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University Governance and Corporate Social Responsibility in Practice: A Case Study of State Universities and Colleges in Zamboanga City, Philippines

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between university governance and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City, Philippines. With higher education institutions increasingly tasked with addressing societal challenges, the role of governance in implementing CSR initiatives becomes crucial. Through a case study approach, this research investigates how SUCs in Zamboanga City design and execute CSR programs, considering the institutional governance structures that influence these actions. The study assesses the alignment of CSR initiatives with local development needs, focusing on community engagement, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic contributions. It highlights the challenges faced by SUCs in balancing academic excellence with social responsibility, including limited resources, lack of institutionalized CSR frameworks, and inconsistent policy implementation. The research further examines how effective governance can enhance CSR outcomes, proposing strategies for improving stakeholder involvement and fostering sustainability. By offering empirical insights, this study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of how SUCs in the Philippines can integrate CSR into their governance systems, ultimately driving positive social change and regional development.

Keywords: University Governance, Corporate Social Responsibility, State Universities and Colleges, Zamboanga City, Higher Education, Community Engagement, Sustainable Development, Philippines, Governance Structures, Institutional Strategy.

1. Introduction

This study sets the stage by exploring the intersection of governance and CSR in higher education. The research aims to address the pivotal role of SUCs in regional development while highlighting the increasing importance of CSR as part of their institutional missions. University governance, often characterized by decision-making processes and stakeholder engagement, has significant implications for the successful implementation of CSR initiatives. These initiatives, in turn, can contribute to social, economic, and environmental improvements within local communities.

The context of Zamboanga City provides a unique case for investigating how SUCs balance their academic objectives with their responsibilities toward social welfare and sustainable development. Despite the growing recognition of CSR's value, challenges persist, such as resource limitations, unclear policy frameworks, and limited community involvement. This study aims to contribute to the

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understanding of these dynamics, offering insights into governance structures, stakeholder relationships, and the operationalization of CSR. By examining the practices of Zamboanga City's SUCs, the research explores how these institutions can further align their governance strategies with CSR principles to promote long-term community development.

1.1 Background of the Study

State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines serve as catalysts for academic excellence and community advancement, addressing societal needs while fulfilling their mandate of education, research, and extension services. Their role becomes even more critical in socio-economically diverse regions like Zamboanga City, where cultural richness coexists with developmental challenges such as resource limitations, regional conflicts, and socio-political disparities.

Within this context, the governance mechanisms of SUCs form the backbone of their functionality, encompassing decision-making frameworks, resource allocation processes, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms. Effective governance ensures not only institutional efficiency but also compliance with regulatory mandates and alignment with national development goals. Concurrently, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in higher education has gained prominence as a strategic avenue for fostering community engagement, sustainability, and ethical practices.

This study addresses the intersection of governance and CSR within SUCs in Zamboanga City, offering a case study approach to elucidate how institutional governance influences CSR initiatives. By examining this dynamic relationship, the research aims to uncover pathways for optimizing SUCs' contributions to sustainable development and societal well-being.

1.2 Research Problem and Questions

Despite their mandated role in societal development, the extent to which SUCs in Zamboanga City integrate CSR into their operational and strategic frameworks remains inadequately explored. Governance structures, often influenced by regulatory frameworks, institutional culture, and resource constraints, play a pivotal role in shaping CSR initiatives. However, existing literature offers limited insights into the governance-CSR interplay, particularly within the regional context of Mindanao.

To bridge this gap, the research focuses on the following central question: *How do governance structures within SUCs in Zamboanga City influence the implementation and effectiveness of CSR initiatives?*

Supporting sub-questions include:

1. What governance models and frameworks are operational in SUCs within the region?
2. How are CSR programmes conceptualized, implemented, and evaluated?
3. What are the barriers and enablers affecting CSR practices within these institutions?

1.3 Objectives and Significance of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the governance-CSR nexus within SUCs in Zamboanga City. Specifically, the research aims to:

1. Identify and evaluate governance structures influencing CSR activities.
2. Assess the effectiveness and societal impact of CSR initiatives undertaken by SUCs.
3. Recommend policy and institutional reforms to strengthen the governance-CSR relationship.

The findings of this study hold significant implications for policymakers, institutional leaders, and scholars. By addressing governance inefficiencies and highlighting best practices, the research contributes to the broader discourse on higher education's role in sustainable development, particularly within the context of the Philippines' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical perspectives:

1. **Agency Theory:** This framework examines the relationship between institutional leaders (agents) and stakeholders (principals), highlighting how governance structures mediate this dynamic.
2. **Stakeholder Theory:** Emphasizing inclusivity and ethical responsibility, this theory frames the role of SUCs as accountable to a diverse array of stakeholders, including students, faculty, policymakers, and local communities.

These frameworks provide a lens for analyzing governance mechanisms, stakeholder engagement, and CSR outcomes.

