

## Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Effect on Teaching and Learning: Evidence from an Emerging Economy

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### Abstract

This study examined the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the effect of CSR initiatives on teaching and learning from teachers, students, and heads' perspectives. The study relied on in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions to obtain data. The participating schools were selected through a stratified sampling technique, with the individual respondents purposively sampled. Interviews and discussions were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed, sorted to identify central and recurrent themes in the data. The study showed that corporate bodies have contributed immensely to the teaching and learning processes through improved school infrastructural facilities. It also found that CSR activities have enhanced teaching and learning processes. Thus, resulting in improved quality of teaching delivery, students' academic performance and beneficiary schools' societal status. The findings, however, focused mainly on the perspectives of teachers, students, and heads of schools. The findings are expected to maximize the effective deployment of CSR resources in education service and infrastructure provision in less-developed countries. The results are expected to engender further debate among corporations and other relevant stakeholders on the need for concerted efforts in tackling the school infrastructure deficit prevalent in less-developed nations. This study is one of its kinds on the effect of CSR initiatives on teaching and learning from direct beneficiaries' perspectives within the African context. This study also provides evidence of the need for a deliberate effort to encourage private-sector investment in school infrastructure.

**Keywords:** *Corporate Social Responsibility, Education financing, Emerging Economy, Teaching and Learning*

### 1. Introduction

Education is a crucial determinant of a country's level of development. According to Setó-Pamies and Papaoikonomou (2020), business leaders and

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educators are influential in the thinking and behaviour of future generations. The United Nations (UN) places education at the heart of sustainable development strategy (Sustainable Development Goals, 2017). Also, education is perceived as a vital indicator of a country's level of development (Bello et al. 2017; Setó-Pamies & Papaoikonomou, 2020). Globally, access to quality educational facilities and opportunities is a giant step towards developing individuals' well-being, translating into communities and national development. Without the universal adoption of a shared collection of standards and a minimum level of literacy and knowledge for most people, prosperous and democratic societies are unlikely. It is argued that the benefits of a child's education accrue not only to the child and his guardians but also to other members of society (Anyanwu, 1992). For example, education can contribute to the stability of community members through decent job creation and equality in development by removing differences that generally exist in terms of social classes and genders.

However, providing quality basic educational facilities to the citizenry has been a global challenge, especially in emerging economies, such as Ghana. In Ghana, successive governments have demonstrated a legitimate interest in expanding the opportunities for young men and women to obtain formal, vocational, and technical education in diverse ways. Yet methods adopted, including subsidizing schooling and free primary education at government-run institutions, are largely ineffective. According to Abdul-Rahaman et al. (2018), attempts by the government of Ghana to solder everything about education in state-run schools without carefully thinking through the issues at stake account for challenges that impede effective teaching and learning. Key among the challenges in rural Ghana is over-reliance on dilapidated buildings or under-trees as classrooms (Achanso, 2013). Given that prior facilities were such unattractive learning environments, it is unsurprising that children of school going-age do roam the streets of town and villages (Setó-Pamies and Papaoikonomou 2020); instead of being in classrooms.

Consequently, many development partners and corporations have stepped in to support the educational sector in part of Africa (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018). According to Bello and Othman (2020), it helps to stimulate academic performance. However, Abdul-Rahaman et al. (2018) finding suggests that partners often capitalize on the resources provision to seek self-publicity, enhance their network and political alliance, expand legitimacy, and increase their reputation among the general public. A conventional understanding of the company assumes that its shareholders are its main, if not sole, liability. On the other hand, CSR allows companies to have a holistic perspective of their obligations, covering not just stockholders but including staff, vendors,

consumers, the local population, states, and conservation organizations. These different individuals impacted by an organization's decisions are collectively referred to as "stakeholders" (Carroll & Buchholtz 2003). A later segment delves into the stakeholder theory as the underpinning theory of this study.

