relevant studies on stakeholder management, CSR and sustainability of CSR in Section 2 above. Three keyword themes and related words were combined using boolean operators "OR", "AND", and wildcard (asterisk sign - *) in developing the search strings shown in Table 2 below. This search string was used in operationalising the search. The Preferred Reporting Item for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were adopted for the search and reporting.

Table 2: Search String

Keyword Theme	Related Words	Search String
Stakeholder Management	Stakeholder Engagement	"stakeholder management" OR "stakeholder engagement"
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)		"corporate social responsibility" OR csr
Sustainability		sustainability OR sustain*
Final Search String: ("stakeholder management" OR "stakeholder engagement") AND ("corporate social responsibility" OR csr) AND (Sustainability OR sustain*)		

Conducting the Review

This review stage involves identifying and selecting relevant studies, conducting quality assessment, data extraction, analysis and synthesis (Tranfield *et al*., 2003; Linnenluecke *et al*., 2020). The final string generated in the planning stage was customised for each database and used to operationalise the search and identification of relevant studies in each database using the PRISMA guidelines. The search results are shown in Figure 1. The search across the four databases was carried out in November 2023. The initial search of the four databases yielded a total of 1533 documents. Refining the initial database results using the relevant inclusion and exclusion criteria (publication period – 2000 to November 2023, peer-reviewed document type and English language) resulted in 1400 documents. This is shown in Figure 1, together with the breakdown for each database. Combining the results from the four databases created some duplicates, which were removed.

The removal of these duplicates, the title/abstract screening and full-text screening to determine which documents to include in the study are all shown in the PRISMA flow diagram in Figure 1. This process was carried out with the assistance of the Rayyan software

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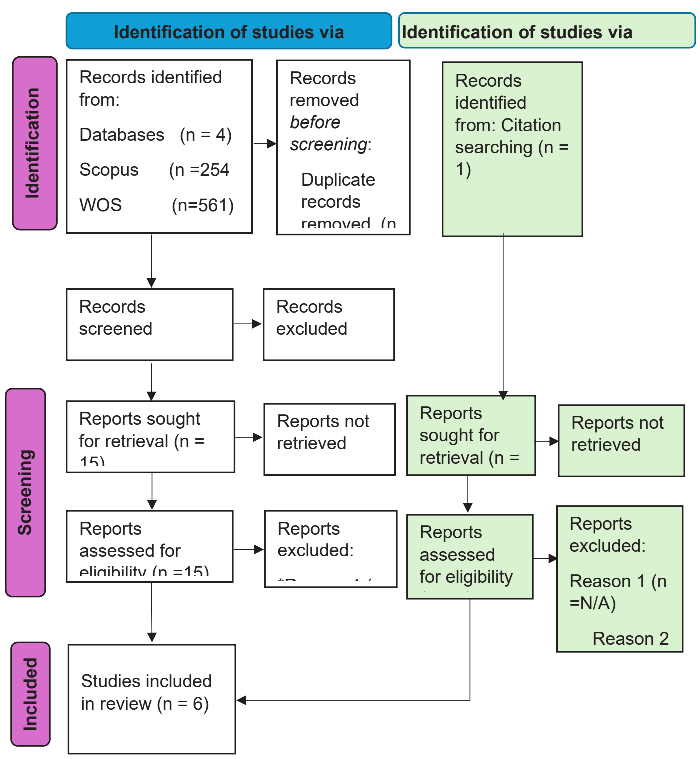
(Qatar Computing Research Institute - QCRI). Also, Mendeley Desktop software was used to manage all the references. Five hundred and fifty-nine (559) duplicate documents were removed, leaving 841 publications for screening. Title/abstract screening was carried out on the remaining 841 publications. Following the title/abstract screening, 826 documents were removed largely because they referred to topics on stakeholder management, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) that were not within the study's scope and will thus not assist in addressing the research question. A few of the documents were also review papers and conceptual. The remaining 15 documents were read in full to make a determination on the inclusion in the study. Also, a forward and backward search (Webster and Watson, 2002) was conducted on the relevant articles among the 15 publications, and this yielded one additional relevant article (Ihugba, 2012) from the Serfontein-Jordaan (2022) reference list. The decision to include or exclude was made based on the publication's relevance in addressing the research question (Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Majd et al., 2015). This resulted in the final sample of six (6) publications (5 peer-reviewed articles and a book chapter) included in the study. These six selected publications focused on stakeholder management, sustainability and CSR or sustainability of CSR projects. The fact that six (6) relevant publications were included in the study shows that the subject area of stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR projects is under-researched. This final sample included in the study is similar to a sample size of less than ten (10) in SLR study on sustainability and project success (Khalifeh et al., 2020 – 5 samples). It is also akin to the numbers of publications included in the following SLR studies: Al-Abdouh et al. (2021) – 4 studies, Wilt et al. (2021) – 4 studies, and Piscoya et al. (2020) - 6 studies