2. Literature Review

The literature review provides a comprehensive exploration of key concepts and frameworks relevant to the study of university governance and corporate social responsibility (CSR) within higher education. University governance, traditionally understood as the systems and processes that guide decision-making within institutions, plays a critical role in the effective implementation of CSR. The review highlights various governance models, emphasizing the importance of transparency, accountability, and stakeholder participation in fostering institutional effectiveness and social responsibility.

CSR, in the context of higher education, is defined as the voluntary commitment of universities to contribute to societal well-being beyond their academic mandates. The literature reveals that CSR in universities typically focuses on community engagement, environmental sustainability, and social equity. However, the implementation of these initiatives often faces challenges, including insufficient resources, limited policy frameworks, and a lack of institutionalized strategies.

Key studies from both global and Philippine contexts underscore the potential of SUCs to address local development needs through CSR. However, there is a gap in the literature concerning the specific practices of SUCs in regions like Zamboanga City. The review stresses the importance of aligning CSR activities with local community priorities and integrating them into university governance structures to achieve long-term, sustainable impacts. This synthesis informs the research by providing a foundation for understanding the governance-CSR nexus in higher education institutions.

2.1 University Governance in Higher Education

University governance encompasses the policies, structures, and processes through which higher education institutions are managed and directed. Globally, governance models vary from centralized state-controlled systems to decentralized, autonomous frameworks. In the Philippine context, SUCs operate under a hybrid model, balancing autonomy with adherence to guidelines from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Governance structures within SUCs typically include a Board of Regents, academic councils, and administrative bodies, each playing distinct roles in decision-making and policy implementation.

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility in Academic Institutions

CSR in higher education extends beyond traditional notions of philanthropy to include sustainable practices, ethical operations, and active community engagement. Universities, as knowledge hubs, possess unique capacities to address societal challenges through research, teaching, and outreach programmes. Emerging trends in CSR emphasize alignment with global frameworks such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in areas such as quality education, gender equality, and climate action.

2.3 The Philippine Context of SUCs and CSR Practices

In the Philippines, SUCs are mandated by Republic Act 7722 (Higher Education Act of 1994) to integrate community extension services into their core functions. However, the execution of CSR initiatives varies widely, influenced by institutional priorities, resource availability, and regional contexts. In Mindanao, where socio-political complexities intersect with developmental challenges, SUCs face unique hurdles in implementing impactful CSR programmes.

2.4 Gaps in Existing Research

While substantial literature exists on university governance and CSR independently, studies exploring their intersection, particularly within Philippine SUCs, remain sparse. This gap underscores the need for localized, empirical research that considers the socio-economic and cultural specificities of regions like Zamboanga City.

3. Methodology

The methodology section outlines the research design and approaches employed to investigate the governance structures and CSR practices of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City, Philippines. This study utilizes a qualitative case study approach, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the context-specific dynamics between university governance and CSR. Data is collected through a combination of semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and participant observation. Key informants include university administrators, faculty members, CSR managers, and local community stakeholders, offering diverse perspectives on governance practices and CSR implementation.

The research employs purposive sampling to select three SUCs in Zamboanga City, chosen for their active engagement in community-based initiatives and their varying governance models. Interviews are transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying common patterns and themes related to governance effectiveness, CSR strategies, and community involvement. Document analysis includes reviewing institutional reports, policy documents, and CSR-related publications from the selected SUCs to triangulate the data.

Additionally, participant observation is used to assess the real-time interaction between the university and its stakeholders during CSR activities. This mixed-method approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of how governance influences CSR practices and allows the study to provide actionable insights for improving governance frameworks and CSR alignment within higher education institutions.

3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study employs a case study research design, selected for its capacity to provide in-depth insights into complex, context-specific phenomena. The case study approach is particularly suited for exploring the interplay between governance structures and CSR practices within the unique institutional settings of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City. This design enables a detailed examination of governance mechanisms, CSR initiatives, and their socio-economic impacts.

3.2 Case Study Framework

The "Case Study Framework" section outlines the methodological approach used to examine the integration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City. It defines a comparative case study methodology, selecting multiple universities as subjects to provide a comprehensive understanding of CSR practices across different contexts. The framework includes qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, surveys, and document analysis, which allow for in-depth insights into governance structures, CSR initiatives, and community engagement strategies. This approach ensures that the research captures the complexities and nuances of CSR implementation within each institution.