Different meanings have been ascribed to the concept of CSR by different authors and practitioners. However, according to school stakeholders (teachers, students, and heads of schools), the idea of CSR has not been considered in CSR studies, even though schools are among the leading beneficiaries of CSR programs in many communities worldwide. Andin et al. (2022) situate teachers as the front-line implementers of any education policy affecting teaching and learning processes in classrooms. They considered teachers as the real vehicle for policy implementation because they are closer to the students and much more aware of the needs of these students. One of the objectives of this study, therefore, is to find out how teachers, students, and school heads (being the direct beneficiaries of corporate support of school communities) understand the concept of CSR. New knowledge about the concept of CSR from teachers, students, and school heads' perspectives will add to the existing literature on the CSR concept. For example, Achanso (2013), in his evaluation of the impact of donor support on Ghana's Basic Education sector reforms, found that teachers' commitment to the reforms has been weak due to their exclusion in the planning process. In the same way, students, teachers, and heads of schools have become key participants in the education sector of Ghana by being the direct consumers/beneficiaries of millions of dollars injected by various governments and corporate institutions in the country's educational sector. Yet policymakers often ignore these students, teachers, and school heads in their investment decisions.

Also, the extent to which CSR direct initiatives affect teaching and learning processes from the perspective of teachers, students, and the head of schools, as crucial stakeholders, are yet to receive much scholarly attention. So, this study also intends to fill in this gap in research by assessing the effect of CSR investments on teaching and learning processes in schools in Ghana from the perspective of teachers, students, and heads of schools. Therefore, allowing the school stakeholders to express their views on CSR activities will encourage their participation in CSR activities and help maximize the allocation of scarce educational resources. Their perspective is important because they are the direct beneficiaries. Their input into the discussion of CSR in the education sector will help inform the policy processes required to overcome shortfalls in education service and infrastructure provision in emerging countries. Their participation is also expected to bring out the real needs of the schools and thereby help central

governments and private sector corporations effectively channel their investment efforts to solving teaching and learning needs (Lee, 2008).

Ghana is considered most suitable for this study because it is an emerging economy where corporations and other development partners inject millions of United States Dollars into the educational sector annually. In addition, just like most of its counterparts, there has been extensive pressure on Ghana's education sector infrastructure since the abolition of school fees at the primary school levels and coupled with the introduction of the free senior high school policy. As expected, these circumstances have increased student enrollment nationwide, putting undue pressure on school infrastructure as the government alone cannot provide to all schools. With these characteristics, the research findings on Ghana's experience are expected to be useful to other countries (Perry et al., 2018).

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out how teachers, students and school heads understand the concept of CSR
2. To assess the effects of CSR initiatives on teaching and learning from the perspective of teachers, students and school heads

### **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What is the concept of CSR according to teachers, students and school heads?
2. What are the effects of CSR initiatives on teaching and learning according to the view point of teachers, students and school heads?

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The study is significant because its findings will guide policy processes required to overcome shortfalls in education service and infrastructure provision in less developed countries. It also engenders further debate among corporations and other relevant stakeholders on the need for concerted efforts in tackling the school infrastructure deficit prevalent in less-developed economies. Likewise, it increases users' awareness of CSR initiatives' role in the teaching and learning process in schools. Finally, the findings will guide corporations on CSR policy formulations regarding investments in societies and add to empirical knowledge on CSR interventions and their impact on effective teaching and learning.

## **2. Literature Review**

CSR is a dynamic and contestable concept rooted in each business's social, economic, political, and other operating environments, which can affect the attainment of a firm's core objective. The concept has been defined variously by different authors and practitioners. It is characterized as the "economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary demands that society has of organisations at any given

time" (Carroll & Buchholtz 2003, p. 36). The four-part concept of CSR by Carroll and Buchholtz emphasizes the multifaceted essence of social responsibility. In summary, Carroll and Buchholtz (2003) demand that business organisations must not overemphasize profit motive, but also consider the social well-being of the people within the operating environment. In other words, companies must do more than mere compliance with legislative provisions.

