

## **Fostering Educational Equity Through Cross-Sector Collaboration: A Case Study of School-Company CSR Partnerships in Indonesia**

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Article History: Received on 15 February 2026, Revised on 9 April 2026,  
Published on 20 April 2026

**Abstract:** This study focuses on examining the partnership pattern between educational institutions and the business sector in implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs in the field of education. The aspects analyzed include the initial circumstances leading to the establishment of the collaboration, the organizational governance model and practices of shared leadership, the mechanisms for implementing and controlling activities, strategies to strengthen trust and commitment among the stakeholders, and the implications of the collaboration for expanding learning opportunities and improving the quality of educational services. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design conducted at Faza Azkia Integrated Islamic Private Elementary School. The research participants include the school principal, educators involved in the planning, data collection, and implementation of educational CSR programs, as well as representatives from partner companies. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, document review, and analysis of CSR activity reports. The analysis process was carried out interactively through stages of data selection, information display, and conclusion drawing. The reliability of the findings was ensured through the application of both source and technique triangulation. The findings indicate that the collaboration was formed due to the socio-economic gaps among students, which were reinforced by corporate initiatives and the school's formal mechanisms. The clarity of the institutional design and the collaborative leadership of the school principal play a crucial role in maintaining the effectiveness and sustainability of the program. Educational CSR collaboration has a positive impact on increasing access to education, student motivation, and academic achievement, although the equitable distribution of program benefits remains a major challenge in its implementation.

**Keywords:** Collaborative Governance, Cross-Sector Collaboration, Educational Equity, Public-Private Partnership, School Leadership

### **A. Introduction**

Education is one of the main pillars in realizing social justice and sustainable development. Globally, the issue of inequality in access to and quality of education still remains a serious challenge, especially in developing countries (Iskandar,

Thalal, Sari, & Azhari, 2026). Although various policies have been designed to expand access to education, the reality on the ground shows that gaps still occur, both in terms of infrastructure, quality of learning, and resource support (Abdul, Adeghe, Adegoke, Adegoke, & Udedeh, 2024). This condition demands a collaborative approach involving various actors outside the government, including the private sector, to jointly contribute to improving the quality of education.

In this context, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become one of the strategic instruments that can be utilized to support the education sector. CSR is no longer seen merely as a moral obligation of the company, but has evolved into a form of social responsibility integrated with community development strategies (Abidah, et al., 2024). Through CSR programs, companies can play an active role in supporting the improvement of access to education, the provision of learning facilities, and the strengthening of school institutional capacity (Tiruwa & Dikshit, 2025). Thus, collaboration between schools and companies becomes one form of practical implementation of collaborative governance that has the potential to promote educational equity. Although the literature on collaborative governance in education has developed, most studies still focus on the policy level or large-scale partnerships between the government and the private sector. These studies tend to emphasize structural aspects and policy outcomes, thus providing less insight into the dynamics of the collaboration process that occurs at the institutional level, particularly at the school level (Fadhli, Prasetyo, Siregar, Pasaribu, & Sari, 2024). In addition, the context of developing countries like Indonesia is still relatively underexplored in those studies, even though the social, cultural, and institutional characteristics in developing countries have their own complexities that affect the success of a collaboration. This gap is what forms the important basis for conducting in-depth case study-based research. A more comprehensive understanding is needed regarding how the partnership between schools and companies is formed, how the collaboration process is carried out, and what factors influence the sustainability of the relationship. In other words, this study not only seeks to answer 'what' the results of the collaboration are, but also explores 'how' and 'why' the collaboration can proceed effectively.

Faza Azkia Integrated Islamic Private Elementary School (SDS IT) was chosen as the case study location because it demonstrates the practical implementation of collaboration between educational institutions and companies through a sustainable CSR program. This partnership is interesting to study because it can show direct interaction between educational actors and the private sector in a local context, as well as provide a concrete illustration of the implementation of cross-sector collaboration in improving the quality of education. In addition, the characteristics of the school based on Islamic values also provide an additional dimension in understanding how social and spiritual values contribute to building harmonious collaborative relationships.

The existing literature shows a number of limitations that indicate the presence of a research gap. First, the study (Tamimi, Stiawati, & Amiruddin, 2025) it is still focused on the macro level, such as public policy and large-scale partnerships between the government and the private sector. This approach tends to emphasize structural aspects and policy outcomes, while the dynamics of the collaboration process at the micro level, particularly at educational institutions such as schools, still receive little attention. In fact, understanding the process of 'how' and 'why' collaboration occurs is key to determining the success of a partnership.

