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**GRASSROOT ACTIVISM AS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: THE
BUZ STOP BOYS IN GHANA**

BY

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NOVEMBER 2025

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I Joanna Obiri Yeboah hereby declare that the research titled “Grassroot Activism As Corporate Social Responsibility: The Buz Stop Boys In Ghana” is entirely original, with no portion of it submitted for credit toward another degree at this university or any other higher study institution. I also affirm that all the sources I have cited or used have been properly identified and referenced.

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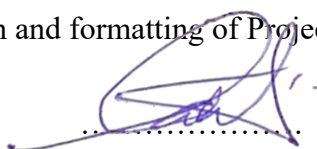
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This Project Work has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Project work laid down by UniMac II.

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Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God, whose grace and wisdom have illuminated my path throughout this academic endeavor, offering strength in times of difficulty and clarity during periods of doubt. To my family and loved ones, whose steadfast support, encouragement, and sacrifices have formed the bedrock of this accomplishment. Your faith in me has been an enduring source of inspiration. To the Buz Stop Boys, whose relentless commitment to environmental advocacy and community development has fueled this research. Your grassroots activism exemplifies that significant change is initiated through passion, dedication, and collective effort. To my Supervisor and lecturers in the Strategic Public Relations Management program, whose knowledge and guidance have profoundly influenced my academic and professional growth. And to all environmental advocates and change-makers in Ghana and beyond, who strive daily to foster a more sustainable and responsible future for the generations to come.

This work is dedicated to all of you.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates grassroots environmental activism as a form of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Ghana, with a particular emphasis on the Buz Stop Boys. Although corporations allocate substantial resources to formal CSR initiatives, grassroots organisations that engage in significant environmental efforts frequently face a lack of acknowledgement and support. This study aims to understand how grassroots movements correspond with CSR principles and to pinpoint avenues for their incorporation into established CSR structures.

Employing qualitative content analysis informed by Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory, the research analysed 18 digital materials from March to September 2025, which included social media content, corporate collaborations, and community feedback. The data sources encompassed platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and various news outlets.

The results indicate a strong correlation between the activities of the Buz Stop Boys and fundamental CSR principles, such as environmental stewardship, transparency, and community involvement. Over a span of two years, the organisation successfully cleaned more than 600 locations and engaged 10,166 volunteers. The study highlighted the construction of multi-dimensional legitimacy through genuine community involvement, reciprocal legitimacy-stakeholder interactions, and a predominantly favorable public perception marked by institutional endorsement and spontaneous citizen backing.

In conclusion, the study suggests that grassroots-driven CSR offers viable alternatives to traditional corporate strategies, highlighting greater authenticity and community participation. Recommendations include establishing systematic documentation practices for grassroots organisations, developing models for resource complementarity in corporate partnerships, and creating policy frameworks that promote the integration of grassroots efforts into formal environmental governance. This study challenges the prevailing corporate-centric CSR paradigms by demonstrating that effective social responsibility can stem from community-based organisations employing bottom-up strategies in developing regions.

Keywords: Grassroots activism, Corporate Social Responsibility, environmental stewardship, legitimacy theory, stakeholder engagement, Ghana

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

While corporations invest millions towards formal Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, some of the many impactful environmental activists within Ghana operate from the grassroots, utilising limited resources and lacking corporate acknowledgement. This research investigates Grassroot Activism as a form of Corporate Social Responsibility: The Buz Stop Boys in Ghana, delving into the significant yet underexplored relationship between grassroots-driven environmental efforts and established CSR frameworks. While there has been significant research on grassroots activism and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) separately, little attention has been given to how grassroots environmental initiatives reflect CSR principles or how recognizing these efforts can enhance urban sustainability. Grassroots initiatives are vital for local environmental protection, yet formal CSR programs frequently neglect them, despite their substantial influence on urban living conditions. The Buz Stop Boys are vital grassroots activists focused on improving urban sanitation and engaging their communities, embodying key CSR values. The Buz Stop Boys who have been in existence for two years have cleaned over 600 different locations in Ghana. They clean averagely 12 locations per month and currently have active membership of 50, about 150 intermittent volunteers and have had about 10,166 volunteers including carpenters, military personnel, and midwives, pass through cleanups in 2 years (Buzstopboys, 2025; The Global Herald, 2024). However, their initiatives often lack corporate support and are overlooked in traditional CSR discussions. This study seeks to explore this gap, examining how their efforts align with CSR principles and community perceptions, highlighting pathways for sustainable urban development and community engagement, and providing practical recommendations for CSR policies in Ghana.

1.1 Background Of The Study

Waste management is a significant environmental and developmental hurdle worldwide, often vying for attention and funding alongside other urgent issues (Kangah et al., 2022). According to Odey (2025), In Africa, governments are pouring considerable resources into sanitation initiatives, but the rapid pace of urbanisation, population growth, and fragile infrastructure often outstrip these efforts and Ghana is no different. In cities like Accra, inadequate waste disposal methods, a lack of public awareness, and inefficient systems have heightened worries about sanitation and public health (Ruocheng & Badolo, 2020; Anaman & Nyadzi, 2015). Since 2006, Zoomlion Ghana Limited is the leading waste management company in the country and has been at the forefront of tackling these challenges (Zoomlion Ghana, n.d.). Yet, sanitation issues continue to linger, especially in public areas that are not directly managed by formal institutions. As reported by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) (2022), Only one-third (33.4%) of households have their solid waste collected, indicating a notable difference between urban (51.4%) and rural areas (5.8%). The predominant method for disposing of abandoned solid waste is incineration (77.5%), followed by unregulated waste.

In light of this, grassroots organisations and volunteer-led projects like Friends of the Earth promote transformation for environmentally and socially just development in governments, institutions, businesses, and industries (Friends of the Earth Ghana, n.d.) and many who increasingly stepped up to bridge these gaps. Friends of the Earth has successfully collaborated with The Co-operative Bank UK through their Postcode Garner Programme to restore natural environments to some of the most ecologically deprived communities in the country (The Co-operative Bank, n.d.).

One standout group is the Buz Stop Boys, a collective of young Ghanaian volunteers dedicated to cleaning and maintaining public spaces like bus stops, gutters, and market areas.

Their efforts, often funded through donations or independently, have garnered significant media attention and community support. With a robust online presence and regular participation in community clean-ups, the Buz Stop Boys exemplify many aspects of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) such as environmental care, public welfare, and civic duty even though they operate outside the conventional corporate landscape.

As Debrah et al., (2021) points out, environmental sustainability has become a focal point in the policies and business strategies of numerous developing nations, largely driven by the increasing issues of plastic waste and ineffective recycling systems. Companies like Twellium Ghana, through their Twellium Foundation, have stepped up with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development (Twellium Ghana, 2024). A noteworthy collaboration with the Buz Stop Boys highlights a growing connection between grassroots activism and formal CSR efforts.

Yet, even with the rising importance of these partnerships, academic discussions around CSR in Ghana still tend to focus on large corporations, often overlooking the valuable contributions of informal community groups. This oversight creates a significant research gap in understanding how grassroots activism can either align with or broaden the existing definitions of CSR.

In the bustling urban landscape of Accra, where municipal waste management systems are stretched thin, grassroots organisations not only provide essential labor but also bring local legitimacy and public trust to the table. Their presence on social media boosts their credibility and extends their reach, shaping how the public and various stakeholders view their initiatives. These digital platforms serve as more than just awareness tools; they are arenas where CSR narratives are crafted and legitimacy is established.

This study aims to bridge both an academic and practical gap. It investigates how the Buz Stop Boys' activities connect with CSR principles, how they are viewed by their community,

and how such informal efforts might be recognised or integrated into formal CSR frameworks. Grounded in Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory, the research delves into how grassroots actors gain public acknowledgement, engage with different stakeholders, and navigate emerging models of grassroots-driven responsibility. Ultimately, this research enriches the understanding of CSR in Ghana by shifting the focus from traditional corporate philanthropy to more inclusive, grassroots-oriented approaches. It also provides practical insights for companies looking to engage meaningfully with their communities, local authorities and policymakers are looking to create CSR strategies that are more collaborative and sensitive to the unique contexts of Ghanaian communities.

1.2 Problem Statement

1.2.1 Issues gap

While existing literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) thoroughly investigates environmental programs initiated by corporations and the formal structures of organisations (Amo-Mensah, 2021; Amponsah-Tawiah & Dartey-Baah, 2011), there remains a scarcity of empirical studies exploring how grassroots-driven environmental activism corresponds with established CSR principles and achieves recognition as credible partners in CSR within developing regions.

Current research on CSR in Ghana primarily emphasises formal corporate entities, especially multinational corporations operating in the banking, mining, and telecommunications industries (Kankam-Kwarteng et al., 2021; Wu & Amoasi, 2023; Ruiz & Garcia, 2021). Although Amo-Mensah (2021) noted that CSR practices in Ghana are largely influenced by developmental needs and are executed through voluntary self-regulation by corporations, these investigations often regard grassroots organisations merely as beneficiaries or advocacy groups within CSR frameworks (Eslit, 2023; Jelks, 2024),

rather than considering them as viable partners in CSR implementation with unique pathways for legitimacy and mechanisms for stakeholder engagement.

The absence of acknowledgement and institutional support not only diminishes the effectiveness of grassroots initiatives but also signifies a lost opportunity to foster sustainable and inclusive development through substantial collaborations between businesses and local communities (Jelks, 2024; Eslit, 2023).

This creates three significant knowledge gaps:

Theoretical Gap: Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory have primarily been applied within corporate CSR frameworks (Freeman, 1984; Suchman, 1995; Deegan, 2002), leaving unclear how these theories explain the legitimacy formation and stakeholder interactions of grassroots organisations involved in environmental activism, especially in African developing contexts where community ties and values of collective responsibility values differ from those in Western corporate environments (Idemudia, 2010; Amaeshi et al., 2006).

Empirical Gap: Although it is acknowledged that grassroots-led environmental initiatives are vital in addressing urban environmental challenges in developing regions (Eslit, 2023; Alnajem, 2024), there is a lack of comprehensive documentation regarding the specific actions undertaken by grassroots environmental organisations, the public's reactions to these initiatives, and the mechanisms that facilitate their incorporation into formal CSR frameworks.

Practical Gap: The existing CSR policy frameworks in Ghana do not provide clear pathways for the integration of grassroots volunteerism into formal CSR systems. As noted by Sarpong (2017) and Ofori (2024), the lack of national policy frameworks to direct CSR implementation in Ghana results in these initiatives being voluntary and frequently fragmented. Without a clear understanding of how effective grassroots initiatives establish

legitimacy and secure institutional partnerships, policymakers and corporations are deprived of evidence-based frameworks necessary for promoting hybrid governance models that merge grassroots operational capabilities with institutional resources while safeguarding community autonomy (Bowen et al., 2010; Porter & Kramer, 2011).

1.2.2 Population Gap and Context gap

Additionally, most studies in this field have been conducted in the Middle East (Iraq) Philippines and West Atlanta (Jelks,2024;Eslit, 2023;Alnajem 2024). According to Sahu et al.,(2025),It's crucial to recognise both the scope and the limitations of the study. Their research took place in Barangay Acmac, Iligan City, so the findings might not be applicable to other communities or regions. The insights and experiences shared by the participants are specific to this community's context. Therefore leaving out insights from African, specifically Ghanaian, communities leaves a gap to be explored in understanding of grassroots activism, like the efforts of the Buz Stop Boys in Ghana, reflects the core ideas of CSR.

This study seeks to fill these gaps by exploring the Buz Stop Boys as a case study to assess the alignment of grassroots environmental initiatives with CSR principles in the context of Ghana. It will analyse public perceptions and stakeholder response patterns within African cultural frameworks, as well as identify strategies for integrating grassroots and corporate CSR partnerships that are pertinent to Ghana's institutional and developmental landscape.

1.3 Research Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to explore the relationship between grassroots activism and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), focusing on the Buz Stop Boys in Ghana as a case study.

Specific objectives:

- To look into the activities of the Buz Stop Boys and how they fit within the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- To examine how public perception is formed regarding the Buz Stop Boys' activities.
- To investigate mechanisms through which grassroots environmental initiatives can be effectively integrated into formal CSR programs in Ghana.

1.4 Research Questions

- What kinds of activities do the Buz Stop Boys participate in, and how do these activities reflect the values or principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?
- How do their publics express support, criticism, or doubt toward the Buz Stop Boys' activities?
- What strategies can integrate grassroots initiatives into formal CSR frameworks in Ghana?

1.5 Significance Of The Study

This research brings both academic and practical insights to the conversation about CSR in Ghana. It sheds light on how grassroots activism, particularly through Buz Stop Boys, expands the understanding of CSR in Ghana. This area is often overlooked in mainstream discussions, which tend to ignore the significant role that informal grassroots groups play. By

addressing this gap, the study enhances understanding of CSR in Ghana, beyond the usual corporate philanthropy to embrace more inclusive, grassroots approaches.

On the practical side, the findings provide useful and actionable insights for creating collaborations that benefit both businesses and local communities. The study aims to illustrate how incorporating grassroots-led initiatives into formal CSR policies in Ghana is crucial for promoting more inclusive and effective sustainable development.

This research offers significant potential for influencing policy in Ghana at both national and local levels. By demonstrating the alignment of grassroots environmental initiatives, like the Buz Stop Boys, with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles, it can help policymakers develop integrated environmental governance strategies that support grassroots activism. The findings may inform policies that promote corporate partnerships with grassroots organisations, create funding opportunities for grassroots environmental projects, and establish regulatory frameworks linking informal activism to formal CSR commitments. Furthermore, this study's results could enhance Ghana's National Environmental Policy and Urban Development Strategy by highlighting the importance of community involvement in achieving sustainable urban sanitation and environmental management goals.

1.6 Scope Of The Study

This research explores how grassroots activism, exemplified by the Buz Stop Boys, can enhance CSR frameworks in Ghana. Centered in urban Accra, where they clean public spaces like bus stops and markets, the research highlights the city's importance in tackling urban development and sanitation issues. Focusing on the period from March 2025 to September 2025, it analyses publicly available content to understand public perception and the group's relevance to CSR. While the findings offer insights into integrating community

efforts into formal CSR strategies, they are not intended to represent all regions or groups in Ghana.

