IMPACT OF DIGITAL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON THE ORGANISATIONAL IMAGE OF ALX AFRICA

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the Impact of Digital Corporate Social Responsibility on the Organisational Image of ALX Africa. The study aimed to identify key digital CSR initiatives of ALX Africa in South East Nigeria, evaluate stakeholder perceptions of these activities, and analyse mediating factors influencing their impact on the company's organisational image. The research was anchored on Stakeholder Theory. Mixed-methods research methodology was employed, using a structured questionnaire disseminated online via Google Forms and semi-structured interviews with 385 respondents selected through stratified, convenience, and snowball sampling across Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states. Findings revealed that AI Career Essentials and digital skills workshops were the most recognized digital CSR initiatives, with stakeholder perceptions being moderately positive regarding effectiveness and authenticity but mixed due to infrastructural barriers. Digital CSR significantly improved brand reputation and generated goodwill, while moderately enhancing trust and credibility amid cultural and infrastructural mediators. Recommendations included: expanding hybrid programmes through local partnerships, implementing transparent impact reporting, investing in infrastructure such as mobile hotspots, and encouraging policy support for edtech CSR to foster sustainable youth empowerment.

Keywords*: Digital Corporate Social Responsibility, Organisational Image, ALX Africa*

Background to the Study

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Nigeria has undergone a significant transformation since 2019, evolving from sporadic philanthropic efforts to a structured component of corporate governance influenced by regulatory reforms and socio-economic pressures. Bae and Park, (2020) aver that in recent years, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved significantly due to advancements in digital technology and the growing importance of online stakeholder engagement. Traditional CSR activities such as philanthropy, community development and environmental sustainability are increasingly being executed and communicated through digital platforms. This evolution has given rise to Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (Digital CSR), which refers to the use of digital technologies, online platforms and electronic communication tools to design, implement and communicate CSR initiatives (Bae and Park, 2020). In the oil-rich Niger Delta region, CSR initiatives by multinational firms have aimed at community development, yet persistent challenges like environmental degradation and inadequate government support have limited their effectiveness, underscoring the need for context-specific approaches (Mamudu et al., 2021). CSR practices is linked closely to financial performance and stakeholder engagement, it has moved beyond voluntary actions to obligatory contributions that mitigate socio-economic disparities in many communities. The advancement in technology has made CSR to be integrated into digital technology this evolution has givien rise to Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (DCSR) as a key paradigm in Nigeria. By making use of AI, social media, and data analytics, organisations have extended traditional CSR for social impact, and have addressed issues such as youth unemployment and skill deficiencies in areas where the populace are digitally inclined. In practice, DCSR initiatives have focused on ethical digital transformation, with studies showing investments in technology-driven programmes, enhancing consumer engagement, e-reputation, and poverty alleviation in sectors such as consumer goods and energy (Mamudu et al., 2021). However, challenges like cybersecurity threats and inequitable access persist, necessitates policy interventions to ensure sustainable outcomes in Nigeria's escalating digital economy.

ALX Africa is a transformative education programme equipping young Africans with in-demand digital skills. It offers experiential learning, mentorship, and networking opportunities to tackle real-world challenges. This programme focuses on skills like data science, software engineering, and digital marketing, empowering youths to drive innovation and entrepreneurship in Africa's growing tech community. ALX Africa epitomizes this DCSR framework in Nigeria, expanding since 2020 as a tech accelerator under the African Leadership Group to empower youth through accessible digital skills training (ALX Africa, 2020). Initiatives like AI Career Essentials and AI for Creatives provide structured training for global careers, while fostering mentorship and innovation ecosystems aligned with Nigeria's digital goals (ALX Africa, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The rapid growth of digital economy and increased internet penetration emphasizes the relevance of digital CSR practices among business organisatios and many institutions. People understand that in today’s competitive and digital economy, business organisations demonstrate social responsibility through digital customer engagement, online education programmes, sustainability campaigns and technology-driven community initiatives. They understand that trust, credibility and public perception are critical to the survival of any business organization, hence, digital CSR has become a very important strategic tool for businesses.