The research focuses on three major SUCs in Zamboanga City, selected based on their strategic importance, size, and diversity of CSR initiatives. These institutions are:

1. **Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology (ZSCMST)**
2. **Western Mindanao State University (WMSU)**
3. **Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University (ZPPSU)**

The case study framework incorporates an institutional analysis, stakeholder mapping, and comparative evaluation of CSR programmes.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

This section outlines the diverse methods employed to gather comprehensive information for the study of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City. It primarily uses qualitative approaches, including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys, to capture both qualitative insights and quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with university administrators, faculty members, and local stakeholders, allowing for flexible, in-depth exploration of their perspectives on CSR practices, governance, and community impact. Focus group discussions facilitate collective input from students and faculty, providing valuable context regarding CSR's role in campus life. Surveys are administered to assess broader public perception and the reach of CSR initiatives. Additionally, document analysis of institutional reports, strategic plans, and CSR project records offers secondary data, ensuring a well-rounded, triangulated approach. These techniques collectively provide a robust dataset to address the research objectives effectively.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the governance-CSR nexus, the study employs a triangulated approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods:

1. **Document Analysis**
 - Institutional governance charters, strategic plans, and CSR reports.
 - Policy guidelines from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and related government agencies.
 - Relevant academic literature and best practice benchmarks.
2. **Surveys**
 - Online and paper-based surveys targeting faculty, administrative staff, and students.
 - Questions designed to assess perceptions of governance effectiveness, CSR awareness, and stakeholder engagement.
3. **Interviews**
 - Semi-structured interviews with university leaders, local government officials, and community beneficiaries.
 - Focus on identifying barriers, enablers, and innovative practices in governance and CSR.

4. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

- Groups composed of students, faculty, and community stakeholders to gather diverse perspectives.

3.4 Sampling Methodology

The "Sampling Methodology" section details the approach used to select participants for the study on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City. A purposive sampling technique is employed to ensure that key individuals with direct involvement or knowledge of CSR initiatives are included. The sample consists of administrators, faculty members, and students from selected SUCs, as well as local community leaders and stakeholders. This approach ensures that the sample reflects a wide range of perspectives, particularly from those who actively participate in or are impacted by CSR activities. Additionally, the study includes representatives from different departments within the universities to capture diverse insights into CSR's integration across various academic disciplines and operational areas. The sample size is determined to provide sufficient data for thematic analysis, ensuring the validity and reliability of the study's findings while maintaining focus on the specific research objectives.

Purposive sampling is employed to select participants with direct involvement or knowledge of governance and CSR activities. A total of 100 respondents are targeted, distributed as follows:

- 30 university leaders and administrators
- 40 faculty members
- 20 students actively participating in CSR programmes
- 10 community representatives

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

This section describes the methods used to process and interpret the data collected during the study on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City. The study employs a thematic analysis approach to analyze qualitative data from interviews, focus group discussions, and open-ended survey responses. This method involves identifying recurring themes and patterns in the data to explore the perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to CSR initiatives within the universities. For quantitative data gathered through surveys, descriptive statistics are applied to summarize key trends and relationships between variables. The combination of these techniques allows for a comprehensive analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of CSR practices. Additionally, triangulation is used to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings by comparing and cross-referencing data from multiple sources, ensuring a more robust interpretation of the research results.

- **Thematic Analysis:** Used to identify recurring patterns and themes from qualitative data sources (interviews and FGDs).
- **Descriptive Statistics:** Employed to analyze survey data, providing insights into trends and stakeholder perceptions.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Facilitates cross-institutional comparison of governance structures and CSR practices.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

These are the critical principles adhered to during the study on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City. The research prioritizes participant consent, ensuring that all individuals involved in interviews, focus groups, and surveys provide

informed consent before their participation. Participants are fully briefed on the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed, with all data anonymized to protect participant identities and personal information. Furthermore, the study ensures that all findings are reported truthfully and responsibly, without misrepresentation. The research adheres to ethical guidelines established by academic institutions and relevant authorities, ensuring that it respects the rights, dignity, and privacy of all participants. These ethical considerations are essential to maintaining the integrity of the research process and ensuring the trustworthiness of the study's outcomes.

The study adheres to ethical research standards, including:

- **Informed Consent:** Participants are fully briefed on the study's objectives and voluntarily consent to participate.
- **Confidentiality:** Responses are anonymized, and data is stored securely.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Research activities are conducted with due respect for the cultural and socio-political nuances of Zamboanga City.

4. Findings and Analysis

The findings and analysis section presents the results of the qualitative data collected from the case study of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City. The study identifies several key themes that emerge from the governance structures and CSR practices of the selected institutions. First, it is evident that governance models in the SUCs vary, with some institutions adopting a more centralized decision-making process, while others allow for greater stakeholder participation. However, regardless of the model, effective governance was found to be a critical factor in the successful execution of CSR initiatives.

The analysis reveals that SUCs in Zamboanga City have made notable efforts to integrate CSR into their institutional framework, focusing on community development, environmental sustainability, and educational outreach. These initiatives are often aligned with local needs, such as skills training for marginalized groups and environmental conservation projects. However, challenges persist, including limited funding, a lack of formalized CSR policies, and weak coordination between university units and local government.

The findings also highlight the importance of leadership and institutional commitment in driving CSR practices, with some SUCs demonstrating stronger leadership and greater community impact. The analysis underscores that the alignment of governance with CSR objectives is crucial for creating long-term, sustainable benefits for both the university and the surrounding community, pointing to potential strategies for improvement.

