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Sustainability of Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives in Platinum Mining Communities in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

For Mining companies that have operations in the developing economies, Corporate Social Responsibility has increasingly become a strategic imperative in which mining activities have greatly influenced social, economic and environmental wellbeing of such host communities. In Zimbabwe's platinum mining sector, the growing expectations that mining companies contribute meaningfully to community development have intensified debates over the long-term sustainability of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. The study sought to assess the impacts of CSR initiatives by platinum companies on community sustainable growth and foster strategies that promote the sustainability of CSR initiatives on platinum mining communities in Zimbabwe. The study was hinged on Institutional theory and adopted a mixed-methods research approach, pragmatism philosophy, and a cross-sectional survey design. A sample size of 354 was used, drawn from community leaders, Ministry of Mines officials, Businesspersons, and School Heads from major platinum Mines in Zimbabwe, namely Unki, Mimosa, and Zimplats. Stratified random sampling and purposive sampling were used for quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. An interview guide and structured questionnaires were used as research instruments. SPSS version 23 with Amos was used for analyzing quantitative data whilst NVivo 12 was used for the analysis of qualitative data. The findings showed that CSR socially helps the vulnerable groups in platinum mining communities, sustainable recycling helps build community trust and reputation and natural resources replenishment. The study found that strategies that may be employed within the platinum mining sector to promote sustainability of CSR initiatives on platinum mining communities in Zimbabwe are legislation of CSR that compels for platinum mines to compulsorily undertake economic responsibility, ethical practices, philanthropism and involving community leaders in CSR initiatives. This study recommends that platinum mines should commit themselves to ethical, economic, and philanthropic practices.

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1. Introduction

According to Crundwell (2011) , platinum mining businesses made significant strides in extracting the material in the 20th century, when it became known to be present worldwide. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (2018), South Africa is the world's greatest producer of platinum, processing 110 million tons of the metal in 2018. Russia, on the other hand, is the second-largest producer worldwide, with 21 million tons produced in 2018. With an output of 14 million tons in 2018, Zimbabwe ranks third among the world's leading platinum producers (Barry, 2018). In 2017, it produced platinum in comparable amounts. There are 1,200 million metric tons of PGMs in Zimbabwe (U.S. Geological Survey, 2018). The Mimosa mine, Ngezi Mine (also known as Zimplats Mine), and Unki mine are the three largest platinum Mines in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe now has the second-largest PGM resource in the world, behind South Africa, and accounts for 6% of global primary platinum production (Wilburn, 2012). Platinum production has increased since Zimplats and Mimosa resumed operations in 2002. The following arrival of Unki in 2010–2011 provided even more motivation for higher production. When other minerals saw drops in output, this industry was one among the few that managed to weather the hyper-inflation crisis (Wilburn, 2012). Thus, Zimplats, Mimosa, and Unki were the three main companies operating in the PGMs market as of 2017. Possible new initiatives included ENRC, Ruschrome (Rostec), and Zimari Platinum, all which Zimbabwe Marketing Development Corporation mentioned as joint venture projects. Unki contributed 15%, Mimosa 30%, and Zimplats 55% on average to the production of platinum between 2014 and 2021 (GlobalData, 2023). Zimbabwe is now the third-largest producer of platinum in the world in 2022, up 2% from 2021, according to GlobalData. Zimbabwe's production fell at a CAGR of 0.05% in the five years leading up to 2021, and it is predicted to increase at a CAGR of 3% in 2022–2025.

The introduction of organized PGM extraction in Zimbabwe was made possible by the arrival of BHP Minerals, an Australian investor in the Makwiro Area. Complex geological and macroeconomic circumstances forced BHP to divest to make room for Impala Platinum, a South African company. A review of the literature indicates that about 97% of global platinum production is concentrated in five countries, namely the United States, Zimbabwe, Canada, South Africa and Russia (Wilburn, 2012). In Zimbabwe, platinum mining is largely associated with the Great Dyke, a prominent geological feature that runs for more than 500 kilometres across the country. This mineral-bearing belt stretches from Mutorashanga in Mashonaland West and passes through several towns including Mhondoro, Chegutu, Kwekwe, Gweru, Shurugwi, Zvishavane and Mberengwa before reaching West Nicholson in Matabeleland South. Mimosa Mining Company in Zvishavane, Unki Mine in Shurugwi and Zimplats in Mhondoro Ngezi are the three big mining companies located in this geological corridor. These three platinum mining companies form the backbone of platinum mining in Zimbabwe along the Great Dyke.