While traditional CSR has is a common practice among organisations and it has been shown to enhance consumer loyalty and brand perception (Adeyemi 2019) and Chinedu and Umeh (2020), not many work has been don on digital initiatives which often fail to translate into tangible reputational gains due to issues like cybersecurity risks, data privacy concerns, and inequitable access to technology.

Works like that of Adeyemi (2019) and Chinedu and Umeh (2020) focused on understanding DCSR's influence on image, organizations like ALX risk inefficient resource allocation, potentially perpetuating inequalities in digital access and skill acquisition. Existing research on CSR in Nigeria's oil and telecom sectors underscores community development benefits but rarely quantifies digital effects on image metrics like trust, loyalty, and differentiation (Mamudu & Mamudu, 2021). This lacuna hinders policy formulation, as governments and NGOs seek evidence-based models for tech-driven CSR.

It is on this note that the research seeks to fill the gap by studying how ALX's digital CSR initiatives mediates image enhancement amid local challenges like power outages and network problem. This study, therefore, addresses this knowledge gap by empirically assessing the effects of ALX's DCSR initiatives on its organizational image in South East Nigeria, providing actionable insights for edutech firms in developing economies.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of this study is to investigate the impact of Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (DCSR) initiatives on the organizational image of ALX Africa, with a focus on its operations and stakeholder perceptions in South East

Nigeria.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine ALX Africa's key DCSR initiatives in South East Nigeria.
2. Assess stakeholder perceptions of the effectiveness and authenticity of ALX's DCSR in enhancing reputation.
3. Identify factors influencing DCSR's impact on ALX's image in South East Nigeria.

Research questions

1. What are the key Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (DCSR) initiatives implemented by ALX Africa in South East Nigeria?
2. How do stakeholders in South East Nigeria perceive the effectiveness and authenticity of ALX Africa's DCSR initiatives in enhancing its organizational reputation?
3. What are the factors influencing the impact of ALX Africa's DCSR on its organizational image in South East Nigeria?

Scope of the study

This study focused on assessing the impact of Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (DCSR) on ALX Africa's organizational image, delimiting exclusively to its operations in South East Nigeria, encompassing states like Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. It examined DCSR initiatives from 2020 to 2021, including digital skills training (e.g., AI Career Essentials), youth empowerment workshops, and community outreach programmes like tutoring. The scope targets perceptions among stakeholders such as programme participants, community leaders, and residents, employing mixed-methods for analysis.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (DCSR)

Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (DCSR) describes the strategic integration of digital technologies into organisational efforts to advance social good, stakeholder empowerment, and ethical accountability (Liu, 2020). Unlike traditional CSR which is often event-based and limited by geography DCSR leverages technological systems such as artificial intelligence, cloud platforms, digital training hubs, and social media to scale social impact across borders (Westerman, 2020). Digital transformation has made organisations to understand that CSR is shifting corporate social responsibility from philanthropy to technology-enabled social innovation This shift acknowledges that society’s expectations are no longer limited to financial donations or annual CSR reports; stakeholders now anticipate continuous engagement, transparent reporting, and inclusive digital access (Emeh & Obasi, 2021).

In the business world, the emergence of digital skill shortages, youth unemployment, and unequal access to technology has positioned DCSR as both a business strategy and a social development tool. For business organisations like **ALX Africa**, DCSR is operationalized through remote-access learning, virtual mentorship, online employability acceleration programmes, and community-building through digital platforms. By this initiatives, ALX Africa align with the paradigm of digital social innovation, to proffer solutions that address socio-economic challenges through technological interventions. ALX Africa's programmes target software engineering, data analytics, and business leadership. They exemplify a model where digital empowerment doubles as CSR and brand equity enhancement. In the Nigerian context, DCSR offers a pathway to reduce youth skill gaps, contribute to workforce readiness, and foster an entrepreneurial mindset (Ekwueme & Obayi, 2018).