Case Study #1: Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology (ZSCMST)

Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology (ZSCMST) stands as a significant educational institution in Zamboanga City, offering specialized courses focused on marine sciences, technology, and related fields. As a State University and College (SUC), ZSCMST plays a critical role in both academic and community development. Its governance structure, which is marked by a Board of Trustees and active engagement with local and regional stakeholders, provides the foundation for its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. This case study explores how ZSCMST integrates CSR into its governance and operational framework, examining the effectiveness and challenges of its CSR practices.

Governance and Institutional Overview: ZSCMST's governance follows a hierarchical structure comprising key administrators, faculty members, and representatives from the community. The

College's Board of Trustees oversees strategic decision-making, ensuring that the institution's actions align with its mission to promote marine sciences and technology. Governance decisions also reflect the College's broader social mission, including a commitment to sustainable development and community engagement, which are central to its CSR efforts.

CSR Initiatives: ZSCMST has a history of implementing CSR initiatives, with a particular emphasis on environmental sustainability, education, and community empowerment. Notable CSR activities include:

- **Marine Conservation Projects:** ZSCMST actively engages in environmental sustainability efforts such as coral reef restoration and waste management programs, addressing pressing local environmental issues.
- **Educational Outreach Programs:** The College runs various community-based programs, including marine science education for local schools and livelihood training for coastal communities, empowering residents with the knowledge and skills necessary for sustainable development.
- **Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM):** As part of its commitment to community welfare, ZSCMST has been involved in DRRM initiatives, particularly in coastal areas prone to natural disasters, offering training and awareness campaigns on disaster preparedness and response.

Governance and CSR Alignment: The success of ZSCMST's CSR initiatives is largely attributed to its strong governance framework. The active involvement of university leaders and faculty members in CSR planning ensures that community-based projects are aligned with both institutional goals and local needs. Furthermore, ZSCMST's governance structure facilitates the integration of CSR into its academic curriculum, making social responsibility an inherent part of the learning experience for students.

However, challenges persist, particularly in terms of resource allocation. While the institution's CSR programs are effective in smaller-scale interventions, there is a lack of significant financial support to expand these programs. Moreover, the absence of a formalized, comprehensive CSR policy limits the sustainability and consistency of some initiatives. Despite these challenges, ZSCMST's commitment to social responsibility and its governance model continue to drive positive impacts within the local community.

Conclusion: ZSCMST's approach to university governance and CSR showcases a model of integration between academic purpose and community-oriented initiatives. Although there are obstacles in terms of resource limitations and formal policy development, the College's focus on environmental sustainability, education, and community engagement reflects its broader commitment to regional development and social responsibility. Moving forward, ZSCMST can strengthen its CSR practices by adopting more formalised policies, increasing funding for community-based programs, and further fostering partnerships with local governments and NGOs. These strategies will enhance the long-term effectiveness and reach of its CSR initiatives, ultimately benefiting both the institution and the surrounding community.

Case Study #2: Western Mindanao State University (WMSU)

Western Mindanao State University (WMSU) is one of the leading institutions of higher learning in Zamboanga City, offering a broad range of academic programs across various disciplines. As a State University and College (SUC), WMSU has an essential role in advancing education, research, and community development in the region. Its governance, which involves strategic decision-making processes from university administrators, faculty, and community representatives, supports its strong commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR). This case study examines how WMSU

incorporates CSR within its governance framework and evaluates the impact and challenges of its CSR initiatives on local communities.

Governance and Institutional Overview: WMSU's governance structure includes a Board of Regents, which oversees its operations, with the President and other key officials playing crucial roles in decision-making and strategic planning. The governance framework prioritizes academic excellence, research innovation, and social responsibility. As a public institution, WMSU is mandated to serve not only the academic needs of students but also to contribute to the socio-economic development of the region. The integration of CSR into WMSU's operations has been a significant aspect of its overall institutional strategy, particularly focusing on local community engagement, education, and socio-economic welfare.

CSR Initiatives: WMSU has been actively involved in several CSR initiatives that are closely aligned with its academic and community development goals. Some of its key CSR activities include:

- **Community Development Projects:** WMSU runs various programs focused on improving the livelihoods of local communities. These include agricultural training programs for farmers, skills development workshops for youth, and initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among women and marginalized groups in the region.
- **Educational Outreach Programs:** WMSU is committed to enhancing educational opportunities for underprivileged communities, offering scholarships and outreach programs to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These programs often include preparatory courses, academic workshops, and tutoring services designed to bridge the gap for students in the region.
- **Environmental Sustainability Initiatives:** WMSU has taken steps to address pressing environmental concerns through projects such as waste management, urban greening, and environmental education. The university encourages its students to participate in these initiatives, which are aligned with the university's commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship.
- **Health and Wellness Programs:** WMSU engages in community health and wellness initiatives, offering free medical and dental clinics to local residents and providing public health education on issues such as hygiene, nutrition, and preventive care. These programs aim to improve public health outcomes in the surrounding communities.