The Mines and Minerals Act govern the extraction of minerals in the broader context of the platinum industry in Zimbabwe. This Act provides a regulatory framework for all mining operations and seeks to ensure that mining operations and mineral extraction are conducted in ways that reduce environmental degradation and protect the welfare of the community. This Act highlights the provisions that influence Corporate Social Responsibility practices of mining companies with the intention of reducing the negative impacts often associated with mining activities (Pons et al., 2021).Although the law does not compel such mining companies to implement corporate social responsibility, it requires that such mining companies provide some form of compensation to Rural District Councils, who are regarded as custodians of communal lands on behalf of the local community. There is however limited evidence that demonstrates that such funds are directed towards community development projects. This hence raises concerns towards the effectiveness of the legislative framework in the safeguard of local community interests. In this manner, Scholars argue that the Mines and Minerals Act has been outdated as it is not sufficiently equipped to address contemporary issues, particularly those linked to the promotion of sustainable and accountable CSR programs being undertaken by mining companies. Despite these regulatory shortcomings, historical evidence from Zimbabwe shows that mining has significantly contributed to the shaping and development of several rural settlements. Many towns in Zimbabwe have been developed as a results of mining activities and such opportunities brought by mining companies (Malinga, 2018). Nevertheless, mining activities have been criticised for the way they have implemented their CSR initiatives. Some studies show that mining companies give priority to CSR in areas where they possess operational advantages and such activities have not equally benefited the communities (Siawor-Robertson & Awaworyi Churchill, 2015).

Zuva (2022) holds the same view mining companies frequently support community projects that encompasses schools' construction, building of clinics and rural electrification programs. However, such initiatives can be motivated more by the desire to maintain stable operational environments and minimisation of community disruptions to mining activities, rather than by deliberate commitment to improving the long-term socio-economic development of local communities.

As one of the biggest producers of platinum, Zimplats implemented the Local Enterprise Development (LEDs) initiative as part of its CSR initiatives (Muruviwa et al., 2018). Through these different capacity building initiatives, the company has involved more enterprises, which has led to the growth of this program. Since 2013, LED projects have been implemented, focusing on the growth of local suppliers near Zimplats' mining and processing facilities. By using a structured LED program to purchase goods and services from these vendors, Zimplats partners with them (Zvarivadza, 2018). This is a result of the company's business philosophy, which aims to conduct business with businesses rooted in the communities where its operations are based and beyond, as this benefits both participating communities and the company economically and socially.

Mimosa, an organization that firmly believes education is the foundation of true economic progress, has actively participated in the construction and renovation of numerous elementary and secondary schools across the nation, primarily using local suppliers. Through its sponsorship of numerous tertiary establishments, Mimosa engages in institutional development through its social development programs, which are aimed at primary and secondary education. Mimosa, an organization that firmly believes education is the foundation of true economic progress, has actively participated in the construction and renovation of numerous elementary and secondary schools across the nation, primarily using local suppliers. Through its sponsorship of numerous tertiary establishments, Mimosa engages in institutional development through its social development programs, which are aimed at primary and secondary education.

Unki Mine is also a mining company that engages in corporate social responsibility (CSR). With support from the organization's top management and stakeholders, the Community Engagement and Development Department (CED) initiates and oversees its CSR programs. The CSR initiatives at Unki Mine are referred to as Community Investments (CI) or Corporate Social Initiatives (CSI). The Unki website states that as of 2023, the firm engages in the following Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices: media relations, advertising, sponsorship, project management, events management, and donations. The CED is responsible for implementing various corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies launched by the mine for its stakeholders. The department's activities revolve around PR. Unki Mine uses a variety of tactics to implement programs that address health, agriculture, education, and the environment. Unki Mine uses a variety of CSR tactics, including as donations, public relations management, corporate philanthropy, publicity, and advertising (Muchirahondo, 2022).

Given the aforementioned CSR efforts aimed at platinum mining communities, CSR in the mining industry has developed into a crucial component of relations between mines and communities (Jenkins & Obara, 2006). Mining companies acknowledged that basic amenities such as electricity, water, health care, and sanitation were necessary for the populations they affected. The development of mine can improve the lives of these communities; otherwise, mine risks becoming an exclusive community. It was anticipated that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities would become a significant part of the compliance package for indigenization and economic empowerment within the mining sector, given the then-existing indigenization and empowerment laws in Zimbabwe. Despite the growing body of literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the mining sector, existing studies have largely focused on the types of CSR initiatives implemented by mining companies and their immediate socio-economic benefits to host communities (Jenkins & Obara, 2006; Siawor-Robertson & Awaworyi Churchill, 2015; Zuva, 2022). While these strides give important insights into CSR initiatives such as infrastructural development, educational facilities, community projects, less attention has been drawn to the long-term sustainability of these CSR initiatives within the platinum mining communities. A lot of the studies focus on general mining CSR practices and not specifically the platinum mining sector. Previous studies have also not provided an in-depth analysis of the strategies and institutional strategies required to bring sustainability of CSR initiatives beyond short term philanthropic initiatives.