1.7 Conclusion

This study is to explore the connection between grassroots activism and CSR, focusing on the Buz Stop Boys as a case study. It seeks to understand their activities in relation to CSR principles, how the community perceives their impact on sanitation and welfare, and how these efforts can be recognised or supported within formal CSR frameworks in Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Grassroots-led environmental initiatives are making a difference in tackling urban environmental issues, especially in developing areas like Ghana. Research on grassroots

movements and community initiatives is growing (Sahu et al., 2025; Jelks, 2024; Eslit, 2023; Alnajem, 2024), focusing mainly on their role in Iraq (Alnajem 2024) and local environmental efforts in the Philippines (Sahu et al., 2025). Additionally, twelve studies have examined radical grassroots innovations and activism in various countries, including the U.K., Colombia, and the U.S. (Apostolopoulou et al., 2022). However, there is a notable lack of literature on grassroots activism promoting CSR values in Ghana.

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility In Ghana

As noted by Sharma & Kiran, 2013 in Awuah et al.,(2021) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been a subject of discussion for numerous years in literature. However,there remains a lack of consensus regarding its definition, as the concept is continually evolving. This evolution has led to its application over the decades in defining a progressively wider range of corporate activities. Dahlsrud (2008 as cited in Thi Ai Van 2024) stated that there exist almost Forty definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the literature, with not a single one conceptualisation regarded as central.

Thi Ai Van (2024) notes that while Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) started to gain attention in the 1970s, particularly in the United States,the Committee for Economic Development introduced a 'social contract' among businesses and society, which gained significant traction worldwide during the 1980s. During this period, many organisations began to evolve their CSR initiatives, becoming increasingly aware of the needs of their stakeholders and the broader societal interests. Jamali (2007 as cited in Thi Ai Van 2024) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was viewed as a strategic philanthropic endeavor aimed at promoting societal welfare. During this time, research began to highlight the involvement of NGOs in the CSR activities of corporations. Considering that the CSR agenda should be viewed as a long-term commitment developmental objective, Thi Ai Van

(2024) according to Levine (2008) contended that stakeholders that are committed to social responsibility, including NGOs, should work towards making CSR an essential agenda for all businesses. Despite the vast amount of literature surrounding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the majority of research tends to concentrate on formal corporate initiatives, thereby leaving a considerable gap in understanding the contributions of informal community groups to CSR outcomes (Freeman, 1984; Amaeshi et al., 2006). This literature review is essential for grasping the role of the Buz Stop Boys in CSR, as it uncovers the theoretical frameworks that can be utilised to assess non-corporate entities that embody CSR principles through grassroots activism (Idemudia, 2010).

In Ghana, CSR has become a crucial part of how companies strategise, especially in industries that have a significant impact on the environment and society. Companies like GOIL PLC and Societe Generale Ghana, for instance have rolled out CSR programs that corresponds with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which focuses crucial areas like clean water, sanitation, and education (GOIL CSR Initiatives; Societe Generale CSR). Other significant CSR achievements in Ghana encompass MTN Ghana's dedication to education through the MTN Foundation, which has successfully completed more than 85 educational projects and awarded scholarships to thousands of students (MTN Ghana Foundation, 2023). AngloGold Ashanti has also made substantial investments in community health initiatives, establishing health facilities and supplying medical equipment in mining regions (AngloGold Ashanti Sustainability Report, 2022). Tullow Oil has also contributed to community development through its Shared Prosperity strategy, which includes environmental efforts such as tree planting campaigns where 100 Tullow volunteers planted 200 trees in Accra to improve the natural environment, as well as involvement in community beach cleanups that removed over 2,600kg of waste.

This illustrates how extractive industries can positively influence environmental and community development (Tullow Oil Sustainability Report, 2023).

These initiatives highlight the potential effectiveness of well-organised corporate CSR programs when they are aligned with the needs of the community and the priorities of national development. These corporate-led initiatives are typically well-funded, professionally managed, and evaluated as part of their corporate governance. Nonetheless, the implementation of corporate CSR in Ghana encounters considerable obstacles that hinder its effectiveness and outreach. Numerous multinational corporations face challenges related to cultural differences, insufficient local understanding, and complications in assessing long-term effects (Amponsah-Tawiah & Dartey-Baah, 2011). Infrastructure limitations, especially in rural regions, pose difficulties for companies aiming to expand their CSR initiatives beyond urban areas where their operations are primarily located. Moreover, certain CSR programs have been labeled as mere 'window dressing' or public relations strategies instead of authentic commitments to fostering social change (Blowfield & Frynas, 2005). The bureaucratic structure of large corporations may also lead to delayed responses to pressing community needs, resulting in gaps where prompt action is necessary. These challenges underscore the urgent requirement for more flexible, community-oriented strategies for social responsibility that can enhance formal corporate CSR initiatives.

These corporate constraints allow for the rise of grassroots volunteer organisations like the Buz Stop Boys, who have become significant informal contributors to addressing urban sanitation issues in Accra. In contrast to corporations that are hindered by bureaucratic procedures and formal approval processes, this group is able to react swiftly to the needs of the community, showcasing the responsiveness that formal CSR initiatives frequently lack. The Buz Stop Boys, recognised nationally for their proactive efforts in cleaning public spaces, including gutters and bus stations Bediako (2025), exemplifies a model of

grassroots-oriented social responsibility that fills the voids left by conventional corporate CSR strategies. Through self-financed and community-backed clean-up initiatives, the Buz Stop Boys engage actively with local residents, raise awareness regarding environmental concerns, and confront the visible challenges of waste management directly. Their initiatives embody essential CSR principles (environmental sustainability, civic responsibility, and community enhancement) even though they operate outside the conventional corporate structure.

These observations underscore a significant gap in both academic literature and policy frameworks: although CSR theory has progressed to include diverse stakeholder approaches, the thorough investigation of how grassroots activism influences and enhances CSR outcomes is still predominantly missing from scholarly discussions. This deficiency is especially notable in the Ghanaian context, where informal community organisations such as the Buz Stop Boys exhibit tangible effects on social welfare and environmental sustainability. Comprehending their function is crucial as it contests the conventional corporate-focused perspective of CSR Freeman (1984) and implies that meaningful social responsibility can arise from various participants within society, such as grassroots movements (Castells, 2015). This is consistent with studies indicating that grassroots-oriented strategies for CSR can be just as effective as those initiated by corporations (Marquis et al., 2006).

2.2 Evolution And Context Of CSR In Ghana

According to Amo-Mensah and Tench, (2015 as cited by Amo-Mensah 2021) Worldwide, there is significant backing for the idea of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Studies indicate that, on both national and international scales, CSR initiatives and discussions have proliferated within business and academic communities to influence and highlight

responsible corporate practices. Anku-Tsede & Deffor(2014 as cited in Kankam-Kwarteng et al.,2021) argue that traditionally, CSR has been viewed as a mechanism by which institutions or organisations honor their obligations under an implied social contract with the communities in which they function. Dauda (2019) also highlights that during the 1980s, a number of multinational corporations started to emphasise the significance of CSR within contemporary business operations.They utilised various channels, such as business organisations, sector reporting structures, media engagement, and partnerships with non-governmental organisations.

Expanding on the worldwide understanding of CSR, the specific context of Ghana showcases distinct features.As noted by Amo-Mensah (2021), although contemporary notions of CSR are relatively recent, companies in Ghana have historically engaged in societal welfare contributions, with cultural values and principles shaping corporate behaviors well prior to the formal acknowledgement of CSR. This cultural integration has led to CSR being perceived as a moral duty rather than simply a business tactic.The framework of CSR in Ghana exhibits notable differences from international CSR practices in several significant aspects. In contrast to Western paradigms that frequently prioritise regulatory adherence and shareholder interests, CSR in Ghana is fundamentally anchored in traditional communal principles and ethical duties that predate the formalisation of CSR concepts (Amo-Mensah, 2021).As highlighted by Anku-Tsede & Deffor (2014 as cited in Kankam-Kwarteng et al.,2021), companies in Ghana have traditionally recognised CSR as a means of honoring an implicit social contract with their communities, embodying the Ubuntu philosophy and a sense of collective accountability. Moreover, while global CSR initiatives often emphasise environmental sustainability and the challenges of climate change, the CSR agenda in Ghana is more focused on essential infrastructure requirements such as education, healthcare, and sanitation, which reflects the nation's developmental

context. The significant role of informal sector participants and grassroots-driven initiatives in tackling social issues further sets Ghana's CSR environment apart from the more structured, corporate-centric models prevalent in developed nations.

Traditionally, CSR in Ghana has typically been led by Formal organisations (corporate entities, registered NGOs, and government bodies) that have structured programs and measurable outcomes. Companies like MTN, Telecel Ghana, and GOIL have crafted strong CSR strategies that resonate with national eminence and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations. These initiatives typically concentrate on vital sectors such as sanitation, healthcare, education and environmental conservation. The expansion of CSR in Ghana has been considerable over the last ten years. For example, the MTN Ghana Foundation has invested more than \$13 million in CSR projects during this decade, focusing on health, education, and economic empowerment sectors (Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications, 2017). In a similar light, AngloGold Ashanti disclosed a community investment of \$18 million in 2022, with 96% of their procurement expenditures directed towards local suppliers (AngloGold Ashanti Sustainability Report, 2022). Furthermore, Tullow Oil's socio-economic contributions amounted to \$3.1 billion over a five-year span across their operational countries, highlighting the significant financial dedication of extractive industries to community development (Tullow Oil Sustainability Report, 2023). These statistics underscore the considerable magnitude and growth trajectory of formal CSR investments within Ghana's developmental framework.

However, despite the dominance of corporate-led CSR, challenges such as urban sanitation continue to loom, grassroots initiatives have stepped up as crucial players in meeting local needs. Groups like the Buz Stop Boys represent a new and important dynamic in Ghana's CSR scene. Even though they lack formal structures, legal recognition, or steady funding,

these volunteer-led initiatives often tackle local issues, like urban sanitation, with a speed and authenticity that is hard to match.

Scholars argue that for CSR to truly make a difference in Ghana, it needs to adapt to the country's unique social, cultural and institutional landscape, which includes recognizing the influence of informal yet effective informal community actors who mobilise local resources and promote civic engagement. There is an increasing demand for CSR models that are more inclusive models that foster partnerships between established corporate entities and grassroots movements like the Buz Stop Boys. These kinds of collaborations would enhance the reach, credibility, and impact of CSR efforts in various communities. The literature reviewed reveals that while CSR has become an essential part of business strategy globally and in Ghana, most of the focus from scholars and companies has been on formal, structured CSR programs run by established organisations. This research intends to fill that gap by exploring how grassroots activism, like the efforts of the Buz Stop Boys in Ghana, reflects the core ideas of Corporate Social Responsibility. It will delve into what these activists are doing, how the public views their work, and how these informal initiatives could be integrated into or supported by formal CSR frameworks. By doing this, the study hopes to widen understanding of CSR in Ghana, highlighting the importance of both corporate efforts and grassroots-driven solutions.

2.3 Community Perception And Involvement Of Grassroots Initiatives

Grassroots sustainability initiatives have gained global attention for their impact in promoting eco-friendly practices and localised development. According to Stephanie and Christoph (2023), these initiatives often depend on creative ways to engage people and promote consumption. However, their success really hinges on having strong volunteer involvement and effective collaborative networks. Alnajem (2024) further emphasises that

grassroots organisations focused on tackling particular social, environmental, and economic issues within the community, play a crucial function in promoting sustainability through the empowerment of communities to engage in local initiatives through a bottom-up approach. These initiatives not only encourage people to get involved in their communities but also help drive lasting social change where it is needed most.

In many developing regions, such as Ghana, where municipal waste management systems often struggle with little supplies and infrastructure, informal volunteer groups often step up to fill the gaps particularly in urban sanitation. However, the legitimacy, visibility and effectiveness of these groups largely hinge on how the community perceives their efforts. When the community views these initiatives positively, it can lead to increased participation, local support, and even spark the development of similar projects. Instances from various regions in Africa illustrate the significant impact of community perception on the outcomes of grassroots initiatives. In Kenya, the Green Belt Movement, spearheaded by Wangari Maathai, achieved remarkable success primarily because local communities recognised tree planting as a solution to their urgent needs for fuel, food, and income, resulting in the planting of over 51 million trees (Green Belt Movement, 2011).

In South Africa, the Abalimi Bezekhaya urban agriculture initiative in Cape Town has flourished since 1983, as communities regarded it as both culturally significant and economically advantageous. The organisation has empowered micro-farmers to cultivate vegetables organically, thereby facilitating food security and income generation through programs such as Harvest of Hope (Karaan & Mohamed, 1998; Abalimi Bezekhaya).

Conversely, water sanitation projects in rural Ghana have faced challenges when communities viewed them as governmental obligations rather than initiatives owned by the community, which has resulted in inadequate maintenance and system failures (Adank et al., 2013). These cases underscore that grassroots initiatives are more likely to succeed when

communities see them as relevant to their local context, culturally suitable, and effectively addressing their genuine priority needs.

Understanding how the community views and engages with sanitation initiatives is absolutely vital for their success. As noted by the Water page (n.d.) community-driven solutions for sanitation thrive on local involvement at every stage (planning to execution and ongoing maintenance). The success of these initiatives hinges on active community participation, like participatory planning, where locals pinpoint specific sanitation challenges, needs, and possible solutions that resonate with their unique cultural and social contexts. This grassroots method guarantees that the solutions are not just relevant to the community but also sustainable in the long run.

Globally research has shown that when communities take an active role in sanitation projects, they not only enhance their immediate living conditions but also play a significant part in improving overall public health. This kind of deep engagement turns participation into a valuable social investment, making grassroots efforts more resilient and adaptable. What is more, when people feel a personal connection to these initiatives, they tend to be more innovative and flexible in tackling new challenges as they come up.

The Buz Stop Boys, a well-known informal group of sanitation volunteers in Accra, have made a name for themselves with their regular cleanup efforts and active presence on social media. But to truly grasp their impact, this study seeks to fill that gap by exploring how the community perceives the activities of the Buz Stop Boys and examining how these perceptions affect their effectiveness, sustainability, and potential incorporation into formal CSR frameworks. By prioritizing the voices of the community (those who are directly

impacted by the group's initiatives) this research enriches understanding of grassroots legitimacy and stakeholder engagement within the Ghanaian CSR context.

