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# **Capitalism with a Conscience: SMEs and Community Engagement**

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Angela Patricia Yates

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## ***ABSTRACT***

It is commonly acknowledged that business organisations are expected to demonstrate ethical and moral conduct, yet throughout the last half century the bar has been raised. Not only are organisations expected to behave ethically; they are being summoned to exercise Business Social Responsibility (BSR). While there is a growing amount of literature on BSR, research in this field has largely confined itself to corporations. As such, especially in the New Zealand space, it has neglected prolific Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). The aim of this study was *to explore SME owner-managers' perceptions of community engagement*. To accomplish this aim an exploratory, qualitative study involving semi-structured interviews with 10 SME owner-managers was conducted. SME owner-managers interviewed perceive business as having a highly integrated function in society. The owner-managers engage with their communities in significantly diverse ways, covering an extensive range of stakeholders. Primarily influenced by values pertaining to religion, family, and moral orientation, many owner-managers overlook economic gain, yet consider peripheral benefits to accrue nonetheless.