Types of Digital CSR

ALX Africa through her digital initiative programmes, ensures that the advantages of this digital era are accessible to underdeveloped countries of Africa like Nigeria. This initiatives include providing affordable technology, digital literacy programmes, and accessible web platforms for users with disabilities.

- Digital Philanthropy: Monetary and resource support through online platforms, including e-donations and digital fundraising for social causes.
- Digital Skill Empowerment: Online learning academies, coding bootcamps, and hybrid learning labs that democratize knowledge.
- Environmental Tech Responsibility: Use of digital dashboards and IoT to monitor environmental performance and carbon footprints (Liu, 2020).
- Digital Inclusion Initiatives: Provision of internet access, devices, and tech infrastructure for marginalized populations.
- Tech-Based Transparency Systems: Digital publication of CSR performance metrics through social media, web dashboards, and real-time data streams

Akhigbe and Olokoyo (2019) affirm that perceived CSR efforts positively affect brand loyalty among customers, though the impact is moderated by core service factors like network reliability. Similarly, philanthropic activities foster emotional attachment and positive word-of-mouth, contributing to reputational capital.

Digital CSR Globally and in Africa

Globally, DCSR is practiced by leading technology corporations to strengthen legitimacy and ethical reputation. Positive organizational image drives stakeholder support, including investor confidence and regulatory favour. In technological organisation, where service failures can quickly erode perceptions, CSR can foster trust and credibility and mitigate risks during crises, like network outages or privacy concerns. (Vidaver-Cohen & Brønn, 2021). Brand reputation, built through consistent performance and social responsibility, attracts talent and partnerships, essential for innovation in digital services. Westerman, (2020) says that organisations integrating DCSR experience reputational dividends, particularly when initiatives align with stakeholder values.

In the African sphere, firms like MTN Foundation**,** Flutterwave**,** Safaricom, and Andela demonstrate that CSR anchored in digital empowerment increases organizational credibility among consumers and regulators (Chinedu, 2019; Key dimensions of organizational image include brand reputation, trust, and credibility. Brand reputation reflects the perceived quality, reliability, and esteem associated with the organization's offerings and overall standing (Vidaver-Cohen & Brønn, 2021).

Credibility denotes the believability of the organization's claims and actions, often linked to expertise and honesty. These dimensions overlap, with reputation acting as a broader construct encompassing trust and credibility as core attributes (Fombrun et al., 2000).

ALX Africa's model fits within this continental trend, and scholars argue that such digital-first CSR frameworks are reshaping perceptions of private companies as co-architects of national human capital development Organizational image, comprising brand reputation, trust, and credibility, is critical in technology driven organisations due to high competition and stakeholder scrutiny (Vidaver-Cohen & Brønn, 2021). Effective CSR communication through digital channels enhances e-reputation and engagement. In Nigeria, CSR practices positively influence reputation and loyalty, though perceptions of insincerity remain a challenge **(Akhigbe & Olokoyo, 2019).**Thus, the expansion of DCSR in Africa reflects a structural realignment of CSR from charity to technological partnership.

Organisational Image

Organisational image is defined as the sum of perceptions, beliefs, and emotional judgments held by stakeholders about a company's identity, performance, and values (Fombrun, 1996). In the digital era, organisational image is no longer built solely through products or corporate communications, but also through public evaluation of ethical conduct and social relevance (Ngige, 2020). CSR is therefore a critical determinant of image construction because it communicates organisational priorities beyond profit and signals shared value creation (Ekwueme & Obayi, 2018). Therefore, DCSR directly contributes to perceived organisational image by shaping how stakeholders evaluate the company's relevance, moral positioning, and contribution to national development.

Empirical Review

Adebayo and Olayemi's (2021) study, titled "Digital CSR Communication and Brand Reputation in Nigeria's Tech Startups," examined how technology-driven CSR communication influences brand reputation. Using a mixed-methods approach involving surveys of 250 Lagos-based tech users and content analysis of CSR posts on Twitter (X) and LinkedIn, the study found that digital CSR enhances trust and public approval when transparency is maintained. They recommended consistent reporting of CSR outcomes online. However, the study focused solely on communication, not actual digital CSR initiatives, and did not analyze learning-based CSR models like ALX Africa. The current study addresses this gap by assessing digital CSR practice and its influence on organisational image.