Governance and CSR Alignment: The alignment between WMSU's governance and CSR activities is evident in the way it integrates social responsibility into its strategic goals. The university's governance structure ensures that CSR is not treated as a separate or secondary function but rather is embedded within its core academic and research missions. This alignment is seen in the active involvement of academic staff, researchers, and students in CSR projects, where they contribute both expertise and resources to community development efforts.

Additionally, WMSU's administration ensures that CSR initiatives are tailored to local community needs, focusing on sectors like education, agriculture, and health, which are critical to the region's development. However, like many other SUCs, WMSU faces challenges in terms of resource constraints, a lack of consistent funding, and the need for more formalized CSR frameworks. Despite these barriers, the university's governance model supports flexible, adaptive CSR practices that respond to immediate community needs.

Conclusion: Western Mindanao State University (WMSU) exemplifies the integration of university governance with CSR, demonstrating a deep commitment to regional development and community welfare. The university's proactive involvement in education, environmental sustainability, community health, and economic empowerment aligns well with its governance principles, but challenges such as resource limitations and policy gaps still hinder the full potential of its CSR initiatives. Moving forward, WMSU could enhance the sustainability of its CSR efforts by formalizing its CSR strategies, developing

dedicated funding mechanisms, and fostering deeper partnerships with local governments, NGOs, and private sector organizations. These improvements would ensure the long-term impact and success of its CSR activities, furthering WMSU's mission to contribute to the social, economic, and environmental well-being of Zamboanga City and the larger region.

Case Study #3: Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University (ZPPSU)

Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University (ZPPSU) is a key higher education institution located in Zamboanga City, offering a wide range of academic programs, particularly in the fields of engineering, technology, business, and social sciences. As a State University and College (SUC), ZPPSU is entrusted with the responsibility of fostering academic excellence and contributing to the socio-economic development of the Zamboanga Peninsula. This case study explores how ZPPSU integrates Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into its governance framework and examines the effectiveness and challenges of its CSR programs in promoting community welfare and regional development.

Governance and Institutional Overview: ZPPSU's governance is characterized by a collaborative decision-making process, involving university administrators, faculty, and staff members, as well as key representatives from the local community and government. The governance structure, led by a Board of Regents, ensures that the institution's objectives are met while also addressing the educational and developmental needs of its immediate surroundings. ZPPSU's commitment to social responsibility is evident in its policies, which prioritize community engagement and the application of academic expertise to resolve local challenges, particularly in the areas of education, livelihoods, and environmental sustainability.

CSR Initiatives: ZPPSU has been actively involved in several CSR initiatives designed to support the local community and promote sustainable development. The university's CSR programs are largely centered around capacity-building, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Key CSR activities include:

- **Livelihood Training and Skills Development:** ZPPSU offers various skills development programs aimed at improving the employability of individuals in the region. These include vocational courses, entrepreneurship workshops, and technical training in fields such as welding, plumbing, and computer literacy. By empowering individuals with marketable skills, the university plays an integral role in enhancing the economic mobility of local communities.
- **Education and Scholarships:** Recognizing the importance of education in breaking the cycle of poverty, ZPPSU provides scholarships to students from underprivileged backgrounds, ensuring that financial constraints do not prevent them from pursuing higher education. The university also offers tutoring and mentoring programs to help students succeed in their academic pursuits.
- **Environmental Sustainability Projects:** ZPPSU is actively involved in environmental conservation efforts, with projects aimed at reducing the ecological footprint of its campus and surrounding areas. The university conducts tree-planting activities, waste management campaigns, and environmental awareness programs, encouraging both students and faculty members to engage in sustainability initiatives.
- **Community Health and Wellness:** As part of its commitment to improving public health, ZPPSU conducts free medical missions and health awareness campaigns in nearby communities. These programs focus on preventive health measures, nutrition education, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, with an emphasis on reaching vulnerable populations in rural areas.

Governance and CSR Alignment: The alignment between ZPPSU's governance and CSR activities is underscored by the university's strategic integration of CSR into its academic and institutional goals. The governance structure of ZPPSU ensures that CSR activities are aligned with the university's

mission of providing education that is responsive to the needs of the community. The active involvement of faculty, staff, and students in CSR programs reflects a strong institutional commitment to social responsibility.

However, the lack of a formalized CSR policy and limited funding remain key challenges. While CSR activities are well-intentioned and responsive to community needs, they are often driven by individual faculty members or specific departments, without an overarching, structured framework. Additionally, the university faces difficulties in securing long-term financial support for its CSR programs, relying heavily on external donations, government grants, or one-time projects.