Second, in the context of the education sector, research (Harini, Ripki, Herlina, Chairunnisa, & Masrum, 2025) regarding CSR involvement, it is still dominated by a normative approach that views CSR as a form of corporate philanthropy, without deeply exploring the strategic interaction between schools and companies within a collaborative framework. This indicates that the integration between the concept of CSR and collaborative governance in educational practice has not been extensively empirically explored.

Third, the study (Rohalia, 2025) regarding collaborative governance, it originates from the context of developed countries, so it less represents the social, cultural, and institutional complexities in developing countries like Indonesia. In fact, the local context plays an important role in shaping the dynamics of collaboration, including matters of trust, leadership, and the distribution of power among actors. Therefore, case-based studies are needed that can provide contextual understanding of the implementation of cross-sector collaboration at the local level.

Fourth, research (Rilci, Nugraha, & Gusmaneli, 2024) also still limited in studying the sustainability aspect of the partnership between schools and companies. Studies focus on short-term outputs, such as facility assistance or educational programs, without examining how the partnership can endure in the long term through mechanisms of trust, commitment, and effective institutional design.

Based on this gap, this study seeks to fill the literature void by presenting an in-depth case study at the Integrated Islamic Private Elementary School (SDS IT) Faza Azkia as a representation of collaborative practice between schools and companies through CSR programs in Indonesia. This study emphasizes qualitative analysis of the collaboration process, by exploring the dynamics of interaction among actors, the initial conditions for the establishment of the partnership, and the factors that influence the sustainability of the collaboration.

The novelty of this research lies in several aspects. First, this study offers a micro-institutional perspective focusing on the school level as the unit of analysis, which has so far received little attention in collaborative governance studies. Second, this research integrates the concepts of CSR and collaborative governance in the

educational context, thereby providing a new conceptual contribution regarding the role of CSR as a collaborative mechanism, not merely a philanthropic activity.

Third, this study provides a contextual contribution by presenting empirical studies from Indonesia as a developing country, enriching the global literature which has so far been dominated by Western contexts. Fourth, this study deeply reveals the mechanisms that build and maintain collaboration, including the role of school leadership, institutional design, as well as the development of trust and commitment among actors. Thus, this study not only provides theoretical contributions to the development of collaborative governance and CSR studies, but also offers practical implications for strengthening cross-sector partnerships in promoting educational equity in Indonesia.

## **B. Methods**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of cross-sector collaboration in promoting educational equity through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partnerships between schools and companies. The qualitative approach is chosen because this study aims to explore the meanings, processes, and social interactions that occur among the actors involved in the collaboration, thus allowing the researcher to obtain a holistic and contextual understanding of the phenomenon being studied. (Creswell, 2024). The case study design is used because this research focuses on a specific case that is studied in depth within the context of real life, namely the practice of CSR partnerships at Faza Azkia Integrated Islamic Private Elementary School (SDS IT).

This research is descriptive qualitative with an intrinsic case study approach, aiming to reveal in detail how the process of forming a partnership between schools and companies occurs, how the dynamics of collaboration unfold, and the factors that influence the sustainability of the relationship (Sugiyono, 2024). The research location was purposively selected at SDS IT Faza Azkia because this school has real experience in establishing partnerships with companies through CSR programs, making it considered representative in illustrating cross-sector collaboration practices in the field of education.

The research subjects consisted of actors directly involved in the CSR partnership, including school principals, teachers, educational staff, company representatives as CSR partners, as well as other relevant parties such as students' parents or the school committee. The selection of informants was carried out using purposive sampling techniques by considering the level of involvement and knowledge of the informants regarding the phenomenon being studied. In addition, snowball sampling techniques were also used to find additional informants who could provide more in-depth and comprehensive information.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and document studies (Arikunto, 2021). Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore the experiences, perceptions, and views of informants regarding the ongoing collaboration process. Observations were carried out to directly observe the interactions and activities occurring in the implementation of the CSR program in the school environment. Meanwhile, documentation studies were conducted by examining various supporting documents, such as activity reports, as well as other archives relevant to the research. The combination of these three techniques allows researchers to obtain rich data and enhance validity through triangulation.

Data analysis is carried out interactively and continuously from the data collection process to drawing conclusions, referring to the model (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2024). The analysis process includes data condensation, data presentation, as well as drawing and verifying conclusions. The obtained data are analyzed using a thematic approach to identify main patterns related to the collaboration process, mechanisms for building trust, and the impact of partnerships on educational equity.