As such, there remains a significant gap in understanding how to structure and manage CSR initiatives to ensure sustainable community development in platinum mining regions. This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by assessing the sustainability of CSR initiatives implemented by platinum mining companies in Zimbabwe and identifying strategies to enhance their long-term impact on host communities.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The current study is underpinned by the Institutional Theory.

2.1.1.Institutional Theory

Institutional theory has been identified by Mondal et al. (2023) as an external factor that affects an organization's behavior. Institutional theory and an organization's CSR practices are related because pressure from stakeholders and competitors is one factor that influences CSR performance. An organization must meet multiple demands and adhere to industry norms to maintain its survival and legitimacy. Failure to comply with acceptable institutional norms could jeopardize an organization's ability to operate (Shadnam & Lawrence, 2015). In a similar vein, obtaining organizational legitimacy and adhering to established institutional norms are positively correlated (Meyer et al., 2017). An organization, as a social unit functioning within an industry, typically accepts and interprets characteristics or behaviors that are institutionalized or considered acceptable acts (Cornelissen et al., 2015). As a result, institutional theory examines how organizational decisions are developed, negotiated, and implemented by looking at the standards that the market or competitive environment maintains.

Organisational behaviour is often influenced by dominant actors within the industry in which a firm operates. According to Caza et al. (2018), organisations aligns their activities and practices to those leading entities within their specific industry so as to be regarded as acceptable and legitimate. This is explained by the concept of isomorphism, which is the process by which organisations adapt their structures, policies, and practices to conform with prevailing institutional expectations or competitive pressures. It is through this process of isomorphism that entities sometimes replicate behaviour of other organisations to fall within the bracket of socially accepted norms and institutional standards.

In this instance, isomorphic change is generally explained by key mechanisms, including coercive, normative, and mimetic pressures. A mimetic mechanism emerges when organisations voluntarily imitate the practices of other firms deemed successful and legitimate within the same sector. As highlighted by Hamidu et al. (2015), such replication is influenced by the desire to be socially acceptable and reduce uncertainty in organisational decision making. Sometimes this imitation assumes a normative dimension when entities adopt certain practices to comply with professional expectations or guidelines established by academic bodies and associations.

On the other hand, coercive pressures arise from formal and informal forces exerted by influential institutions or organisations upon which a firm depends. Such coercive pressures manifest through regulatory requirements, contractual obligations, and invitations to commit to specific standards. In this view, scholars argue that coercive mechanisms typically occur in situations where companies may lack autonomy and must respond to expectations that are imposed by more powerful entities within their operational environment. Institutional theory primarily explains how behavioural patterns become established and stabilised within organisational environments. The theory holds that organisations operating within the same sector influence each other's behaviour, which gradually shapes accepted standards and modes of operation. Ferrell et al. (2019) observe that institutions play an important role in defining recognised norms, operational standards, and acceptable practices across industries. In this view, Institutional theory provides an important framework for understanding how organisations respond to expectations from different stakeholders when they adopt CSR initiatives.

The Institutional theory which is hinged on the contributions of Meyer and Rowan (1977); Murad et al. (2022); Palmer et al. (2017); Scott (2005) has relevant in modern corporations in explaining CSR initiatives. The theory has increasingly been applied to explain how CSR emerges and evolves within organisational contexts. It is from this perspective that CSR broadly encompasses corporations' responsibilities to communities, including ethical, social, and economic responsibilities. Scherer and Palazzo (2007) emphasise that CSR reflects the evolving role of organisations as societal actors whose responsibilities extend beyond profit generation.

In the context of platinum mining companies, the institutional theory offers a valuable lens for examining the sustainability of CSR initiatives in local communities. Mining companies operate within an institutional environment shaped by regulatory bodies, expectations of communities and industry standards. Such institutional forces determine how CSR programs are designed and implemented. Coercive forces are sometimes triggered by government legislative measures and other regulations intended to foster responsible mining practices. On the other hand, normative pressures come from professional ethics, industry regulations, and societal expectations regarding ethical corporate conduct. Additionally, mimetic pressures may encourage mining companies to replicate CSR initiatives adopted by other firms in the sector to maintain legitimacy and competitiveness. Using the institutional theory, this study explores how different institutional pressures influence CSR initiatives' sustainability being undertaken by platinum mining companies in Zimbabwe. The theory as such helps to explain how factors such as ethical responsibility, economic obligations, and interaction with local communities shape the development, implementation, and long-term effectiveness of such CSR initiatives within platinum mining communities. The study hence through the lenses of the Institutional theory examines how institutional dynamics contributes to the continuation or limitation of CSR initiatives in the mining sector.

