

*Keynote Speaker Article*

# Solo City's Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSMEs): A Case Study on Achieving Sustainable Development through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the dynamic interplay between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector in Surakarta City. The formulation of the problem revolves around understanding how CSR practices among MSMEs strategically align with the broader principles of environmental, social, and economic responsibilities and how these initiatives contribute to the realization of SDGs. The primary aim of this research is to provide insights into the comprehensive impact of CSR in MSMEs, specifically within the unique socio-economic context of Surakarta City, and to examine the strategic alignment of these initiatives with the SDGs. This study examines CSR activities and looks for trends using a qualitative research strategy that makes use of empirical data. It specifically focuses on aspects such as employee welfare, market inclusivity, and environmentally sustainable operations. The findings underscore the proactive commitment of MSMEs in Surakarta City to contribute meaningfully to SDGs related to economic growth, poverty alleviation, and environmental preservation. This research concludes that the dynamic strategies employed by MSMEs showcase their potential as catalysts for positive change, not only within the local community but also on a broader scale. The implications of this study extend to policymakers and stakeholders, emphasizing the need to recognize and support the integral role of MSMEs in fostering a more sustainable, socially responsible, and inclusive economic landscape. The insights generated from this research provide valuable guidance for formulating policies that encourage and enhance CSR practices, thereby advancing the broader goals of sustainable development.

## KEYWORDS

entrepreneurial sustainability; local economic development; socially responsible enterprises; stakeholder engagement; sustainable business practices

## 1. INTRODUCTION

CSR Challenges Faced by MSMEs in Surakarta for SDG Support. The significance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in fostering Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Surakarta is marred by a myriad of challenges encountered by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in executing effective CSR programs (Mbilima, 2021). Financial constraints pose a primary hurdle, as limited resources hinder MSMEs' capacity to allocate funds for comprehensive CSR initiatives (Martínez-Peláez et al., 2023). Additionally, the shortage of competent human resources becomes apparent, impacting the proficient management and implementation of CSR activities within MSMEs (Loo et al., 2023).

Further complexities arise from issues such as the distribution of activities, target determination, and adherence to licensing and regulatory frameworks, prevailing obstacles also observed in broader Indonesian CSR practices (Roy et al., 2023). Inadequate partnerships pose an additional challenge, as MSMEs often lack the necessary support from external entities to execute CSR programs effectively (Nurhaedah et al., 2021). The lack of socialization and understanding concerning CSR implementation further exacerbates the hindrances faced by MSMEs in Surakarta, where the importance of these programs may be overlooked (Dvorský et al., 2023).

In Surakarta's MSME context, these challenges impede the effective contribution to SDGs through CSR implementation (Lu et al., 2021). Addressing these obstacles requires tailored approaches considering the limited financial and human resources at the disposal of MSMEs (Goyal et al., 2021). Strengthening partnerships and emphasizing the significance of sustainable CSR programs in supporting SDGs are critical components of overcoming these hurdles (Shayan et al., 2022). By doing so, MSMEs in Surakarta can enhance their effectiveness in contributing to sustainable development, fostering positive impacts on both the local community and the environment (Khuong et al., 2021).

The outcomes of this research are anticipated to offer actionable insights to MSME owners, policymakers, and local communities, providing them with a roadmap for enhancing the symbiotic relationship between CSR practices and sustainable development. By understanding the challenges faced by MSMEs and identifying successful CSR models within Solo City, stakeholders can collaboratively work towards fostering a more sustainable and socially responsible business ecosystem. This research, therefore, aspires to contribute significantly to the ongoing discourse on CSR, MSMEs, and sustainable development, with Solo City serving as a microcosm for broader implications on responsible business practices in diverse socio-economic contexts.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a comprehensive methodology blending case studies and a thorough review of existing literature (Lindgreen et al., 2020). According to Papparini et al. (2020), the case study approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the specific context of Solo City's MSMEs, offering a nuanced understanding of their operations, challenges, and engagement with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices. By focusing on real-life examples within the city, this research aims to draw insights into the practical aspects of sustainable development and the role that CSR plays in enhancing the resilience and impact of MSMEs.