Conclusion: Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University (ZPPSU) demonstrates a strong commitment to community engagement and social responsibility through its CSR initiatives. By focusing on skills development, education, environmental sustainability, and public health, the university has made a significant impact on the local communities of the Zamboanga Peninsula. However, challenges such as inconsistent funding and the lack of a comprehensive CSR framework hinder the full potential of these initiatives. To improve the sustainability and impact of its CSR programs, ZPPSU would benefit from developing a formalized CSR policy, securing stable funding sources, and fostering stronger partnerships with local government units, non-governmental organizations, and private sector stakeholders. These steps would enable the university to maximize its role as an agent of change, driving regional development and contributing to the long-term well-being of the communities it serves.

4.1 Governance Structures of SUCs in Zamboanga City

Analysis of governance frameworks reveals varying levels of adherence to CHED guidelines across the three SUCs. While all institutions maintain formal governance structures, significant differences emerge in the operationalization of transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement. For example:

- **ZSCMST** demonstrates strong alignment with participatory governance practices but faces challenges in resource allocation.
- **WMSU** excels in implementing strategic governance reforms but struggles with stakeholder representation in decision-making.
- **ZPPSU** exhibits robust financial governance but lags in integrating community perspectives.

4.2 CSR Implementation in Practice

CSR initiatives across the three SUCs focus on education outreach, environmental sustainability, and community livelihood projects. However, the scope and impact of these programmes vary:

- **Education Outreach:** Literacy programmes targeting underprivileged communities are a shared priority but differ in scale and funding.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Initiatives such as coastal clean-ups and reforestation efforts are prominent but often lack long-term planning.
- **Livelihood Projects:** ZSCMST's marine-focused livelihood training stands out as an exemplary practice.

4.3 Stakeholder Engagement and Perceptions

Survey and interview data indicate mixed perceptions of governance and CSR effectiveness. Faculty and administrative staff report limited opportunities for meaningful participation in governance, while students express enthusiasm for CSR activities but cite insufficient institutional support. Community beneficiaries acknowledge the positive impact of SUC initiatives but advocate for greater collaboration and inclusivity.

5. Discussion

The discussion section contextualizes the findings within the broader academic and practical implications of university governance and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in higher education. It emphasizes that while the governance structures of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City vary, there is a clear link between effective governance and the successful implementation of CSR initiatives. The study highlights that decentralized decision-making processes, with active involvement from university administrators, faculty, and external stakeholders, are more likely to produce CSR activities that are both relevant and impactful for local communities.

Despite these positive outcomes, the research identifies several challenges that hinder the full potential of CSR within SUCs. These include insufficient funding, the absence of standardized CSR policies, and a lack of clear alignment between academic goals and CSR activities. Moreover, the fragmented coordination between SUCs and local governments impedes the scalability and sustainability of CSR programmes.

The discussion also connects the findings to existing literature on CSR in higher education, arguing that universities must develop more formalized, institutionalized CSR frameworks to ensure long-term sustainability and community development. The study suggests that university governance should be restructured to prioritize CSR objectives, integrating them into strategic plans and academic curricula. Finally, it calls for more research to understand the broader implications of governance-CSR integration in regional contexts, such as Zamboanga City, and offers recommendations for policy reforms.

5.1 Interplay Between Governance and CSR

Findings highlight the critical role of governance in shaping the design, execution, and outcomes of CSR initiatives. Institutions with more participatory and transparent governance frameworks demonstrate higher levels of CSR engagement and societal impact. However, governance gaps, particularly in stakeholder representation and resource allocation, pose significant challenges.

5.2 Challenges and Opportunities

This highlights the key obstacles and potential for growth in the integration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City. Challenges include limited financial resources, the absence of formalized CSR policies, and inconsistent coordination between university units and local stakeholders. Despite these barriers, significant opportunities exist, particularly in expanding partnerships with local governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Strengthening governance structures, formalizing CSR frameworks, and fostering student and faculty involvement in community-based initiatives offer avenues for enhancing the sustainability and impact of CSR efforts.

Key challenges include:

- Inconsistent policy implementation across SUCs.
- Resource limitations hindering the scalability of CSR programmes.
- Limited integration of CSR into institutional strategies.

Opportunities for improvement encompass:

- Leveraging partnerships with local governments, NGOs, and private sector entities.
- Embedding CSR principles into academic curricula to foster institutional ownership.
- Enhancing monitoring and evaluation systems for CSR activities.

5.3 Policy Implications and Best Practices

This section discusses the need for formalizing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) frameworks within State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to ensure more consistent, impactful, and sustainable initiatives. It suggests that universities should adopt clear CSR policies, integrate these policies into their strategic planning, and allocate dedicated resources for CSR activities. Best practices include fostering partnerships with local communities, government bodies, and private sector entities, ensuring that CSR initiatives are tailored to local needs. Additionally, involving students and faculty in CSR projects can create a culture of social responsibility, enhancing the overall effectiveness of these programs.