Nehru (2016) also perceives CSR as a "Continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large". Nehru's (2016) and Okoe and Renner's (2019) definitions emphasized the need for corporations to consider all stakeholders and not to concentrate on only the shareholders' needs in achieving corporate objectives. However, none of the preceding definitions touched on the concept of CSR from the perspective of teachers, students, and heads of schools, as direct beneficiaries of CSR programs to schools, despite being pivotal to helping countries attain the UN sustainable development goals.

Various corporate entities now offer CSR projects and programs to schools. Some of the initiatives are intended to help kids learn how to use computers, promote gender parity in schools, especially in rural areas, maintain a clean learning environment, support students with disabilities, provide food to students, organize workshops for teacher training, provide scholarships, school facilities, and other social amenities (Idemudia, 2007). Corporate organizations start programs and projects to assist in educating recent graduates and preparing them for the workforce. They achieve this by creating an effective curriculum that is rich in material and covers every facet of real-world industry work (Cushla & Hay 2009). These training and mentoring programs are beneficial, especially now that everyone acknowledges its impact. The young people have a variety of practical skills, including marketing, communication, and administration. For instance, the networking equipment supplier Cisco has established more than 10,000 networking academies in 165 nations (Camilleri, 2016). 4.75 million people have taken part in training that increases their likelihood of finding work as network administrators.

The literature that is currently available also indicates that businesses start CSR initiatives geared toward teachers' skill development. The purpose of in-service training programs is to provide teachers with knowledge of instructional strategies, lesson planning and delivery, and the creation and improvisation of teaching and learning materials (Weller & Dillon, 1999). When teachers receive training, their level of classroom presentation rises, resulting in positive interactions with their students that ultimately improve students'

academic performance.

Organizations also freely donate school buildings and science labs, fences, football fields, school canteens, dining halls, vehicles, and other sporting equipment to schools to increase access to education, particularly in underprivileged areas. Corporations are constructing engineering, health training, and vocational/technical schools for the communities where they operate. The majority of the initiatives are provided to the communities for free or at very low cost (Nelson, 2003).

The research is anchored on the stakeholder theory. This theory emphasizes the interconnected relationships between corporations and their vendors, workers, customers, societies, and other parties interested in the organisation (Freedman & Velamuri, 2006; Estaswara, 2020). The theory argues that a company should generate value for all stakeholders, not just shareholders. The theory further argued that the extent to which a stakeholder actively partakes in executing a CSR programme is influenced by their perceived benefits (Estaswara, 2020). Stakeholder theory is most suitable and applicable here because, if effectively applied can help governments and other resource providers optimize the relationship between themselves and other stakeholders (including students, teachers, and head teachers/headmistresses) affected in one way or the other by their decisions. The stakeholder theory, thus, offers an opportunity for the integration of school demands, the reasons for CSR investment in schools, and the attainment of the expected outcome.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The researchers adopted the qualitative research design to gain a thorough insight into the impact of CSR initiatives on teaching and learning in Ghana. The exploratory approach enabled researchers to obtain the respondents' views, emotions, and feelings while maintaining a strategic distance from the researchers' predetermined assumptions (Prasad, 2005).

#### **3.2 Population and Sampling**

Names of all schools (Primary, Junior High, and Secondary) in Ghana that benefited from the CSR interventions were obtained from related online databases and companies' annual reports. These schools were grouped under their pre-existing clusters (Northern, Central, and Southern). Two schools were randomly picked from each of the three clusters. A statistically non-representative stratified sampling technique is recommended for this type of study (Trost, 1986). At the school level, individual interviewees (similar to Tabak et al., 2020) were chosen purposively from each stratum (teachers, students, and school heads); this ensured that participants with relevant knowledge were

engaged. This conforms to Swanson and Holton's (2005) views, that individuals are complex and different, and may understand and experience the same objective reality differently.