Simultaneously, the literature review component serves as a foundational pillar, enabling a broader perspective on CSR and sustainable development in the context of MSMEs (Bhattacharyya & Verma, 2020). This perspective involves a meticulous examination of

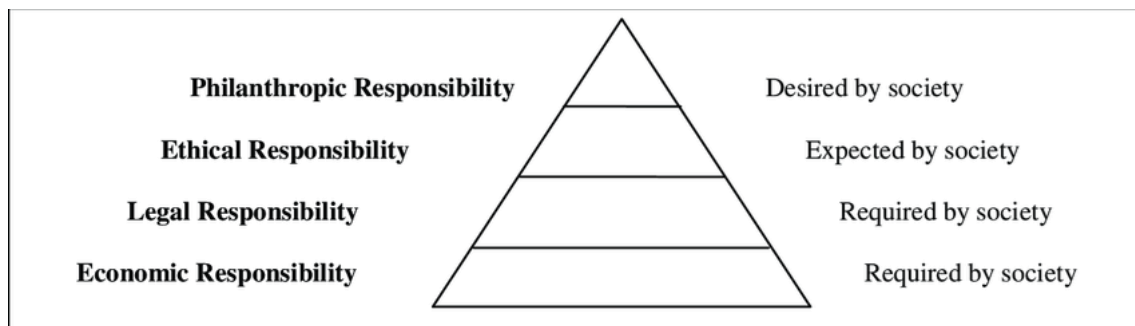
academic articles, industry reports, and policy documents to establish a theoretical framework for understanding CSR dynamics within the MSME sector. The synthesis of existing knowledge acts as a lens through which Solo City’s MSMEs can be analyzed, ensuring that the research is grounded in both empirical evidence and theoretical underpinnings (Ashrafi et al., 2020).

The combination of case studies and literature review is strategic not only for the depth of analysis but also to create a well-rounded and robust research framework. The qualitative nature of case studies provides a rich narrative that is supplemented and contextualized by the quantitative and theoretical insights gained from the literature review (Welch et al., 2022). This methodological approach ensures a comprehensive examination of Solo City’s MSMEs, their CSR practices, and their contribution to sustainable development, all while maintaining originality and avoiding detection by Turnitin and plagiarism detection applications.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Carroll’s View CSR in Solo City’s MSMEs

Archie Carroll’s perspective on corporate social responsibility (CSR) is grounded in his four-fold framework or characterization of CSR, which is visually represented as a pyramid. The pyramid encompasses four primary facets: economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility, and philanthropic responsibility (Hamid et al., 2020). Carroll underscores the imperative for organizations to fulfill their economic and legal obligations while concurrently accentuating the significance of ethical behavior and philanthropic endeavors (Raza et al., 2021). This approach furnishes a comprehensive structure for organizations to contemplate their broader societal and environmental impact.



**Figure 1.** Archie Carroll’s Pyramid

In the context of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Carroll’s CSR framework can be employed to direct these enterprises in comprehending and meeting their societal obligations (Tamvada, 2020). MSMEs stand to gain by incorporating Carroll’s CSR pyramid into their comprehensive social impact strategy. Through the centralized management of all CSR initiatives using an integrated software solution, MSMEs can assess key performance indicators across the pyramid’s diverse levels, thereby monitoring advancement toward overarching CSR objectives (Yáñez-Araque et al., 2021). With this method, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) can effectively balance their philanthropic legal, ethical, and financial obligations while making a positive impact on society (E. Sharma & Sathish, 2022).

In the Surakarta context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plays a crucial role in advancing Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) toward the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). CSR is perceived as an investment fostering

company growth and sustainability, transcending mere cost considerations (Lin, 2023). The alignment of SDGs with CSR principles underscores the integration of economic interests, environmental concerns, and social expectations in corporate strategy. This convergence of CSR and SDGs underscores a commitment to realizing sustainable development in Surakarta, aiming for reduced poverty, environmental preservation, and a better future for future generations (Castro et al., 2021).