2.4 Integrating Grassroots Volunteerism Into CSR Policy In Ghana

In recent decades, CSR in Ghana has experienced significant growth, especially in industries like oil, telecommunications, and banking. However, the prevailing policy and strategic frameworks still tend to emphasise formal, top-down methods, frequently neglecting the valuable input from grassroots volunteer initiatives.

Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) play a crucial role in the space of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). They act as a vital link between businesses and the communities they serve, helping to ensure that corporate goals align with the needs of society. By offering valuable insights into local challenges, NGOs make sure that corporate initiatives are not only well-informed but also culturally aware, which ultimately leads to more effective results (Funds for NGOs, n.d.). Rondinelli and London (2003 as cited in Yin 2020) argues that collaborations with nonprofit organisations can serve as a significant resource for insights and understanding regarding innovative approaches to tackle CSR and sustainability challenges, as well as to reorganise operational practices within the local markets.

While registered NGOs have their formal structures, informal grassroots groups like the Buz Stop Boys often operate without the backing of institutions, legal recognition, or a place in the national CSR conversation. There are many significant challenges that impede the integration of grassroots volunteerism into existing CSR frameworks in Ghana. In Ghana, the notion of CSR has not received the attention it deserves, primarily due to insufficient government oversight and engagement, which has been identified as a factor contributing to its diminished significance. The lack of a national policy structure to direct the execution of

CSR initiatives in Ghana renders these efforts voluntary, frequently leading to disjointed, unfocused, and 'haphazard' projects. This void of a definitive policy framework complicates the systematic incorporation of grassroots volunteerism into corporate strategies (Sarpong, 2017; Ofori, 2024). The conceptualisation and prioritisation of CSR in Ghana has traditionally emphasised an external philanthropic approach. This suggests that companies might opt for direct contributions or prominent projects instead of engaging in the continuous, informal initiatives of grassroots volunteerism. The lack of clarity surrounding CSR and a limited comprehension of its strategic value can result in isolated, image-enhancing activities rather than fostering profound, integrated collaborations with community organisations (Amponsah-Tawiah & Dartey-Baah, 2011; Sarpong, 2017). Yet, despite these challenges, the Buz Stop Boys have made a tangible difference in urban sanitation through their self-organised clean-up initiatives, community engagement, and a strong presence on social media. Their efforts embody essential CSR values (community involvement, environmental stewardship, and civic education) even though they function outside the traditional CSR frameworks.

Despite the expanding acknowledgement of the important part NGOs play in implementing CSR, there is still a noticeable absence of research on how grassroots movements, which are often driven by volunteers, can be woven into formal CSR policies and practices in Ghana. The Buz Stop Boys serve as a perfect example to explore this issue, because of their visibility, community roots, and alignment with CSR principles.

To address these obstacles and promote integration, a variety of practical strategies and frameworks may be established. Partnership intermediary models could be created in which established NGOs or community-based organisations act as conduits between corporations and informal groups, ensuring accountability mechanisms while preserving grassroots authenticity (Bowen et al., 2010). Tiered recognition systems may be implemented to provide

varying degrees of corporate support contingent upon the maturity of the group, ranging from fundamental resource allocation for developing groups to formal collaborations for well-established initiatives. Frameworks for community validation could replace conventional legal registration prerequisites, in which community endorsement and evidenced impact function as criteria for legitimacy in corporate involvement. Moreover, adaptable funding strategies, including micro-grants, provision of equipment, or support for capacity building, could be tailored specifically for informal volunteer organisations, thereby mitigating financial risks while facilitating substantial assistance (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

This study seeks to fill that gap by looking into how informal grassroots groups like the Buz Stop Boys can not only contribute to but also receive support within Ghana's changing CSR landscape. The research delves into the possibilities for corporate partnerships, legitimacy frameworks, and policy inclusion that can connect formal business responsibilities with informal civic activism.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Legitimacy Theory

Campbell et al., (2003, p.559 as cited in Gulluscio 2023) asserts that Legitimacy theory stands as one of the most frequently referenced theoretical frameworks in the realm of environmental, social and sustainability accounting research. It is likely the most prevalent theory utilised to elucidate social, environmental, and sustainability disclosures. Guthrie et al., (2006 as cited in Olateju et al., 2022) indicated that the Legitimacy theory was derived from organisational and social system theory, viewing organisations as network entities that

must associate with their surroundings for survival. According to Dowling & Pfeffer 1975; Guthrie et al.,(2006 as cited in Olateju et al.,2021),The strategic alignment of an organisation's daily operational activities and behaviors to genuinely embody the norms, values, expectations, and demands of society, with the aim of being lawful and socially acceptable, constitutes the legitimate status of the organisation.This legitimate status is fundamentally grounded in legitimacy theory. Deegan et al as cited in Fernando & Lawrence, (2014) noted that Legitimacy theory proposes a "social agreement" between a corporation and the communities, in which it functions, focusing on the organisation's adherence to societal norms and expectations. Fernando & Lawrence (2014) postulates that an organisation must ensure that these terms are adhered to maintain its legitimacy, which is crucial for securing society's trust and support for its continued existence.

In the context of this research, Legitimacy Theory serves as a significant perspective for examining how grassroots organisations such as the Buz Stop Boys foster public trust and societal endorsement through activism driven by the community. Despite not being a formal corporate entity, the Buz Stop Boys are actively involved in initiatives that address urgent societal issues (sanitation, environmental consciousness, and youth empowerment). By aligning their objectives with widely recognised civic and environmental principles, they bolster their legitimacy in the eyes of the Ghanaian populace, prospective corporate collaborators, and local government officials.

This acquired legitimacy allows the group to garner attention on social media, secure public endorsements, and even form informal partnerships with private-sector entities. From a theoretical standpoint, the Buz Stop Boys' achievement in securing public backing can be viewed as a result of their capacity to mirror and strengthen shared community values, thereby establishing their role as credible and socially relevant participants in the public arena. Consequently, Legitimacy Theory not only explains the group's increasing influence

but also validates its participation in broader CSR discussions even in the absence of formal acknowledgement or corporate framework.

Legitimacy theory has been utilised in numerous studies to understand how organisations achieve social acceptance and credibility. O'Donovan (2002) employed legitimacy theory to investigate corporate environmental disclosures, illustrating how organisations implement communication strategies to uphold legitimacy in the face of environmental scrutiny. Deegan (2002) used legitimacy theory to explore how companies react to threats to their legitimacy through strategic disclosures, indicating that organisations proactively manage their legitimacy via various communication methods. Suchman (1995) established a foundational framework for legitimacy theory, explaining how organisations can acquire, sustain, and restore legitimacy through strategic actions that correspond with societal expectations. Although these studies predominantly concentrate on corporate environments, they lay down significant principles regarding legitimacy acquisition through value alignment and stakeholder engagement, which can also be applied to grassroots organisations. The theoretical framework posits that any organisation be it formal or informal can attain legitimacy by demonstrating alignment with societal values and addressing community needs, principles that are directly relevant to understanding the increasing social acceptance of the Buz Stop Boys in Ghana.

2.5.2 Stakeholder Theory

The idea of "stakeholder" started at the Stanford Research Institute in 1963, but it was significantly expanded and popularised by Edward Freeman's seminal work "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach" (1984). In his work, Freeman argued that businesses ought to take into account the interests of all stakeholders, rather than solely on shareholders, to create long-term value for all parties involved and achieve sustainable success. (Mahajan et al., 2023). Stakeholder theory emphasises that corporations have both ethical and strategic

obligations to various stakeholder groups (employees, customers, communities etc). There exists a notable connection between CSR and stakeholder theory, as companies are expected to achieve their operational objectives in accordance with the standards, principles, and practices that are aligned with the business models in which they operate (Zarefar & Sawarjuwono, 2021). Donaldson & Preston (1995) built upon Freeman's research, contending that companies have a moral responsibility to take into account the concerns of all stakeholders, and that proficient stakeholder management could enhance long-term productivity.

They defined three theoretical frameworks for addressing stakeholders:

- **The illustrative framework**, that perceives organisations as body made up of numerous stakeholder groups, each with their own concerns (the least comprehensive perspective, laying groundwork for the consideration of stakeholder claims or concerns),
- **The instrumental framework**, that underscores the importance of stakeholder management rightful to its impact on monetary results (a progressive perspective that prepares the ground for reconciling financial and stakeholder interests), and
- **The normative framework**, that places stakeholders as the “ends” instead of the “means” to achieve financial results (the most overarching perspective on stakeholders, concentrating exclusively on them).

In this study, Stakeholder Theory serves as a valuable lens for understanding how the Buz Stop Boys engage with various stakeholder groups. These groups include the local communities they support, potential corporate sponsors, government entities, and

enthusiastic young volunteers. Their grassroots activism can be seen as a strategy focused on stakeholders, aiming to meet the expectations of both internal and external audiences.

In the case of this grassroots activist, their community clean-up initiatives. The Buz Stop Boys address local sanitation issues, which helps build trust and credibility among residents. Meanwhile, by partnering with corporate organisations, these companies can showcase their commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) through genuine collaborations that are deeply rooted in the community. In this way, Stakeholder Theory lays the groundwork for exploring how these informal actors create shared value between grassroots efforts and established CSR stakeholders.

Stakeholder theory offers a practical framework for facilitating the incorporation of grassroots initiatives, such as the Buz Stop Boys, into formal CSR structures through its comprehensive approach to stakeholder engagement. By utilizing the descriptive framework proposed by Donaldson and Preston (1995), corporations can identify and acknowledge grassroots organisations as legitimate stakeholders, each possessing unique interests and contributions. This perspective transcends conventional stakeholder classifications to encompass grassroots-based actors.

The instrumental framework provides strategic insights by illustrating how collaborations with grassroots initiatives can improve corporate financial performance and enhance reputation through genuine community engagement, the acquisition of local knowledge, and an augmented social license to operate (Freeman et al., 1984). Most importantly, the normative framework offers an ethical rationale for recognizing grassroots organisations as ends in themselves, rather than merely as tools for achieving corporate goals. It posits that

companies bear moral responsibilities to support grassroots-driven initiatives that resonate with societal values.

This theoretical underpinning indicates that effective integration necessitates corporations to implement stakeholder management practices that honor the autonomy of grassroots groups, allocate suitable resources without undermining their community-based essence, and establish governance frameworks that facilitate substantial involvement in CSR decision-making processes (Mitchell et al., 1997).

By adhering to the principles of stakeholder theory, companies can formulate integration models that reconcile corporate accountability demands with the adaptable and responsive traits that render grassroots initiatives successful.

2.5.3 Relevance Of The Theory

The combination of Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory is especially relevant to this study, as it focuses on public perception, community involvement, and informal contributions to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Ghana.

Legitimacy Theory provides an interpretive lens on how the Buz Stop Boys are viewed by society, particularly in relation to the prevailing norms and expectations surrounding sanitation, civic responsibility, and public welfare. By examining how well their initiatives align with community values and earn public support, this study sheds light on how grassroots organisations can build informal legitimacy even without formal corporate structures or regulatory support.

On the other hand, Stakeholder Theory offers a useful framework for understanding how various stakeholder groups (local residents, city officials, and potential business partners) interact with or respond to the group's efforts. It allows for a closer look at the shared expectations, interests, and influences that shape these relationships. Additionally, this

theory emphasises the role of grassroots movements in connecting formal institutions with community needs, particularly in areas where traditional CSR approaches fall short.

Together, these theories provide a critical and context-specific analysis of how grassroots activism operates within the larger CSR landscape. They help the researcher interpret social narratives, public discussions, and community reactions in a way that highlights the importance of informal volunteer efforts. Most importantly, they provide the theoretical foundation for evaluating how these initiatives can be acknowledged, supported, and woven into more inclusive and community-focused CSR frameworks in Ghana.

The practical implementation of these theories within this research will be evident through various specific analytical methods. Legitimacy Theory will be utilised to evaluate interview responses and patterns of social media engagement, aiming to understand how community members perceive the credibility and social acceptability of the Buz Stop Boys. For example, this theory will facilitate an investigation into whether participants consider the group's sanitation efforts as fulfilling societal norms for civic duty, how media portrayals influence their legitimacy, and which particular actions or communication strategies contribute to their social acceptance.

Stakeholder Theory will be put into practice through stakeholder mapping activities designed to identify and classify different groups (including community residents, local government officials, corporate representatives, and volunteers) while analyzing their diverse interests, expectations, and degrees of influence concerning the Buz Stop Boys' initiatives. The analysis will focus on specific interactions among stakeholders, such as community responses to clean-up efforts, the extent of informal support or acknowledgement from local authorities, and how potential corporate partners evaluate the group's worth for CSR collaborations.

The combined use of both theories will facilitate an exploration of how the group's legitimacy impacts stakeholder relationships and vice versa. For instance, the research will investigate whether enhanced community legitimacy results in increased stakeholder backing, how endorsements from stakeholders bolster perceived legitimacy, and what particular mechanisms could formalise these informal connections within corporate CSR frameworks. This dual theoretical perspective will also inform the creation of actionable recommendations for incorporating grassroots initiatives into formal CSR policies by pinpointing strategies for building legitimacy and models for stakeholder engagement that corporations can implement.

2.6 Empirical Review

2.6.i Corporate Social Responsibility In Ghana

Amo-Mensah (2021) provided an extensive analysis of the existing literature concerning Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Ghana, covering research trends and developments between 2007 to 2020. Her findings indicated that CSR practices in Ghana are predominantly shaped by developmental imperatives and functions mainly through voluntary self-regulation by corporations. Additionally, the study recognised corporate reforms, globalisation, and stakeholder pressures as pivotal factors driving the adoption of CSR, underscoring its growing incorporation into business strategies aimed at fostering sustainable practices and improving corporate reputation. Amo-Mensah's review highlights a remarkable limitation in the current landscape of CSR research in Ghana: it primarily emphasises formal corporate entities, particularly multinational corporations (MNCs) engaged in industries like banking, mining, and telecommunications. These investigations frequently focus on organised CSR initiatives that are overseen by formal governance frameworks and assessed through quantifiable metrics. Consequently, the contributions of

informal participants, such as grassroots volunteer organisations, have largely been overlooked in the predominant CSR discussions.