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Note : *Reason 1(n=10): False positives – publications focused on one or more of the constructs but not within the study scope and were irrelevant to addressing the research question.

Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram for SLR Study

Source: Page et al.(2021)

Synthesising and Reporting the Review

The research question was addressed by conducting descriptive and content analysis to synthesise, summarise and report the review's findings (Linnenluecke *et al*., 2020). The content analysis adopted the methodology of Bauer (2007) and Hsieh and Shannon (2005). Each article was read and classified under relevant classification themes to address the research question. The following classifications were adapted to aid in synthesising the publications included in the study: type of article; research strategy and focus of the studies; industries studied or discussed; sample of respondents and main findings on the stakeholder management in the context of sustainability of CSR projects including any relationships (Damoah *et al*.,2019; Khalifeh et al. 2020; Silvius and Schipper, 2014).

Results

Results of Descriptive Analysis

Though the publication's search covered a period of twenty-three (23) years, only six (6) publications covering a time frame of ten (10) years from 2012 to 2022 were finally included in this study. The earliest publication was done in 2012, and the six (6) publications were published in different years. No year has more than one publication. The final sample comprised six (6) publications, made up of five (5) peer-reviewed journal papers and a book chapter published in six (6) different journals. The five (5) journal publications covered developing countries in Africa, and the book chapter covered developed and developing countries. Though the publication's search was not limited to any sector, most of the publications unearthed covered stakeholder management in the context of sustainability of CSR projects in the mining sector. A summary of the descriptive analysis is shown in Table 3.

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Table 3: Description of Studies

S/No.	Study	Year	Study Type	Country	Source and Number of Citations
1	Ihugba (2012)	2012	Academic Paper	Developing Country (Nigeria)	African Journal of Economics and Management Studies (21 citations)
2	Sarfo *et al.* (2016)	2016	Academic Paper	Developing Country (Ghana)	Environment and Natural Resources Research (4 citations)
3	Mbirigenda (2017)	2017	Academic Paper	Developing Country (Tanzania)	Utafiti (1 citation)
4	Rendtorff (2019)	2019	Book Chapter	Developed and developing countries	Philosophy of Management and Sustainability (21 Citations)
5	Ansu-Mensah *et al.* (2021)	2021	Academic Paper	Developing Country (Ghana)	International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility (69 citations)
6	Serfontein-Jordaan (2022)	2022	Academic Paper	Developing Country (South Africa)	Communitas (3 Citations)

Results of Content Analysis (Classification of Literature)

Strategy and Focus of Studies

The final sample and results showed that the subject matter of stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR projects is inadequately addressed in the literature. This area is under-researched. Only five (5) empirical studies and one (1) book chapter were found to have covered the subject matter under consideration within ten years from 2012 to 2022. Five (5) studies adopted a qualitative research strategy with a case study research design. One of the studies adopted the multiple case study, whilst four (4) used the single case study. Interviews were used as the primary method for data collection. Also, the main sampling technique was purposive with thematic analysis as the main analytical technique. Studies focused on the mining and manufacturing industries. Out of the six publications included in the study, only the study by Serfontein-Jordaan (2022) proposed a conceptual framework between stakeholder engagement and sustainable CSR outcomes. The main issues explored in the publications include the nature of CSR projects; stakeholder management – stakeholder identification, stakeholder engagement through dialogues/consultative, post dialogues/consultation, stakeholder management in achieving CSR outcomes; Sustainability of CSR projects – TBL, form of project sustainability. Table 4 summarises the research strategy and focus of the five studies.