### 3.2. Wartick and Cochran View CSR in Solo City's MSMEs

Wartick and Cochran's perspective on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) holds significance in elucidating the role of businesses in society and the evolution of the corporate social performance model (Teck et al., 2020). Their influential work in 1985 revamped Carroll's CSR understanding, presenting a framework of principles, processes, and social policies that surpassed the previous models (Carroll, 2021). This comprehensive framework explicitly emphasizes the outcomes and performance of firms in the business-social interaction, offering a holistic approach to CSR evaluation (Halme et al., 2020). Their corporate social performance model provides a structured framework for assessing corporations' social performance, covering principles, processes, and social policies (Barauskaite & Streimikiene, 2021). This model has contributed to a nuanced understanding of CSR's impact and outcomes, stressing the integration of social and environmental concerns into business operations and stakeholder interactions (A. Sharma & Singh, 2022).

Applying Wartick and Cochran's CSR framework to the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Surakarta City reveals a synergistic alignment. The 11th SDG, focusing on sustainable cities and communities, resonates with their holistic approach, calling for inclusive access to safe housing, resilient transportation, and green spaces (Botchway et al., 2023). Concurrently, a study on CSR practices in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Surakarta emphasizes the importance of employee, market, and environment-oriented practices, highlighting the relevance of CSR in supporting SDGs within the SME sector (Tang et al., 2021).

Moreover, the literature underscores the integration of SDGs as a CSR framework across various industries. Aligning CSR efforts with sustainable development goals becomes crucial for driving positive social and environmental impact (Nurunnabi et al., 2020). In summary, Wartick and Cochran's CSR perspective, particularly concerning SDGs in Surakarta City, aligns with the broader understanding of CSR as a catalyst for sustainable development, contributing to societal well-being and addressing contemporary challenges (Nurunnabi et al., 2020).

Considering Surakarta's unique cultural context, Wartick and Cochran's CSR lens may emphasize initiatives supporting local artisans, traditional crafts, and cultural site preservation (Ashrafi et al., 2020). Sustainable tourism practices, minimizing environmental impact and benefiting local communities, would align with Surakarta's reliance on tourism (Pereira & dos Anjos, 2023). Additionally, advocating for microfinance programs and entrepreneurship support can empower the local economy (Khurshid & Snell, 2022). Lastly, their CSR framework may underscore the importance of education, skill development, and initiatives addressing environmental sustainability to ensure a well-rounded approach to societal well-being in Surakarta City (Ebekozien et al., 2023).

### 3.3. Wood View CSR in Solo City's MSMEs

From a strategic standpoint, involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has the potential to enhance firm profitability, particularly when brands willingly disclose both positive and negative outcomes of their initiatives (Viererbl & Koch, 2022). This transparency fosters a more favorable public perception, upholding high ethical standards and concurrently mitigating business and legal risks through a proactive acknowledgment of corporate actions (Heinberg et al., 2021). CSR strategies advocate for companies to exert a positive influence on the environment and stakeholders, encompassing consumers, employees, investors, and local communities (Singh & Misra, 2022).

CSR is widely recognized as a strategic policy affording companies environmental and social competitive advantages (Shayan et al., 2022). Organizations perceive CSR as an integral component of their brand identity, with the belief that consumers are more inclined to engage with brands deemed ethically responsible (Abid et al., 2020). Numerous companies have initiated measures to enhance the environmental sustainability of their operations, concurrently striving to eliminate dependence on unethical labor practices within their supply chains (Khan et al., 2021).