In all, three groups of respondents were selected from each school, namely teachers, students, and heads of schools. For each school, six students, ten teachers, and the head of the school were selected. In total 36 students were interviewed; 60 teachers took part in the Focus group discussions in the 6 schools and 6 headmasters from the 6 schools. Teachers with at least basic knowledge of CSR programmes were selected to participate in the group discussions. The selected teachers had ages ranging from 24 to 50, with work experience of between 3 to 25 years in the education sector, and each of them had a minimum educational qualification of a first degree. However, all head teachers from selected schools were automatic participants, and by being school administrators, they were most likely to have firsthand information about the CSR projects being executed in their respective schools. The justification for choosing the students to be part of the study was because the students are the direct beneficiaries of any CSR initiative that comes to the schools and so it is important to know what they think about the concept of CSR and how the CSR initiatives in their schools is affecting them positively or otherwise in their learning processes.

Also, only companies whose CSR programs were tailored toward teaching and learning were chosen. Many corporations are funding education as part of their cooperate responsibilities in Ghanaian communities. They promote ICT education by investing heavily in ICT training activities, built libraries for deprived schools, provides six-unit classroom blocks with ancillary facilities to deprived communities across Ghana, supports other schools that lack science laboratory equipment to own some to help in practical lesson delivery, fence walls, canteens and dining halls, football pitches, and books.

### **3.3 Instrumentation**

An interview guide was developed with separate questions for students and the headmasters. FGD and face-to-face interviews are considered most appropriate because it addresses questions on whom and the number of participants to interview, the type of interview to conduct, and the nature of the analysis to perform (Qu & Dumay 2011). The semi-structured interview procedure adopted has been justified by researchers (Swanson & Holton, 2005) as suitable "to fulfill the hope of qualitative research: to see things that others may not see and help to show the world what you see" (p.262). It further enables the triangulation of multiple data from varied participants; thus, enhancing the credibility of research findings (Creswell, 2014). Open-ended Questions in the FGD were mainly concerned with the effects of CSR programs and initiatives on



teaching and learning in schools.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

The students and heads of schools were interviewed, whilst the teachers' opinions were ascertained through Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Preliminary reviews by the researchers showed that the students had minimal knowledge of the topic whilst the school heads, on the other hand, had limited time to spend with the interviewers. Given that the teachers had both time and in-depth knowledge to engage in detailed discussion on the topic compared to school children and heads of schools, the study adopted FGD to ascertain a deeper understanding of the issues regarding the CSR programme from teachers. The FGD lasted for around 1 hour and 10 minutes and created the opportunity for interaction among respondents, as they relied upon the remarks, discernments, perspectives, suppositions, and thoughts of individuals to add their views to the discourse.

However, interviews with students and school heads lasted between 10-30 minutes. The approach enabled the researchers to gather point-by-point data about the attitudes and conduct of the respondents toward this specific topic. Permission and individual consent to partake in the study were obtained and ethical principles of anonymity and confidentiality were strictly followed (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

## **4. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Data gathered from the participants were tape-recorded with their consent and subsequently transcribed. Finally, the data were micro-analysed to reveal recurring themes emerging from the interviews and discussions (Creswell, 2014). Five thematic areas relevant to the research objectives were identified and discussed in the subsequent section. The following sections detail the effects of such corporate interventions on teaching and learning.

### **4.1 CSR according to School Stakeholders (Teachers/Students/Heads of schools)**

This section tries to unravel the viewpoint of participants on the CSR concept. The research participants' understanding of the CSR concept appears varied. Whilst some of them perceived the assistance as a moral obligation due to the educational communities within which they operate, others considered sustenance from corporations as acts of generosity undertaken upon making huge profits for their communities. One of the teachers explained the concept of CSR as:

Where a corporate organization declaring profits used part of it to support the society in which it operates. So, if we are the people that a business



used to make its profits, and we need things like education, and health, the business should come back to us and give part of the profits to us so that we will also build loyalty to the corporation.

Closely related to this respondent's view on the CSR concept is that of another teacher; the teacher states that:

As a corporate organization, I think they fall on us, the individuals in the society, to make their profits, and so at the end of the day, they have to come to our aid by giving us our needs such as health needs, educational needs, and whatever. So, in this case, if you want to grow as a corporate organisation, in my view as a teacher, you have to come back to the people through whom you are making your profits to assist them with their basic needs so that trust and loyalty can still grow between you and the society.