CSR initiatives by mining companies and sustainable growth

Research on CSR identifies various elements that shape how the concept is understood and applied in practice. In this regard, Sarkar and Searcy (2016) highlight key components that are commonly present in CSR definitions such as ethical responsibility, social responsibility, stakeholder engagement, sustainability and discretionary responsibilities. Also, the scholars note that definitions that rely on fixed or repetitive dimensions may become irrelevant in evolving socio-economic contexts. As business environments and societal expectations change, CSR frameworks may need to be flexible to remain applicable to emerging challenges and opportunities.

In the current world, CSR has expanded greatly to encompass a broad spectrum of organisational practices. These cover areas such as environmental stewardship, employee welfare initiatives, and policies that promote diversity and inclusion amongst employees. Aligned to this is the concept of environmental, social, and governance (ESG), which refers to the integration of environmental protection, social responsibility, and governance standards into corporate management and investment decision-making processes (Sherwood & Pollard, 2023). ESG considerations have increasingly influenced how investors assess corporate performance and long-term risk.

The concept of sustainability is multifaceted and complex as it is interpreted differently in different disciplines. Chapin and Knapp (2015) note that the diverse interpretations of the concept of sustainability provides a conceptual flexibility required to apply it in different environmental, social, and economic contexts. In this manner, the concept can be examined at different spatial and temporal scales depending on subject under discussion. Sustainability can be broadly categorised as strong sustainability and weak sustainability. According to Lozano et al. (2015), sustainability is strong when there is preservation of natural ecosystems and recognizes the intrinsic value of nature. It is from this perspective that nature should be preserved irrespective of its direct utility to humans. This eccentric view is coined by Washington et al. (2017). On the other hand, weak sustainability adopts a more anthropocentric perspective, prioritizing human welfare and viewing environmental protection mainly in terms of its benefits for human societies. Earlier CSR discussions frequently focused on the conservation of the environment as a core aspect of a responsible organisation. In the mining sector, the relationship between mining companies and the local community has attracted much research attention. Studies by Davis and Franks (2014); Hodge (2014), and Brereton et al. (2023) indicate that tensions between mining companies and local communities have become increasingly visible in recent years. Zhang et al. (2015), protests and complaints in mining communities because of irresponsible mining activities have been more pronounced across the globe, sometimes leading to disruptions and at time closure of mining operations. The existence of such conflicts has raised concerns over environmental protection, community rights, governance issues and broader social responsibilities by mining companies.

It is against this background that it can be argued that mining companies could assume a more proactive leadership role by addressing sustainability challenges and developing collaborative solutions to shared problems (Jackson et al., 2023). Much of the social and environmental challenges that are associated with mineral extraction are reflected in the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The mining industry has been widely recognised as a sector that is capable of making a contribution to the social development, economic growth and environmental management when the right and appropriate governance frameworks are put in place (Ruokonen & Temmes, 2019; Yousefian, 2025). A strand of literature from both developed and developing economies illustrates how mining operations have contributed to the development of infrastructure, offered economic growth and improves community welfare when managed responsibly.

The notion of a “social license to operate” has been an important concept that has emerged within the mining governance discourse. Originally the term was used to describe the challenge of building trust between mining companies and the local communities but now the term broadly refers to the level of acceptance that is granted by the communities to mining operations (Hitch & Barakos, 2021). Getting such legitimacy has become important as companies recognise the need to maintain healthy relationships with mining communities affected by mining operations (Hitch & Barakos, 2021). Evidence from different countries highlights different effects of mining activities to mining communities. In parts of the Central and Eastern Europe, mining has greatly led to the expansion of infrastructure and poverty eradication (Tsaurai, 2021). However, critics argue that mining operations may generate environmental degradation and social decadence especially when mining activities do not result in employment creation and economic benefits that adequately compensate for ecological and social damage (Suopajärvi et al., 2016). Despite the increase in transparency initiatives and corporate sustainability initiatives, non-governmental organisations continue to question commitment of some mining companies to responsible mining practices (Dashwood, 2012). Resultantly, sustainability considerations and alignment with sustainable development goals have become increasingly central to strategic decision making within the mining industry (Govindan et al., 2014).