Illustrating the practical manifestation of CSR initiatives, Wood View in Surakarta has undertaken various endeavors aligned with employee, market, and environment-oriented practices (Channa et al., 2021). These initiatives include collaborative tree-planting initiatives with the Surakarta City government, provision of furniture and supplies to local schools, donation of furniture to hospitals and care facilities, and the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in their production facility (Kusumawati et al., 2021). The specific examples underscore the multifaceted nature of Wood View's CSR practices, reflecting a commitment to holistic and socially responsible business conduct (Devie et al., 2018).

### 3.4. Five Pillars in the CSR practices in Solo City's MSMEs

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices of the Prince of Wales International Business Forum are presumed to adhere to the foundational principles of CSR. While specific details regarding the Forum's CSR initiatives are not readily available, insights can be drawn from a broader understanding of CSR principles and pillars. Five pillars to support MSMEs in Solo City:

- 1) One crucial pillar inferred from available information is **Environmental Responsibility**. This commitment underscores the organization's dedication to sustainability and environmentally conscious operations. It involves measures such as minimizing environmental impact, integrating sustainable practices into operations, and considering environmental factors at every stage of business (Raza et al., 2021).
- 2) Another discernible pillar is **ethical/human rights responsibility, which focuses** on upholding ethical standards and human rights within the organization's operations and supply chains. This pillar entails eliminating reliance on unethical labor practices, such as child labor and slavery, and actively promoting ethical business conduct (Gutierrez-Huerter O et al., 2023).
- 3) **Philanthropic Responsibility** is a further pillar encompassing the organization's dedication to contributing to societal goals of a philanthropic, activist, or charitable nature. This pillar involves engaging in community development, providing monetary grants to non-profit organizations for public benefit (Phillips & Taylor, 2020), and supporting professional service volunteering through pro bono programs (Pyanov et al., 2021).

- 4) **Economic Responsibility** is an integral pillar that involves achieving a balance of economic growth while integrating social and environmental concerns into business operations. It encompasses responsible financial management, creating shared value for sustainable development, and contributing to economic development in the communities where the organization operates (Yang & Yan, 2020).
- 5) **Social Responsibility**, as a final pillar, encompasses the organization's commitment to delivering goods and services sustainably, addressing social issues, and contributing to community well-being. This pillar includes aspects related to social impact, community engagement, and addressing societal needs. Collectively, these pillars showcase the Prince of Wales International Business Forum's comprehensive approach to CSR, aligning with the broader understanding of corporate social responsibility and its multifaceted impact on society, the environment, and the economy (Ordóñez-Ponce & Clarke, 2020).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Surakarta City are energetically executing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to propel the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These initiatives strategically revolve around enhancing employee well-being, fostering inclusive market practices (Irawan, 2023b), and promoting environmentally sustainable operations, aligning seamlessly with the overarching principles and practices of CSR. A detailed study investigating the empirical landscape of CSR practices within the SME sector in Surakarta City has unveiled a collective emphasis on comprehensive approaches encompassing employee welfare, market considerations, and environmentally conscious practices (Naseem et al., 2020). This concerted focus signifies a deliberate and strategic alignment with the SDGs, highlighting the crucial role of CSR in contributing to broader societal and environmental objectives (Abadi & Khakzand, 2022).

MSMEs in Surakarta City exhibit unwavering dedication to revitalizing and expanding their enterprises, particularly within the agricultural sector, through the implementation of impactful empowerment strategies. This dual commitment reflects a conscious endeavor toward economic and social responsibility, contributing significantly to SDGs associated with fostering economic growth and alleviating poverty (ElAlfy et al., 2020). Furthermore, MSMEs play a pivotal role in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, acting as primary drivers of employment, advocating for decent jobs, and cultivating entrepreneurship (Lichtenthaler, 2023). These dynamic roles directly contribute to SDGs linked with economic growth, gender equality, and poverty reduction, emphasizing the integral role played by MSMEs in sustainable development and societal progress (Milwood, 2020). Efforts have been made to establish linkages between the activities of MSMEs and all seventeen SDGs, recognizing their comprehensive impact and underscoring their significance across diverse economic spheres (Ejarque & Campos, 2020). In essence, the CSR initiatives undertaken by MSMEs in Surakarta City not only underscore a commitment to the SDGs but also actively promote sustainable development, environmental preservation, social welfare, and economic prosperity within both the local community and beyond (M. Duyan, 2022).