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Table 4: Study Strategy and Focus

S/N	Study	Industry Focus	Study Strategy	Research Design	Sampling Technique	Data Collection Method	Analytical Techniques
1	Ihugba (2012)	Manufacturing	Qualitative	Single case study			Thematic & content analysis
2	Sarfo *et al.* (2016)	Mining	Qualitative	Single case study	Purposive	Interview & questionnaire survey	Thematic analysis
3	Mbirigenda (2017)	Mining	Qualitative	Single case study	Purposive	Interview questionnaire survey & focus group discussion	Thematic analysis
4	Rendtorff (2019)	Multiple Industries					
5	Ansu-Mensah *et al.* (2021)	Mining	Qualitative	Single case study	Purposive & snowball	Interview	Thematic analysis
6	Serfontein-Jordaan (2022)	Mining	Qualitative	Multiple case study	Homogenous	Interview	Thematic analysis

Sustainability of CSR Projects and Study Respondents

This section of the studies reviews the nature of CSR projects considered in each publication, the sought of sustainability of CSR projects the publications focused on and also identifies the respondents in each study. All the CSR projects generally focused on social infrastructure, including the provision of potable water and sanitation projects, agricultural development, poverty reduction, environmental protection, healthcare and immunisation delivery, quality of life projects, education and disaster relief. From the review of literature, the sustainability of CSR projects can be looked at from two different perspectives viz CSR project process sustainability and CSR project product sustainability. Thus, in reviewing the selected publications to understand the stakeholder management within the sustainability of CSR projects, which form of sustainability was considered and how stakeholder management interfaced with the sustainability of CSR projects. This was necessary to aid in comprehensively addressing the research question. All the studies focused on both CSR project process sustainability and CSR project product sustainability. All the studies indicated the sustainability of CSR project outcomes being affected by CSR project processes. Asu-Mensah et al. (2021) and Serfontein-Jordaan (2022) found that effective stakeholder management is one of the main ways stakeholders can contribute to sustainable CSR projects. Thus, stakeholder management have an impact on the triple bottom line of social, environmental

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and economic sustainability paramenters of CSR projects. For Rendtorff (2019), the focus was not on process or product sustainability, but the emphasis was on some of the principles considered in CSR sustainability. Ihugba (2012) found that reactive CSR projects instead of proactive and stakeholder-led CSR projects lead to unsustainable or ill-advised CSR projects.

The respondents' backgrounds in each study were also examined since the views of different stakeholders affect how stakeholder management may influence the sustainability of CSR projects. The book chapter (Rendtorff, 2019) and studies by Ihugba (2012) did not involve any respondents because they were based on secondary data and social reports. Sarfo *et al.* (2016) collected data collected via questionnaire surveys and interviews with senior staff of the mining company studied (AngloGold Ashanti), members of some communities in the catchment area of the mining company and heads of government institutions also within the catchment area of the mining company. In Mbirigenda (2017), focus group discussions comprising nine to eleven (9 to 11) people were held in 4 villages with village leaders, local communities' business groups and the youth. Also, interviews were conducted with twelve (12) interview respondents - Manager and CSR officer of the mining company, head teacher of a local school, leaders within the four (4) villages and business people. Ansu-Mensah (2021) used multiple stakeholders as respondents. These respondents included management and employees of mining company, chiefs, local government representatives, community representatives and heads of governmental and non-government institutions. Serfontein-Jordaan (2022) obtained data from sustainability specialists from three (3) mining companies.

A summary of various perspectives on the sustainability of CSR projects, study respondents and the nature of CSR projects are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Sustainability of CSR Projects and Study Respondents

S/ No.	Study	Nature of CSR Projects	Sustainability of CSR Projects	Study Respondents
1	Ihugba (2012)	Provision of potable water (boreholes), agricultural development (fish farming centre), poverty reduction(vocational training centres), environmental protection(tree planting), healthcare and immunisation delivery (HIV/AIDS vaccines), education (scholarship) and disaster relief.	Project process and project product sustainability	No respondent, based on the company's 5 years social reports and newspaper reports of corporate activities.