Mining activities are geographically fixed in the sense that they cannot easily relocate once resource extraction has started. As a result, mining companies may need to develop and maintain cordial relationships with local communities and other various stakeholders. CSR initiatives hence serve as a mechanism through which mining companies engage with stakeholders while strengthening their organizational reputation and long-term sustainability (Azzone et al., 1997). According to Gorman and Dzombak (2018), sustainable mining involves the adoption of operational practices that minimises environmental degradation, improve the welfare of communities and enhance occupational health and safety for workers and surrounding communities.Society's expectations towards mining companies are wide ranging. Frederiksen (2019), notes that mining communities emphasise issues such as environmental stewardship, respect for human rights, employee health and safety, alignment with the SDGs and effective corporate governance of mining companies. Similar sentiments were echoed by Bascompta et al. (2022); Uzma (2016); Vintró et al. (2012) who highlights what constitutes responsible mining practices.

Although the mining sector has devoted considerable attention to CSR over the past years, the sector's contribution to sustainable development has been met with mixed reactions. Researchers have argued that the voluntary nature of CSR initiatives have resulted in their limited effectiveness as companies may adopt CSR frameworks without substantially changing operational practices or allocating enough resources to mitigate social and environmental impacts (Frederiksen, 2018; Wanvik, 2016). These authors suggest that meaningful changes the behaviour of mining industry by adopting stronger mechanisms that ensures corporate accountability and stakeholder engagement in CSR matters (Idemudia & Kwakyewah, 2018). In response to these stakeholder concerns, a body of literature has emphasised the need for a more active regulatory role by governments in shaping ethical and responsible practices within the mining sector. Steurer et al. (2011) argues that governments possess both legitimacy and institutional capacity to influence corporate behaviour. Governments establish minimum legal standards that define the boundaries of CSR while at the same time promoting ethical mining practices through policy instruments and regulatory frameworks. It is through such mechanisms that the government becomes an influential stakeholder capable of shaping the definition, scope and practical implementation of CSR within mining industries.

3. Data And Methodology

In assessing the impacts and sustainability of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in platinum mining communities, the study used a mixed-methods research approach grounded in the pragmatist philosophy. Pragmatism permitted the integration of quantitative of both quantitative and qualitative data in measuring the sustainability of CSR initiatives directed towards platinum mining companies. The research used cross sectional descriptive survey research design that captured stakeholder perceptions and experiences at a single point in time in communities that surrounded major platinum mining companies in Zimbabwe. Cross Sectional research design allowed the examination of the sustainability CSR initiatives in promoting growth and development of communities.

The study consisted of 4500 stakeholders drawn from the communities that are located along the Great Dyke region. The population comprised councillors, chiefs, headmasters, business people, Ministry of mines officials and other members of the community who are directly and indirectly affected by CSR initiatives being implemented by platinum mining companies by Ackers and Grobbelaar (2022) at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. In terms of sampling, stratified random sampling was used for quantitative data sampling that allowed a proportional representation of all the study participants, hence enhancing statistical precision. In selecting the key informants of the study, researchers applied purposive sampling. The selected key informants had extensive knowledge and lived experience of CSR initiatives being implemented in their respective communities. Data collection was done using structured questionnaires and semi structured interviews. The analysis of quantitative data was done using SPSS version 23 to do descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. On the other hand, the analysis of qualitative data was done using NVivo 12 through thematic analysis to enable the identification of recurring patterns.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Impacts of CSR Initiatives by Platinum Companies on Community Sustainable Growth

The research on the sustainability of CSR initiatives directed towards platinum mining communities sought to assess the impacts of CSR initiatives by platinum companies on community sustainable growth. Table 1 summarises the descriptive statistics Table 1: The impacts of CSR initiatives by platinum companies on community sustainable growth

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mean response	Std. Deviation
Corporates have been socially helping the vulnerable groups	290	3	5	4.44	Agree	.504
Established Trust`s longevity improved	290	4	5	4.48	Agree	.500
Sustained recycling of materials in organization witnessed	290	2	5	4.51	Strongly agree	.534
Sustained replenishment of natural resources has been witnessed	290	3	5	4.51	Strongly agree	.521
Overall	290	3.75	5.00	4.4387	Agree	.29218
Valid N (listwise)	290					

Source: Researcher 2025

Table 1 depicts a mean response between 4.44, standard deviation = 0.504 for the descriptor socially helps the vulnerable groups and 4.51 with standard deviations 0.528 0.534 and 0.521 descriptors. All the descriptors Sustained recycling of materials in organization witnessed and Sustained replenishment of natural resources has been witnessed shown in Table 1 had mean scores above 4(four) which shows that respondents were agreeable to the listed descriptors are the impacts of CSR initiatives by platinum companies on community sustainable growth. The existence of the very small standard deviations of less than 1 imply that respondents were converging around the agreeing mean response. Corroborating the quantitative findings is Figure 1 which presents the word cloud summary of the impacts of CSR initiatives by platinum companies on community sustainable growth

Figure 1: Impacts of CSR Initiatives by Platinum Companies on Community Sustainable Growth
Source: Researcher (2025)

4.2. Socially Vulnerable

Respondent SV1 stated that:

"CSR has enormous potential in helping platinum mining firms meet the requirements of underprivileged or marginalized communities which helps poverty eradication. Such CSR programs aid in social inclusion and the reduction of poverty. Local platinum mining companies' CSR initiatives play a significant role in fostering entrepreneurship and creating new technologies that address issues with access to clean water provision, healthcare, food, education, and shelter, as well as raising the social standard of living for the poor and underprivileged".