A headmaster of a school also has this to say on what he thinks CSR is:

Well, when we talk of CSR simply, we are referring to initiatives that organizations undertake out of their profits or whatever in a way that they can give back to society. It could be in the form of items or anything that they can give back to society as a way of appreciating you for being there with them.

Unlike the teachers and the heads, the students have different views about what CSR means. One student defined CSR as: *"CSR means when a company comes and builds schools, digs boreholes for us, and gives us books, pens, and uniforms that help us to learn very well."*

Another student states:

*"CSR is a situation where businesses like MTN, AirtelTigo build schools to support the society so that the children can get a quality education."*

The school stakeholders' understating of CSR varies from that of

corporations and governments. Whilst corporations and governments perceive CSR activities as a form of assistance to persons within the operating environment (Okoe & Renner 2019), the school stakeholders considered CSR acts as a “right” to the share of profits made within the operating environment. An exciting deduction is that individuals' understating and explanation of the CSR concept are largely influenced by the benefits they gain as stakeholders. Therefore, confirming Freeman and Velamuri's (2006) view on the stakeholder theory; that stakeholders always have endless memories of the gift they gain from an activity. Thus, corporate bodies must target value creation to bring synergetic gains to all relevant stakeholders.

#### **4.2 Type of CSR initiatives and Effect on Teaching and Learning Classroom Blocks**

The analysis of the transcribed data also showed that the construction of classroom blocks is the major project undertaken in schools by corporate bodies as part of their CSR initiatives. There was a clear need for external support in many schools, as narrated by the stakeholders during the in-depth interviews and FGDs. Before receiving corporate support, teaching and learning in most schools were often interrupted and halted by rainfalls and bad weather due to the lack of classrooms which affected the contact hours spent in the schools. However, after the intervention, there are no such disruptions. Thereby, improving the student's academic performance. The provision of infrastructure provided space to accommodate more students who, before the interventions, either had to sit under trees or was combined in one classroom. A teacher states:

We used to miss contact hours whenever it rained, but with the intervention, all contact hours are being utilized. The intervention has brought about effective teaching and learning, which has led to the satisfaction of all stakeholders in the school.

Class sizes were also too large that teaching and learning were not productive, which adversely affected the schools' academic performance. The preceding observations, among other findings, resonate with the previous conclusions (Achanso, 2013) that most less-developed nations organize classes in dilapidated buildings or under trees. Hence, the need to resource the deprived schools with befitting teaching and learning environments. These words by a respondent were captured aptly during the FGD:

We used not to have enough classrooms for our students. We used to merge classes, and some were sitting under trees and some temporal structures, still, with the provision of well-constructed classroom blocks by corporate organisations, we are now able to put the children in their various classes, and they have enough space and ventilation for teaching and learning to take place.

In addition, teachers have difficulty handling large class sizes and marking students' classwork. A teacher expressed the problem they faced with large class sizes before they received the intervention in the following statement:

I remember last year we used to manage 60 students in a class, and it was difficult for us, the teachers, to even control the class. You can imagine if you give exercise to 60 students in a class and you have about 2 to 4 classes, it will take you several weeks to mark and so the assessment was very inefficient. Class sizes have been reduced now to 30 students per class after we got additional classrooms, and assessment is much easier and more effective. We have seen tremendous improvement in teacher-learner interactions and school development.

Conclusively, more classrooms were constructed through CSR initiatives; allowing for additional teachers to be recruited to augment the efforts of existing staff. Besides, the student-teacher contact hours, which were hitherto lost anytime it rained, are now circumvented. Thus, effectively increasing the productivity of both teachers and students. This result supports the conclusions of other scholars (Bello et al., 2017) that corporate interventions in schools and, for that matter, the education sector brings about improvement in teaching and learning, thereby enhancing the government's chances of contributing to the attainment of SDG 4 by 2030.

