

# **An Assessment of the Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on the Competitiveness of SMEs in the Retail Sector in Ndola District**

**Dr. Christine Nankamba Lesa, Ph.D.**

Head of Department – Department of Operations and Supply Chain Management  
School of Business, Copperbelt University,  
Kitwe, Zambia

[christinelesa@yahoo.com](mailto:christinelesa@yahoo.com)/[CHRISTINE.LESA@cbu.ac.zm](mailto:CHRISTINE.LESA@cbu.ac.zm)

**Mr. Grant Sikazwe**

MBA Student  
School of Graduate Studies, Copperbelt University,  
Kitwe, Zambia

[grantsikazwe@yahoo.com](mailto:grantsikazwe@yahoo.com)

**Progress Choongo, Ph.D.**

Senior Lecturer  
School of Business, Copperbelt University,  
Kitwe, Zambia

[pchoongo2003@yahoo.com](mailto:pchoongo2003@yahoo.com)/[progress.choongo@cbu.ac.zm](mailto:progress.choongo@cbu.ac.zm)

## **Abstract**

The business environment is very competitive today. To stay afloat, organisations are always trying to achieve competitive advantage. It is argued that CSR can contribute to creating competitive advantage of organisations. Despite the contribution competitive advantage bring to firms, there are not many studies that have related CSR in SMEs and its impact on the competitive advantage attained. The objective of the study was to assess the effect of CSR activities on the competitiveness of SMEs operating in the retail sector in Ndola. The sample size for the research was 360 SME owner and employed managers. A total of 263 managed to fill in the questionnaires to provide the empirical data needed for analysis. Regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The key findings of the research were that economic responsibility was a determinant of competitiveness while philanthropic responsibility, environmental responsibility and workforce-oriented responsibility were not. Policy makers can consider giving incentives such as tax break on money spent on CSR to encourage SMEs to undertaken CSR activities to improve the competitiveness of SMEs. The research thus recommends that CSR be fully implemented by SMEs in the retail sector in Ndola and other areas in order to improve their competitiveness.

## **Keywords**

*Corporate social responsibility, competitiveness, economic responsibility, philanthropic responsibility, SMEs.*

## **Biographies**

**Christine Chanda Nakamba** is Lecturer and Head of Operation and Supply Chain Management in the School of Business at the Copperbelt University in Zambia. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Production Management from the Copperbelt University, Zambia; a Master of Science in Master of Science degree in Logistics from Coventry University; and a PhD in Management of Projects from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom. Her main research interests are in the area of supply chain management, sustainability and entrepreneurship. Her work is published in research journals such as *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal* and *British Academy of Management*.

**Mr. Grant Sikazwe** is a holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from the Copperbelt University.

**Progress Choongo** is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Business at the Copperbelt University in Zambia. He has worked as a coordinator of graduate school, head of department for Operations and Supply Chain Management, Project manager, Interim Director: Projects, and innovations at CBU. He obtained his PhD in 2018 from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in the Netherlands. His research includes entrepreneurship, SMEs, sustainability, corporate social responsibility and other related topics. His work is published in research journals such as *International Review of Entrepreneurship, Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* and *Sustainability*.