The study advocates for:

- A unified governance framework tailored to the regional context.
- Enhanced funding mechanisms to support CSR initiatives.
- Regular capacity-building workshops for university leaders on governance and CSR integration.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusion summarizes the key insights derived from the study on university governance and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City, Philippines. The research underscores that effective governance is a crucial determinant in the success of CSR initiatives, with SUCs exhibiting varying levels of governance structures and CSR integration. It concludes that while SUCs have made notable strides in aligning their CSR activities with community needs, such as educational outreach and environmental conservation, challenges remain in terms of resource allocation, policy standardization, and inter-institutional coordination.

The study highlights the importance of developing formalized CSR frameworks within SUCs, suggesting that institutional commitment to CSR should be embedded into the governance structure to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness. Furthermore, the research advocates for enhanced collaboration between universities, local governments, and community stakeholders to create more impactful and scalable CSR programmes.

In terms of recommendations, the study suggests that SUCs should adopt clear CSR policies, integrate CSR objectives into institutional strategic planning, and establish dedicated CSR units to oversee these initiatives. It also calls for further research into the broader regional and national contexts to understand the scalability of these practices across other Philippine regions. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of higher education in regional development and sustainable community engagement.

6.1 Conclusion

This research has critically examined the interplay between university governance and corporate social responsibility (CSR) within the context of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City, Philippines. By employing a case study methodology, the study provides empirical insights into how governance structures influence the formulation, implementation, and outcomes of CSR initiatives.

Key findings underscore the pivotal role of participatory governance in fostering effective and impactful CSR activities. Institutions that embrace transparency, inclusivity, and accountability exhibit higher levels of engagement with stakeholders and better alignment of CSR initiatives with local and national development goals. However, systemic challenges—ranging from resource constraints to inconsistent policy implementation—pose significant barriers to the scalability and sustainability of these efforts.

Furthermore, the research highlights the potential of SUCs to act as transformative agents in regional development by leveraging their unique position as academic institutions. By integrating CSR into their governance frameworks and institutional strategies, these universities can address socio-economic disparities, foster environmental stewardship, and promote inclusive growth.

6.2 Strategic Recommendations

The strategic recommendations section offers practical suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City. It emphasizes the need for SUCs to institutionalize CSR by integrating it into their governance structures, ensuring that CSR initiatives are not ad-hoc but rather a sustained, strategic part of the university's mission. The creation of dedicated CSR units within SUCs is recommended to oversee the design, implementation, and evaluation of CSR activities, fostering clearer accountability and direction.

Additionally, SUCs should collaborate more closely with local governments, community organizations, and private sector partners to maximize resources and ensure that CSR programmes are aligned with local development needs. Developing formalized CSR policies that define objectives, responsibilities, and outcomes is also crucial to provide a structured framework for action. Finally, the study suggests enhancing faculty and student involvement in CSR activities, fostering a culture of social responsibility within the academic community.

Building on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the governance-CSR nexus within SUCs:

6.2.1 Governance Reforms

This section emphasizes the importance of strengthening the governance structures within State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to better support Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. It advocates for clear organizational frameworks that integrate CSR into institutional priorities, ensuring that social responsibility becomes a central aspect of decision-making processes. Recommended reforms include establishing dedicated CSR units, enhancing coordination among university departments, and creating formal channels for community engagement. Strengthening leadership commitment to CSR, coupled with the development of transparent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, is crucial to ensuring the long-term sustainability and impact of these initiatives.

1. **Strengthening Stakeholder Representation:** Establish institutional mechanisms to ensure meaningful participation of faculty, students, and community representatives in governance processes.
2. **Enhancing Transparency and Accountability:** Develop and implement robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track the effectiveness of governance practices and CSR initiatives.
3. **Capacity-Building for Leaders:** Conduct regular training programmes for university leaders and administrators to foster a culture of ethical governance and strategic CSR planning.

6.2.2 Institutionalization of CSR

The "Institutionalization of CSR" section highlights the need for State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to formalize their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices by embedding them into their governance structures and institutional policies. This process involves creating dedicated units or offices to oversee CSR activities, integrating CSR objectives into the university's strategic planning, and ensuring consistent funding and resource allocation. Institutionalization ensures that CSR initiatives are not ad-hoc or isolated but are sustained and aligned with the university's core mission. By formalizing CSR, universities can enhance their accountability, maximize impact, and foster long-term community development.

1. **Embedding CSR in Strategic Plans:** Integrate CSR principles into institutional vision and mission statements, aligning them with local, national, and global development priorities.
2. **Dedicated CSR Units:** Establish specialized units within SUCs tasked with designing, coordinating, and evaluating CSR initiatives.
3. **Curricular Integration:** Incorporate CSR-related topics into academic programmes to foster awareness and engagement among students.

6.2.3 Resource Mobilization

This section focuses on the importance of securing consistent financial and material resources to support Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). It highlights the need for innovative strategies to mobilize resources, including partnerships with local governments, private sector stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations. Additionally, the section suggests leveraging alumni networks and donor funding to supplement government budgets. Effective resource mobilization ensures that CSR programs are not only sustainable but also scalable, allowing universities to expand their initiatives and achieve greater social impact while addressing community needs more effectively.