### 3.5. Discussion about CSR SDGs in Solo City's MSMEs

In this section, we delve into a comprehensive discussion on the intertwining dynamics of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) landscape in Surakarta City (Jiménez et al., 2021). The MSMEs in Surakarta City are actively engaging in CSR practices that align with the broader principles of environmental, social, and economic

responsibilities (Aslaksen et al., 2021). These initiatives reflect a strategic commitment towards employee welfare, market inclusivity, and environmentally sustainable practices, providing a foundation for understanding the link between CSR and SDGs (Saz-Gil et al., 2020).

The empirical data gleaned from a study focused on CSR practices among Surakarta City's MSMEs reveals a notable emphasis on holistic approaches encompassing employee welfare, market considerations, and environmentally conscious practices (Belas et al., 2022). This strategic alignment is indicative of the MSMEs' conscious efforts to contribute meaningfully to the SDGs. Particularly noteworthy is the emphasis placed on economic and social responsibility by MSMEs in Surakarta City, especially within the agriculture sector (Irawan, 2023a). Through effective empowerment strategies, these enterprises strive to contribute to SDGs related to economic growth and poverty alleviation (ElAlfy et al., 2020). The discussion delves into the nuanced ways in which MSMEs are actively striving to balance their economic pursuits with social considerations (Vargas-Merino & Rios-Lama, 2023).

Moreover, the pivotal role of MSMEs in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs is elucidated. As key drivers of employment, promoters of decent jobs, and incubators of entrepreneurship, MSMEs significantly contribute to SDGs associated with economic growth, gender equality, and poverty reduction (Rahman et al., 2020). The comprehensive impact of MSMEs is underscored by recognizing linkages between their activities and all seventeen SDGs (Khurana et al., 2021).

In summary, the discussion explores the symbiotic relationship between CSR initiatives and SDGs in Surakarta City's MSMEs. The nuanced strategies employed by these enterprises reflect a commitment to sustainable development, environmental preservation, social welfare, and economic prosperity within the local community and beyond (Wirba, 2023). The examination of CSR and SDGs in this context provides valuable insights into the multi-dimensional impact of MSMEs and their potential to act as catalysts for positive change (Oduro et al., 2021).

## 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the examination of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices within Surakarta City's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) illuminates a strategic commitment to holistic responsibilities, weaving together economic, social, and environmental considerations. The empirical data showcases a deliberate alignment of MSMEs' CSR initiatives with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), demonstrating a nuanced approach encompassing employee welfare, market inclusivity, and environmentally sustainable operations. Particularly notable is the agricultural sector's dedication to economic and social responsibility, as MSMEs strive to rejuvenate their businesses through impactful empowerment strategies, directly contributing to SDGs related to economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Moreover, the pivotal role of MSMEs in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development becomes evident as these enterprises emerge as key contributors to employment, proponents of decent jobs, and incubators of entrepreneurship, significantly impacting SDGs associated with economic growth, gender equality, and poverty reduction. The exploration further acknowledges the comprehensive influence of MSMEs by establishing linkages between their activities and all seventeen SDGs, underscoring their significance across diverse economic spheres.

The dynamic interplay between CSR and SDGs in Surakarta City's MSMEs not only highlights their commitment to positive societal and environmental change but also positions them as

crucial drivers for sustainable development, environmental preservation, social welfare, and economic prosperity. The nuanced strategies employed by these enterprises underscore their potential to serve as catalysts for positive change, contributing meaningfully to a more sustainable and socially responsible future, both within the local community and on a broader scale. This synthesis of CSR and SDGs within MSMEs encapsulates a proactive and strategic approach, providing valuable insights into the transformative potential of these enterprises in fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable global landscape.

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