Recent academic research has persistently investigated the dynamics of CSR in Ghana, uncovering emerging trends and ongoing deficiencies. Kankam-Kwarteng et al.,(2021) analysed the influence of CSR and marketing capabilities on end user behavior within Ghana's telecommunications sector, concluding that marketing ability plays a moderating role in the connection between CSR efforts and end user reactions. In a similar vein, Thi Ai Van (2024) explored the present challenges of CSR execution in developing nations, emphasising the conflict between global CSR standards and the specific needs of local contexts. Nevertheless, despite these recent scholarly contributions, the existing literature still demonstrates a significant inclination towards the study of formal, corporate-led CSR initiatives. Current CSR research in Ghana remains largely centered on established corporate entities that possess formal CSR departments and organised programs, especially in industries such as banking (Ruiz & Garcia, 2021) , telecommunications (Wu & Amoasi, 2023), and mining(Pons et al., 2021), where multinational corporations have developed comprehensive CSR frameworks.

This study aims to fill a significant gap by looking into grassroots initiatives, particularly focusing on the Buz Stop Boys, who are actively involved in community development activities that reflect the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), even though they operate outside the usual frameworks. The Buz Stop Boys have made a name for themselves through their sanitation efforts in busy areas of Accra, where they organise clean-up campaigns and encourage civic responsibility. Their work captures essential aspects of CSR, including environmental sustainability, public engagement, and community development.

By shifting the focus from traditional corporate-led philanthropy to grassroots-driven initiatives, this study offers a fresh perspective on CSR literature in Ghana. While Amo-Mensah (2021) points out that CSR often centers around charitable donations and symbolic gestures, this research delves into how grassroots efforts can create more participatory, sustainable, and locally relevant CSR models. It also investigates how corporate organisations can go beyond one-time philanthropic acts to build strategic partnerships with informal groups like the Buz Stop Boys. These collaborations can boost the legitimacy, scalability, and impact of CSR in ways that benefit both businesses and the communities they serve.

2.7 Summary of Chapter

The literature review suggests that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a complex and dynamic concept that is widely adopted. In Ghana, CSR is profoundly influenced by cultural values and is perceived as a moral obligation, increasingly integrated into business strategies.

While formal CSR, usually led by established organisations, is well-documented, the literature highlights a significant gap: the neglect of grassroots, community-driven initiatives such as the Buz Stop Boys.

The Buz Stop Boys are recognised as vital informal contributors who actively improve urban sanitation and embody core CSR principles, despite often functioning without formal corporate support or acknowledgement in mainstream CSR discussions. Understanding community perceptions and involvement is deemed essential for the success and sustainability of these initiatives. The theoretical frameworks of Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory provide insights into how groups like the Buz Stop Boys gain public acceptance and interact with various stakeholders, even in the absence of formal structures.

The literature reviewed provides direct support for the research objectives and questions of this study by establishing several fundamental bases. First, the identified gap in CSR research concerning grassroots initiatives substantiates the study's aim to investigate community perceptions of the Buz Stop Boys' activities and their compatibility with CSR principles. Secondly, the literature's focus on cultural values and moral responsibilities within Ghanaian CSR offers a framework for comprehending how informal volunteer groups can attain legitimacy and social acceptance. Thirdly, the theoretical frameworks identified supply analytical instruments to tackle the research questions regarding how grassroots initiatives cultivate credibility and interact with various stakeholders. Also, the literature's identification of obstacles to the incorporation of informal actors into formal CSR frameworks directly informs the study's inquiry into possible integration mechanisms. Lastly, the evidence of grassroots-driven solutions addressing urban issues bolsters the investigation into how the Buz Stop Boys' sanitation initiatives contribute to broader CSR outcomes in Ghana.

In conclusion, the review illustrates that integrating grassroots volunteerism into formal CSR policy in Ghana is essential for promoting more inclusive and effective sustainable development, moving away from traditional philanthropic methods towards collaborative engagement. Therefore, the literature review provides both the theoretical basis and empirical rationale for this study's emphasis on understanding and potentially incorporating grassroots-driven CSR initiatives into the wider corporate social responsibility framework in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section outlines the methodological approach adopted to address the research questions of the study. To delve into the connection between grassroots activism and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through the perspective of the Buz Stop Boys in Ghana, this study takes a qualitative research approach. Grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, the methodology aims to grasp the social meanings and public perceptions surrounding Grassroots-driven environmental initiatives. According to Trochim (2006 as cited in Muzari et al., 2022), The qualitative approach focuses on utilizing the actual words of the participants, serving as a mechanism that reduces the risk of altering and fabricating conclusions in the study, thus enhancing the credibility of the findings. With a focus on public discourse and visible social engagement, the primary data collection method chosen is qualitative content analysis of publicly available digital materials. This helps explore how the activities of the Buz Stop Boys are represented, perceived, and aligned with CSR principles. By employing a purposive sampling technique, the study would gather social media posts, news articles, and videos that highlight the group's initiatives. A qualitative content analysis guide would then be utilised to code and interpret this data through the frameworks of Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory. This chapter details the research paradigm, design, approach, sampling method, and ethical considerations that would shape the investigation.

3.1 Research Paradigm: Interpretivist Paradigm

This study is based in the Interpretivist Paradigm, which is suitable for qualitative research aimed at understanding how individuals create meaning from their social realities. McQueen (2002 as cited in Thanh & Thanh, 2015) posits that interpretivists perceive the world through a "collection of individual perspectives" and select participants who "possess their own interpretations of reality" in order to "capture the broader worldview". Interpretivism focuses on context, meaning, and personal experience rather than on broad generalisations or objective measurements. In this research, interpretivism supports the aim of examining how the grassroots efforts of the Buz Stop Boys are portrayed in public discussions and how they relate to the concept of CSR. This approach fits well with using qualitative content analysis to uncover themes, values, and the relationships between stakeholders that are woven into digital media and public narratives.

By adopting the interpretivist perspective, the study recognises that meaning is shaped by social interactions and that public content (social media posts, news articles, and commentary) mirrors how society views and engages with grassroots activism. This perspective enables a deeper understanding of how legitimacy and stakeholder involvement develop outside of traditional corporate frameworks.

3.1.1 Philosophical Assumptions

Whether consciously or unconsciously, researchers always infuse their fundamental beliefs and philosophical views into their research work. These influences play a role in how they choose research issues, develop questions, and collect data. Typically, these assumptions are shaped by our educational background, academic literature, mentorship, and the intellectual communities we are part of (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.1.2 Ontological and epistemological rationalisations

The Ontology of Interpretivist suggests that reality is shaped by social interactions and varies depending on the context. From this standpoint, there is not just one objective truth; instead, there are many realities that arise from people's experiences, perceptions, and cultural backgrounds. For the Buz Stop Boys, this means that their legitimacy, social worth, and connection to CSR principles are not set in stone or universally accepted. Instead, they are influenced by how various stakeholders (community members, the media, and corporations) interpret and portray their actions. As a result, the study does not aim to uncover a single "truth" but rather delves into the different viewpoints found in public discourse.

3.1.3 Axiology of Interpretivist

The interpretivist perspective posits that researchers cannot be completely detached from their investigations, as their decisions and interpretations significantly affect the findings presented in their research. In this study the researcher recognises the impact of their biases on the purposive sampling method, the selection of questions, and the subjective interpretations of publicly accessible content. Potential biases will, however, be minimised through triangulation of data sources, peer reviewing and debriefing respectively.

3.1.4 Methodology in Interpretivist Research

The interpretivist paradigm is chosen because it aligns with qualitative assessment on community perceptions and stakeholder responses related to grassroots activism. This methodology facilitates a systematic investigation and interpretation of textual data derived from media content, aiming to understand how the activities of the Buz Stop Boys are perceived and understood within the social and cultural framework of Ghana.

This paradigm endorses an exploratory and qualitative content analysis approach that aims to uncover patterns and meanings inherent in public discourse concerning grassroots volunteerism. The focus is on grasping how community members, stakeholders, and media outlets construct narratives surrounding urban sanitation activism, civic responsibility, and the validity of informal CSR initiatives. By employing qualitative content analysis, the research can systematically evaluate how various social groups interpret and ascribe meaning to the contributions of the Buz Stop Boys towards community development.

Interpretivism provides a suitable theoretical basis for qualitative content analysis by acknowledging that the significance of grassroots activism is not intrinsic but is instead shaped through social interactions and cultural contexts. This paradigm helps to examine how different stakeholders, community residents, government officials, corporate representatives, and volunteers formulate and convey varying understandings of the role that informal initiatives ought to play in tackling societal issues. The interpretivist approach recognises that textual data encompasses multiple layers of meaning that can be revealed through systematic content analysis, thus uncovering diverse viewpoints on how grassroots organisations like the Buz Stop Boys can contribute to and potentially align with formal CSR frameworks in Ghana.

3.2 Research Approach

This research adopts a qualitative research design with a focus on content analysis.

Denzin & Lincoln (2005 as cited in Muzari et al., 2022) qualitative research relies on the natural environment which serves as the main source of information. It emphasises genuine lived experiences and actual circumstances as they occur in the routine flow of events.

The quantitative approach is viewed as a more reliable method since it depends on numerical data and techniques that could be objectively verified and duplicated by other scholars. In contrast, the qualitative technique aims to understand individuals' experiences, beliefs,

behaviors, attitudes and interactions, producing non-numerical data. Incorporating qualitative research into intervention studies is a research approach that is gaining growing recognition across numerous fields (Anas & Ishaq, 2022). The research approach takes on an exploratory and interpretive style, focusing on generating rich insights instead of just broad conclusions. It prioritises understanding over mere numbers and aims to reveal how social actors, specifically the Buz Stop Boys and the communities they engage with, create meaning around environmental activism and CSR.

For this study, a qualitative approach has been chosen because it offers the best framework for delving into the complex, socially constructed meanings tied to grassroots activism and CSR. As opposed to quantitative research, which centers on measurement and statistical analysis, qualitative research emphasises understanding context, subjective experiences, and interpretation. This is crucial for a study like this, which seeks to grasp how the community perceives the activities of the Buz Stop Boys, how their efforts embody CSR principles, and how such informal initiatives might fit into formal CSR frameworks.

Additionally, the qualitative approach facilitates qualitative content analysis, a method that allows researchers to draw insights from social media posts, news articles, and other publicly available content. It also aligns with the interpretivist paradigm that guides this study, which posits that reality is shaped by human experiences and social interactions. In this light, qualitative inquiry enables a more profound exploration of themes such as legitimacy, civic engagement, and stakeholder influence, all of which are central to the study's goals.

3.3 Research design

According to Creswell (2014 as cited in Chali et al., 2022) Creswell asserts that the selection of a research design is influenced by the characteristics of the research problem, the

challenges that the research seeks to address, as well as the personal events of both the researcher and the intended research audience. Furthermore, he highlights entrenched viewpoints regarding the inquiry research process and particular methodologies for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This study takes a qualitative research approach, focusing on qualitative content analysis. This method is ideal because it enables a deep dive into how the activities of the Buz Stop Boys align with the principles of CSR. This study would be looking at publicly available materials like social media posts, news articles, and multimedia documentation. A qualitative design also helps us interpret themes related to social meaning, community impact, and stakeholder engagement, which are key to the goals of this study.

3.4 Data collection methods

Taherdoost (2021) asserts that typically, methods for data collection are classified into two primary categories: Primary Data Collection Methods and Secondary Data Collection Methods. Primary data refers to information that has not yet been published and is considered first-hand, remaining unaltered by any individual. In contrast, Secondary data comprises information sourced from published materials, signifying that it has been gathered by a different entity for an alternative purpose; nevertheless, it can still be employed for a range of research aims. This research utilises qualitative content analysis as its main approach for gathering data. Considering the focus of the study aimed at comprehending how the grassroots initiatives of the Buz Stop Boys correspond with CSR principles and how they are viewed by the public, the employment of secondary data derived from publicly accessible digital content provides a valuable and readily available data source. Furthermore, this approach aligns with the interpretivist paradigm that underpins the study, which prioritises the construction of meaning through both textual and visual analysis.

3.5 Data collection instrument

The research takes a qualitative approach and relies on secondary data, the main tool for data collection is a content analysis guide crafted by the researcher. This guide acts as a structured framework to help identify, categorise, and interpret relevant information from publicly accessible sources like social media posts, online news articles, and video content. The guide features a set of predefined coding categories that stem from the study's research objectives and theoretical framework, which includes Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory. These categories are designed to extract data related to: Type of activity (like clean-up efforts, education initiatives, or advocacy), Stakeholder engagement (such as community involvement, partnerships, and media attention), CSR alignment (focusing on environmental sustainability and civic responsibility), Community reaction or public sentiment, Frequency and visibility of posts or mentions.

This content analysis guide helps to systematically gather and organise both textual and visual data, while also being flexible enough to adapt to new themes that may arise during the analysis. Additionally, the framework promotes consistency and transparency throughout the data collection process, enhancing the overall trustworthiness of the study.

3.6 Research population

The research population for this study comprises publicly available digital content that highlights the activities and community involvement of the Buz Stop Boys in Ghana. This encompasses everything from social media posts and online news articles to blog features, videos, and other materials that are accessible to the public and shed light on the group's grassroots sanitation initiatives.

Unlike research that involves direct human participants, this study relies on qualitative secondary data. Here, the term "population" refers to the entire range of digital content that

mentions, supports, or critiques the work of the Buz Stop Boys. This content can be found on various platforms, including :Instagram, Twitter (X), Facebook, TikTok, News websites like MyJoyOnline, Citi Newsroom, and GhanaWeb, YouTube videos or interviews, Publications from organisations or NGOs.

The population consists of content created by the Buz Stop Boys, as well as coverage from third-party media and community feedback visible through public comments or shares. From this larger pool, a targeted sample will be selected to enable a focused and insightful analysis.

3.7 Sample Size

Sampling refers to the technique of utilizing a subset of a population to symbolise the whole population in survey research. It is a strategy that one might adopt to decide on various approaches. The methodology of sampling is a statistical technique employed by researchers to gather data and analyse the population. There are various sampling methods available, and all these techniques may target hard-to-reach groups (Afifah et al., 2023: Wahab et al., 2023)

The proposed sample will include around 10 to 18 pieces of digital content to avoid data saturation. This includes Social media posts, like images, captions, video clips, and comment threads, Online news articles and blog posts, Short videos or interviews found on platforms such as YouTube, Tiktok and Community responses or public comments related to the content.