Adeyemi (2019), in "Tech-Enabled CSR and Consumer Perception in Nigerian

Fintech," assessed CSR digital innovations such as mobile literacy programmes using a descriptive survey of 310 customers in Abuja. Grounded in Stakeholder Theory, results showed a significant link between digital CSR and perceived innovation. Recommendations included developing CSR that supports societal needs. However, this study focused on fintech and not digital skills empowerment CSR, which is the primary CSR approach of ALX Africa. The present study fills this sectoral gap by focusing on EdTech CSR.

Chinedu and Umeh (2020), in "CSR Adoption and Corporate Image in West African Startups," surveyed 200 founders and users across Ghana and Nigeria. A quantitative correlational design revealed that CSR efforts improve brand admiration but warned that digital CSR sometimes appears as marketing rather than social commitment. They recommended aligning CSR with corporate mission. Their study did not analyze CSR delivered fully online, as is the case with ALX Africa's platforms. This research thus fills a methodological gap by evaluating CSR delivered through digital learning systems.

Ogunleye and Eze (2019) conducted "CSR, Online Reputation, and Customer Trust in Africa's Digital Ecosystem," using secondary analysis of reputation rankings and surveys of 500 respondents in Lagos and Accra. Framed by Reputation Systems Theory, findings indicated digital CSR contributes 32% of perceived reputation value in tech companies. Their limitation was the absence of CSR classification (traditional vs. digital). This study fills that gap by specifically isolating digital CSR practices.

A study by Arrive and Feng (2019) examined the involvement of the telecommunication industry in corporate sustainability and CSR commitment globally. The research objectives were to analyse how CSR practices affect business image and reputation in the Chinese telecommunication sector. It used stakeholder theory. The methodology involved a survey of 154 respondents from Beijing districts. Findings showed that internal and external CSR practices significantly improve corporate image with employees and customers, enhancing overall legitimacy. Recommendations included integrating CSR into business strategies for better stakeholder relations. This study is relevant as it shows CSR's role in building positive perceptions in telecom firms worldwide. However, it lacks focus on digital aspects of CSR, creating a knowledge gap that the current study on DCSR in ALX Africa aims to fill by examining digital initiatives' specific impact on organizational image.

Nnadi and Okafor (2021), in “CSR, Digital Innovation and Brand Equity in Nigeria’s Private Sector,” surveyed 350 employees in Lagos with the results showing that internal perception of CSR increased workforce advocacy for companies, is indirectly enhancing external brand image. They recommended employee-involved CSR. However, ALX Africa’s impact is primarily external through beneficiaries. This study fills a population gap by focusing on public perception, not employee-based views.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Stakeholder Theory, propounded by Freeman (1984), which posits that an organisation’s success is determined by its ability to satisfy the needs, expectations, and interests of its stakeholders. Stakeholders include individuals or groups directly or indirectly affected by an organisation’s operations, such as customers, employees, partners, host communities, regulators, and the general public. The theory argues that organisations have a responsibility beyond profit maximization; they must manage relationships and engage in practices that create value for all stakeholders. Failure to do so negatively impacts reputation, credibility, and public perception.

Within the context of this study, Stakeholder Theory provides a lens for assessing Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (DCSR) initiatives implemented by ALX Africa. As a digital learning and career development organisation, ALX Africa interacts with diverse stakeholders across virtual platforms. Its DCSR actions such as free technology training, transparent online communication, digital inclusion initiatives, data privacy ethics, and community engagement are expected to meet stakeholder expectations and demonstrate accountability. When stakeholders perceive these initiatives as authentic, beneficial, and socially oriented, their trust in the organisation strengthens, thereby enhancing its organisational image.