The validity of the data is maintained through source and method triangulation techniques, namely by comparing data from various informants and data collection techniques. In addition, member checks are conducted to ensure the correspondence between the obtained data and the informants' experiences, as well as audit trails to systematically document the entire research process. The researcher also engages in extended involvement in the field to gain a deep understanding of the research context.

In its implementation, this research still pays attention to the principles of research ethics, such as obtaining consent from informants, maintaining the confidentiality of respondents' identities, and ensuring that the data obtained is used only for academic purposes. Thus, this research is expected to produce findings that are valid, credible, and can contribute to the development of studies on cross-sector collaboration in education.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **1. Results**

#### **Initial Conditions That Underlie the Formation of Sustainable CSR Partnerships Between Schools and Companies**

Based on the observations conducted at the Faza Azkia Integrated Islamic Private Elementary School (SDS IT), it was found that the initial conditions underlying the formation of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partnership between the school and the company were closely linked to the socio-economic realities of the students. Most of the students come from families with low to middle economic levels, which

affects their ability to meet educational needs, such as paying school fees, providing learning supplies, and supporting additional academic activities. Nevertheless, the observations show that the students still have high motivation to learn, which is reflected in their active participation in the learning process and involvement in various school activities.

In such a situation, the school faces limitations in internal resources to provide comprehensive support to all students in need. This condition prompts the necessity for external support as an effort to maintain sustainable access to education for students. Based on observations, it is evident that the school has a strong commitment to not let economic constraints become a barrier for students in obtaining a proper education. Therefore, the presence of corporate CSR programs is seen as a strategic solution capable of addressing this need.

Furthermore, the observation results indicate that the initial initiative for forming the partnership came from the company, which actively established communication with the school through formal mechanisms. This process is marked by the submission of CSR programs in the form of official letters, which are then followed up by the school through socialization to teachers and educational staff. In practice, the principal plays the role of a key actor who coordinates the delivery of information and ensures that all elements of the school understand the purpose and benefits of the program.

The initial condition of this partnership was also marked by a match between the school's needs and the company's social vision. Observations showed that the CSR program offered was not general, but specifically targeted educational needs, such as providing scholarships and support for learning facilities. This created a convergence of interests that strengthened the basis of collaboration, so the resulting partnership was not temporary, but had the potential to be sustainable.

In addition, transparency in the initial stages of the collaboration process was also one of the important findings in the observation. The school demonstrated openness in conveying the actual conditions of the students to the company, while the company provided a clear mechanism in the application and selection process of the CSR program. This transparent initial interaction-built trust between both parties, which then became the main foundation in maintaining the sustainability of the partnership. The observation results also align with the findings from the interviews, and the researcher presents the interview findings below.

*Principal: "Most of our students come from families with economic limitations, while the school also has limitations in providing comprehensive assistance, so when a company offers a CSR program through an official letter, we see it as the right solution to maintain the sustainability of students' education."*

*Teacher: "Many students have good academic abilities but face financial constraints, so the presence of scholarship programs from companies greatly helps them to stay motivated and focused on their studies."*

*Educational Staff: "The need for educational assistance has actually existed for a long time, but the limitations of the school make us unable to meet all of it, so the CSR program becomes an important support for students."*

*The Company Party (CSR Partner): "We initiated an educational CSR program by looking for schools that have real needs and strong commitment, and SDS IT Faza Azkia was chosen because it aligns with our goal of helping underprivileged students through a transparent mechanism."*

*Parents of Students: "Scholarships from the CSR program greatly help us in easing school expenses, so that our child can continue education more peacefully."*

Based on the interview results, CSR partnerships were formed due to real needs arising from students' economic limitations and the school's limitations in providing assistance. Corporate initiatives offering CSR programs aligned with these needs create an alignment of interests between both parties. The scholarship programs provided have proven to help students continue their education and ease the burden on parents, thus forming a strong foundation for the establishment of sustainable collaboration.

### **School Institutional and Leadership Design Shapes the Collaboration Process**

Based on the results of observations carried out at the Faza Azkia Integrated Islamic Private Elementary School (SDS IT), it was found that the school's institutional design and leadership play a very significant role in shaping and directing the collaboration process with companies through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. The institutional design implemented at this school demonstrates a structured system, particularly in terms of data management, coordination mechanisms, as well as the implementation of scholarship programs and other supporting activities.