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S/ No.	Study	Nature of CSR Projects	Sustainability of CSR Projects	Study Respondents
2	Sarfo *et al*. (2016)	Community health and malaria control programme, social infrastructure programme, education programme and sports/arts programme.	Project process and project product sustainability	12 respondents -senior staff of mining company, members of communities and heads of government institutions.
3	Mbirigenda (2017)	CSR projects in water supply, education, health and agroforestry.	Project process and project product sustainability	Focus group discussions comprising of 9 to 11 people from 4 villages: 12 interview respondents
4	Rendtorff (2019)	Generic CSR Initiatives	Project process sustainability	No respondent
5	Ansu-Mensah *et al.* (2021)	Community Health projects, Education, Water and Sanitation, Quality of life projects in the form of safety and protection, production of human capital, improvement of livelihoods and rural development; Agriculture improvement and land access projects/programs; Environmental projects through afforestation program	Project process and project product sustainability	21 respondents
6	Serfontein-Jordaan (2022)	CSR projects implemented include education projects (donations of school items and infrastructure developments), health projects (Donating ambulances, building and refurbishing hospitals, advocacy programmes - hosting awareness programmes for HIV/ Aids and cancer), community/social infrastructure	Project process and project product sustainability	Sustainability specialist from 3 mining companies.

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Stakeholder Management and Sustainability of CSR Projects

Understanding the background of respondents and the type of stakeholders considered in each study also assistsed in understanding how stakeholder management contributes to the sustainability of CSR projects. Thus, this section covered the stakeholders (single or multiple) considered in each study and how stakeholder management is related to the sustainability of the CSR projects. All studies showed that relevant stakeholders were carefully identified and engaged. The stakeholders' involvement in the formulation and implementation of the CSR projects through consultative committee meetings and community/public engagements is essential for the sustainability of CSR projects. Ihugaba (2012) identified multiple stakeholders, including representatives from government establishments, suppliers, and local communities. This stakeholder participation impacted the sustainability of the CSR projects. Studies by Sarfo *et al*. (2016), Mbirigenda (2017), Ansu-Mensah *et al.* (2021) and Serfontein-Jordaan (2022) all considered multiple stakeholders and showed some significant impact on the sustainability of CSR projects. Mbirigenda (2017) found that ineffective stakeholder participation undermines the sustainability of CSR projects. Stakeholder and relationship of stakeholder management and sustainability of CSR projects are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Stakeholder Management and Sustainability of CSR Projects

S/No.	Study	Stakeholders	Relationship of Stakeholder Management and Sustainability of CSR Projects
1	Ihugba (2012)	Multiple Stakeholders were considered (26 government establishments - federal, state and local agencies; 12 suppliers and 4 local communities.)	Stakeholder participation impact on the sustainability of CSR projects
2	Sarfo *et al.* (2016)	Multi-stakeholder groups, including traditional leaders, youth leaders, local government representatives – assemblymen, senior staff and directors of Obuasi Municipal Assembly, Auditor General Department and Municipal Health Directorate were considered.	Stakeholder participation impact on the sustainability of CSR projects
3	Mbirigenda (2017)	Multi-stakeholder groups include 4 villages, district commissioner, head teacher of a school, 4 village chairpersons and business people.	Stakeholders' involvement affects the sustainability of CSR projects.

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S/No.	Study	Stakeholders	Relationship of Stakeholder Management and Sustainability of CSR Projects
4	Rendtorff (2019)	Multi-stakeholder	Uncertain
5	Ansu-Mensah *et al*. (2021)	Multi-stakeholder groups, including management, employees, chiefs, assemblymen, community representatives, governmental agencies and non-governmental institutions	Stakeholders' management affects the sustainability of CSR projects.
6	Serfontein-Jordaan (2022)	Multi-stakeholder group involving three mining companies	Stakeholders' management affects the sustainability of CSR projects