Respondent SV 2 also supported SV1 by opining that:

"Through responsible CSR platinum companies consider how their actions and decisions affect the environment and society while putting CSR projects into action. For the benefit of society, platinum mining corporations are supposed to act morally and transparently. One such specialized area of corporate behavior and governance that needs to be addressed and successfully implemented in the company is corporate social responsibility. Once CSR is implemented transparently it has the potential to eradicate poverty thus attainment of vision 2030 helping the socially vulnerable".

Respondent SV 7 also had this to say:

"The reason is straightforward: these mining corporations' CSR contributes to the eradication and alleviation of poverty by helping the vulnerable such as the elderly and children. Such platinum mining firms may combat social issues and end poverty when they use corporate social responsibility (CSR) to preserve the environment and society. There are many businesses that have developed, roads maintained and schools built. This all helps to reduce poverty in

Respondent SV8 stated that:

"Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR can be described as the level of accountability a company assumes for the economic, social, and environmental outcomes of its activities. CSR is important to employees because it enables them to use corporate resources to contribute positively to society, particularly by supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable groups."

4.3. Recycling

Respondent RC4 stated that:

"In the contemporary business environment, organisations face growing expectations to demonstrate ethical conduct. Showing commitment to recycling practices can serve as an effective way of signalling to consumers that a company operates responsibly and can therefore be trusted."

Respondent RC4 opined that:

"Adopting sustainable recycling practices benefits not only the environment but also businesses, including mining companies. The said practices help organisations in the minimisation of waste, low operational costs and strengthens their reputation as socially responsible entities"

Respondent RC5 alluded to that:

"When materials and products are being reused rather than discarded, environmental pressure is reduced. Such a process contributes to production sustainability and consumption patterns, which illustrates how recycling initiatives promote environmental sustainability."

4.4. Replenishment of Natural Resources

Respondent RN2 had this to say:

"Environmental responsibility is a key aspect of CSR. Entities can demonstrate environmental stewardship through reducing pollution and emissions in production processes, material recycling, restoration of forests, and developing product lines that reflect CSR principles."

Respondent RN4 alluded that:

"CSR enables organisations to align their operational practices with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by integrating sustainability principles into their activities and contributing to the achievement of these global targets. Through this alignment, businesses can support the development of a more equitable and sustainable future while also enhancing their own organisational performance."

Respondent RN5 pointed out that:

"Companies can practice environmental stewardship by reducing pollution and emissions generated during manufacturing processes, recycling waste materials, replenishing natural resources such as trees, and developing product lines that are consistent with CSR principles. Ethical accountability, which emphasises fairness and responsible conduct, is also an important component of corporate social responsibility."

4.5. Trust and Reputation

Respondent TR1 aired out that:

"It is a way of doing business that reflects your values, ethics, and commitment to making a positive impact on society and the environment. By adopting CSR practices, you can also benefit from building trust with your, communities, customers and suppliers, who are increasingly looking for more than just products and services".

Respondent TR2 gave an assertion that:

"Companies that actively engage in CSR initiatives build a positive reputation in the eyes of their stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, and the public. This enhanced reputation helps build trust and loyalty, attract new customers, and retain existing ones*".*

In support of these findings, Lee et al. (2018) are of the view that company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) had a beneficial impact on the perceived advantages and quality of life of the community. CSR which includes four dimensions: legal, ethical, philanthropic, and economic impacts on citizens' for example, residents' quality of life through employment provision and better clinics, schools and other social amenities (Lee et al., 2018).Comparable findings were reported by Muhwava, whose study examined the contribution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives undertaken by Zimplats to sustainable development within the Mhondoro-Ngezi area. The study sought to make an evaluation of the extent to which mining organisations' CSR policies and activities support sustainable development to the surrounding communities. In this view, the study employed a mixed research approach in which data were gathered from a sample of 384 respondents.