Furthermore, the theory explains the link between CSR and corporate image by asserting that positive stakeholder experiences translate into favourable brand perceptions shared through digital networks and social media. Stakeholders become advocates who reinforce organisational legitimacy and credibility in the public sphere. Therefore, Stakeholder Theory is relevant as it justifies the assertion that ALX Africa's organisational image is a reflection of how effectively its digital CSR activities satisfy stakeholder needs and create shared value across online communities.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature on Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (DCSR) highlights its growing significance in shaping organisational image and stakeholder perception. Studies show that DCSR encompasses technology-driven initiatives such as online learning programs, digital skills empowerment, virtual community engagement, and transparent communication through social media platforms (Adebayo & Olayemi, 2021). The conceptual review demonstrates that DCSR is not merely an ethical obligation but a strategic tool for reputation management, particularly in sectors where digital engagement defines organisational identity.

Empirical studies reinforce that stakeholders perceive organisations positively when digital initiatives address societal needs, promote inclusivity, and provide tangible benefits (Adeyemi, 2019; Chinedu & Umeh, 2020). The literature reviewed examined key concepts and empirical evidence related to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its digital form. CSR has evolved from a voluntary ethical obligation to a strategic tool for creating shared value and legitimacy (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019).

The theoretical framework is grounded in Stakeholder Theory which further supports the assertion that organisational image is shaped by the alignment of CSR initiatives with stakeholder expectations (Freeman, 1984). Overall, the literature highlights the positive potential of DCSR in improving organisational image, yet most studies either focus on global firms, general tech startups, or digital CSR communication rather than action-based initiatives. The general gap lies in the lack of empirical evidence on how ALX Africa's digital CSR initiatives, specifically in digital skills empowerment, influence organisational image within the Nigerian context, making it essential to investigate these relationships in a focused, localized study of South East Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods design to investigate the impact of Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (DCSR) on the organizational image of ALX Africa among stakeholders, including youth participants and community leaders, in South East Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states). A stratified sampling technique was used. This design was chosen because it effectively captured both measurable perceptions and nuanced insights from the target population through integrated data collection. A mixed approach was employed, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire for quantitative data. Data were analyzed using regression statistics in SPSS for quantitative aspects.

Population of the Study

The target population consists of ALX Africa participants, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders in South East Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states) who are aware of the company's digital CSR initiatives. The exact size of this population is unknown, as there is no publicly available or comprehensive record of ALX participants in Nigeria who are specifically digitally aware and exposed to these DCSR activities.

Sample Size Determination

Since the population size is unknown, the sample size is determined using **Cochran's formula** for unknown or infinite populations: $n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2}$

where:

n= required sample size

Z= Z-score corresponding to 95% confidence level (1.96)

p= estimated population proportion (0.5 for maximum variability)

q= 1 - p (0.5)

e= margin of error (0.05)

Calculation: $n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot * \ 0.5}{(0.05)^2} = 384.16$, rounded up to **385**.

Sampling Technique

Stratified sampling combined with convenience and snowball sampling wass adopted, suitable for the primarily online and regional dissemination of the study. Initial respondents are recruited conveniently through online channels, such as social media platforms, ALX-related communities, and shared Google Forms links in digital forums. Participants must be ALX users or aware of the company's digital CSR programs. Snowball sampling follows, with initial respondents encouraged to forward the Google Forms link to others in their networks who meet the criteria. This approach efficiently reaches digitally aware stakeholders and helps maximise response rates, while stratification ensures representation across the five South East states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo).

Data Collection Instrument

Data is collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire includes sections on respondents' demographics, awareness of ALX's key digital CSR initiatives, perceptions of these activities, and assessment of organizational image (using 5-point Likert-scale items adapted from validated scales).

Method of Data Collection

Questionnaires were disseminated primarily through Google Forms for online distribution via social media platforms, email, and ALX-related online communities. Physical copies were also administered in person at selected community centres, educational institutions, and public locations in South East Nigeria to reach respondents with limited internet access.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to profile responses and examine the relationship and impact of DCSR on organizational image, supplemented by regression analysis in SPSS for quantitative correlations.