Institutionally, the school has developed a clear mechanism in the process of collecting and managing data of beneficiary students. Observations show that data collection is conducted systematically by following the procedures set by the company, including the use of an online system for data entry. This not only facilitates the administrative process but also improves the accuracy and transparency of the data provided. In addition, there is a fairly clear division of tasks among educational and administrative staff, where teachers play a role in identifying students eligible for assistance, while the school management is responsible for the administrative process and coordination with the company. On

the other hand, the leadership of the principal appears to play a key role in driving and maintaining the continuity of collaboration. Based on observations, the principal not only functions as a decision-maker but also as an active facilitator who bridges communication between the school and the company. The principal routinely coordinates internally with teachers and staff, while also establishing external communication with CSR partners to ensure alignment between the school's needs and the programs offered.

Furthermore, the leadership demonstrated is proactive and responsive to cooperation opportunities. This is evident from the principal's efforts in preparing and submitting proposals for the school's needs to company officials, both related to scholarship programs and the development of facilities and infrastructure. In addition, the principal also plays a role in socializing the CSR program to the entire school community, thereby creating a shared understanding of the goals and benefits of the collaboration.

Observations also indicate that the leadership of the school principal is able to create a collaborative working atmosphere within the school environment. Teachers and education personnel appear to have awareness and shared responsibility in supporting the implementation of the CSR program. This reflects the internalization of strong collaborative values, which not only depend on formal structures but also on the shared commitment among actors within the school organization. The observation results are also in line with the findings from the interviews, which the researcher presents below.

*Principal: "In the implementation of the CSR program, we already have a clear mechanism, starting from student data collection to submission to the company through a predetermined system. I also play a role in coordinating teachers and staff as well as bridging communication with the company so that all the school's needs can be conveyed properly."*

*Teacher: "We as teachers are involved in the process of collecting data on students who are eligible to receive aid, especially based on economic conditions and achievements. After that, the data is handed over to the school to be processed further according to existing procedures."*

*Educational Staff: "Administratively, we follow the system that has been established by the company, including online data entry. With this clear system, our work becomes more focused and minimizes errors in data management."*

*The Company Party (CSR Partner): "We see that this school has a fairly good system in data management and internal coordination. The principal is also active in communicating with us, which makes it easier to adjust the CSR program to the needs of the school."*

Parents of Students: *"We see the school as quite open in conveying information related to the aid program, and the principal also often explains how the process works, so we feel confident and assured that this program is running well."*

From the results of the interviews, it appears that a structured institutional design, such as the presence of a clear data management system and organized task distribution, as well as a school principal's facilitative and proactive leadership, are key factors in shaping an effective collaboration process. The role of the principal as the main liaison among stakeholders, supported by the involvement of teachers and educational staff in operational mechanisms, as well as positive responses from companies and parents, indicates that collaboration is built through clear systems and strong leadership.

### **Mechanisms That Build and Maintain Trust and Commitment Between Partners**

Based on the results of observations conducted at the Faza Azkia Integrated Islamic Private Elementary School (SDS IT), it was found that trust and commitment between the school and companies as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partners are built through a series of mechanisms that are transparent, accountable, and sustainable. Trust is not formed instantly, but rather develops through consistent interactions supported by institutional practices that uphold data integrity and information transparency.

One of the main mechanisms identified is transparency in managing data of student beneficiaries. Observations show that schools systematically collect and present student data based on economic conditions and academic achievements by following procedures established by the company. This process is carried out carefully and can be verified, both through administrative documents and factual conditions in the field. Openness in presenting this data creates confidence for the company that the information provided by the schools is valid and reliable.

In addition, accountability in program implementation also becomes an important factor in building trust. Schools routinely prepare reports related to the distribution of scholarships and the implementation of other CSR programs, which are then submitted to the company as a form of responsibility. Observations show that these reports are not only administrative in nature but also reflect the alignment between the submitted data and on-the-ground implementation. This strengthens the cooperative relationship because the company can monitor the use of assistance clearly and measurably.

An intensive and continuous communication mechanism also becomes an important element in maintaining trust and commitment between partners. Interaction between schools and companies occurs not only at the initial stage of cooperation but continues throughout the program implementation through various

communication media, both formal and informal. Observations show that there is a routine exchange of information, including notifications regarding program implementation, data verification, and follow-up activities. This open communication minimizes the potential for misunderstandings and strengthens a harmonious working relationship.