The study was grounded in relevant literature and theoretical perspectives on CSR and sustainable development, drawn from studies conducted in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and other international contexts. The study evaluated how CSR initiatives by platinum companies affect the socio-economic development of communities within platinum mining communities. As such, the study sought to determine if CSR initiatives serve as a sustainable solution for addressing some of the socio-economic challenges experienced by platinum mining communities. Data analysis involved correlation analysis techniques to establish the relationship between the study variables. The study indicates that CSR initiatives by platinum mining companies contribute positively to societal growth in platinum mining communities. The study highlighted that active participation and sense of ownership amongst members of the community were critical factors that ensures long term sustainability of CSR initiatives. Additionally, results suggested an association between the involvement of the community in community development projects and sustainability of these CSR initiatives. Also, the study found out that CSR initiatives implemented by platinum mining companies created employment, skills development and improvements in people's standards of living.

4.6. Strategies that Promote Sustainability of CSR Initiatives on Platinum Mining Communities

In line with the second objective of the study, Table 2 gives the descriptive statistics

Table 2
Strategies that promote sustainability of CSR initiatives on platinum mining communities

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Legislation of CSR	290	2	5	4.07	.340
Undertaking economic responsibility	290	2	5	4.43	.536
Ethical practices	290	2	5	4.34	.531
Compulsory philanthropism	290	3	5	4.38	.501
Involving community leaders in CSR initiatives	290	3	5	4.44	.525
Encourage beneficiation	290	3	5	4.27	.476
Social, environmental and economic governance	290	1	5	4.44	.616
Mandatory CSR reporting	290	2	5	4.38	.601
CSR transparency and accountability	290	2	5	4.23	.485
Valid N (listwise)	290				

Source: Researcher (2025)

The second objective of the study on sustainability of CSR initiatives directed towards platinum mining communities was to foster strategies that promote sustainability of CSR initiatives on platinum mining communities in Zimbabwe. Table 2 depicts the descriptive results which shows a mean response between 4.07, standard deviation = 0.340 for the descriptor legislation of CSR and 4.4 with standard deviations 0.616 and 0.525 descriptors Social, environmental and economic governance and involving community leaders in CSR initiatives respectively. All the items shown in above Table 2 had mean scores above 4(four) which thus shows that respondents were generally agreeable to the above listed items are strategies that promote sustainability of CSR initiatives on platinum mining communities in Zimbabwe.

Notably, the existence of the very small standard deviations of less than 1 imply that respondents converged around the agreeing mean response. Similar results were obtained by Doh et al. (2015) who asserts that both in the developed and developing countries companies engage in CSR, albeit to different degrees and with different motivations and strategies. Institutional, societal, and organizational factors all play a role as to whether and how CSR and sustainability are exhibited and strategized in emerging markets.

Figure below makes an illustration of responses and themes that emerged on Strategies that promote sustainability of CSR initiatives on platinum mining communities. From the 12 interviews conducted the main themes that emerged includes CSR legislation, CSR reporting, beneficiation and compulsory CSR. In this view, the diagram labelled Figure 2 are the interview responses on the questions on what strategies may be adopted to promote sustainability of CSR initiatives by platinum mines on platinum mining communities in Zimbabwe.

Figure 2: Strategies that Promote Sustainability of CSR Initiatives on Platinum Mining Communities
Source: Researcher (2025)

4.7. Legislating CSR in Mining

The interviewees were asked about the strategies to promote sustainability of CSR initiatives in platinum mining communities. In this dimension, Respondent LC2 had this to say:

"On what strategies may be adopted to promote sustainability of CSR initiatives by platinum mines on platinum mining communities in Zimbabwe, I think there is need for the government through responsible ministry to have legislation that deals with CSR in specific mining sector. For example, legislating CSR in the platinum mining sector will ensure sustainability of CSR initiatives in these communities. Having a specific legislation governing CSR activities by mines will reduce perception that CSR is optional and erodes profits. One more thing platinum is highly priced these mining companies must do meaningful CSR initiatives. I rest my case colleagues thank you so much"

4.8. Respondent LC3

This respondent had this to say:

"In my view, one way to ensure the sustainability of CSR initiatives is to regulate them through specific legislation. I may not be fully familiar with the Mines and Minerals Act in Zimbabwe, but such a law should clearly state the proportion of the annual budget that mining companies must allocate to CSR activities. Unfortunately, communities within platinum mining areas experience slow growth while such mining companies focus on only providing employment. A regulatory framework is necessary to ensure more comprehensive support to the society beyond just providing job opportunities."

Respondent LC4 put forward that:

"When CSR implementation is supported by legislation, it can help demonstrate to the government and the generality of the public that the company is committed to important issues that includes health and safety, diversity and environmental protection. This boosts the company's image and reputation."