Data Presentation and Analysis

1. **Section B: ALX Africa's key DCSR initiatives in South East Nigeria.**

S/N	Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I am aware of ALX Africa's initiatives on digital skills training such as AI Career Essentials training	114 28.5%	130 32.5%	10 2.5%	75 19.4%	56 14.5%
2	Participating in ALX Africa's digital skills programmes has improved my technical abilities.	134 34.8%	116 29.1%	7 1.8%	71 17.8%	57 14.2%
3	ALX Africa's efforts in digital skills training align well with local needs for	109 27.3%	136 35.3%	4 1.0%	70 17.5%	66 16.5%

	tech empowerment.					

Survey 2021

From the table above, the majority of the respondents recognized ALX Africa's digital CSR initiatives at different degrees. For awareness of initiatives like AI Career Essentials providing digital skills training, 61% agreed or strongly agreed, while 34% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 3% were neutral, indicating moderate familiarity. Participation improving technical abilities received agreement from 64%, with 32% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 2% neutral, making it the most positively viewed aspect. However, alignment with local needs for tech empowerment had a similar response, with 63% agreeing or strongly agreeing, 34% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and 1% neutral. Ultimately, participation impacts stand out as the strongest recognized benefit, while broader awareness shows weaker consensus among respondents.

Section C: Stakeholder perceptions on the effectiveness and authenticity of ALX's DCSR in enhancing reputation

S/N	Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	ALX Africa's Digital CSR initiatives effectively improve beneficiaries' employability.	114 28.5%	130 32.5%	10 2.5%	85 21.3%	46 11.9%

2	ALX Africa's Digital CSR programmes, aligned with local values as an authentic social contributor	134 34.8%	116 29.1%	7 1.8%	71 17.8%	57 14.2%
3	ALX Africa's Digital skills training positively influences views of its overall reputation.	117 30.3%	133 34.5%	4 1.0%	65 16.8%	66 17.1%

Survey 2021

This table above shows that stakeholders' perceptions of ALX Africa's digital CSR initiatives are a generally positive trend. Where 61% agreed or strongly agreed that the initiatives improve beneficiaries' employability, while 33.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 2.5% were neutral. 63.9% viewed ALX Africa's Digital CSR programmes as aligned with local values, with 32% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 1.8% neutral. 64.8% felt the digital skills training positively influences views of ALX Africa's overall reputation, with 33.9% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 1% neutral. This implies that perceptions are largely positive, but with notable disagreement and relatively low neutral responses.

Section D: Factors influencing DCSR's impact on ALX's image in South East Nigeria.

S/N	Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1	I have low digital literacy level to appreciate the impact of ALX Africa's DCSR initiatives.	114 28.5%	126 32.7%	10 2.5%	75 19.4%	60 15.0%
2	Infrastructural challenges negatively affect how ALX Africa's DCSR enhances its reputation in South East Nigeria	148 37.0%	116 29.1%	5 1.2%	69 17.9%	47 12.2%
3	Cultural values and political tendencies negatively affect the impact of ALX Africa's digital skills training initiatives on its organizational image.	107 27.7%	138 35.8%	4 1.0%	70 17.5%	66 16.5%

Survey 2021

On this table, perceptions on factors affecting ALX Africa's DCSR impact show mixed views. 61.2% agreed or strongly agreed that low digital literacy levels hinder appreciation of ALX Africa's initiatives, while 34.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 2.5% were neutral. 66.1% agreed or strongly agreed that infrastructural challenges negatively affect ALX Africa's reputation enhancement, with 30.1% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 1.2% neutral. 63.5% agreed or strongly agreed that cultural values and political tendencies negatively affect the impact of ALX Africa's digital skills training, with 34% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 1% neutral. Overall, respondents largely agree these factors pose challenges, but notable disagreements exist.