This size is deemed adequate for a thematic content analysis, which prioritises depth and rich insights rather than just quantity. The goal is to uncover significant patterns and themes that shed light on how the Buz Stop Boys' work connects with CSR values and how it is viewed by the public.

3. 7.1 Sampling technique

SAGO(n.d) asserts that although qualitative research offers deep and detailed insights, the precision and applicability of its findings are contingent upon the effectiveness of the sampling process. Sampling methods play a vital role in qualitative research, as they entail the selection of a participant group capable of delivering significant insights related to the research inquiries. Employing sampling techniques can reduce the limitations imposed by costs, delays, and the complexities linked to different population sizes in your research. To gather relevant data from the population, numerous sampling methods are accessible in statistics, including Probability Sampling and Non-probability Sampling (Adeoye, 2023). Purposive sampling methods are commonly employed in various research articles due to their applicability across various research paradigms. They assist in distinguishing a quality sample free from biases, thereby enhancing the reliability and credibility of the results (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024).

The study uses a purposive sampling technique, a common approach in qualitative research that allows for the careful selection of data sources that are rich in information. This method helps hone in on digital content that directly aligns with the research goals, especially content that showcases the activities, visibility, and community involvement of the Buz Stop Boys. Content will be chosen based on these criteria:

- It must specifically mention or highlight the Buz Stop Boys.
- It should relate to their efforts in sanitation, civic engagement, or community initiatives.
- It needs to be publicly accessible on platforms like social media, news sites, or video-sharing platforms.
- This study prioritised content that has been published in the last 9 months to ensure it is timely and relevant.

3.7.2 Data Processing and Analysis Procedure

Qualitative Content Analysis

The chosen content would be analysed through thematic content analysis, which includes the following steps:

- **Familiarisation** : Reviewing and structuring the data into manageable formats (e.g. screenshots, transcripts).
- **Coding**- Labeling key actions, phrases, and visual elements (e.g. community service, public engagement, environmental responsibility).
- **Theme Development** - Organizing similar codes into broader themes such as:Environmental sustainability,Community empowerment, Stakeholder engagement,Grassroots legitimacy.
- **Interpretation** -Applying Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory to analyse: How the Buz Stop Boys cultivate public trust and visibility and how their actions meet the needs of various stakeholders (e.g. residents, media, local government).

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The conduct of academic researchers is regulated by research ethics.Ethical standards are crucial for safeguarding the dignity and rights of participants in research (Hasan et al., 2021). This research is based exclusively on data that is publicly accessible, thus eliminating the necessity for direct engagement with participants.Nevertheless, the subsequent ethical guidelines will be adhered to:

1. Accurately attributing sources (the names of platforms and articles).
2. Upholding privacy by refraining from sharing personal information or comments unless they have already been disclosed publicly.

3. Institutional approval will be sought if mandated by the ethical review board of the University.

3.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter discusses the methodological approach that would be adopted to explore how the grassroots activism of the Buz Stop Boys aligns with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles. A qualitative research approach would be employed, using thematic content analysis of secondary digital content such as social media posts, news articles, and videos. The research design would involve purposive sampling of 10–18 data sources, guided by a qualitative content analysis framework based on Legitimacy and Stakeholder Theories. Ethical considerations would focus on public content use, source attribution, and privacy protection.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter outlines the results of a qualitative content analysis of publicly accessible digital materials concerning the environmental activism of the Buz Stop Boys in Ghana. The results were organised around three research questions: the link between Buz Stop Boys' activities and CSR principles, public perceptions of their initiatives, and strategies for integrating grassroots efforts into CSR frameworks. Using Mayring (2014) deductive content analysis, data were coded through the lenses of Legitimacy Theory (Campbell et al., 2003; Gulluscio 2023), and Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) to identify patterns. Based

on 18 documented events occurring between March and September 2025, this study investigated patterns of stakeholder engagement, activities aimed at building legitimacy, and the dynamics of public response.

The results are structured around three primary research questions that examine the nature of the Buz Stop Boys' initiatives, the public's reception of their efforts, and possible avenues for incorporating grassroots initiatives into established CSR frameworks. This study uncovers a complex grassroots organisation that has adeptly established itself as a credible environmental steward while fostering strategic partnerships across various sectors.

The analysed data encompasses social media content from platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, announcements of corporate partnerships, collaborations with government agencies, and public commentary collected over six months of vigorous environmental activism. This multi-platform strategy offers a thorough perspective on how grassroots environmental initiatives can transition into formally recognised CSR partners.

4.1 Preliminary Descriptions (Demographic Data/ Units Of Analysis Presentation)

This research analysed 18 digital content pieces reflecting diverse stakeholder perspectives on the Buz Stop Boys' environmental activism, collected from March to September 2025. The content included social media posts, institutional meeting documentation, corporate collaboration materials, and community responses, showcasing the group's activities and stakeholder engagement patterns. These occurrences were classified along various dimensions, encompassing strategies for building legitimacy (PT, SA, MA, CR), types of civic engagement (ES, CP, PW, VC), categories of stakeholder influence (GR, MC, CRP, CR, YE), and codes for measuring impact (QI, LI, PE).

The Buz Stop Boys represent a grassroots perspective, primarily consisting of young Ghanaian environmental volunteers skilled in digital communication and community mobilisation. Insights from a Youth Employment Agency (YEA) meeting reveal their unique environmental vision and strong advocacy skills, with a spokesperson demonstrating a deep understanding of environmental issues and youth engagement strategies.

The institutional stakeholders analysed include representatives from government bodies like the Youth Employment Agency (YEA) and the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), who hold senior positions capable of influencing policy and strategic initiatives. The YEA representative noted the group's significant impact, emphasising frequent public references to their work.

Corporate representatives from established organisations like Fidelity Bank, Tango Prime Wash, and Twellium Industries (Verna Water) oversee CSR programs focused on community engagement. They bring expertise in marketing, CSR execution, and brand partnerships, contributing to sustainable business practices and stakeholder collaboration.

Community members and social media users, as seen in public comments, displayed diverse environmental awareness and civic involvement across age groups, demonstrating grassroots support on platforms like TikTok and Facebook.

Media figures and influencers, such as Fred Amugi, provided insights on celebrity endorsements, while independent observers document the group's activities and their community impact. This diverse stakeholder representation forms a strong analytical framework for exploring how grassroots environmental activism gains legitimacy, encourages civic engagement, and influences various stakeholder groups in Ghana's evolving CSR landscape, from community testimonials to corporate partnerships.

4.1.1 Activity Distribution by Type

A. Legitimacy Categories:

- **Policy/Technocratic (PT):** 11 occurrences - Indicating formal collaborations and activities aligned with policy objectives.
- **Social Action (SA):** 8 occurrences - Initiatives driven by community efforts for environmental improvement.
- **Moral Authority (MA):** 6 occurrences - Actions reflecting ethical leadership
- **Crisis Response (CR):** 7 occurrences - Operations for emergency and flood relief

B. Civic Engagement Patterns:

- **Environmental Stewardship (ES):** 10 occurrences - Direct actions for environmental cleanup and conservation
- **Civic Partnership (CP):** 9 occurrences - Joint efforts with various institutions
- **Public Works (PW):** 6 occurrences - Activities related to infrastructure and community service
- **Values Communication (VC):** 7 occurrences - Messaging and awareness efforts driven by mission

4.1.3 Stakeholder Engagement Analysis

A. Primary Stakeholders:

- **Corporate Partners (CRP):** 8 recorded collaborations including Fidelity Bank, Tango Prime, Verna Water, and Twellium
- **Government Relations (GR):** 4 formal partnerships with YEA, GTA, National Sports Authority, and 37 Military Hospital
- **Media Coverage (MC):** 7 notable media events across diverse platforms
- **Youth Engagement (YE):** 9 initiatives and collaborations focused on youth

4.1.4 Geographic and Temporal Scope

Activities are primarily located in the Greater Accra Region, with significant interventions at:

1. Nationalism Park (collaboration with GTA)
2. Kotobabi (partnership with Tango Prime)
3. Fadama (operations for flood relief)
4. Legon-Okponglo corridor (maintenance of infrastructure)
5. Mile 7 (spontaneous engagement by citizens)

The temporal analysis indicates a sustained level of activity, with peak engagement observed between March and June 2025, showcasing a consistent operational capacity rather than intermittent activism.

4.2 Findings For Research Questions

4.2.1 Research Question 1: What activities of the Buz Stop Boys align with the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?

4.2.1.i Environmental Stewardship Initiatives

The analysis revealed a strong link between Buz Stop Boys' activities and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles regarding environmental accountability. Evidence from various sources shows their consistent commitment to environmental stewardship in urban Ghana. This is evident in three main forms:

1. **Direct Environmental Action:** The organisation actively participates in practical environmental cleanup initiatives, with 10 out of 18 recorded events reflecting direct Environmental Stewardship (ES coding). These activities exemplify the CSR principle of environmental responsibility by demonstrating quantifiable impacts on the community, aligning with Castells' (2015) examination of how grassroots movements foster significant social transformation through ongoing collective efforts. The cleanup at Nationalism Park in collaboration with GTA serves as a prime example of this strategy, where the organisation remarked: *"Tourism is a shared*

responsibility... We encourage partnership between governmental bodies, the private sector, traditional leaders, and local communities."

2. **Resource Efficiency and Waste Management:** A notable example is the independent cleanup at Fadama using a tyre and chain in August 2025, which aimed to *"transform unclean areas into clean spaces at no cost"* and aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 11 on clean water and sustainable cities, demonstrating an understanding of international CSR standards. This approach exemplifies Porter and Kramer's (2011) concept of creating shared value, where community environmental improvements generate benefits for both residents and the broader urban ecosystem without imposing financial burdens on beneficiaries. Additionally, the Fadama flood relief cleanup operation highlighted their dedication to environmental stewardship by improving infrastructure and addressing community flooding issues without financial burden on residents, thus contributing to public welfare and reflecting CSR principles of community responsibility and environmental conservation.

Sustainable Partnership Development: The organisation has established systematic methods to address environmental issues that are in accordance with formal CSR frameworks, reflecting what Bowen et al. (2010) characterise as strategic community engagement where grassroots organisations develop operational capabilities that complement rather than compete with institutional CSR initiatives. The ongoing collaboration with Verna Water, which has supplied around 8,640 water packs over a span of two years, exemplifies a continuous dedication to community well-being and environmental sustainability. The partnership between the Ghana Tourism Authority exemplifies institutional collaboration, emphasising that *"tourism is a shared responsibility... we encourage partnerships between government, private sector, traditional*

leaders, and communities." This multi-stakeholder approach aligns with Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory and modern CSR best practices. Corporate partnerships with Fidelity Bank and Tango Prime Wash demonstrate the private sector's commitment to CSR. Fidelity Bank's collaboration emphasised collective environmental stewardship, stating, *"protecting our environment isn't a one-man affair. It truly takes all of us."* These partnerships show how grassroots initiatives can enhance CSR engagement across sectors.

4.2.1.ii Transparency and Accountability

The organisation exemplifies the principles of CSR transparency by systematically documenting and publicly reporting its activities, a practice consistent with O'Donovan's (2002) finding that organisations build legitimacy through transparent communication of environmental actions rather than merely symbolic gestures. The quantified impact reporting (QI) coding in four instances reflects a commitment to measurable outcomes, while ongoing social media documentation offers stakeholders regular updates on progress.

1. Measurable Impact Communication: The organisation's commitment to quantified impact reporting is evident in their social media communications. A TikTok post from August 2025 documented:

"We made a historic milestone! Over 2 years, we have cleaned more than 600 different locations across Ghana, averaging 12 locations per month. We've mobilised 10,166 volunteers including carpenters, military personnel, and midwives."

This systematic quantification demonstrates accountability standards typically associated with formal corporate CSR programs (O'Donovan 2002). The organisation also supplies specific metrics regarding corporate partnerships, such as the provision of 8,640 water packs through the Verna Water collaboration, thereby demonstrating accountability to both partners and beneficiaries. These quantified communications provide stakeholders with

concrete evidence of organisational impact, facilitating institutional trust and partnership development.

2. Values-Based Messaging: Values communication (VC) is evident in seven instances, consistently reinforcing messages of environmental stewardship. Fred Amugi's endorsement encapsulated this approach: *"These are the Buz Stop Boys... we are here to help their cause... God bless you all,"* illustrating the alignment of values with both celebrity and institutional partners.

4.3.1.iii Youth Empowerment and Civic Engagement

The meeting of the Youth Employment Agency showcased a clear alignment with the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) related to youth development. The spokesperson's discussion of environmental issues and strategies for engaging youth highlighted the aspects of capacity building and leadership development inherent in CSR, reflecting Freeman's (1984) emphasis on engaging diverse stakeholder groups in ways that build long-term organisational capacity. The spokesperson for the Buz Stop Boys at the YEA meeting exhibited advanced skills in environmental advocacy, asserting: *"Every great nation... is a nation that has a great environment... how about deliberately pushing content about environmental sustainability to the youth?"* This statement not only reflects a strong awareness of environmental issues but also demonstrates a strategic approach to engaging youth and fostering behavioral change. Their assertion regarding *"deliberately pushing content about environmental sustainability to the youth?"* illustrates a strategic approach to fostering long-term social impact and encouraging behavioral change through what Bowen et al. (2010) describe as community capacity development mechanisms.

The promotion of a culture of volunteerism emerged as a recurring theme throughout various content pieces. The ongoing engagement of volunteers documented during numerous

cleanup initiatives exemplifies the CSR principles of community service and civic duty. Corporate partners acknowledged this volunteerism explicitly, with Fidelity Bank emphasising how its partnership *"enhanced our dedication to creating cleaner, healthier communities."* demonstrating the concept of shared value creation as articulated by Porter and Kramer (2011), where grassroots organisations and corporate partners fulfill their individual goals through cooperative involvement.

4.2.2 Research Question 2: How do their publics express support, criticism, or doubt toward the Buz Stop Boys' activities?