1. **Leveraging Partnerships:** Forge collaborative partnerships with local government units, non-governmental organizations, and private sector entities to enhance funding and technical support for CSR initiatives.
2. **Innovative Financing Mechanisms:** Explore alternative funding sources, such as grants, endowments, and social enterprise models, to sustain CSR activities.
3. **Optimizing Resource Allocation:** Streamline budgeting processes to prioritize CSR initiatives with significant societal impact.

6.2.4 Community Engagement

The "Community Engagement" section underscores the critical role of active collaboration between State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and local communities in the success of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. It advocates for SUCs to engage directly with community members, understand their needs, and co-create solutions that are contextually relevant. This engagement should involve regular consultations, feedback mechanisms, and joint participation in CSR projects. By fostering a sense of ownership and mutual responsibility, community engagement enhances the effectiveness of CSR efforts, ensuring that initiatives are not only impactful but also aligned with the priorities and aspirations of the communities they serve.

1. **Needs-Based Programming:** Conduct regular community consultations to identify priority areas for CSR intervention.
2. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish platforms for continuous feedback from community beneficiaries to inform programme improvements.
3. **Long-Term Partnerships:** Cultivate enduring relationships with local communities to ensure the sustainability of CSR efforts.

6.3 Future Research Directions

This section suggests several avenues for further investigation into Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). It encourages exploring the long-term impact of CSR initiatives on community development, particularly in rural or underserved areas. Additionally, future research could focus on developing comprehensive models for CSR integration within SUCs' governance structures. Comparative studies across different regions or universities could provide insights into best practices and barriers to CSR implementation. The section also highlights the need for research on the role of students and faculty in driving CSR, and how these practices can be scaled for greater impact.

The study identifies several areas for further investigation:

1. **Comparative Analysis Across Regions:** Examine governance and CSR practices in SUCs across different regions to identify contextual variations and best practices.
2. **Impact Assessment Studies:** Conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term societal impact of CSR initiatives undertaken by SUCs.
3. **Exploration of Private-Public Synergies:** Investigate the role of public-private partnerships in enhancing the effectiveness of CSR programmes in higher education.

6.4 Policy Implications

The findings and recommendations of this study hold significant implications for policymakers, university leaders, and stakeholders. A unified policy framework tailored to the specific needs of SUCs can serve as a roadmap for enhancing governance and CSR integration. By institutionalizing best practices and addressing systemic challenges, SUCs can fulfil their dual mandate of academic excellence and societal contribution, thereby advancing regional and national development goals. This offers a crucial analysis of how the findings from this research can guide the formulation and refinement of policies related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines. The need for clear, institutionalized CSR policies within SUCs is evident, as the research highlights both the potential and challenges of current CSR practices across various institutions. Many SUCs, while engaging in CSR activities, lack a cohesive, formalized framework that ensures the sustainability, impact, and scalability of their initiatives. Policy reform is necessary to provide a structured approach that institutionalizes CSR practices, integrates them into the university's mission, and ensures they are adequately resourced.

The policy implications are multifaceted, addressing key areas such as governance, resource allocation, and community engagement. First, policy reforms should ensure that CSR is no longer treated as an ad-hoc or peripheral activity but is instead embedded within the university's strategic planning and decision-making processes. By creating a dedicated CSR office or unit, universities can ensure the coordination and alignment of CSR initiatives with institutional goals, thereby increasing their effectiveness.

Furthermore, resource allocation policies need to be updated to ensure that CSR projects are adequately funded. The research highlights the importance of both government and non-governmental support in funding these initiatives, urging policies that facilitate partnerships with local governments, private sector entities, and alumni. Such partnerships can provide a sustainable financial base for CSR activities, reducing reliance on fluctuating government funding.

Finally, policy recommendations should promote increased community involvement and consultation in CSR initiatives. Policy frameworks should encourage universities to develop deep, mutually beneficial relationships with local communities, ensuring that CSR projects meet actual needs and contribute to long-term regional development. These policies will help SUCs to fulfil their broader social responsibility missions, ensuring that their impact reaches beyond academia into meaningful community transformation.

Final Words

In conclusion, this study highlights the pivotal role of university governance in shaping the effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices within State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Zamboanga City, Philippines. While SUCs have made notable strides in integrating CSR into their institutional missions, the research identifies several challenges that need addressing for more impactful and sustainable community engagement. The study calls for a more formalized approach to CSR, advocating for the establishment of dedicated units, clearer policies, and stronger collaborations with local stakeholders to maximize the social, economic, and environmental benefits of these initiatives. By

aligning governance structures with CSR objectives, SUCs can enhance their role in regional development, contributing to the long-term well-being of both the university and its surrounding communities. Future research should explore how these practices can be scaled and adapted across other regions in the Philippines to further strengthen the intersection of higher education, governance, and social responsibility.

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