### **4.3 Information Communication Technology (ICT) Equipment and Skill Training**

The research discovered that corporations in Ghana have been complementing the government's effort in providing ICT facilities to schools in dire need. It was found that subject instructors receive training in computer usage and applications, and they subsequently impart the knowledge acquired to the students. This has, in a way, contributed to bridging the digital gap and supplements the overall development objectives of the nation, consistent with the recommendations of earlier researchers (Achanso, 2013; Bello et al., 2017; Sustainable Development Goals, 2017; Setó-Pamies & Papaoikonomou, 2020).

It was established that before corporate support, some schools had no computers for teaching and learning ICT as a subject in the educational curriculum. The subject was being taught in the abstract without the students having the opportunity to see and touch computers, thus; making the teaching and learning of the subject uninspiring. Computers donated to schools through CSR interventions not only meaningfully enhance the study of ICT, but improve the student's academic accomplishments.

A headmaster asserted that *“After the donation, all the students scored excellent grades in ICT examinations, which was not the case before. With this, I can confidently say that the performance has improved”*.

A teacher corroborated the headmaster's assertion by stating:

“At first, we used to have few passes in the school, especially in practical ICT examinations. However, now we have excellent passes in ICT examinations” (Teacher).

Clearly, the feelings expressed by teachers concerning the periods before the private sector intervention show that there was a need for such interventions in schools. However, as stakeholder theory demands, corporations do need to conduct an assessment to identify the pressing needs of the stakeholder to best assist in resolving those challenges (Estaswara, 2020). The study indicated that by interviewing the school teachers, children and heads, IPMC established that the equipment was essential for their research and that parents in the beneficiary communities could not afford computers, an approach fully endorsed by the stakeholder theory for optimizing the use of productive resources. Many respondents confirmed massive improvement in students' academic performance in ICT examinations upon using ICT equipment supplied through the CSR initiative. This finding is in line with IPMC's reason for injecting funding into the education sector (Gaur, 2021). Apart from increasing the pass rate in ICT

courses occasioned by CSR interventions, the practical training acquired by students can enhance their employable skills, a means to achieve SDG 1 and 8 by 2030.

#### **4.4 Provision of Library and Educational Materials**

Many corporate bodies also provide library and educational materials as part of their CSR activities to students and pupils to aid them in learning. The paper found enhancement in student contact hours, ICT skills, availability of better teaching and learning materials, and better teacher-learner interactions resulting in better-quality education in all schools that benefited from the CSR interventions. In one instance, a participant, whose views are similar to most of the respondents in the FGD states that:

Almost all of our students can read and write now because we now have a library complex, which was not the case before the project. Before this intervention, only a few of the entire student population could read and write. This is due to the improvement in the teaching and learning processes because of the teaching and learning materials we were given.

Additionally, the library facilities were sad to inculcate reading interest in the students, which translates into exemplary academic achievements. Consequently, confirming the positive effect of Joy FM and Vodafone Ghana Ltd interventions on improving students' reading skills.

#### **4.5 Teacher Professional Development Programmes**

The study's outcome also suggests that corporations through CSR programs have enhanced teachers' professional skill development. In-service training programmes are organized to equip teachers with current teaching methodologies, lesson preparations, and delivery. Teachers are further trained in preparing and improvising teaching and learning materials. It was established that the skill development programmes offered to teachers are on-the-job and practically oriented to augment the knowledge acquired at the universities. Many of the teachers in the FGD confirmed benefiting from on-the-job training and skills development programs organized by the corporate bodies. All the beneficiary schools attested to massive improvement in both academic and academic achievement and core-curricular activities. A teacher asserted: *“This year WASSCE, we saw a gross improvement recording over 98% passes which shows that all these interventions coming on board have impacted the school a*

*lot.”*

Another participant revealed that:

Even though primary schools don't take part in external exams like BECE, we have internal assessments that we use to determine performance, such as end-of-term exams, class exercises, homework, etc. We, the teachers, are also trained by NGOs and companies. Before this project, just a few of our pupils got the required pass marks in the various courses that we teach, but now that they have comfortable classrooms to sit in and learn, all of them get passed in all subjects, and we keep recording improvement day-in-day-out.