Furthermore, the commitment between partners is also reflected in the consistency in the implementation of programs. Schools demonstrate earnestness in carrying out each stage of the program in accordance with the agreed provisions, while companies continuously provide support through CSR programs that are relevant to the needs of the schools. Observations show that even though it is not always based on a binding formal contract, the partnership relationship still runs well because it is founded on mutual trust and shared responsibility.

In addition, the cooperative attitude and openness of the school in accepting various CSR programs also become supporting factors in maintaining commitment. The school not only plays the role of an aid recipient but also as an active partner who strives to align internal needs with the programs offered by the company. This creates a reciprocal relationship, where both parties have roles and contributions in maintaining the sustainability of the collaboration. The observation results are also in line with the findings of the interviews; the results of the interview findings are presented by the researcher below.

Principal: *"We always ensure that the data we send to the company truly reflects the conditions of the students in the field, and we also regularly make reports as a form of accountability to maintain the company's trust."*

Teacher: *"In the data collection process, we are very careful to ensure that the information provided is truly accurate, because we realize that the company's trust greatly depends on the data we deliver."*

Educational Staff: *"Every program that runs is always documented and reported according to procedure, so that all processes can be accounted for and do not raise doubts from the company."*

The Company Party (CSR Partner): *"We continue to maintain communication with the school and carry out data verification to ensure that the program runs according to its objectives, so that trust can be built and cooperation can continue."*

Parents of Students: *"We see the school as very open in explaining the aid program and its process, so we believe that this aid is given fairly and truly for students in need."*

The interview results indicate that trust and commitment between partners are built through data transparency, accountability in reporting, continuous communication,

as well as openness of information to all relevant parties. Schools play an active role in maintaining data integrity and program implementation, while companies ensure the continuity of cooperation through verification and regular communication. This creates a collaborative relationship based on mutual trust and long-term commitment.

### **The Impact Felt from This Collaboration on Access and Quality of Education**

Based on the results of observations conducted at the Integrated Islamic Private Elementary School (SDS IT) Faza Azkia, it was found that collaboration between the school and companies through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program has a significant impact on improving access to and the quality of education. This impact is clearly visible both in terms of the sustainability of students' education and in strengthening the learning environment at the school.

From the perspective of access to education, CSR programs in the form of scholarships have been proven to help students from underprivileged families continue their education without significant financial obstacles. Observations show that scholarship recipients can participate in learning activities more consistently, without being disrupted by concerns about school fees. In addition, the existence of this program also reduces the potential for school dropouts, especially for students with economic limitations. The school environment shows better inclusivity, where all students have relatively equal opportunities to access educational services.

Furthermore, from the aspect of education quality, the impact of collaboration is also seen in the increase in students' learning motivation. Observations show that students receiving assistance tend to demonstrate higher enthusiasm in participating in learning, both in the classroom and in other academic activities. They appear more confident and active in participating, which indirectly contributes to improved academic achievement. In some cases, students also have the opportunity to participate in competitive activities, such as academic competitions, because they are no longer burdened by educational costs.

In addition to the impact on students, CSR collaboration also contributes to improving the quality of school facilities and infrastructure. Observations show support from companies in the form of assistance for the construction or repair of school facilities, such as classrooms and other supporting needs. The improvement of these facilities impacts the creation of a more comfortable and conducive learning environment, which ultimately supports a more effective learning process. However, the observation results also identified limitations in the distribution of program benefits, particularly regarding the limited number of scholarship recipients. Not all students in need can receive assistance, so there are still some students who have not fully felt the benefits of the CSR program. This indicates that although the

collaboration has provided significant positive impacts, challenges in the aspect of equity still need to be addressed in the future.

Principal: *"This CSR program is very helpful in maintaining the sustainability of students' education, especially for those who are underprivileged, so that they can continue to attend school without financial obstacles and focus more on learning."*

Teacher: *"After the scholarship was introduced, students appeared more motivated and confident in participating in learning, and some of them were even able to improve their academic achievements."*

Educational Staff: *"Assistance from the company is not only in the form of scholarships, but also school facilities, making the learning environment better and supporting the learning process."*

The Company Party (CSR Partner): *"We see that this program has a positive impact, especially in increasing access to education and encouraging students' enthusiasm for learning, although there are still limitations in the number of beneficiaries."*

Parents of Students: *"With the scholarship assistance, we feel very helped because our child can continue schooling peacefully, and we also see them become more enthusiastic about learning."*

The interview results indicate that CSR collaboration has a real impact on improving access to and quality of education. Scholarships help students overcome financial barriers, while facility support enhances the quality of the learning environment. In addition, there is an increase in students' motivation, self-confidence, and achievements. However, the limited number of aid recipients still remains a challenge in the equitable distribution of program benefits.