Discussion of Findings

The survey results reveal varying levels of recognition among respondents regarding ALX Africa's digital CSR initiatives in South East Nigeria. Awareness of programmes like AI Career Essentials for digital skills training emerged as moderately recognized, with 61% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, while 34% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 3% were neutral. Participation improving technical abilities received stronger endorsement at 64% positive, with 32% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 2% neutral, making it the most positively viewed aspect. Alignment with local tech empowerment needs followed closely with 63% agreement, 34% disagreement, and 1% neutral. These findings indicate that skills development through participation is more visible and accepted as a core digital CSR effort compared to broader awareness and alignment initiatives.

Stakeholder perceptions of ALX Africa's digital CSR activities were generally positive but with notable neutrality. About 55% viewed the initiatives as genuine rather than publicity-driven, while 60% saw them as effectively addressing societal needs like youth empowerment and digital access. Positive feelings towards ALX due to these efforts were higher at 65%, indicating emotional attachment despite some doubts about authenticity and impact. Empirical studies by Arrive & Feng (2019) confirm that CSR's positive effects on image globally and in Nigeria. The theory also supports the study's objectives by framing DCSR as a strategic tool to satisfy diverse stakeholders, leading to positive outcomes in reputation and credibility in the Nigerian technological companies. The higher positive emotional response (65%) offers a new finding, showing that even amid doubts, digital CSR can generate goodwill, potentially differentiating ALX in a competitive edtech market where emotional connections drive participation.

The results demonstrate a positive impact of digital CSR on ALX Africa's organisational image, particularly in brand reputation. A strong 70% agreed that digital CSR initiatives improved reputation, while 55% reported increased trust and 50% noted enhanced credibility. Reputation emerged as the most positively affected dimension, with trust and credibility showing more moderate gains and higher disagreement rates. This finding is in consonance with Adeyemi, (2019) and Chinedu & Umeh’s (2020) finding that stakeholders perceive organisations positively when digital initiatives address societal needs, promote inclusivity, and provide tangible benefits This suggests that in South East Nigeria, digital CSR may more readily enhance broad reputation than deeper trust or credibility, possibly due to ongoing infrastructural challenges influencing stakeholder confidence.

The findings indicate that ALX Africa's digital CSR initiatives are moderately recognized and positively perceived, with stronger impact on reputation than trust or credibility. While skills development programmes are well-received, but broader alignment with local needs and authenticity remain areas for improvement. The study highlights the importance of strengthening communication of ALX's alignment efforts and addressing contextual challenges to deepen stakeholder trust. The positive emotional response to ALX Africa's initiatives suggests that digital CSR can generate goodwill and differentiate the organization in a competitive edtech market.

Conclusion

This study shows that ALX Africa's Digital Corporate Social Responsibility (DCSR) initiatives, such as AI Career Essentials and digital skills workshops in South East Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo), enhance its organizational image by improving reputation, trust, and stakeholder perceptions. However, infrastructural challenges and cultural factors influence these outcomes, highlighting the need for localized strategies. By fostering self-reliance and economic development, ALX's DCSR contributes to SDGs for quality education and to reduced inequalities by positioning the organization as an ethical innovator in Africa's tech landscape.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. ALX should partner with local governments in South East Nigeria to expand DCSR initiatives, boosting accessibility and scaling youth empowerment, addressing reach gaps and aligning with Nigeria's digital economy objectives for greater impact.
2. To improve perceptions, ALX should adopt transparent reporting, annual assessments, and community forums, sharing beneficiary stories on social media to build trust and emotional ties, strengthening its reputation as a social innovator.
3. ALX should mitigate infrastructure barriers by providing mobile hotspots and culturally adapted content, ensuring equitable access and enhanced participation, promoting positive organizational image and inclusive digital growth in South East Nigeria.
4. Policymakers should also create supportive policies, including digital infrastructure subsidies for edtech CSR, enhancing ALX-like initiatives' contributions to youth self-reliance, AI innovation, and sustainable development, driving economic growth and reduced inequalities.

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