4.2.2.i Institutional Support and Recognition

The analysis indicates a predominantly favorable institutional response from government, corporate, and civil society sectors:

1. **Government Endorsement:** Recognition at the presidential level, exemplified by President Mahama's C\$50,000 donation along with sanitation equipment, signifies the pinnacle of institutional support and represents what Fernando and Lawrence (2014) describe as the conferral of institutional legitimacy, where governmental endorsement serves to validate organisational activities as being in accordance with national development priorities. Government recognition has played a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of legitimacy. The acknowledgment by an official from the Youth Employment Agency, who noted, *"I saw a lot of people mention Bus stop boys"* during public engagement sessions, illustrates institutional validation of their public standing. This recognition has established a feedback loop of legitimacy, where government acknowledgement has bolstered public trust and credibility, a dynamic consistent with Suchman's (1995) theory that organisational legitimacy

increases when institutional actors confer social approval and validate organisational activities as appropriate and desirable.

2. **Corporate Validation:** Corporate partners regularly convey alignment with shared values in their public statements. Fidelity Bank's assertion that its partnership *"enhanced our dedication to fostering cleaner, healthier communities"* exemplifies corporate acknowledgement of the organisation's CSR value proposition.
3. **Healthcare Sector Recognition:** The proposal from the 37 Military Hospital for a *"long-term beautification partnership"* reflects institutional trust in the organisation's ability to create lasting community impact, illustrating what Suchman (1995) defines as cognitive legitimacy, where the organisation's presence and actions are regarded as appropriate and essential by institutional stakeholders.

4.2.2.ii Grassroots Public Support

Public commentary analysis indicates a robust grassroots endorsement characterised by distinct patterns:

1. **Heroic Framing:** Public remarks consistently utilise heroic terminology: *"These are Heroes of the century, well done"* and *"Bus stop boy the best," "God richly bless the whole team chale you guys are doing a great job. You're a national asset the country needs to protect you", "brilliant initiative"*, reflecting a profound emotional bond and admiration from community members. This heroic framing aligns with Castells' (2015) assertion that effective social movements foster emotional connection by

meeting community needs in manners that conventional institutions fail in accomplishing, thereby creating genuine public identification with grassroots efforts.

2. **Comparative Excellence:** Citizens make explicit comparisons, favorably positioning the organisation against established institutions: *"Zoomlion contracts should be awarded to Bus Stop Boys... they have passion for the well-being of the country,"* implying a public perception of greater effectiveness relative to existing service providers. This comparative assessment reflects what Suchman (1995) describes as competitive legitimacy, where stakeholders evaluate organisational worth not in absolute terms but relative to alternative institutional arrangements.
3. **Spontaneous Support:** The incident involving citizen donations at Mile 7, where *"a passerby returned to donate after seeing cleanup,"* illustrates organic public support and confidence in the organisation's mission. This spontaneous endorsement reflects what Suchman (1995) describes as pragmatic legitimacy where organisations gain social acceptance through demonstrable benefit to stakeholders' immediate self-interests, in this case, visible environmental improvement that directly benefits community members.

4.2.2.iii. Absence of Documented Criticism

Notably, the thorough examination of 18 recorded events and numerous public remarks uncovered no occurrences of criticism, skepticism, or uncertainty within the time frame of conducting this study.

Unlike conventional CSR initiatives that frequently provoke varied public reactions, the Bus Stop Boys' endeavors received consistently favorable feedback. As highlighted by one community member: *"Zoomlion contract should be awarded to Bus Stop Boys. They are not just the best but have passion for the well-being of the country"*

Even this comparative statement which references an established waste management company maintains positive framing rather than explicit criticism of either organisation.

The absence of criticism might also indicate the uncontroversial character of environmental stewardship initiatives and the organisation's careful strategy to uphold political neutrality while interacting across party lines.

4.2.2. iv Credibility Through Demonstrated Impact

Public perception was significantly shaped by observable environmental effects. Content that illustrated before-and-after changes in public areas offered concrete proof that bolstered public evaluations of credibility. The Fadama flood relief initiative, which reinstated "*free water flow*" and delivered "*direct public benefit and safety*," showcased quantifiable community effects that enhanced public confidence.

Consistency in operations across various contexts enhanced perceptions of credibility. The analysis indicated ongoing involvement from independent initiatives to corporate partnerships, implying a dependable commitment rather than intermittent activism, which aligns with Deegan's (2002) observation that stakeholders assess organisational legitimacy through consistent performance trends rather than through singular actions or declarations. This consistency was echoed in public remarks commending their "*dedication to the welfare of the nation*."

4.2.2.v The Impact of Celebrity and Corporate Endorsements

The collaboration with Fred Amugi for celebrity endorsement greatly enhanced the favorable public perception. His remark, "*God bless you all*," along with his active involvement, offered aspirational validation that broadened their influence beyond local community boundaries. This association with a celebrity not only raised their public profile but also preserved authenticity through ongoing grassroots initiatives, demonstrating what

Suchman (1995) identifies as endorsement legitimacy, where associations with respected public figures transfer credibility and social acceptance to emerging organisations.

The visibility gained from corporate partnerships influenced the perception of legitimacy and sustainability. Documented collaborations with reputable companies such as Fidelity Bank and Tango Prime Wash gave institutional credibility that shaped public opinion, demonstrating the instrumental stakeholder framework proposed by Donaldson and Preston (1995), which posits that collaborations with reputable institutions bolster organisational credibility and promote operational sustainability. Community members voiced their trust in their methods, with some recommending that the *"Zoomlion contract should be awarded to Bus Stop Boys"* due to their proven competence and dedication.

4.2.3 Research Question 3: What strategies can integrate grassroots initiatives into formal CSR frameworks in Ghana?

4.2.3.i Partnership Integration Model

The case of the Buz Stop Boys illustrates an effective three-tier integration approach that aligns with Bowen et al(2010) framework for community engagement strategy, where grassroots organisations and corporations create mutual value through resource complementarity rather than traditional donor-recipient relationships.

1. **Tier 1: Demonstration of Competence** - Initially, organisations must create credible histories through consistent and measurable environmental impacts. This foundational stage reflects O'Donovan's (2002) finding that organisations build legitimacy through demonstrated performance rather than symbolic communication. The systematic documentation of the organisation's activities and quantified results (8,640 water packs, flood relief efforts, infrastructure upkeep) forms the essential evidence base required for formal CSR integration.

2. **Tier 2: Values Alignment Communication** - Grassroots organisations should express their activities using formal CSR language and frameworks. The partnership communications of the organisation consistently utilise CSR terminology such as *"shared responsibility," "community partnerships,"* and *"sustainable development,"* which aids in aligning with corporate CSR goals.
3. **Tier 3: Institutional Legitimisation** - Recognition from the government (YEA partnership, presidential endorsement) offers the institutional credibility needed for corporate CSR integration. This governmental support diminishes corporate risk perception and affirms the organisation's legitimacy as a CSR partner.

4.2.3.ii Multi-Platform Communication Strategy

Effective integration necessitates advanced communication strategies tailored to various stakeholder groups as Freeman et al. (2010) highlight that modern stakeholder theory necessitates varied engagement strategies that acknowledge the distinct traits and communication preferences of different stakeholder groups.

1. **Platform Diversification:** The organisation sustains its presence on TikTok (engaging youth), Facebook (facilitating corporate communication), Instagram (offering visual narratives), and YouTube (providing comprehensive documentation), which allows for precise messaging directed at distinct stakeholder categories.
2. **Message Consistency:** In spite of the diversity of platforms, the fundamental messages regarding environmental stewardship remain uniform, fostering brand recognition and trust among different stakeholder groups.

3. **Professional Documentation:** Collaborations within the corporate sector demand high-quality documentation and reporting, which the organisation has achieved through a methodical approach to social media content creation.

4.2.3.iii Institutional Recognition and Support Mechanisms

1. **Corporate Resource Partnership:** Ongoing collaborations with firms such as Verna Water ensure a steady supply of resources, enabling corporations to fulfill their CSR goals through grassroots partnerships instead of relying on internal program development.
2. **Government Infrastructure Utilisation:** Collaborations with governmental bodies (GTA, National Sports Authority, YEA) offer access to institutional resources and confer official recognition, thereby increasing the appeal of corporate partnerships. The engagement of the Youth Employment Agency exemplifies how governmental institutions can offer formal acknowledgement while maintaining the autonomy of grassroots movements. The agency's curiosity about *"how you make this possible"* indicates a readiness to learn from grassroots methodologies instead of merely appropriating them.

Opportunities for developing policy frameworks arose through a clear alignment with national development objectives. The direct link to UN Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 11 in their activities implies a possibility for incorporation into national environmental policy frameworks and international development initiatives.

4.3 Discussions Of Findings

This qualitative content analysis reveals key insights into the relationship between grassroots environmental activism and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Ghana. This section critically examines the significance of the identified themes, their connection to existing

CSR literature, and their contribution to environmental governance discussions in developing contexts.

4.3.1 Legitimacy Construction and Authentic Community Engagement

The Buz Stop Boys' environmental activism challenges traditional CSR legitimacy by emphasising genuine community engagement. Unlike corporate CSR initiatives that often lack real stakeholder involvement and may prioritise business motives over social responsibility (Blowfield & Frynas, 2005), this grassroots movement gains legitimacy through authentic community integration. Their commitment to addressing critical community issues '*at no expense to residents*' reflects what Carroll & Shabana (2010) describe as 'enlightened self-interest,' but in reverse, prioritizing community benefits before any organisational gain.

4.3.2 Stakeholder Theory Reconsidered: Community as Primary Stakeholder

The findings challenge the traditional view in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) literature that prioritises shareholders over communities. While conventional CSR models place shareholders first, stakeholder theory advocates for equal consideration of all groups (Freeman et al., 2010). In contrast, the Buz Stop Boys model exemplifies a community-first approach, aligning environmental benefits, community needs, and organisational goals.

Secondary stakeholders encompass media figures, social media audiences, and various civil society participants who shape public perception and policy discussions. The collaboration with Fred Amugi and extensive social media involvement demonstrate how secondary stakeholders can transition to primary status through strategic engagement, thereby reinforcing the principles of dynamic stakeholder categorisation.

The creation of value for stakeholders varies among different groups: communities benefit from enhancements to the environment and opportunities for civic participation;

corporations realise genuine corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices and build credibility within the community; government entities acquire models for youth mobilisation and partners for implementing environmental policies. This approach to multi-stakeholder value creation illustrates how grassroots initiatives can simultaneously produce value for a variety of stakeholder groups, as Freeman et al. (2010) advocate in their contemporary stakeholder theory applications.

The strategies for engaging stakeholders that have been identified encompass direct involvement of the community (such as cleanup initiatives), dialogue with institutions (including YEA meetings), collaboration with corporations (in terms of resource sharing), and engagement through digital platforms (like social media interactions). This diverse approach aligns with Freeman's (1984) suggestion for tailored stakeholder engagement that considers the unique characteristics and expectations of different groups.

4.4 Theoretical Integration: Dynamics of Legitimacy And Stakeholders

4.4.1 Reciprocal Legitimacy-Stakeholder Relationships

The findings indicate intricate interactions between legitimacy and stakeholders, where the construction of legitimacy facilitates wider stakeholder involvement, while the backing of stakeholders bolsters legitimacy assertions. Government acknowledgement amplifies legitimacy, thereby drawing in corporate collaborations that showcase competence and sustainability, which in turn fortifies community backing, establishing positive feedback loops between legitimacy and stakeholder involvement. The reciprocal dynamics outlined by Fernando and Lawrence (2014) bolster their integrated framework, illustrating that legitimacy and stakeholder engagement are interrelated rather than distinct organisational processes. The recognition from the government via the YEA partnership and presidential donations creates a form of pragmatic legitimacy, which in turn increases the organisation's

appeal to corporate partners in search of credible CSR collaborators. This pattern illustrates the concept of stakeholder salience dynamics as articulated by Mitchell et al. (1997), where organisational legitimacy amplifies stakeholder power and urgency, thereby establishing reinforcing cycles of institutional acknowledgment and resource mobilisation. These corporate alliances, such as those with Fidelity Bank, Tango Prime, and Verna Water, showcase operational competence and financial viability, thereby strengthening community trust and engagement. The rise in community support, illustrated by spontaneous donations and public endorsements, further affirms the organisation's moral legitimacy, rendering it more appealing to prospective institutional partners.

The proposal from the 37 Military Hospital for a *"long-term beautification partnership"* serves as a prime example of this dynamic. Institutional confidence in the ability to maintain a sustained partnership is derived from the legitimacy demonstrated across various stakeholder groups: government endorsement confirms regulatory compliance, corporate partnerships illustrate operational dependability, and community backing verifies social acceptance. This validation, which encompasses multiple dimensions, aligns with the descriptive stakeholder framework proposed by Donaldson and Preston (1995). In this framework, organisational legitimacy arises from the ability to show accountability to various stakeholder groups at the same time.

4.4.2 Stakeholder-Mediated Legitimacy Construction

The data indicates the presence of distinct mechanisms for validating legitimacy that are specific to various stakeholders, different categories of stakeholders authenticate legitimacy through unique pathways that correspond with their institutional roles:

1. **Community-Mediated Pragmatic Legitimacy:** Grassroots stakeholders affirm legitimacy via direct involvement and testimonial support. The spontaneous donations at Mile 7 and public remarks referring to the organisation as *"Heroes of*

the century" exemplify what Suchman (1995) categorises as pragmatic legitimacy, specifically, exchange legitimacy based on observable community effects that directly benefit stakeholder interests. The measurable results of *"flood relief at Fadama"* with *"no cost to residents"* and quantifiable infrastructure enhancements at Legon-Okponglo offer concrete evidence that community stakeholders utilise to evaluate legitimacy, consistent with Deegan's (2002) finding that stakeholders validate organisational legitimacy through tangible outcomes rather than symbolic gestures.

2. **Government-Mediated Moral Legitimacy:** Government institutions show legitimacy by means of institutional acknowledgement that indicates moral authority and compliance with regulations. The statement from the YEA meeting *"Every great nation... is a nation that has a great environment"* positions the organisation's efforts within the context of national development stories, bestowing moral legitimacy through its connection to state environmental goals. Support at the presidential level (€50,000 donation) represents the most significant form of validation for moral legitimacy within the governance framework of Ghana.