## **2. Discussion**

### **Initial Conditions That Underlie the Formation of Sustainable CSR Partnerships Between Schools and Companies**

Research results indicate that the formation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partnerships between schools and companies at SDS IT Faza Azkia is rooted in the socio-economic disparities of students, which impact their limited access to educational services. This finding aligns with various studies that assert that CSR programs in the field of education generally emerge as responses to social inequalities and the need for educational access for underprivileged groups. In this context, CSR is viewed not only as a corporate social responsibility but also as a strategic instrument to promote educational equity.

Furthermore, the high learning motivation of students despite being in limited economic conditions reinforces the finding that non-economic factors, such as aspirations and environmental support, still play an important role in educational success (Pulido-Gómez, Jong, & Rivkin, 2025). However, the limitations of the school's internal resources as found in this study indicate that motivation alone is not enough without structural support. This reinforces the argument that cross-sector collaboration becomes an essential need in bridging the gap between student potential and the availability of resources.

From the perspective of partnership formation, the finding that the initial initiative comes from the company through formal mechanisms indicates a shift in the CSR paradigm from being philanthropic to a more strategic and planned approach (Owoola, et al., 2024). The alignment between school needs and the company's social vision reflects the concept of shared value, where collaboration is built on the basis of mutually beneficial common interests. This is evident from CSR programs that specifically target educational needs, such as scholarships and support for learning facilities, thereby increasing the relevance and effectiveness of the programs.

The role of the principal as a key actor in coordinating the implementation of programs is also in line with (Calancie, et al., 2021) which emphasizes the importance of collaborative leadership in educational partnerships. The principal not only functions as an administrator, but also as a boundary spanner who connects the school's internal interests with external parties. Effective leadership has been proven capable of ensuring that all elements of the school understand the program's objectives and actively participate in its implementation.

In addition, transparency in the early stages of cooperation found in this study strengthens the theory of trust in inter-organizational partnerships. According to (Judijanto, 2025), Transparency and open communication are key factors in building trust and long-term commitment among stakeholders. The school's openness in conveying the condition of students and the clarity of mechanisms from the company create accountable and credible relationships, which become the foundation for the sustainability of the CSR program.

The positive impact of the CSR program in the form of increased access to education, student learning motivation, and alleviation of parents' economic burdens is also consistent with previous research findings by (Knestis, Cheng, Fontaine, & Feng, 2022) which shows that CSR-based interventions in the education sector are able to increase student participation and learning success. The scholarships provided not only function as financial assistance but also as a form of recognition of students' potential, thereby encouraging them to continue achieving. Thus, the findings of this study confirm that effective CSR partnerships are built through the alignment of needs, collaborative leadership, and transparency in implementation. Collaboration between schools and companies not only serves as a short-term solution to address

students' economic limitations but also has the potential to become a sustainable model in efforts to improve the quality and equity of education.

### **School Institutional and Leadership Design Shapes the Collaboration Process**

The discussion of the results of this study shows that institutional design and school leadership are key factors in the successful implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partnerships in the field of education. Findings at SDS IT Faza Azkia indicate that the presence of a structured institutional system, including student data collection mechanisms, task allocation, and coordination procedures, can create effective, transparent, and accountable program governance. This is in line with the view (Ba, Nair, & Kedia, 2024) which emphasizes that school organizations that have institutional coherence and clear working systems will be more capable of managing external collaboration productively.

More specifically, the practice of data collection based on online systems and procedures that follow company standards indicates the adoption of modern governance principles in the management of educational programs. This finding is consistent with research (Fadhli, Prasetyo, Siregar, Pasaribu, & Sari, 2024) which states that the success of CSR programs in the education sector is largely determined by the institutional capacity of education partners in managing data, coordinating actors, and ensuring program accountability. Thus, a strong institutional design not only functions as an administrative tool but also as a strategic instrument in building trust between schools and companies. On the other hand, the role of the principal as a collaborative leader becomes a central element in driving the entire partnership process. Research results show that the principal not only acts as a decision-maker, but also as a facilitator, mediator, and boundary spanner between the school and the company. These findings are in line with the concept of collaborative leadership proposed by (Siahaan, Akmalia, Ray, Sembiring, & Yunita, 2023), where the success of collaboration is greatly influenced by the leader's ability to build communication, trust, and commitment among parties.