Discussion

This study addressed the following research question: What is the state of knowledge of stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR projects? To address the research question, literature was systematically reviewed, and content analysis was carried out based on the following considerations clarified under sections 3 and 4: the strategy and focus of the studies; sustainability of CSR projects and study respondents; and stakeholder management and the sustainability of CSR projects. The study results showed that out of an initial 1400 publications searched in four databases, only six (6) publications qualified to be included in the study. Thus, stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR projects is under-researched, with interest in the subject emerging in 2012. The research strategy for all the publications except that in the book chapter used qualitative research with a case study design. The data collection technique was primarily interviews. Purposive sampling technique was also mainly used. The findings also showed that the studies focused on both CSR project process and product sustainability and that Stakeholder management impacts the sustainability of CSR projects. The emphasis was on effective stakeholder management impacting the sustainability of CSR projects. All the publications included in this SLR study were based on qualitative research strategy, thus, the impact of stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR projects was not quantitatively assessed to determine the type and the level of impact. The finding may also be criticised because of the number of publications (six) included in the study and the few authors involved.

Limitation of Selected Studies

There are some limitations on the publications included in this study that may impact the results of these publications. The study by Ihugaba (2012) was limited to social reports and

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not respondents. It was also limited to one developing country and thus may suffer from geographical bias. Studies by Sarfo *et al.* (2016), Mbirigenda (2017) and Ansu-Mensah *et al.* (2021) were also limited to one developing country. All these studies used non-probability sampling techniques (maninly purposive sampling technique) to access respondents and study data. Additionally, Ansu-Mensah *et al.* (2021) used snowballing technique. Serfontein-Jordaan (2022) used homogenous sampling technique. Thus, all the results have limited generalizability. The limitations of publications included in this study are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: Limitations of Selected Studies

S/ No.	Study	Study Limitation
1	Ihugba (2012)	Research relied primarily on documentary analysis of company social reports and new paper reports of corporate activities. No respondents. The study was limited to one developing country (Nigeria), thus subject to geographical bias.
2	Sarfo *et al.* (2016)	The study was limited to Ghana, a developing country. Non-probabilistic sampling technique used, thus limiting the generalizability of study findings.
3	Mbirigenda (2017)	The study was limited to Tanzania, a developing country. Non-probabilistic sample bias limited the generalisability of study findings.
4	Rendtorff (2019)	-
5	Ansu-Mensah *et al.* (2021)	The study was limited to Ghana, a developing country. Non-probabilistic sample bias and limited the generalisability of study findings.
6	Serfontein-Jordaan (2022)	The study was limited to South Africa, a developing country, with a with non-probabilistic sample bias and limited the generalisability of study findings.

Conclusions and Further Research

The study revealed the state of knowledge or research in stakeholder management in the sustainability of CSR projects. The findings revealed a dearth of empirical research and, thus, contributions from authors. These provide a basis for further research on this subject matter in developed and developing countries. The study also revealed that stakeholder management may impact the sustainability of CSR projects. The study's findings also showed that all the empirical studies included in this research used qualitative research strategy with case study research design, thus limiting the generalisability of the findings. Further studies should consider quantitative research strategy with survey research design rather than the case study to explore this subject matter. This will allow advanced statistical methods such as structural equational modelling, among others, to be used for analysis. Also, only one publication in the study produced a conceptual framework of stakeholder engagement and sustainable CSR outcomes. Future studies can address this gap by empirically exploring a suitable, effective and efficient framework for stakeholder management in the sustainability

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of CSR projects. Most of the studies were focused on the mining sector, with only one focusing on the manufacturing sector. This imply the need for more research in other industries such as the construction, banking, hospitality, telecommunication, forestry, oil industry, tourism and hospitality as identified in CSR studies (Olanipekun *et al*.,2020; Damoah *et al*., 2019) which were not examined in the empirical publications included in this study. Most of the studies were carried out in developing countries and thus subject to some level of geographical bias. Future studies covering developed countries are also advocated. All the included publications in this study used non-probabilistic sampling techniques in accessing respondents and study data thus limiting the generalisability of the findings. This is a critical knowledge and methodological gap which should be considered in future research to enhance the generalisability of research findings. Further research is thus required based on the limitations identified in the selected empirical publications.

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