4.5 Implications For Csr Theory And Practice In Ghana

4.5.1 Reconceptualizing CSR Directionality

The results challenge traditional CSR frameworks that presume a corporate-to-community flow, indicating that CSR initiated by grassroots movements may yield enhanced sustainability and legitimacy within the Ghanaian context. Although Amo-Mensah (2021) noted that CSR in Ghana is largely influenced by corporate developmental goals and voluntary self-regulation, the Buz Stop Boys case illustrates an alternative framework where CSR arises from needs identified by the community and the operational capacity of

grassroots organisations, with corporations offering support in terms of resources rather than directing programs. This inverted model corresponds with Idemudia's (2010) assertion that successful CSR in African settings should arise from the priorities of the community instead of being dictated by external corporate agendas, recognizing that the requirements for development are fundamentally distinct from those in Western CSR environments.

The partnership with Fidelity Bank serves as a prime example of this methodology, where the corporation bolsters existing grassroots efforts instead of enforcing pre-established CSR initiatives.

4.5.2 Practical Guidance for Grassroots organisations

The case study offers practical insights for grassroots organisations aiming to integrate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

1. **Documentation and Measurement Priority:** It is essential for organisations to establish systematic documentation and quantifiable impact measurement to showcase their capabilities to prospective corporate partners and government entities as O'Donovan (2002) demonstrated, the legitimacy of an organisation is heavily reliant on the communication of environmental performance that is grounded in evidence, rather than solely on rhetorical assertions. The Buz Stop Boys serve as a prime example of this methodology through their extensive operational metrics: over a span of two years, they have successfully cleaned more than 600 distinct locations throughout Ghana, sustaining an average operational rate of 12 locations each month. Their organisational capacity surpasses the core membership of 50 active volunteers, encompassing around 150 intermittent volunteers, with a cumulative total of 10,166 individuals, including a variety of professionals such as carpenters, military

personnel, and midwives engaging in cleanup initiatives during the two-year timeframe. This systematic quantification of impact (over 600 locations cleaned), operational regularity (12 locations monthly), and mobilisation capability (over 10,000 volunteers) establishes the necessary evidence base for developing institutional partnerships. The calculated provision of 8,640 water packs through the Verna Water partnership further illustrates this documentation priority, converting resource partnerships into quantifiable community benefits.

2. **Multi-Platform Communication Strategies:** Ensuring a presence on various platforms (such as TikTok for engaging youth, Facebook for corporate messaging, and Instagram for visual storytelling) facilitates targeted engagement with stakeholders while fostering widespread public support. Utilizing the contemporary stakeholder principle proposed by Freeman et al. (2010), it is essential to recognise that successful engagement necessitates communication strategies that are customised to the unique preferences and access behaviors of various stakeholder groups.
3. **Political Neutrality Maintenance:** Functioning across political lines without aligning with any particular party allows for ongoing operations regardless of political changes, thereby safeguarding the legitimacy of the organisation and the continuity of partnerships. This strategic neutrality embodies what Suchman (1995) articulates as the preservation of pragmatic legitimacy across various institutional realms by steering clear of reliance on any one political constituency.
4. **Crisis Response Capability:** Cultivating the ability to respond to emergencies (like flood relief efforts) showcases operational adaptability, which enhances the institutional value and makes partnerships more appealing beyond standard environmental management, illustrating the concept of community responsiveness as

identified by Bowen et al. (2010), which is a vital capability that sets apart successful grassroots organisations from inflexible institutional programs.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter primarily focused on the Findings for Research Questions and the Discussions of the data. The subsequent chapter will address the findings and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This final chapter combines the principal findings derived from the study of grassroots environmental activism and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) frameworks in Ghana, with a particular focus on the Buz Stop Boys as a case study. The research utilised deductive qualitative content analysis, informed by Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory, to analyse 18 documented events occurring from March to September 2025. It explores the alignment of grassroots initiatives with CSR principles, the public's reactions to these activities, and the strategies that facilitate their incorporation into established CSR frameworks.

5.1 Summary Of Findings

The main objective of this study was to explore the intersection of grassroots environmental activism with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) frameworks, using the Buz Stop Boys in Ghana as a case study. The specific goals included analyzing the alignment of grassroots

environmental initiatives with recognised CSR principles, understanding public perceptions and stakeholder reactions to these initiatives, and identifying effective strategies for incorporating grassroots activism into established CSR frameworks. A systematic analysis of 18 documented events from March to September 2025 yielded six key findings:

1. **Robust Alignment with CSR Principles** - Grassroots environmental initiatives can exemplify fundamental CSR principles such as environmental stewardship, community responsibility, stakeholder engagement, and transparency, even in the absence of formal corporate frameworks. The organised documentation and quantifiable impacts showcased by the Buz Stop Boys illustrate accountability benchmarks usually linked to established corporate CSR initiatives, thereby questioning the belief that effective CSR necessitates corporate institutional capabilities.
2. **Multi-Dimensional Legitimacy Construction** - Grassroots initiatives cultivate legitimacy across four distinct dimensions concurrently: pragmatic legitimacy achieved through evident community impact and reliable service provision; moral legitimacy established via governmental acknowledgement and institutional support; structural legitimacy derived from corporate partnership choices; and cognitive legitimacy fostered through cultural assimilation and endorsements from public figures. This multi-faceted legitimacy arises naturally from genuine community involvement rather than from strategic communication efforts, endowing grassroots organisations with intrinsic authenticity benefits compared to corporate-led CSR initiatives.
3. **Reciprocal Legitimacy-Stakeholder Dynamics** - The study revealed tangled feedback loops in which the construction of legitimacy facilitates wider stakeholder involvement, while concurrently, the backing of stakeholders bolsters legitimacy

assertions. Various categories of stakeholders authenticate legitimacy via distinct mechanisms, communities through active participation, government through formal recognition, corporations through decisions regarding partnerships, and cultural influencers through their endorsements. These reciprocal dynamics generate effects of legitimacy amplification, where the initial credibility of the community draws in institutional support, which in turn enhances operational capacity, subsequently increasing community impact, and further fortifying legitimacy

4. **Community-Focused Stakeholder Efficiency** - Models centered around community stakeholders exhibit higher engagement effectiveness compared to traditional CSR approaches that prioritise shareholders. The study recorded inventive engagement techniques such as peer-to-peer volunteer mobilisation from various professional backgrounds, organic media amplification across several platforms, crisis-responsive operations, and partnerships based on resource complementarity instead of donor-recipient dynamics. These methods fostered trust levels and participation rates that corporate CSR initiatives often find challenging to reach.
5. **The Viability of Hybrid Governance Models** - Partnerships that integrate grassroots operational capabilities, corporate resources, and governmental institutional support have emerged as effective frameworks for sustainable environmental governance. Successful collaboration among government agencies, corporate entities, and community stakeholders has been achieved without compromising grassroots autonomy or community responsiveness. This indicates that hybrid models can effectively overcome the limitations associated with solely governmental or solely corporate approaches to environmental governance.

6. **Sequential Legitimacy Development Pathway** - Grassroots organisations engage in a unique sequential process of legitimacy construction: they first establish pragmatic legitimacy by demonstrating their impact on the community, then advance to moral legitimacy through the articulation of values and gaining institutional recognition, subsequently achieving structural legitimacy through partnerships with corporations, and finally reaching cognitive legitimacy through cultural integration. This progression is fundamentally different from the legitimacy-building process in corporations, which usually starts with compliance to structural or regulatory standards. This indicates that grassroots organisations and corporations follow distinct pathways in their corporate social responsibility (CSR) development, underscoring the significance of community-first strategies for grassroots entities aiming to form institutional partnerships.

5.2 Conclusions

This study investigated the Buz Stop Boys as a case study of grassroots-initiated Corporate Social Responsibility, analyzing the intersection of grassroots-driven environmental activism with established CSR frameworks in Ghana. The findings of this research present several significant conclusions that have implications for CSR theory, practices in environmental governance, and policies for sustainable development in developing contexts.

5.2.1 Theoretical Conclusions

1. **Grassroots Legitimacy Pathways Differ from Corporate Models:** The study illustrates that grassroots organisations establish legitimacy via pathways that are fundamentally distinct from those of corporations. In contrast to corporate CSR legitimacy, which typically initiates with structural compliance and alignment with

regulations before advancing to social acceptance, grassroots initiatives adopt a reversed order. They first achieve pragmatic legitimacy through evident community impact, subsequently attain moral legitimacy through the articulation of values and recognition by institutions, and ultimately secure cognitive legitimacy through cultural integration. This variation in sequence carries significant implications for the applicability of legitimacy theory across different organisational types and indicates that grassroots organisations inherently possess advantages in legitimacy concerning community-oriented CSR activities.

2. **Stakeholder-Mediated Legitimacy Amplification:** The results indicate intricate reciprocal relationships between the construction of legitimacy and stakeholder engagement, functioning through mutually reinforcing feedback loops. Various stakeholder categories validate legitimacy through specific mechanisms: communities through active participation, government through formal recognition, corporations through decisions regarding partnerships, and cultural influencers through endorsements. This construction of legitimacy mediated by stakeholders implies that legitimacy is not solely an organisational construct but arises from dynamic interactions within stakeholder networks, thereby broadening the scope of legitimacy theory beyond organisation-centric viewpoints.
3. **Community-Focused Stakeholder Theory Applications:** The study illustrates that the application of stakeholder theory in developing environments can gain from reversing traditional corporate-stakeholder hierarchies. Instead of corporations determining stakeholder requirements and creating interventions, the Buz Stop Boys case illustrates community organisations expressing their priorities while corporations offer complementary resources. This observation contests shareholder-

primacy CSR frameworks and endorses stakeholder-focused methodologies where community needs guide CSR initiatives rather than corporate strategies dictating community involvement.

5.2.2 Practical Conclusions

- 1. Hybrid Governance Models Provide Sustainable Environmental Solutions:** The effective multi-sector collaborations exemplified by the Buz Stop Boys indicate that hybrid governance frameworks, which integrate grassroots operational capabilities, corporate assets, and governmental institutional backing, present feasible avenues for sustainable environmental governance in Ghana. These frameworks mitigate the shortcomings of solely governmental (resource limitations, bureaucratic inefficiencies) or solely corporate (issues of authenticity, lack of community trust) strategies by capitalizing on the comparative strengths of various sectors. The over 600 locations that were cleaned within a two-year period through consistent monthly operations illustrate an operational sustainability that many governmental and corporate initiatives find challenging to attain.
- 2. Documentation Facilitates Grassroots Expansion:** The systematic documentation of operations and the quantification of impact are identified as essential enablers for grassroots organisations aiming to establish institutional partnerships. The shift from informal community service to a recognised CSR partner necessitates an evidence-based demonstration of operational reliability, impact assessment, and mobilisation capabilities. organisations that cultivate strong documentation practices can diminish the perceived institutional risks and gain access to resources that are not available to undocumented initiatives, thus allowing for expansion without compromising grassroots authenticity.

3. **Authenticity Fosters Competitive Advantages in CSR:** Grassroots-driven CSR initiatives exhibit authenticity benefits that surpass those of corporate-led programs, fostering trust and community involvement that formal initiatives struggle to emulate. The unprompted contributions from citizens, the mobilisation of 10,166 volunteers from various professional backgrounds, and public endorsements that recognise the organisation as *"Heroes of the Century"* illustrate a true connection with the community that is seldom attained through corporate CSR communication methods. This authenticity leads to enhanced operational effectiveness, as community members engage actively rather than merely receiving corporate charitable efforts.

5.2.3 Policy Conclusions

1. **Participatory CSR Governance Frameworks Required:** The findings advocate for policy initiatives that promote participatory CSR governance, which supports grassroots initiatives instead of merely regulating them. The YEA partnership model where governmental bodies identify and uplift effective grassroots organisations rather than enforcing regulatory measures, illustrates governmental strategies that facilitate scaling while safeguarding community autonomy. Systematic policies that acknowledge, legitimise, and provide resources to credible grassroots environmental organisations as official implementation partners could enhance Ghana's environmental governance.
2. **Corporate-Grassroots Partnership Facilitation Necessary:** Policy frameworks ought to actively promote corporate-grassroots partnerships while safeguarding community organisations from corporate co-optation. This necessitates regulatory mechanisms that incentivise corporate CSR investments in grassroots collaborations (potentially through tax incentives or recognition in CSR reporting) while instituting

safeguards that maintain the integrity of grassroots missions and their operational independence. The successful collaborations with Fidelity Bank *“Together, we not only brightened our surroundings but also deepened our commitment to building cleaner, healthier communities.”*, Tango Prime *“We joined the @buzstopboys last Friday for a massive cleanup at Kotobabi...”*, and Verna Water *“Verna agreed to reduce plastic thickness and bottle seals, showing environmental commitment”* highlight the potential for mutual value creation when partnerships function as resource complementarity rather than corporate dominance.

3. Environmental Governance Necessitates Coordination Across Multiple

Sectors: In developing contexts, effective environmental governance necessitates institutional frameworks that facilitate collaboration among government agencies, corporate entities, grassroots organisations, and community stakeholders. The partnerships formed by the Buz Stop Boys, which include government bodies (YEA, GTA, National Sports Authority, 37 Military Hospital), corporations (various CSR initiatives), and community volunteers, illustrate that environmental issues surpass the capabilities of any one sector. Policies should promote, rather than hinder, multi-sector coordination, acknowledging that intricate environmental challenges demand a variety of organisational skills.

5.3 Limitations

While this study offers significant insights into grassroots corporate social responsibility (CSR) and environmental activism in Ghana, there are several limitations that influence the breadth and applicability of the results.

5.3.1 Methodological Limitations

1. **Single Case Study Design:** This research utilises a single case study methodology centered on the Buz Stop Boys, which restricts the applicability of the findings to other grassroots organisations that may operate in diverse contexts, possess different organisational frameworks, or tackle various environmental issues. Although the case study approach facilitates a profound contextual understanding, the conclusions derived from a single organisation may not be relevant to grassroots initiatives that have distinct founding conditions, leadership dynamics, or operational strategies.
2. **Time-Bounded Data Collection:** This systematic analysis considers only a seven-month period of recorded activities (March-September 2025), which may overlook significant seasonal fluctuations, the evolution of long-term partnerships, or patterns of organisational development that can only be discerned over more extended periods. Although the two-year operational history offers a broader context, the detailed coding analysis is confined to a limited timeframe that might not encompass all pertinent dynamics.
3. **Public Data Dependence:** The study is entirely dependent on publicly accessible social media content, media reports, and communications from the organisation. This restriction in data access implies that internal organisational dynamics, private partnership discussions, financial arrangements, strategic decision-making processes, and potential conflicts are not examined. Consequently, the results reflect only the public-facing activities of the organisation and may not adequately capture internal challenges or complexities.