Furthermore, the leadership character that is proactive and responsive to cooperation opportunities as found in this study strengthens the argument (Cohen & Eyal, 2021) about the importance of a strategic approach in building partnerships based on shared value. The principal does not just wait for initiatives from external parties, but also actively identifies the school's needs and proposes them to CSR partners through well-planned proposals. This shows that effective leadership is able to direct collaboration to be more relevant to the real needs of the organization.

In addition, the findings regarding the creation of a collaborative work atmosphere in the school environment indicate the internalization of collective values among teachers and educational staff. This condition aligns with research (Djafri & Mujahidin, 2025) Regarding distributed leadership, which emphasizes that

leadership is not only centered on one individual but is distributed through the active involvement of various actors within the organization. The involvement of teachers in the process of identifying student beneficiaries as well as the role of educational staff in managing administration reflects the presence of internal synergy that strengthens the effectiveness of CSR program implementation.

From the perspective of inter-organizational partnerships, transparency in data management systems and intensive communication between school principals and company parties are also important factors in building trust. This is in line with the findings (Liu, et al., 2025) which states that clarity of procedures, accountability, and open communication are the main pillars of collaborative governance. The trust that is built is felt not only by the company, but also by the parents of the students, which ultimately strengthens the legitimacy of the CSR program in the school environment. Thus, the results of this study confirm that the success of CSR partnerships at SDS IT Faza Azkia is inseparable from the synergy between structured institutional design and the collaborative leadership of the school principal. Both complement each other in creating an effective, responsive, and sustainable system. These findings reinforce the literature which states that cross-sector collaboration in education will run optimally if supported by adequate organizational capacity and leadership that is able to strategically integrate various interests.

### **Mechanisms That Build and Maintain Trust and Commitment Between Partners**

The discussion of the research results shows that trust and commitment are the main foundations for the success of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partnerships between schools and companies. Findings at SDS IT Faza Azkia indicate that trust is not formed instantly, but rather through a process of continuous interaction, information transparency, and accountability in program implementation. This is in line with the view (Kolleck, 2021) which emphasizes that effective partnership relationships are built on the basis of trust and commitment that develop through consistent communication and reliable behavior.

Transparency in managing student data has become one of the main mechanisms in building trust. Research results show that schools present data systematically, accurately, and verifiably, both through administrative documents and actual conditions in the field. These findings are consistent with research (Mosley, 2021) which states that organizational transparency plays an important role in enhancing credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders. In this context, data openness not only functions as an administrative tool but also as a strategic instrument to build the company's confidence in the school's integrity.

Furthermore, accountability in CSR program reporting strengthens trust relationships among partners. Schools routinely prepare reports that are not only administrative in nature but also reflect the alignment between planning and

implementation in the field. This is in line with the findings (Heatly, Nichols-Hadeed, Stiles, & Alpert-Gillis, 2023) which emphasizes that accountability is a key element in maintaining the sustainability of partnerships, especially in social programs involving various parties. With clear and measurable reporting, companies have a strong basis to evaluate the effectiveness of programs as well as ensure that the assistance provided is targeted appropriately. On the other hand, intensive and continuous communication between schools and companies also becomes an important factor in strengthening trust and commitment. Research results show the existence of routine interactions that include information exchange, data verification, as well as program follow-ups. These findings are in line with (Egede, Ozieh, Campbell, Williams, & Walker, 2022), where open and continuous communication becomes the main prerequisite in building a stable and effective collaborative relationship. Good communication can minimize potential conflicts and increase the alignment of goals between parties.

Furthermore, commitment in the partnership is reflected in the consistency of both parties in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. The school demonstrates seriousness in managing the program according to procedures, while the company continuously provides support through relevant CSR programs. This condition strengthens the argument (Parris & Broussard, 2021) that trust will develop when each party demonstrates competence, integrity, and goodwill (benevolence) in a cooperative relationship. In fact, in situations where relationships are not always based on strict formal contracts, trust and commitment can become the main bonds of partnership sustainability.