4.9. CSR Reporting

Respondent R1 opined that:

"I am of the conviction that CSR reporting. In cases where organisations fail to comply, strict penalties should be enforced. As community, we deserve receiving clear information about CSR activities taking place in our area. Such reporting promotes transparency because the information presented in CSR reports should correspond with what is happening within the community. Therefore, I strongly support the idea that CSR reporting should be mandatory."

Respondent R1 held the view that:

"CSR reporting is significant because it enables organisations to evaluate the effects of their activities on the environment, society, and the economy. The process of gathering detailed information for CSR reports also allows companies to review their operations, identify areas for improvement, and potentially reduce operational costs."

Respondent R2 was of the view that:

"The purpose of CSR reporting goes beyond promoting transparency and accountability. It also plays an important role in enhancing organisational performance in areas related to social responsibility and environmental management."

4.10. Beneficiation

Respondent B1opined that:

"These platinum mining companies have done a lot of good things for our communities. However, CSR is not compulsory, but it is voluntary. To ensure that the communities benefit sustainably from the CSR initiative, there must be a lot more beneficiation of the ore. We must not export ore but ensure maximum refinement and export product. This increases and creates more job opportunities".

Respondent B2 posited that:

"Through beneficiation CSR has the potential to develop communities and create employment and alleviate poverty. Community Tourism offers enormous opportunities to achieve Government's strategic objectives. development opportunities".

4.11. Compulsory CSR

Respondent C22 articulated that:

"If possible, CSR must be made not a voluntary gesture but compulsory. Companies must not base their CSR initiatives only on their company policies but also on the national legislation that makes compulsory CSR. So far it appears platinum mining company does it just as a way of maintaining a good image and no law obliges them".

Respondent C23 noted that:

'I believe mandated CSR protects long-term community benefits and growth. Feel that there is a significant association between CSR and sustainable community growth'.

In view of the above quantitative and qualitative results, they corroborate with Hitch and Barakos (2021) investigated real effects of a widespread corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting mandate. In 2014, the European Union (EU) passed Directive 2014/95 (hereafter, "CSR Directive), mandating large, listed EU firms to prepare annual nonfinancial reports beginning from fiscal year 2017 onward. The research documents that firms within the scope of the directive respond by increasing their CSR activities and that they start doing so before the entry-into-force of the directive. These real effects are concentrated in firms that are plausibly more strongly affected by the directive, that is, those with previously low levels of both CSR reporting and CSR activities. Using various alternative outcome variables (new CSR initiatives, improvements in CSR infrastructure, or firm performance), the study shows that these real effects reflect meaningful increases in CSR beyond firms' potential attempts to "greenwash" CSR performance.

5. Conclusion

The objective of the study was to assess the impacts of CSR initiatives by platinum companies on community sustainable growth. The results presented lead to the conclusion that the impacts of CSR initiatives by platinum companies on community sustainable growth include the fact that CSR socially helps the vulnerable groups in platinum mining communities, sustainable recycling, helps build community trust and reputation and natural resources replenishment. The other objective of the study was to foster strategies that promote sustainability of CSR initiatives on platinum mining communities in Zimbabwe. With regards to this objective, the study concludes that strategies that may be employed within the platinum mining sector to promote sustainability of CSR initiatives on platinum mining communities in Zimbabwe are legislation of CSR, undertaking economic responsibility, ethical practices, compulsory philanthropism, involving community leaders in CSR initiatives, encourage beneficiation, social, environmental and economic governance, mandatory CSR reporting and CSR transparency and accountability. To ensure that these strategies work well, it is recommended that the legislature in Zimbabwe amends the Mines and Minerals Act to cater for these provisions and enacts a separate CSR legislation enacted

5.1. Recommendations

The following recommendations to theory, policy and practice are made

5.1.1. Recommendations to Practice

To have sustainability of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives directed toward mining communities, practitioners in the platinum mining sector should adopt a more structured and integrated approach to CSR implementation. Priority should be given to mandatory environmental responsibility, including environmental rehabilitation, sustainable waste management, and natural resource replenishment programmes that protect ecosystems in mining communities.

5.1.2. Recommendations to Policy

The government of Zimbabwe should strengthen the regulatory framework governing CSR within the mining sector by promoting sustainable community development. Policymakers should consider reviewing and amending the Mines and Minerals Act to incorporate clear provisions that guide CSR implementation by mining companies.

5.1.3. Areas of Further Research

The current study's findings have limited generalizability. The current study focused on platinum mining in Zimbabwe. Therefore, there might be need for future studies to make a comparative approach on sustainability CSR initiatives between Zimbabwe and probably South Africa. This is because these countries have different political, economic, social, and technological setups that may affect the sustainability of CSR initiatives.

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