4. **Platform Selection Bias:** The analysis is centered on content from TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, where the Buz Stop Boys are active. organisations employing different communication strategies or utilizing alternative channels may exhibit distinct patterns of legitimacy construction or stakeholder engagement. Therefore, the findings may be influenced by the characteristics of the platforms and the demographics of their audiences, rather than representing universal grassroots CSR traits.

5.3.2 Data Limitations

1. **Absence of Critical Voices:** The data analysed showed no recorded public protest or skepticism regarding the activities of the Buz Stop Boys. This lack of protest may suggest a true consensus, effective management of crisis communication, potential bias in researcher selection, or constraints in the methods used for data collection. The absence of critical viewpoints restricts the comprehension of possible challenges to legitimacy, conflicts among stakeholders, or organisational vulnerabilities that might exist but are not publicly acknowledged.
2. **Limited Stakeholder Perspective Diversity:** Although the research encompasses the viewpoints of corporate partners, government agencies, and public supporters, it fails to systematically include insights from community members who did not engage in the activities, potential critics, rival organisations, or other grassroots environmental groups. This restricted diversity of stakeholders may result in an incomplete understanding of public perception and the impact of the organisation.
3. **Quantification Challenges:** Certain impact metrics depend on self-reported data from the organisation (over 600 locations cleaned, 10,166 volunteers mobilised) without independent verification. While these statistics seem credible and are publicly available,

the research does not possess the means for independent assessment of impact or third-party validation of the outcomes claimed.

5.3.3 Theoretical Limitations

1. **Framework Constraints:** This study utilises Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory as its main analytical frameworks, which may result in the neglect of valuable insights that could be gained from other theoretical perspectives, including Social Movement Theory, Resource Mobilisation Theory, or Institutional Theory. Employing diverse theoretical frameworks could uncover dynamics that are not addressed by the legitimacy-stakeholder analysis.

5.3.4 Contextual Limitations

1. **Geographic Specificity:** The results are derived from urban and peri-urban settings within the Greater Accra Region, which is the most developed metropolitan area in Ghana. The relevance of these findings to rural areas, other regions of Ghana, or different African nations with distinct political economies, cultural contexts, or environmental issues is still uncertain.
2. **Organisational Life Stage:** The Buz Stop Boys are a relatively young organisation, having been established for two years, and are currently in a growth phase with increasing institutional recognition. The findings may not be applicable to more established organisations that encounter different challenges, emerging groups that are still in the process of building initial legitimacy, or organisations that are experiencing decline or transition phases.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the research, this section offers evidence-based recommendations for various stakeholder groups engaged in environmental governance and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Ghana.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Grassroots organisations

1. **Implement Systematic Documentation Practices:** Grassroots environmental organisations ought to prioritise the systematic documentation of their operations, impact assessment, and volunteer mobilisation from the outset. It is essential to maintain comprehensive records that include the number of locations served, the frequency of operations, volunteer demographics and numbers, resources mobilised, and the tangible impacts on the community. This documentation serves as the necessary evidence base for developing institutional partnerships and mitigating corporate risk perceptions. organisations should allocate resources to basic data management systems, such as simple spreadsheets, to systematically track their operations instead of relying on anecdotal claims of impact.
2. **Create Multi-Platform Communication Strategies:** organisations should establish a presence across various social media platforms that are tailored to different stakeholder audiences. They should leverage platforms like TikTok for engaging youth and creating viral content, Instagram for visual storytelling and brand development, Facebook for detailed updates and community organizing, and YouTube for thorough documentation and institutional communication. Consistent messaging across these platforms enhances brand recognition while facilitating targeted engagement with stakeholders. It is advisable to invest in fundamental social

media management capabilities, including skills in photography/videography and content scheduling.

3. **Safeguard organisational Independence in Collaborations:** In the pursuit of corporate or governmental partnerships, it is essential for organisations to define explicit terms that uphold mission integrity and operational autonomy. Steer clear of partnerships that necessitate significant alterations to the mission or that undermine responsiveness to the community. Aim for arrangements that complement resources, wherein partners offer financial or material assistance aligned with priorities identified by the community, as opposed to donor-recipient dynamics that allow funders to dictate programmatic choices. Clearly document the terms of the partnership and ensure the maintenance of alternative resource streams to prevent reliance on a single source.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Corporate Entities

1. **Collaborate with Reputable Grassroots organisations:** Instead of creating parallel internal CSR initiatives, corporations ought to seek out and collaborate with established grassroots organisations that exhibit community credibility, operational reliability, and proven impact. This strategy effectively fulfills CSR goals through genuine community involvement while fostering local capacity development. It is essential to conduct thorough due diligence to evaluate the legitimacy of the organisation, financial transparency, and community standing prior to allocating partnership resources.

2. **Implement Resource Complementarity Models:** Design partnerships as resource complementarity frameworks instead of conventional philanthropy. Offer financial support, materials, technical expertise, or access to infrastructure to align with grassroots-determined priorities rather than enforcing corporate programmatic agendas. The Verna Water model provides consistent product support for grassroots initiatives

and illustrates effective complementarity. This method enhances the authenticity of corporate CSR while empowering community organisations.

3. Honor Grassroots Autonomy: Steer clear of partnership frameworks that undermine the independence of grassroots organisations or shift their focus towards corporate objectives. Acknowledge that the legitimacy of grassroots organisations is partially rooted in community ownership and responsiveness, which may be jeopardised by excessive corporate oversight. Extend support without micromanaging, granting organisations operational flexibility while ensuring suitable accountability for the use of resources.

4. Incorporate Grassroots Partnerships into CSR Reporting: Systematically include grassroots partnerships in corporate CSR reporting and communication, emphasising collaborative strategies, resource allocations, and the impacts achieved within communities. This documentation reflects a genuine corporate commitment to meaningful stakeholder engagement, as opposed to mere token CSR initiatives, which may improve corporate reputation and foster stakeholder trust. Utilise documentation from grassroots partners and impact metrics to bolster the credibility of CSR reporting.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Government Entities

1. Create Grassroots Recognition Frameworks: Implement formal systems of acknowledgement that identify and validate credible grassroots environmental organisations that fulfill specific criteria (such as transparency, community impact, operational sustainability, and capacity for volunteer mobilisation). Recognition may encompass official certification, public endorsement, or integration into governmental environmental planning processes. This approach mitigates corporate risk perception and promotes the development of partnerships, while also offering quality assurance to

communities and donors. The YEA partnership model exemplifies the advantages of governmental recognition.

2. Incorporate Grassroots organisations into the Execution of Environmental

Policies: Transition from perceiving grassroots organisations merely as advocates within civil society to acknowledging them as viable partners in the implementation of environmental policies. Involve reputable grassroots organisations in governmental environmental planning initiatives, engage them for specific environmental services when suitable, and establish formal channels for grassroots contributions to the formulation of environmental policies. The suggested long-term partnership with the 37 Military Hospital and the collaboration with the National Sports Authority exemplify institutional acknowledgement of the capacity for grassroots implementation. A systematic integration of this approach could broaden its application across various government agencies, utilizing the operational adaptability and community ties of grassroots organisations to improve the effectiveness of governmental environmental programs.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter synthesises the research findings pertaining to grassroots environmental activism and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the context of Ghana. It outlines six key findings associated with CSR alignment, the establishment of legitimacy, and the efficacy of stakeholder engagement. The chapter drew theoretical, practical, and policy implications that challenge conventional corporate-centric CSR frameworks, while demonstrating that grassroots-initiated CSR initiatives offer viable alternatives.

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APPENDIX

Content Analysis Coding Framework

A.1 Theoretical Coding Categories

LEGITIMACY THEORY CODES

- **PT (Public Trust):** Evidence of community confidence and trust
- **SA (Social Acceptance):** Community embracing their environmental role
- **MA (Moral Authority):** Recognition of right to advocate for environment
- **CR (Credibility):** Perception of genuine and effective work

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (CSR) CODES

- **CP (Community Participation):** Evidence of people joining activities
- **ES (Environmental Stewardship):** Care for public spaces and environment
- **PW (Public Welfare):** Activities benefiting community health/wellbeing
- **VC (Volunteerism Culture):** Promoting volunteer spirit and civic responsibility

STAKEHOLDER INFLUENCE CODES

- **GR (Government Response):** Official government acknowledgement/action
- **MC (Media Coverage):** Traditional and digital media portrayal
- **CRP (Corporate Partnership):** Business sector engagement and support
- **CR (Community Response):** Local resident reactions and feedback
- **YE (Youth Engagement):** Impact on young people and student involvement

IMPACT MEASUREMENT CODES

- **QI (Quantifiable Impact):** Specific metrics (locations cleaned, waste removed, volunteers engaged)
- **LI (Long-term Impact):** Evidence of sustained environmental or behavioral change
- **PE (Policy Engagement):** Influence on local environmental policies or regulations

B.

B. Buz Stop Boys – Master Table (with Codes)							
Date year- month- day	Source / Event	Type	LEGI TIM ACY (PT, SA, MA, CR)	CIVIC ENGAG EMENT (CP, ES, PW, VC)	STAKEH OLDER INFLUE NCE (GR, MC, CRP, CR, YE)	IMPACT MEASURE MENT CODES QI,LI,PE	Key Quote
2025-05-3	YEA Meeting with Buz Stop Boys	TikTok / Agency Meeting	PT, CR, MA	ES, CP	GR, YE, CRP		“Every great nation... is a nation that has a great environment... How about environmental sustainability for the youth?”
2025-04-28	GTA & Buz Stop Boyz Clean-up at Nationalism Park	Media / Ghana Web	PT, CR, MA	ES, CP	GR, CRP, MC		“Tourism is a shared responsibility... We encourage partnerships between government bodies, the private sector, traditional

							leaders, and communities.”
2025-09-13	President Mahama donation	Youtube	PT MA CR		GR CRP	QI	Mahama donated C\$50,000 + sanitation tools to support Buzstop Boys and sanitation day.
2025-09-12	National Sports Authority collaboration (Citizen Kofi)	Youtube	PT MA CR SA	PW CP ES	GR MC YE	LI	“This is our generation and there’s a lot we can do this country and it starts with cleanliness” “ the National Sports Authority expressed gratitude...and invited the buz stop boys to step in and help”
2025-08-15	Fidelity Bank Collaboration (IG post)	Instagram / Corporate CSR	PT, CR, SA	ES, CP, VC	CRP, MC, YE		“Together, we not only brightened our surroundings but also deepened our commitment to building cleaner, healthier communities.”
2025-08-15	Fidelity Bank CSR Video	Facebook / CSR Video	PT, CR, SA, MA	ES, CP, VC, PW	CRP, MC, YE		“Protecting our environment isn't a one-man affair. It truly takes all of us.”
2025-05-26	Tango Prime Wash –	Facebook /	PT, CR	ES, CP, VC	CRP, MC, YE		“We joined the @buzstopboys last Friday for a

	Kotobabi Clean-up	Corporate CSR					massive cleanup at Kotobabi...”
2025-06-27	Tango Prime & Fred Amugi Collaboration	TikTok / Collab	PT, SA, CR	ES, CP, VC	CRP, MC, YE		“These are the Buz Stop Boys... we are here to help their cause... God bless you all.” – Fred Amugi
2025-06-22	37 Military Hospital collaboration	TikTok	PT MA CR	PW	GR	LI	The hospital thanked Buzstop Boys for cleaning support, and proposed a long-term beautification partnership.
2025-0530	Verna Water / Twellium Support	TikTok / Partner Support	PT, SA	ES, VC	CRP, MC, YE		
2025-08-13	Verna Water support (recurring)	tiktok	CR	CP PW VC,	CRP	QI	The leader calculated that Verna supplied 8,640 packs of water in 2 years.
2025-08-12	Independent Cleanup Mission – Tyre & Chain ‘Cleaning Hack’	TikTok / Independent Operation	MA, CR, PT	ES, CP, VC	MC, YE	QI LI	“Making unclean places clean for free.”
2025-04-26	Verna Water plastic reduction pledge	TikTok		ES	CRP	LI PE	“Verna agreed to reduce plastic thickness and bottle seals, showing

							environmental commitment”
2025-08-14	Fadama Flood Relief Cleanup	Youtube	PT, MA	ES, CP, PW	YE, MC	QI LI	“Solving serious community flooding problems in Fadama... all at no cost to residents.”
2025-04-29	Legon-Okponglo Clean up Aftermath	tiktok		PW, ES		QI,LI	Post-cleanup rainfall showed no floods at Legon-Okponglo road, confirming measurable impact.
2025-04-26	Public Comment – (tiktok)Zoom lion contract comparison	tiktok	PT, SA, CR	PW	YE, MC		“Zoomlion contract should be awarded to Bus Stop Boys... they have passion for the well-being of the country.”
2025-04-20	Public Comments – Endorsements (tiktok)	tiktok	PT, SA	PW	YE, MC		“These are Heroes of the century, well done.” / “Bus stop boy the best.” / “You’re doing a great job... God bless you.”
2025-03-13	Citizen donation at Mile 7	tiktok	PT CR	VC CP			A passerby returned to donate after seeing cleanup, reinforcing public trust.

C. ABBREVIATIONS

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility

UN - United Nations

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

NGO - Non-Governmental organisation

GTA - Ghana Tourism Authority

YEA - Youth Employment Agency

GSS - Ghana Statistical Service

MNC - Multinational Corporation

GOIL PLC - Ghana Oil Company Public Limited Company

MTN - Mobile Telephone Network

GHS - Ghana Health Service

AMEC - International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication

PT - Public Trust

SA - Social Action OR Social Acceptance (context-dependent)

MA - Moral Authority

CR - Crisis Response ,Credibility OR Community Response (context-dependent)

ES - Environmental Stewardship

CP - Civic Partnership OR Community Participation (context-dependent)

PW - Public Works OR Public Welfare (context-dependent)

VC - Values Communication OR Volunteerism Culture (context-dependent)

GR - Government Relations OR Government Response (context-dependent)

MC - Media Coverage

CRP - Corporate Partnership

YE - Youth Engagement

QI - Quantifiable Impact

LI - Long-term Impact

PE - Policy Engagement

UK - United Kingdom

US - United States