In addition, the cooperative attitude and openness of the school in accepting and adjusting CSR programs also reflect the existence of a reciprocal relationship between the two parties. This is in line with research (Lee, 2024) which states that successful cross-sector partnerships are marked by active contributions from each party as well as the ability to adjust to each other's needs and resources. In the context of this research, schools not only serve as beneficiaries but also as strategic partners who help determine the direction and success of the program. Thus, the results of this study confirm that trust and commitment in CSR partnerships are built through the integration of data transparency, reporting accountability, continuous communication, and cooperative attitudes among actors. These four aspects reinforce each other in creating collaborative relationships that are not only effective in the short term but also sustainable in the long term. These findings enrich the literature on educational collaboration by showing that relational dimensions are equally important as structural aspects in determining the success of cross-sector partnerships.

## **The Impact Felt from This Collaboration on Access and Quality of Education**

The discussion of the research results shows that collaboration between schools and companies through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs provides a tangible contribution to improving access to and the quality of education. Findings at SDS IT Faza Azkia indicate that CSR interventions, particularly in the form of scholarships and facility support, are able to address fundamental issues related to disparities in access to education due to economic factors. This is in line with research (Klein, 2022) which emphasizes that CSR programs in the education sector play a significant role in increasing school participation, especially for students from vulnerable groups.

From the aspect of access to education, the provision of scholarships has been proven to reduce financial barriers, which are often the main cause of school dropouts. This finding is consistent with (Tiruwa & Dikshit, 2025) which states that financial support such as scholarships is an effective strategy in increasing educational sustainability and preventing dropout. In the context of this research, beneficiaries can participate in the learning process more consistently and without economic pressure, thereby creating a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

Furthermore, the increase in students' learning motivation as a result of the CSR program also strengthens the findings of previous research, one of which is the research by (Asatryan, 2024) stating that external support that provides economic security can increase student engagement in the learning process. Observations at SDS IT Faza Azkia show that scholarship recipients become more active, confident, and have a higher enthusiasm for learning. This condition indirectly contributes to the improvement of academic achievement, as also found in the study (Olaboye, Maha, Kolawole, & Abdul, 2024) which highlights the relationship between economic stability and students' learning achievements.

In addition, CSR contributions to the improvement of school facilities and infrastructure show that cross-sector collaboration not only impacts individual students but also the overall learning system. These findings are in line with (Abdul, Adeghe, Adegoke, Adegoke, & Udedeh, 2024) which emphasizes that partnerships between the education sector and external parties can strengthen institutional capacity through the provision of additional resources. The improvement of learning facilities at SDS IT Faza Azkia creates a more conducive environment, which ultimately supports the effectiveness of the learning process. However, the limitation in the equitable distribution of program benefits becomes an important finding that needs attention. Although positive impacts have been felt, the limited number of scholarship recipients means that not all students in need can be accommodated. This is in line with (Abidah, et al., 2024) In the CSR literature, it is stated that corporate social programs often face challenges in the scale and distribution of

benefits. Therefore, a more comprehensive strategy is needed to expand the reach of programs so that the benefits can be felt more evenly.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that CSR collaboration between schools and companies plays a strategic role in improving access to and the quality of education through financial support, increased learning motivation, and the strengthening of educational facilities. However, the sustainability and effectiveness of the program strongly depend on the stakeholders' ability to address equity challenges, so that the goals of educational justice can be achieved more optimally.

#### **D. Conclusions**

The CSR partnership between schools and companies was formed due to real needs arising from students' economic limitations and school resources, as well as being supported by company initiatives. The collaboration runs effectively through a structured institutional design, proactive school leadership, and mechanisms of transparency, accountability, and continuous communication. The impact is seen in increased access to education, student motivation, achievements, and the quality of facilities, although the equitable distribution of benefits remains a challenge. This study shows that cross-sector collaboration through CSR can be an effective strategy in promoting educational equity. Schools need to strengthen institutional systems and collaborative leadership, while companies can optimize the role of CSR not only as aid but as a sustainable strategic partnership. This research is limited to a single case study, so the results cannot yet be generalized widely. In addition, the study focuses more on qualitative perspectives without quantitative data to measure the impact more objectively. Future research is recommended to involve more locations or comparisons between schools, as well as to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches. Furthermore, strategies for equitable distribution of CSR benefits need to be studied further so that their impact can be felt more broadly by all students.

#### **E. Acknowledgement**

The authors express the utmost gratitude to the principal, the teachers, and the partner company for their support and willingness to provide valuable information during the research process at Faza Azkia Integrated Islamic Private Elementary School. Appreciation is also extended to the State Islamic University of North Sumatra for the academic support that has enabled this research to be completed successfully.

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