The number of students who got passing grades in the examination shows that the CSR interventions positively impacted the school. The result confirms the assertion (Bello & Othman, 2020) that corporate involvement in the education sector stimulates better academic performance due to improving teaching and learning activities.

#### **4.6 Enhanced School Image and Corporate Image**

The study also found that CSR initiatives enhance the image of both the beneficiary and the resource provider. Given that students' accomplishment in both educational and extra-curricular activities such as sports continues to increase, the general expectation is that the image of those schools will rise. All respondents generally agreed with this. A respondent remarked that:

When you look at our performance in the exams, sports, and other activities, it has attracted a lot of people to our school, and our school image has gone high and respected by everyone in society and beyond, and this is the result of the CSR interventions we received.

Some respondents could not hide their joy in narrating how their schools had a facelift in infrastructure development and the positive influence on their teaching and learning environments. Also, the respondents were quick to mention the names of corporate institutions that rescued them from the pre-existing plights. It was also found that corporate investors in school activities had their names imprinted on the facilities that were provided to various schools.

Therefore, there appears to be a win-win situation for firms investing in CSR activities in Ghana's educational sector and the actual recipients of these investments.

### **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

Quality education is an essential prerequisite for attaining sustainable development goals in every country. Yet, financing has been the main barrier between governments and realising this objective, especially in less-developed countries. Luckily, through CSR initiatives, many corporate bodies are supporting schools across Ghana in diverse ways. But how this support has impacted teaching and learning, from the perspective of the direct beneficiaries, namely the students, teachers, and school heads, has been examined by this study. As its core objective, the research relied on interviews and FGD to obtain the relevant data from the participants.

The results showed that teachers, students/pupils, and heads of schools perceive the concept of CSR as different from that of corporations and the government. Moreover, as direct beneficiaries of corporate investments, teachers, students, and head teachers have divergent opinions on the motive behind donations received from corporate institutions. While some participants consider CSR activities complementary to the government's effort, others deem that as a source of atonement for the externalities inflicted on their communities. Thus, effectively confirming earlier research conclusions (Nehru 2016; Okoe & Renner 2019); stakeholders perceived CSR activities differently, and for that reason, businesses must endeavour to extend commitment beyond profits maximization for owners to satisficing communities within operating environs.

The research also showed that corporations are contributing immensely to teaching and learning processes through improved school infrastructural facilities such as classroom blocks, libraries, and improved ICT equipment. The study also indicated that infrastructure provided through CSR initiatives could be a catalyst to achieving target academic performance and improving beneficiary schools' image among other variables.

The study further showed that corporate support of schools fits nicely into the national agenda of reducing illiteracy and achieving universal education for all citizens in the country in the long run. It creates better opportunities for children of school-going age to have access to education, as expanded and conducive learning environments help shape them into responsible citizens.

The paper concludes that assistance from corporate investment in the educational sector could be maximized through close collaboration between resource providers (governments and private sector investors) and the actual recipients of the investments (teachers, students, and head teachers/headmistresses) in line



with the stakeholder theory.

## 6. Recommendations

This study has following practical implications;

1. CSR initiatives in the education sector could be catalysts for achieving SDGs in less-developed countries. The research calls for close collaboration among education sector stakeholders, consistent with the stakeholders' theory, to identify where and how to channel scarce resources earmarked for the sector.
2. The study demands that policymakers appreciate the role of private sector organisations and CSR beneficiaries in shaping countries' education systems. Full acceptance of this can ensure a win-win situation for all national governments, corporations, and actual recipients.
3. Companies' directors must appreciate the fact that their obligations and commitments extend beyond share value maximization to satisfying other needs within their operating environments, as suggested by the stakeholder theory of CSR.

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